

NCLC 375 - 008: Explorations of Adoption

Spring 2014, Mondays 10:30am – 1:10pm Innovation Hall 133

Instructor: Teri Slick

Phone: 703-993-1436 to request course

E-mail: tslick@gmu.edu

related appointment outside of scheduled

Office location: 408 Enterprise Hall

office hours

Office hours: Mondays 2:00-3:30pm &

By Appointment

Course Description:

The concept of human adoption has a long and diverse history spanning numerous cultures and significant time periods. It has been brought to the forefront of media in recent years with various celebrities turning to this form of procreation to establish families. What is often not understood nor appreciated are its political, economic, cultural and social benefits and consequences. We will attempt to explore this complex topic through each of these lenses.

Questions that will guide our semester journey include:

- How is the practice of human adoption defined in different countries and what does this mean for those wishing to adopt from different countries?
- What does history tell us about how the practice of adoption has evolved over time with regard to politics, economics, race, gender and class?
- What role does international/transracial adoption have on one's self-identity, especially considering their culture?
- How does the practice of human adoption impact how one defines 'family'?
- What has been the role of social media in influencing adoption practices and the adoption community?

Learning objectives

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of basic adoption terms including the "adoption triad";
- Gain a better understanding of adoption through exploration of its history, economics, psychological, sociological and cultural topics resulting from the different voices that are part of the adoption community;
- Make intellectual connections across texts, theoretical knowledge, and hands-on learning experiences (both within and outside of the course);
- Strengthen your working knowledge of the following NCC competencies: critical thinking, global understanding, communication and civic engagement

Required readings & texts

There are no textbooks for this course; rather, all readings will be posted on blackboard as PDF's or links to the appropriate URL. You are expected to have read assigned articles before class and to be prepared to discuss the readings in class. To ensure that readings have been completed on time and to prepare you for class discussion, you will be asked to bring in relevant news articles related a given week's topic and to discuss within small groups. Additionally, you are expected to check your Masonlive accounts on a daily

basis for any updates relevant to the course (i.e. changes in class activities or due dates).

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Participation and Attendance: We are a Learning Community and important responsibilities come with participation in this community. These responsibilities include completing readings and assignments on time, actively engaging materials, coming to class regularly and on time with enthusiasm to discuss course materials, and listening attentively to comments made in class.

Given the importance of active and engaged participation, **regular and prompt attendance is expected! Unexcused absences will adversely affect your final grade.** An absence is excused when due to serious illness, religious observance, participation in University activities at the request of University authorities, or compelling circumstances beyond your control. To claim an excused absence, you must provide a signed letter by a person in a position to make an authoritative determination as to the validity of the cause of the absence within three calendar days of your return from that absence. In cases where you know you will be missing class, please let me know as soon as possible. You are responsible for all announcements, assignments, materials and date changes covered or made in class while you are absent.

Use of cell phones & laptops: Please limit your use of your cell phones to announced breaks during a class session or just prior to and immediately concluding it. You are free to bring a laptop to engage in course-related work. However, I reserve the right to ask you to put it away if I see you on FB, playing a game or otherwise not engaged in the class activities.

Commitment to Diversity and Classroom Climate: New Century College is an *intentionally* inclusive community that celebrates diversity and strives to have faculty, staff and students who 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. This class assumes that informed, well-supported opinions, thoughts, and ideas deserve respectful hearings from others. Diversity in analysis and expression is the key to a successful course. Demeaning, intolerant and/or disruptive behavior or responses at any time are inappropriate.

➔ **Late Work.** Papers and other assignments are to be turned in to the instructor as hard copy at the beginning of class on the day due. All due dates are indicated on the weekly schedule. **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.

Email and Inclement Weather Policy: In compliance with a University-wide initiative, NCC faculty and staff will correspond electronically with students only through their GMU assigned email accounts. No assignments will be accepted via email unless

specifically requested. Please check your email account regularly for updates and important announcements.

Academic Honesty and Collaboration: George Mason University has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental principles to follow at all times are: 1) all work submitted must be your own; 2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and 3) if you are uncertain about citation rules or assignment guidelines, ask me for clarification. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. If you feel unusual pressure or anxiety about your grade in this course, please let me know. The University provides a range of services to help with test anxiety, writing skills, study skills, personal issues, among other concerns.

Using someone else's words or ideas without giving them credit is plagiarism! To quote directly from any text, use the exact words (including punctuation) just as the words, phrases, and sentences appear in the original text. Additionally, you must follow proper citation rules to indicate that you are quoting directly from a text (e.g. quotation marks, quote indentation, source identification). If you want to paraphrase ideas from a source, that is, convey the author's ideas in your own words, you must still cite the source, using an established citation format.

Using papers, presentations, and other materials from one course as work for this course is not appropriate. I expect that submitted work has been prepared for this class only! An exception to this rule is made for materials included within course portfolios.

Student Learning Resources

Writing Resources: Writing is an important component of this learning community and represents one facet of effective communication. You should use the Writing Center to assist you with assignments. The Writing Center is located in Robinson Hall, Rm. A114; (703) 993-1200; <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>.

Disability Resource Center (DRC): The staff members of the DRC assist students with learning differences or any other conditions that may impact academic performance. DRC is located in SUB I, Rm. 222; (703) 993-2474; <http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc>.

Center for Leadership and Community Engagement (CLCE): CLCE is a terrific place to start if you are interested in getting involved in campus and community activities. This center sponsors numerous programs and activities that will help you develop leadership skills and gain experience. This is also the place to research possible service-learning placement sites for your learning communities. CLCE is located in Enterprise Hall, Rm. 442; (703) 993-2900; <http://www.gmu.edu/student/csl>.

Counseling Services: Professional counselors provide individual and group sessions for personal development and assistance with a range of emotional and relational issues. Counseling Services are located in SUB I, Rm. 364; (703) 993-2380; <http://clce.gmu.edu>.

Learning Services Program: Offers academic skill-building workshops as well as a tutor referral service; (703) 993-2999 and <http://caps.gmu.edu/learningservices/>.

Student Technology Assistance and Resource Center (STAR): The STAR Center is available to help students with technology needs, such as video, multimedia, desktop publishing, and web skills. The STAR Center is located in Johnson Center, Rm. 229; (703) 993-8990; <http://media.gmu.edu>.

Division of Instructional and Technology Support Services (DoIT): If you have any difficulties with accessing the campus network or on-campus computers, please contact the help desk. DoIT is located in Innovations Hall, Rm.416; 703-993-3178; <http://www.doit.gmu.edu>.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT GRADING STANDARDS

Format for Assignments: All papers must be typed, double spaced on 8.5" x 11" paper using 12 point font with 1" margins. Multiple pages must include page numbers at the lower right corner and student name & course title at the top right. All papers should be documented properly in accordance with an accepted citation manual (e.g. The Chicago Manual of Style, The APA Manual of Style, The MLA Style Manual). Keep a copy of all assignments. Failure to follow assignment guidelines may result in a grade deduction.

All assignments are due at the beginning of class as noted in the daily schedule.

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.

Date	Topics/Class Activity	Readings Due	Assignments Due
Jan 27	Welcome and Introduction to the Course Overview of assignments		
Feb 3	History of Adoption/Language of Adoption	Handbook of Adoption: <u>Part I</u> , pp. 1 – 44	
Feb 10	Depiction of Adoption in Media View: Clip from “Modern Family”: Lily eating at Vietnamese Restaurant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Presentation of “Search”, “Reunion” and Open Records 	Student selected news article about adoption as it is depicted in the media
Feb 17	Politics & Business of Adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market Puts Price Tags on the 	Student selected news article about

	View: The Journey Home: A Romanian Adoption	Priceless	policies or business trends in adoption
Feb 24	Development issues for adopted child Open Adoptions + foster system	Handbook of Adoption <u>Part II</u> : pp. 59 – 112 <u>PART IV</u> : Special Issues in Adoption 12: Open Adoptions: Longitudinal Outcomes for the Adoption Triad, pp. 175 -189	Student selected news article/blog about open adoptions
March 3	In Class Midterm	None	
March 10	Spring Break	No Class	
March 17	Adoptive & Birth parents (Defining “family”) Guest Speaker: Susan Brionez	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making a “Real” Family • Reunions Between Adoptees and Birth Parents- Birth Parents' Experience • Real Parents in Adoption/ A Paradigm Shift Frank Ligtoet • National Survey of Adoptive Parents 	Student selected news article/blog about adoptive & birth parent
March 24	International adoptions View: Adopted	Handbook of Adoption <u>PART III</u> : Transracial and International Adoption, pp. 113 – 132	
March 31	International adoptions continued View: Somewhere Between	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A critique of Harry and Bertha Holt’s work while setting up intercountry adoption in South 	April 1: Extra Credit Opportunity (Attend viewing of and discussion about Somewhere

		Korea. Transracialeyes	Between)
April 7	Birth Family Search & Heritage Camps View: Videos from Holt Adoptees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring Birth Countries • Searching for Birth Parents 	Extra Credit Paper about Somewhere Between viewing and Discussion due in class at start.
April 14	No Class (work on Adoption Interviews or Adoption Memoir paper)	None	Video Reaction & Analysis due
April 21	Transracial adoptions & Special needs adoptive families	Handbook of Adoption <u>Part III</u> , Ch. 9, pp. 133 - 148 <u>PART IV</u> : Special Issues in Adoption 14: The Special Needs of Special-Needs Adoptees and Their Families , pp. 217 -227	Student selected news or journal article/blog about transracial & special needs adoptions – 2 articles.
April 28	Adoption Story Narratives		Adoption Story Narratives papers
May 5	LAST class session: final course evaluations	Handbook of Adoption <u>Part IX</u> : Conclusion The Future of Adoption: A Call to Action, pp. 527 - 538	

Grading Scale for this Learning Community		
93-100 A	77-79 C+	
90-92 A-	73-76 C	
87-89 B+	70-72 C-	
83-86 B	69-60 D	
80-82 B-	59-0 F	
Descriptions of Graded Requirements		Points
Student Selected News Articles (see handout on Blackboard for instructions)		100 (20 points each)
Midterm Exam		200
Paper #1: Video Reaction & Analysis During the semester, we will watch three videos that deal with adoption in different ways. Pick ONE video to write your paper. This paper will incorporate your reaction, reflection and analysis of the video in regard to the issues and research discussed in class.		250
Paper #2: Adoption Story Narratives Paper (see handout on Blackboard for instructions)		250
Paper #3: Adoption Interview (see handout on Blackboard for instructions)		200
Extra Credit: Attend a viewing of “Somewhere Between” on April 1 (details of the event to be shared as they become available), and write a minimum 3 page reflection that accounts for: 1) General description of who was in attendance, 2) Panel members, 3) Topics raised for discussion, 4) What you learned from attending (this should also incorporate references to our class readings and/or discussions) that you would not have without doing so. In addressing the last question, think about the different ways in which you learn about ideas, and describe how this format of learned knowledge helped you to better understand an aspect of adoption.		10
Total points		1000