

INTS 321: Parent-Child Relations (3 credits)
Fall 2016
Wednesdays 10:30am-1:10pm Krug Hall 253

Dr. Pamela Garner
School of Integrative Studies, Enterprise Hall 402
pgarner1@gmu.edu, 703-993-4599

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to introduce upper-level undergraduate students with three aspects of parenting: a) concepts, challenges, and changes, b) family diversity, and c) family risk factors. The course considers interactions between parents and children from birth to adolescence and considers cross-cultural, historical, and societal influences. Students will also have the opportunity to learn about efforts that have been successful in changing detrimental parenting actions.

OBJECTIVES:

- Describe the historical and theoretical foundations of parenting research and practice;
- Summarize the cultural and contextual factors influencing parenthood, parent-child relationships, including topics such as parenting children with special needs and parenting in the context of various family forms (e.g., single-parent families, blended families, gay and lesbian families).
- Evaluate changes in parenting styles and parenting strategies across developmental stages from pregnancy to adulthood.
- Analyze current research on parenting and parent education and classify local, statewide, and national parenting education programs.
- Integrate research and evidence-based perspectives to demonstrate the importance of parent education.

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Chua, Amy *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*
- Heath, Phyllis (3rd Edition) *Parent-Child Relations: Context, Research, and Application*

COURSE ASSESSMENT

- Participation 10%
- In-class Exams 50%
- Paper 20%
- Final Assignment 20%

Participation = 10%. Collaborative learning is an important feature of a learning community. Students are expected to attend class (arriving on time and remaining until the end of the session), to participate actively and responsibly, complete in-class assignments, and to hand in all assignments when due. Students are expected to read and be prepared to discuss the assigned texts.

In-class Exams = 50%. There will be two in-class tests on material covered in the *Parent-Child Relations* text. Each test is worth 25% of your final grade.

Class Presentation = 20%. In groups of no more than 4, and in consultation with the instructor, students will select a chapter from those available in the syllabus and co-lead (with their peers) a class discussion. Groups are required to develop 5-10 open-ended questions (the cover the entire set of readings/ chapters) to be distributed to class members before the presentation begins. The presentations should include the following: a) an introduction of the topic, b) a PowerPoint presentation on the important aspects of the readings/ chapters, and c) a discussion of the

open-ended questions with students. The presentation slides/ handouts, etc., along with the discussion questions, should be submitted to the instructor at the time of presentation.

Final Assignment = 20%. The final assignment (6-8 page parent interview and reflection) will be a write-up of an interview with a parent of a preschool child (between the ages of 3 and 5). The interview will address issues related to the research on parenthood, rewards/ concerns of parenting, context of parenting, parenting & development, and discipline strategies. Each interview should take between 45 minutes to an hour and should be transcribed. The interview questions should be developed from class materials. However, I will provide some materials that should also be used to gather information used in the write-up to standardize the grading. The case study paper will integrate the parent interview with research and theory on parenting and parent-child relationships. Please include information regarding the child's age, sex, race, number of siblings, and birth order. Note whether mother or father completed the interview and if the child is in child-care or preschool (if so, what type and make a note of how many hours per week). Integrate this information into your case study.

➔ **Late Work.** Papers and other assignments are to be turned in to the instructors at the beginning of class on the day due. **Late work will be reduced one letter grade per day that it is late** (including Saturday & Sunday). No work will be accepted over one week late without a valid written medical excuse or notice of death in the family. Please do not plan to turn work in to your instructor's mailbox unless you have specific permission to do so. Unless otherwise stipulated, work should be submitted in class in hard copy format; emailed and faxed material is not acceptable.

Disability Services

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the [Office of Disability Services](#) at 703-993-2474 or ods.gmu.edu. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. The need for accommodations must be identified at the beginning of the semester.

Honor Code

*"To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the University Community have set forth this: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to **cheat, plagiarize, steal, and/or lie** in matters related to academic work."*

All George Mason University students have agreed to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review.

Commitment to Diversity:

New Century College is an intentionally inclusive community that celebrates diversity and strives to have faculty, staff and students that reflect the diversity of our plural society. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, class, linguistic background, religion, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, or physical ability.

COMPETENCIES

A Competency-Based Education: what does the ability to use these skills contribute to a degree in Integrative Studies? New Century College believes that a successful undergraduate education requires more than an ability to master complex bodies of knowledge. Throughout their years as undergraduates, Integrative Studies students pursue excellence in eight competencies, each one essential to the transfer of knowledge from classroom practice to real-life problems. Students demonstrate their growing mastery of the competencies through assignments, projects, reflection, self-assessment and the creation of portfolios.

1. Communication

Communication is the process of creating and sharing meaning through human interaction. A competent communicator will be able to:

- Speak, read, write and listen effectively, with attention to audience, purpose and context.
- Use appropriate language, nonverbal and visual symbols.

- Organize ideas and information strategically.
- Design, revise and produce work tailored to diverse audiences.

2. Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating a judgment or conclusion. Someone who is a good critical thinker will be able to:

- Explore the issues and identify any problems to be solved.
- Identify and evaluate relevant, valid information and evidence.
- Understand the influence of context and assumptions.
- Summarize and synthesize key issues.
- Articulate his or her own position using evidence-based arguments.
- Design and implement problem solving plans.

3. Group Collaboration

Group collaboration is the process of working toward a shared agenda and/or common purpose while capitalizing on the diversity within the group. Effective group collaboration means that students should be able to:

- Create shared expectations and a common purpose.
- Understand and choose roles and tasks.
- Make decisions and track progress collaboratively.
- Facilitate constructive consensus-building, compromise and conflict.
- Integrate individual talents and strengths toward the accomplishment of goals and tasks.
- Be inclusive and value the diversity of the group.

4. Global Understanding

Global Understanding is the respect for and appreciation of the interconnections among biocultural systems. Global understanding includes the ability to:

- Appreciate and apply diverse perspectives, ways of knowing, and values.
- Analyze the complexity of the interconnectedness of local and global communities politically, economically, socially, and culturally.
- Understand and respect various life forms and the environment.
- Recognize and address the global implications of human, environmental, and economic exploitation.

5. Civic Engagement

Civic engagement is practice based on an informed understanding of communities and the roles and responsibilities of individuals within those communities. Students will:

- Develop the ability to examine contemporary issues and their historical contexts.
- Recognize and value multiple perspectives in civic life.
- Understand how actions are shaped by multiple forces, including values, and economic and social inequity.
- Make informed choices regarding personal community involvement, social justice issues and leadership roles.
- Work collaboratively with diverse partners to solve problems for a common good

6. Digital Literacy

As information and communication technologies permeate more and more aspects of personal, professional and civic life, students need to be able to apply and critique existing and emerging technologies. Competence in digital literacy requires that students will be able to:

- Research, evaluate and apply the digital information and communication tools and platforms appropriate to each activity undertaken.
- Demonstrate a readiness to learn new information communication technology (ICT) confidently and independently in the creation of original digital work.
- Integrate existing personal and networked ICTs with emerging tools and platforms.
- Understand and ethically resolve the privacy, security, accessibility and identity-management issues associated with the integration of digital literacy into everyday life.

7. Aesthetic Awareness

Aesthetic awareness encourages individual to develop intellectual and emotional responses to nature or human creativity. An aesthetically aware person can:

- Understand the historical, social, political, environmental or gendered contexts of specific created works.
- Appreciate the complex processes of creative expression in multiple forms and media.
- Recognize and explore the transformative potential of creativity in effecting societal change.
- Value creative expression and the natural world to enrich everyday life.

WRITTEN AND ORAL ASSIGNMENT GRADING STANDARDS

All assignments are due at the beginning of class as noted in the daily schedule and must be typed using 11 or 12 point font and one-inch margins, double-spaced, and stapled. You must correctly and consistently use a recognized citation style, such as MLA or APA.

Score of A: Superior

- Addresses the topic fully and explores the issue thoughtfully.
- Shows substantial depth, fullness and complexity of thought.
- Demonstrates clear, focused, coherent, and logical organization.
- Is fully developed and detailed. The point is clear and well stated.
- Good introduction with clear thesis statement, and an effective conclusion.
- Evidences superior control of diction, syntactic variety, and transition between paragraphs; only a few minor flaws.
- Integrates evidence from texts to support ideas and arguments.
- Proper citation of texts using a standard citation method.

Score of B: Strong

- Clearly addresses the topic and explores the issue.
- Shows some depth and complexity of thought.
- Is effectively organized. Easy to follow and understand.
- Is well developed, with supporting detail. Logically coherent.
- Demonstrates control of diction, syntactic variety, and transition; may have a few minor mechanical flaws.
- Proper citation of texts using a standard citation method.

Score of C: Competent

- Adequately addresses the topic and explores the issue.
- Shows clarity of thought but may lack complexity.
- Is organized. Can be followed with some difficulty.
- Is adequately developed, with some detail. Some logical fallacies or incoherent sentences/paragraphs.
- Demonstrates competent writing; shows some flaws in syntax and grammar.
- Proper citation of texts using a standard citation method.

Score of D: Weak

- May distort or neglect parts of the topic.
- May be simplistic or stereotyped in thought.
- May demonstrate problems in organization.
- May have generalizations without supporting detail or detail without generalizations; may be undeveloped. Logically flawed; several incoherencies.
- May reveal patterns of flaws in language, syntax or mechanics.
- Improper citation method.

Score of F: Inadequate

- Demonstrates serious inadequacy in addressing the topic.
- Fails in its attempts to discuss the topic. Illogical.
- May be deliberately off-topic. Extremely difficult to follow.
- Is so incompletely developed as to suggest or demonstrate incompetency.
- Is wholly incompetent mechanically.

- Improper citation method.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

As in any course, some adjustments to the schedule may be made during the semester. It is the responsibility of students to come to class regularly and frequently monitor their Mason email account in order to stay informed about possible changes in activities or assignments.

| | Topic | Reading Schedule and Assignments Due |
|-------------------|--|--|
| Week 1 Aug 31 | Introduction and Syllabus | |
| Week 2 Sept 7 | Historical, Theoretical, & Ecological Models of Parenting | Chapter 1, Heath: Historical and Theoretical Influences of Childrearing |
| Week 3 Sept 14 | Parenting Styles and Typologies | Chapter 2 Heath; Parenting Patterns |
| Week 4 Sept 21 | Parenting Styles and Typologies | <u>Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother</u> |
| Week 5 Sept 28 | In-class Exam | |
| Week 6 Oct 5 | Diversity in Family Structure: Theoretical and Conceptual Perspectives | Chapter 3, Heath: Parents and Children in Varied Family Structures |
| Week 7 Oct 12 | Diversity in Family Structure: Applications and Interventions | <i>View Parenthood</i> |
| Week 8 Oct 19 | Parental Socialization Strategies & Techniques | Chapter 4, Heath: Child Socialization Strategies and Techniques Response Paper Due |
| Week 9 Oct 26 | In-class Exam | |
| Week 10 Nov 2 | Pregnancy, Childbirth & the Transition to Parenthood | Chapter 5, Heath: Becoming Parents and Parenting Infants and Toddlers |
| Week 11 Nov 9 | Parenting in Early Childhood and Early Elementary and Middle School | Chapters 6 & 7 Heath: Parent-Preschooler Interactions and Parents and their School-age Children |
| Week 12 Nov 16 | Parenting Adolescents and Young Adults | Chapter 8, Heath: Parent-Adolescent Interactions <i>View Closure: A Documentary on Adoption</i> |
| Week 13 Nov 23 | Parenting Children with Special Needs | Chapter 11 Heath: Parenting Children with Special Needs <i>View My Flesh & Blood: A documentary</i> |
| Nov 30 | Out of Class Project Work | |
| Week 14 Dec 7 | Course Wrap-Up, Evaluations | Discussion of Final Essay Research Q&A |

Response Paper

Three- five pages, typed using 11 or 12 point font and one-inch margins, double-spaced, and stapled. Be sure to cite the texts discussed in class to support your points.

After watching the film *Parenthood*, write an essay that describes your overall thoughts on the parent-child relationships that are portrayed, making specific references to class discussions and texts. In your essay, you should discuss:

- How is each parent affected by the nature of the child's birth and the resources of the family?
- What factors influence the satisfaction of couples during the transition to parenthood?
- How do the parents and grandparents work together to accommodate the arrival of children into the family?
- Discuss any marital conflict caused by differing parenting styles.
- What roles do the parents take in promoting their young children's cognitive development?
- How do the parents support their children's goals to realize their potential (developmental, social, emotional, etc.)?
- Describe how the parents' and grandparents' socialization patterns influence their relationships with their children.
- How does the quality of parent-adolescent attachment play out in the lives of the adolescents and their well-being?
- What are the sources of parent-adolescent conflict **and** how do these conflicts change over time?

Writing the Parenting Case Study

The first thing to understand about this assignment is that writing any case study requires that the writer has enough descriptive information in it so that the reader (me) can determine what the dynamics are between the parent and the child. In this way, writing an interesting paper will mean that you will need to approach the assignment like a detective story. I have provided you with some strategies in the form of handouts and activities that you should use in gathering your information so that we can both figure out what was going on between the parent and the child. My other goal in providing these materials was to make sure that everyone had enough information to come up with a compelling paper. At the same time, a good paper will be more than mere description of the information you gathered and the observations you make. Your grade will also be dependent upon how you decide to arrange the information in your paper to tell your story. That is, a description of the situation, dynamics, etc. is required, but you must also demonstrate your ability to organize the information and to come to conclusions.

There are basic steps to conducting a successful case study:

- Find a family to participate in the case study. Next, conduct your interview/visit and gather the required information. In addition to getting to using the documents and activities I provided, you can come up with some additional questions that will help you understand the parenting dynamics in the family (e.g., philosophy of parenting at different ages, ... or you could decide to talk to both parents to see if there are differences between them). You get the idea. Then you can add these facts to your case.
- Next, there is the Research Phase. Use your texts, class discussions, films presented in class, etc.) and any other additional research you choose to gather from other sources (although outside

sources are not required) to analyze the case. This means that you need to sort through all of the information you have and then figure out how to arrange it so that the case site will be understandable to a reader. Before you begin writing, then, you have to put all the information together where you can see it and analyze what the information is telling you. In this way, you have to figure out what is really important to share with me.

Organize the paper as follows:

- Introduction (i.e., describe the parent and child in terms of age, sex, race, number of children in the family, what their ages are, whether the parents are married or divorced, where the child is being reared, whether or not the child attends preschool (full-time or part-time), etc). The reader really needs to get a sense of the family. This should take about a page to complete adequately.
- The second part of the paper will focus on the analysis. This section of the paper should be about 3 pages. Please cite appropriately and include a works cited page using APA format.

Written Assignment Grading Standards

All assignments are due at the beginning of class as noted in the daily schedule and must be typed using 11 or 12 point font and one-inch margins, double-spaced, and stapled.

Score of A: Superior

- Addresses the topic fully and explores the issue thoughtfully.
- Shows substantial depth, fullness and complexity of thought.
- Demonstrates clear, focused, coherent, and logical organization.
- Is fully developed and detailed. The point is clear and well stated.
- Good introduction with clear thesis statement, and an effective conclusion.
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Score of B: Strong

- Clearly addresses the topic and explores the issue.
- Shows some depth and complexity of thought.
- Is effectively organized. Easy to follow and understand.
- Is well developed, with supporting detail. Logically coherent.
- Demonstrates control of diction, syntactic variety, and transition; may have a few minor mechanical flaws.
- Proper citation of texts using a standard citation method.

Score of C: Competent

- Adequately addresses the topic and explores the issue.
- Shows clarity of thought but may lack complexity.
- Is organized. Can be followed with some difficulty.
- Is adequately developed, with some detail. Some logical fallacies or incoherent sentences/paragraphs.

- Demonstrates competent writing; shows some flaws in syntax and grammar.
- Proper citation of texts using a standard citation method.

Score of D: Weak

- May distort or neglect parts of the topic.
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- May demonstrate problems in organization.
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