PBS 9 THE FAMILY

LIST OF LECTURES

Michaelmas Term

Day: Thursday
Time: 11am-1pm
Beginning on: October 4th, 2018

Venue: Psychology Lecture Theatre, Downing Site

Lecture 1 (4th October): Professor Marinus van IJzendoorn
Introduction to the psychology of the family

Lecture 2 (11th October): Dr Tabitha Freeman
Introduction to the sociology of the family

Lecture 3 (18th October): Dr Charlotte Faircloth
Introduction to the social anthropology of the family

Lecture 4 (25th October): Dr Susan Imrie
Adolescents and the family

Lecture 5 (1st November): Dr Susanna Graham
Assisted Reproductive Technologies: Culture, Gender and Kinship

Lecture 6 (8th November): Dr Jens Scherpe
The family and the legal system

Lecture 7 (15th November): Dr Vasanti Jadva
Assisted reproduction families

Lecture 7 (22nd November): Anja McConnachie
Same-sex parent families
**Lent Term**

**Day:** Thursday  
**Time:** 11am-1pm  
**Beginning on:** January 15th, 2019

**Venue:** Psychology Lecture Theatre, Downing Site

**Lecture 9 (17th January):** Dr Sophie Zadeh  
Single-parent and step-families

**Lecture 10 (24th January):** Dr Polly Casey  
Marriage

**Lecture 11 (31st January):** Dr Sophie Zadeh  
Motherhood and the media

**Lecture 12 (7th February):** Dr Lucy Blake  
Family estrangement

**Lecture 13 (14th February):** Dr Vasanti Jadva  
Doing family research

**Lecture 14 (21st February):** Dr Sophie Landa  
Family therapy

**Lecture 15 (28th February):** Dr Humera Iqbal  
Families across cultures

**Lecture 16 (7th March):** Anastasia de Waal  
Social policy and the family

**Easter Term**

**Lecture 17** Dr Vasanti Jadva  
Revision lecture, date tbc
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
Lecture 1. 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 2. 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 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**

**Dr 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. Assisted Reproductive Technologies: Culture, Gender and Kinship

Dr Susanna Graham

Supervision Essay Question

Assisted reproductive technologies (ARTs) have radically altered our notion of what a family is. Discuss

It is forty years since the first “test-tube” baby was born via in vitro fertilisation (IVF). This lecture will look at how Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ARTs) have evolved over time and will explore the cultural, legal and ethical responses that have emerged to them. Through examining global perspectives on infertility and ARTs we will see how although the technologies have spread globally, their specific uses are framed and influenced by local cultural contexts and moral worlds. We will see how ARTs can both challenge and reinforce notions of gender and kinship, making us reconsider what
makes a family, what being a mother or a father entails and what it means to be 
“biologically related”.

California Press: Berkley


Franklin, S. Embodied Progress

through donor profiles,’ in T. Freeman, S. Graham, F. Ebtehaj and M. Richards (eds.) 
University Press


Childlessness, Gender and Reproductive Technologies. University of California Press: 
Berkley. (Especially chapters 14, 15 and 16).

Inhorn, M. and Birenbaum-Carmeli, D. 2008. ‘Assisted Reproductive Technologies and 
Culture Change’. Annual Review of Anthropology, 37: 177-96

Anthropology, 37: 375-89

Mohr, S. 2015. ‘Living Kinship Trouble: Danish Sperm Donors’ Narratives of Relatedness’ 
Medical Anthropology, 34, 470-484.

Nordqvist, P. 2012. ‘Origins and originators: lesbian couples negotiating parental 
identities and sperm donor conception’. Culture, Health & Sexuality, 14: 297–311

Thompson, C. Making Parents: The Ontological Choreography of Reproductive 

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.


Scherpe, The financial consequences of divorce in a European Perspective, in: Scherpe
Lecture 7. Assisted Reproduction Families

Dr Vasanti Jadva

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 8. Same-sex parent families

Anja McConnachie

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

Cambridge University Press. Chapters 2 and 7.


Lecture 9. Single-parent and stepfamilies

Dr Sophie Zadeh

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**


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**Lecture 11. Motherhood and the Media.**

**Dr Sophie Zadeh**

This lecture will focus on the media and 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 use and mothers’ experiences on the one hand, and media representations and mothers’ experiences on the other. 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**

What is the relationship between the media and motherhood?
Reading


**Texts good for theory**


Lecture 12: 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 estrangement between parents and their adult children?

Reading


Doyle M, O’Dywer C, Timonen V. “How can you just cut off a whole side of the family and say move on?” The reshaping of paternal grandparent-grandchild


Lecture 13. 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 new family forms 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 in new family forms.

Reading

scales, and clinical applications. Developmental Review. 34, 114-167. 
doi:10.1016/j.dr.2014.01.002

Brannen, J. (2005). Mixing methods: The entry of Qualitative and Quantitative 
approaches into the research process. International journal of Research Methodology. 
8, 173-184.

concerns of human research ethics committees. Journal of Empirical Research on 

Casey P, Jadva V, Blake L, Golombok, S. (2013). Families created by donor insemination: 

Sage Publications, Inc.


Press.

Greene, S (2005) Researching Children’s Experience: Methods and Approaches. London, 
SAGE Publications Ltd.

SAGE Publications, Inc,

Golombok et al. (2013) Children born though reproductive donation: a longitudinal 
study of psychological adjustment. Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 54, 653-
60.

adolescents and adults conceived by sperm donation: Comparisons by age of disclosure 


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: Families across Cultures**

**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. 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**

Discuss the strengths and limitations of Urie Bronfenbrenner’s Bioeological System’s Theory as a means to examine parenting practices and child development across cultures. How effective is it compared to other cross-cultural developmental theories?

**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


