PBS 9 THE FAMILY

LIST OF LECTURES

Michaelmas Term

Day: Thursday
Time: 11am-1pm
Beginning on: October 5th, 2017

Venue: Psychology Lecture Theatre

Lecture 1 (5th October): Dr Tabitha Freeman
Introduction to the sociology of the family

Lecture 2 (12th October): Professor Marinus van Ijzendoorn
Introduction to the psychology of the family

Lecture 3 (19th October): Dr Charlotte Faircloth
Introduction to the social anthropology of the family

Lecture 4 (26th October): Dr Susan Imrie
Adolescents and the family

Lecture 5 (2nd November): Dr Tabitha Freeman
The politics of motherhood and fatherhood

Lecture 6 (9th November): Dr Jens Scherpe
The family and the legal system

Lecture 7 (16th November): Professor Susan Golombok
Lesbian and gay families

Lecture 8 (23rd November): Professor Susan Golombok
Assisted reproduction families
**Lent Term**

**Day:** Thursday  
**Time:** 11am-1pm  
**Beginning on:** January 19th, 2016

**Venue:** Psychology Lecture Theatre

**Lecture 9 (18th January):** Professor Susan Golombok  
Single-parent and step-families

**Lecture 10 (25th January):** Dr Polly Casey  
Marriage

**Lecture 11 (1st February):** Dr Sophie Zadeh  
Motherhood and the media

**Lecture 12 (8th February):** Dr Vasanti Jadva  
Doing family research

**Lecture 13 (15th February):** Dr Lucy Blake  
Family estrangement

**Lecture 14 (22nd February):** Dr Sophie Landa  
Family therapy

**Lecture 15 (1st March):** Dr Humera Iqbal  
Families across cultures

**Lecture 16 (8th March):** Anastasia de Waal  
Social policy and the family

**Easter Term**

**Lecture 17** Professor Susan Golombok  
Revision lecture, date tbc
PAPER CONTACTS

Course Organiser
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Lecturers

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OUTLINE OF PAPER

Course content
In addition to psychology, this interdisciplinary paper draws on material from sociology, social anthropology, law and other relevant disciplines. Psychological and social perspectives on family relationships and child development are examined in relation to specific topics such as motherhood, fatherhood, adolescence, marriage, new family forms, cross-cultural perspectives, dysfunctional family relationships, and family policy. Theories of family life are studied as well as methodologies of family research.

Mode of teaching
The course will be taught by lectures and discussion. Directors of Studies are advised that students should receive 3 supervisions per term on specialist topics. Development of writing skills will also be taught through supervisions. The paper will be assessed through a 3 hour examination.

Introductory reading

Cambridge University Press.

Lecture 1. Introduction to the Sociology of the Family

Dr Tabitha Freeman

This introductory lecture will present an overview of classical, modern and contemporary sociological approaches to the family and personal relationships, including feminist perspectives. The lecture will examine alternative accounts of the past, present and future of the nuclear family and introduce key concepts such as patriarchy, the public and private sphere, and the sex/gender distinction.

Supervision Essay Question

Why has the nuclear family been both criticised and idealised in recent years?

Reading


**Lecture 2. Introduction to the Psychology of the Family: Attachment**

**Professor Marinus van IJzendoorn**

When attachment is discussed, we usually think of young children with a specific behavioural system that orients them to their caregiver when they are hurt, anxious or alarmed. Yet attachment remains relevant into adulthood, if in a more diffuse way, in how we manage difficult feelings in the relationship with our children and other close relationships. This lecture will explore the transmission of attachment from parents to their infants, with an emphasis on two central measures of attachment: the Strange Situation Procedure and the Adult Attachment Interview. The various approaches to bridge the so-called ‘transmission gap’ will be discussed.

**Supervision Essay Question**

What can research on infant and adult attachment tell us about the role of genetics and family environment in the intergenerational transmission of attachment?

**Reading**

*General background:*


*Suggested reading:*


Lecture 3. Introduction to the Social Anthropology of the Family

Dr Charlotte Faircloth

This lecture introduces students to the social anthropology of the family by problematising “the family” as a self-evident concept. Rather than families, anthropologists tend to talk about “kinship” or “relatedness”, exploring the different ways and means by which persons consider themselves to be related. Through a historical look at the anthropological discipline, combined with a range of ethnographic examples, this lecture shows how terms which are often taken for granted in social analysis actually require considerable contextualisation. The lecture therefore prompts students to think about who counts as ‘family’, and why.

Supervision essay question

What does the term ‘relatedness’ convey that ‘family’ does not?

Reading


- especially chapters by Charis Thompson and Signe Howell


**Lecture 4: Adolescents and the family**

*Susan Imrie*

This lecture will look at the developmental stage of adolescence in relation to the family. It will examine the influence of parenting and family relationships on adolescent psychological well-being, as well as considering the roles of the peer group and changes in brain development during adolescence. It will also examine the outcomes for adolescents of teenage pregnancy and parenthood.

**Supervision Essay Questions**

Evaluate the role of parents in influencing adolescents’ psychological well-being?

**OR**

Teenage parenthood continues to be portrayed as problematic and undesirable. To what extent could such portrayals be considered misleading?

**Reading**


**Lecture 5. The Politics of Motherhood and Fatherhood**

**Dr Tabitha Freeman**

This lecture will explore the gendered politics of parenting and provide a theoretical and cultural framework for understanding contemporary debates about men and women’s roles in family life. Key topics include: gender, patriarchy and the cultural construction of motherhood and fatherhood; feminist approaches to motherhood and childcare; ‘traditional’ and ‘new’ models of fatherhood; shared parenting.

**Supervision Essay Question**

Is it possible for men and women to parent as equals?

**Reading**


Lecture 6. The family and the legal system

Dr Jens M. Scherpe

The lecture will look at the role family law plays, or intends to play, with regard to the family. In particular, the lecture will discuss the increasing number challenges that the family law system because of societal and scientific developments - and possible answers.

Supervision Essay Question

What should the role of family law be - to regulate or to regularise family life?

Reading


*Eekelaar, Regulating Divorce (1997), especially pp. 142-145.


**Lecture 7. Lesbian and gay families**

**Professor Susan Golombok**

This lecture will examine the influence of parental sexual orientation on children’s social, emotional and gender development.
**Supervision Essay Question**

Are children with same-sex parents at risk for psychological problems?

**Reading**


**Lecture 8. Assisted Reproduction Families**

**Professor Susan Golombok**

This lecture will look at parenting and child development in families created through assisted reproduction (*in vitro* fertilisation [IVF], donor insemination, egg donation and surrogacy), with an emphasis on families where parents lack a genetic and/or gestational link with their children. It will also examine how disclosure can impact on
children’s well-being. The network of relationships that develop as a result of gamete donation and surrogacy and the implications of this will also be discussed.

**Supervision Essay Question**

Should children born using gamete donation and/or surrogacy be told about their birth?

**Reading**


**Lecture 9. Single-parent and stepfamilies**

**Professor Susan Golombok**

This lecture will focus on types of single parent family, as well as stepfather and stepmother families, and the psychological consequences for parents and children.
Supervision Essay Question

Would you expect children born to single mothers by choice to be more at risk for psychological difficulties than children in single parent families resulting from divorce?

Reading


Biblarz, T. & Stacey, J. (2010) How does the gender of parents matter? *Journal of marriage and the Family, 72*, 3-22. [see also commentary on this paper by Strohschein pp. 23-28; Goldberg, pp. 29-34; Tasker, pp. 35-40; Biblarz & Stacey, 41-44]


**Lecture 10: Marriage**

**Dr Polly Casey**

This lecture looks at the psychology of marriage and couple relationships in general. The lecture will introduce students to the dynamic psychological processes within couple relationships, considering the couple relationship as a fundamental element within the wider family system, and thinking about what happens when couple relationships break down. This will be within the context of current and historical demographic trends, including the changing face of marriage and the rise in cohabitation and divorce.

**Supervision Essay Question**

Can we predict who will get divorced?

**Reading**


Dr Sophie Zadeh

This lecture will focus on media representations of motherhood. It will discuss depictions of ‘non-traditional’ motherhood and related issues (assisted reproductive technologies, fertility decline) in the mass media, and will consider the relationship between media representations and mothers’ experiences. The lecture will also look at the relationship between the mass media and its audience. Finally, the lecture will outline some of the theoretical approaches to understanding the impact of media messages about motherhood.

(Please note: students writing supervision essays on this topic are not expected to have read all of the reading suggestions. Essays should, however, combine empirical examples with a degree of theoretical insight. Texts good for theory are listed at the end).

Supervision Essay Question

Using empirical examples, discuss the influence of the media on mothers and social others.

Reading


**Texts good for theory**


**Lecture 12. Doing Family Research**

**Dr Vasanti Jadva**

This lecture will look at different methodologies used to study families and will focus on examples of how family research is conducted and the advantages and disadvantages of different methods. The practical and ethical considerations that need to be taken into account when studying families will also be discussed. Examples from selected studies will help gain an insight into the practicalities of doing family research.

**Supervision Essay Question**

Discuss the practical and ethical challenges of studying family relationships.

**Reading**


24
Lecture 13: Estrangement - when relationships between family members break down.

Dr Lucy Blake

The family is often assumed to be a source of support and security, in which love and affection between family members is unconditional. Relationships that are distant, dissatisfying, or have broken down do not fit into this normative model of the family. This lecture will focus on estrangement between family members, and in particular, parents and their adult children. The causes, processes and consequences of estrangement will be explored.

Supervision Essay Question

What are the causes and consequences of family estrangement?

Reading


**Lecture 14. Family Therapy**

**Dr Sophie Landa**

This lecture will introduce students to the principles of family therapy. It will explore how family therapy’s theory and practice has evolved, including changing conceptualisations of power, the role of the therapist, and who or what is considered to be the “problem”.

**Supervision Essay Question**

Contrast and evaluate two approaches to family therapy.
Reading


Lecture 15: Family life from a cross-cultural perspective.

Dr Humera Iqbal

What role does culture play in family practices? Do traditional psychological theories and models account for cultural differences? This lecture attempts to answer these questions by exploring family life across different cultures (and ethnic groups). Using the example of self-awareness, we investigate different parenting styles and practices.
Students will also be introduced to the sub-discipline of cross-cultural psychology and we will examine some key theories in the field.

**Supervision Essay Question**

Using examples and drawing from theory, discuss how different parenting practices across cultures can result in similar outcomes for children and young people.

**Reading**


Lecture 16. Social Policy and the Family

Anastasia de Waal

This lecture presents the central concepts within family policy, moving from definitions of social policy to what specifically constitutes family policy. Family policy is then contextualised, exploring its interface with welfare policy, economics, politics and history.

The second half of the lecture goes on to look at key elements of family policy in the UK today, including demographic change and family structure, partnerships, parenting and work, and family income. Central to exploring influences on family life will be discussion around the dynamics between policy and social change, and the interdisciplinary tools used to understand these interactions.

Supervision Essay Question

What is the relationship between the changing family and family policy?

Reading list


