SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY
COURSE SYLLABUS
CF 102

Department: Human Environmental Studies
Course No.: CF 102

Title of Course: Relationships in the 21st Century

I. Catalog Description and Credit Hours of Course:
Insights into relating to others through the framework of dating, committed relationships, family and friends. Three (3) credit hours.

II. Interdisciplinary Nature of Course: Not applicable

III. Prerequisite(s): None.

IV. Objectives of the Course:
The students will be able to:

1. Identify, examine, and interpret the relational needs and behavior of the individual in today’s society. (Universities Studies Objective 1).

2. Demonstrate critical thinking skills by evaluating, analyzing and synthesizing the dimensions and dynamics of love in personal and family relationships and by developing practical approaches to successful relationships. (Universities Studies Objective 2).

3. Discuss, illustrate, and explain the value of effective communication skills within personal and family relationships. (Universities Studies Objective 3).

4. Demonstrate an understanding of relationships and families within a social historical context. (Universities Studies Objective 4).

5. Identify, compare, differentiate, and distinguish cultural and socio-economic differences related to personal relationships and families. (Universities Studies Objective 5).
6. Identify and discuss values and attitudes regarding moral issues related to personal and family relationships. Develop one’s own philosophy of life for single and/or married living consistent with identified values and goals. (Universities Studies Objective 7).

V. **Expectations of Students**

The students will show progress in meeting course objectives by:

1. Achieving satisfactory scores on tests, quizzes and self assessment questionnaires.
2. Completing two quality written papers in a professional and timely manner. These two papers will be a self-evaluation of how one functions within personal relationships and within their own family.

VI. **Course Content or Outline**

A. What is a family? 3 hrs.  
(Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)  
Define what is a relationship? A marriage? A family?  
Examine the different types of relationships and family structures.  
Discuss the functions of a family and relationships.  
Explore the cross-cultural differences in relationships and families.  
Discuss the family in a historical perspective.

B. Family diversity 3 hrs.  
(Objectives 1, 5)  
Discuss the strengths and stresses of different racial and ethnic families.  
Discuss the strengths and stresses of interracial and interethnic relationships.

C. Gender roles and socialization 3 hrs.  
( Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 7)  
Discuss how gender roles are learned – Nature vs. Nurture.  
Examine gender roles within relationships and families. Contemporary vs. Traditional?  
Identify the theories associated with the socialization of gender roles.

D. Dimensions of love 4 hrs.  
( Objectives 1, 2)  
Identify the different types of love.  
Define love and its functions.  
Identify the characteristics of love.  
Discuss the theories about love.
E. Sexuality awareness 3 hrs.

(Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7)
Discuss sexuality related to sexual identity, sexual orientation, and sexual scripts.
Examine homosexuality and the socio-political issues.
Define sexual terminology.
Discuss family planning and birth control.
Examine the characteristics of sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS.

F. Beginning new relationships 4 hrs.

(Objectives 1, 2, 3, 7)
Examine the functions of dating.
Identify the different types of dating and ways to meet other people.
Examine mate selection theories.
Identify desirable mate characteristics.
Discuss harmful dating relationships: power, control, and aggression.

G. Singlehood 2 hrs.

(Objectives 1, 2, 3, 5, 7)
Discuss the diversity of singles.
Examine why people choose to live alone.
Discuss the pros and cons of living alone.

H. Cohabitation 2 hrs.

(Objectives 1, 2, 3, 5, 7)
Identify the characteristics and trends of cohabitation cross-culturally.
Identify the costs and benefits of cohabitation.
Discuss gay and lesbian relationships.

I. Committed relationships 4 hrs.

(Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 7)
Identify the different types of commitments.
Examine why people commit to one another.
Identify the different types of marriages.
Examine how committed relationships change across the life span.
Identify the variables that make committed relationships successful.
Discuss the common issues couples fight about.

J. Familial Relationships 6 hrs.

(Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7)
Discuss the benefits and costs of having children.
Examine fertility patterns across different race and ethnic groups.
Examine causes and solutions of infertility.
Discuss the pros and cons of postponing parenthood.
Explore the characteristics of nonmarital childbearing.
Discuss the issues related to adoption.
Identify the characteristics of mother/daughter/son relationships.
Identify the characteristics of father/daughter/son relationships.
Discuss the issues related to siblings and birth order.
Explore the roles of extended family members.
Examine the role of family rituals and traditions.

K. Relationships and work
   (Objectives 1, 2, 4, 7)
   Discuss the changing economy and its impact on families.
   Identify the different types of dual earner families.
   Discuss women’s participation in the work force and its impact on families.
   Explore the effect of work on family dynamics.
   Identify social policies that are workplace family friendly.
   Examine the issues surrounding coworker relationships.

L. Dissolution of relationships
   (Objectives 1, 2, 3, 7)
   Identify the phases and process of relationship dissolution.
   Explore the emotional and legal process of divorce.
   Discuss why relationships dissolve.
   Examine the positive and negative effects of relationship dissolution on adults and children.

M. Remarriage and stepfamilies
   (Objectives 1, 2, 5)
   Examine remarriage across different racial-ethnic and social class families.
   Identify the stages of remarriage.
   Discuss how first marriages and remarriages differ.
   Identify the characteristics of different types of stepfamilies and serial relationships.
   Discuss the characteristics of successful stepfamilies.

N. Friendships
   (Objectives 1, 2, 3)
   Examine the role of friendships as a support network.
   Identify the benefits and challenges of adulthood friendships.
   Discuss strategies for establishing boundaries with friends.

VII. Required Textbooks
VIII. **Basis for Student Evaluations**

- Self assessment questionnaires and quizzes 25%
- Two papers – a self evaluation 25%
  1. Personal relationships
  2. Family
- Three multiple choice exams 50%

Total 100%

IX. **Justification for Inclusion in the University Studies Program**

**Objective 1:** Demonstrate the ability to locate and gather information.

**Emphasis:** Significant

**Content:** Students will be required to locate, gather and apply a variety of information to meet course objectives. The students will utilize textbooks, articles, and their own family members to identify, examine, and interpret the relational needs and behavior of the individual in today’s society.

**Teaching Strategies:** Students will work individually and in cooperative learning teams to research and evaluate information. Each topic will include a variety of activities such as lecture, discussion, visuals aids (PowerPoint, videos).

**Student Assignments:** Students will complete assignments that require locating and gathering information related to relationships and one’s own family heritage.

**Student Evaluation:** Students will be evaluated on the ability to gather and organize information for each topic. Students will be expected to accurately complete all assignments and activities based on the specific criteria of the instructor.

**Objective 2:** Demonstrate capabilities for critical thinking, reasoning and analyzing.

**Emphasis:** Significant

**Content:** Students will be evaluated on the basis of their ability to evaluate, analyze, and synthesize a variety of relationship theories and information relevant to personal relationships. The student’s ability to think critically by developing practical approaches to successful relationships is fundamental to the class.

**Teaching Strategies:** Students will analyze a variety of relationships and families presented to them through case presentation and/or video. Through individual and groups assignments students will apply relationship theories and other course information to develop practical approaches for the couples and families presented.

**Student Assignments:** Assignments and examinations are designed to further the student’s ability for analysis within a logical framework. Students will write a paper integrating and applying the course material to their own personal lives and families.
**Student Evaluation:** Evaluations will assess how well the students can demonstrate critical thinking and reasoning skills pertaining to personal relationships.

**Objective 3:** Demonstrate effective communication skills.

**Emphasis:** Significant

**Content:** The course content presents numerous opportunities for students to exercise verbal and written communication skills. Students will learn and evaluate different communication skills/styles. Students will examine communication across cultures and in various family structures. Oral and written communication skills will be demonstrated through written assignments and class discussions.

**Teaching Strategies:** Teaching strategies will include lecture and discussion regarding communication skills/styles. Class discussion and written assignments will also be used to improve student’s oral and written communication skills.

**Student Assignments:** Student’s assignments will be designed to achieve proficiency in oral and written communication skills and to demonstrate knowledge of effective communication skills and strategies.

**Student Evaluation:** Students must demonstrate successful completion of oral and written communication assignments. Written assignments will be evaluated based on predetermined criteria including quality, content, and proficiency.

**Objective 4:** Demonstrate an understanding of human experiences and the ability to relate them to the present.

**Emphasis:** Significant

**Content:** The content provides an understanding of relationships and families within a social historical context. Students will examine the historical and social forces that influence present day relationships and families.

**Teaching Strategies:** Teaching strategies include assigned readings, lectures and discussions on the evolution of relationships and families. Lectures and assigned readings with provide students with a framework for evaluating and discussing the impact of societal forces on present day family systems.

**Student Assignments:** Through examinations, students will be tested on their knowledge regarding the social forces impacting past, present, and future families. Students will be asked to complete a written assignment examining their own family’s evolution.

**Student Evaluation:** Students will be evaluated based on their ability to demonstrate an understanding of the social forces impacting past, present, and future families. Student’s writing skills will be evaluated based on grammar, content and organization of information.
Objective 5: Demonstrate an understanding of various cultures and their inter-relationships.

**Emphasis:** Some

**Content:** The content provides students the opportunity to identify, compare, differentiate, and distinguish cultural and socio-economic differences related to personal relationships and families. Students will develop an understanding of their own cultural values in relation to others.

**Teaching Strategies:** Lecture and discussion will be used to achieve this objective. Students will be encouraged to research and analyze their cultural values in relation to others.

**Student Assignments:** Assignments will allow the students to examine how culture and relationships are integrated. A written assignment will require students to research their own family’s culture in terms of values, traditions, and historical events.

**Student Evaluation:** Students will be evaluated on their knowledge of different cultures and how cultural values impact relationships. Written assignments will be evaluated on quality, content and organization.

Objective 6: Demonstrate the ability to integrate the breadth and diversity of knowledge and experiences.

**Emphasis:** Not emphasized

**Content:** The course content provides students with an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to integrate the breadth and diversity of knowledge and experience. The course content blends a variety of topics including diversity, gender socialization, dating/marriage, sexuality, parenting, divorce/remarriage, and balancing work and family. The interrelationship of these diverse topics will be examined.

**Teaching Strategies:** Students will be given the opportunity to explore the relationship between the various aspects of relationships and families and evaluate the significance of the various areas in their personal and family lives.

**Student Assignments:** A written assignment will provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to integrate and apply the course content to their own relationships and families.

**Student Evaluation:** Written assignments will be evaluated on quality, content and organization.

Objective 7: Demonstrate the ability to make informed, intelligent value decisions.

**Emphasis:** Significant

**Content:** The main objective of this course is to provide information and strategies to improve the student’s decision-making ability regarding personal and family relationships. Students will examine individual and
family values and attitudes within the decision making process of dating, marriage, divorce, becoming parents and raising children.

**Teaching Strategies:** Lectures, case presentations and discussions will present issues that involve moral, ethical, aesthetic, and practical implications.

**Student Assignments:** Student assignments will include an assessment of their personal values regarding personal relationships and families. Students will be expected to demonstrate an ability to make informed, valued decisions through individual and group activities.

**Student Evaluation:** Students will be evaluated based on their ability to identify and support their values and decision making process. Students will be required to complete writing assignments that will be evaluated on quality, content, and organization.

**Objective 8:** Demonstrate the ability to make informed, sensitive aesthetic responses.

**Emphasis:** Not emphasized

**Content:** The subject matter provides valuable information for students to enhance their appreciation of the various historical, cultural and social aspects of personal and family relationships.

**Teaching Strategies:** Reading assignments, discussion and lecture will direct students toward an aesthetic appreciation of the various historical, cultural, and social aspects of personal and family relationships.

**Student Assignments:** Reading assignments and class discussion will provide the appropriate emphasis upon aesthetics.

**Student Evaluation:** Students’ performance will be evaluated based on diversity of observations and conclusions during class and group discussions.

**Objective 9:** Demonstrate the ability to function responsibly in one’s natural, social, and political environment.

**Emphasis:** Not emphasized

**Content:** One’s socio-economic and political environment has an important effect on personal and family relationships. Class content will emphasize the relationship between the social and political environment and the functioning of relationships and families.

**Teaching Strategies:** Reading assignments, lecture, and class discussions will illustrate the direct impact economics and politics have on relationships and families.

**Student Assignments:** Student assignments will be designed to review and evaluate various social and political issues and their relationship to family functioning.

**Student Evaluation:** Students will be evaluated on their ability to identify social and political issues and the ramifications for relationships and families. Exams and quizzes will provide the basis for evaluation.
X. Instructor’s Background
The instructor should have an advanced degree in family studies, human environmental studies, psychology, sociology, or counseling. A strong commitment to University Studies Objectives and strengths in written and verbal communication are required.

All instructors will receive training on the course content, cooperative learning teaching strategies, and the University Studies requirements.

XI. Class Size
The recommended class size will be 25 students.

* Due to the nature of the course and the emphasis placed on classroom discussion, the class size should not exceed 25 students.