**HDFS470: FAMILIES AND CHILDREN AT RISK**

**Department of Human Development and Family Sciences**

**Fall 2018**

Professor: Rob Palkovitz, Ph.D. Teaching Assistant: Nadisha Downs

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Study of social-emotional considerations of disabilities and risk factors upon development of children and families. Theory, research, and practices discussed with emphasis on family-professional collaboration, empowerment, family-focused practice, and cultural sensitivity.  
PREREQ:HDFS201 or HDFS220 or HDFS221 or PSYC325.

This course provides participants with background and basic skills to assist vulnerable families and their young children. Particular emphasis is placed on understanding diverse families and developing culturally sensitive partnerships with parents. The course emphasizes the professional development of participants for addressing the needs of families and children at risk. The systemically interacting role of cultural, family, individual, community and circumstantial characteristics are explored as they influence the developmental strengths and challenges faced by families and their children.

**Course Objectives:**

By the completion of this course, participants should be able to:

* Identify specific strategies that they can employ to facilitate family functioning and development, with a particular emphasis on identifying and nurturing individual and family strengths.
* Demonstrate basic ability to engage with families and individuals experiencing stressors across a variety of environments, including schools, social services, and community service settings.
* Articulate systemic factors related to family stressors, including mental and physical illness, substance abuse, violence, food insecurity, and residential uncertainty.
* Demonstrate an initial understanding and appreciation of the lives of families and children who experience socio-economic challenges, and the often related issues of discrimination, marginalization, oppression and social justice.
* Show basic abilities in assessing family and individual needs and facilitate the development of a service network to assist in meeting those needs.
* Understand the basic ethical and legal issues in working with families and children.
* Demonstrate basic skills in working with diverse parents and children who may share both similar and different values and life aspirations than you have, and/or who make different life choices than you anticipate making in your life.
* Have basic skills necessary to work within a variety of individual, familial, cultural, socio-economic, and institutional contexts.

**Required Readings: (TEXTBOOKS)**

Hanson, M.J, & Lynch, E.W. (2013). Understanding families: Supportive approaches to diversity, disability and risk, 2nd edition. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing.

Edin, K. & Nelson, T.J. (2013). Doing the best I can: Fatherhood in the inner city. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Articles/readings/web resources to be assigned over the course of the semester.

**Course Requirements:**

**2 Midterm Exams**: Exam 1 covers course content and approaches and exam 2 focuses on application of class constructs to case studies. (100 points each) Midterm 1 10/18 Midterm 2 11/15

**New Directions Early Head Start Field Experience Paper**: Class participants will shadow one home visit as a part of the field experience for this course. The supporting paper for this assignment will include two components- 1) preparation and reflection on the home visit (prior to going) and 2) reflective analysis of the experience of attending the home visit. (100 points)

Due Date 11-15-18, 4:45 pm, submitted inline on Canvas.

**Family Transitions paper**: each class participant will identify a potential family transition issue for families and have the topic approved by the instructor. Each participant will select two peer-reviewed professional journal articles on one transition topic, provide an executive summary of each article, and provide an analytic synthesis and application of the articles in a brief paper. (100 points) Due Date 10-11-18, 4:45 pm, submitted inline on Canvas.

**Doing the Best I can Analysis Paper**: class participants are required to read the book and to apply central course constructs to analyze and frame personal reflections to frame responses and reactions to the book. (100 points). Due Date 10-25-18, 4:45 pm, submitted inline on Canvas.

**Group Presentation**: groups of 3-4 participants will select a current issue or policy that represents a potential risk to families and their children (e.g., immigration policies, unemployment, health care policies, etc.). All topics and groups must be approved by the instructor. In the presentation, participants will describe the issue/policy and elaborate potential impacts on families from a risk and resilience perspective. (100 points) Presentations are 11/29 and 12/6

**Grading:**

Each point earned in the course counts equally in the calculation of the final course grade (i.e., three points on an exam are the same value as three points on a paper or other assignment). The grading scale is applied uniformly to all students. I understand that grades are important to you and that you expend considerable effort to achieve good grades. Grades are not awarded for effort, however. ***Grades are earned based on total course points received, and are non-negotiable.***

You can track your course standing using the following scale, throughout the semester as grade cut-offs are available.

**Course Grading Scale:**

600 points are possible in the course.

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| Grade | Percentage |
| A | 92-100 |
| A- | 90-91 |
| B+ | 88-89 |
| B | 82-87 |
| B- | 80-81 |
| C+ | 78-79 |
| C | 72-77 |
| C- | 70-71 |
| D+ | 68-69 |
| D | 62-67 |
| D- | 60-61 |
| F | 59 AND BELOW |

**Course Policies:**

**NOTE:**

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|  | Students in any course with a field experience or observation in an educational setting (e.g., schools, community centers) must have a valid TB test on file at Student Health Services and a valid federal criminal background clearance with fingerprinting on file at the Office of Clinical Studies by the first day of the semester/term. See the web page at http://www.ocs.udel.edu for information on when and how to complete the TB test and secure the background clearance when registering for this course. |

1. Course attendance and participation – students are expected to attend all class meetings, and to constructively participate in (contribute to) in-class activities and read the book in its entirety. Much of the delivery of course constructs is achieved through SEMINAR-like interactive participation between all class participants, often entailing extended interactive discussions and sometimes entailing group work. It is expected that you read assignments prior to class so that class time is used to expand on the written material. If you do not attend, you will miss many important aspects of the course, and your contributions to discussions and in-class activities will be missed as well. There is a strong relationship between "showing up" and positive, personal development of professional skills. Much of the material covered in the readings provides details and examples of important constructs that cannot be covered in the class sessions due to limited time. The class sessions are designed as integrative enrichment sessions that build on background established in the readings. If you miss class, it is your responsiblity to get notes from a classmate and to review those notes. The instructor or the TA will not supply slides or notes from missed sessions. I am intentionally NOT using UDCapture this semester.
2. This is a professional development course. It is expected that you will utilize electronics in a professional manner. Silence all cell phones, and limit use of electronic devices to class-related activities (i.e., use of computers and note taking devices is fine, please don’t use them for social media, or surfing or use your phones for texting during class- you know you do it… *but you only think you can multi-task. Research states otherwise…), and limit in class conversations to whole-class or structured group discussions.* Once you come in to the classroom, please do not leave during class except for emergencies. Thanks. All of these policies are designed to reduce the distraction level in class.
3. Make-up Policy – make-up exams will be given for excused absences if students notify the instructor ***prior to*** the excused absence, or if notification is received by the instructor within a reasonable time of a legitimate emergency absence. There are no make-ups for unscheduled in class quizzes, even if you are “just late” to class or were “out” during the quiz.
4. Assignments are due on time on posted due dates. Plan accordingly and allow time to get the materials submitted and time stamped by the Canvas dropbox system prior to the deadline. Technological glitches often occur, but they are not legitimate excuses for late submission. Late assignments will be assessed with posted late penalties that accrue across time.
5. Honor Code – It is expected that all work for this course will be conducted in a manner consistent with the University’s policies on Academic Honesty. Any infractions will be dealt with according to the rules of the University. In completing written assignments, students should give written acknowledgement (citation) to intellectual contributions of others, including works cited in the body of the paper. If direct quotes are used, quotation marks and full citation is required. During exams, there is to be no talking, no looking at others’ exam papers, and all electronic devices are to be turned OFF (not just silenced).
6. Extra credit- there is NO extra credit for this course. All grades are calculated by summing points across all exams and other graded assignments or assessments, and the total score is compared to posted course grading .

**Proposed Course Schedule** (Subject to change with notice)

Graded components appear in RED on the course schedule

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| **Class**  **Session** | **Date** | **Topic** | **Readings/Assignments/Etc.** |
| **1** | 8-30-18 | Course Introduction and Overview:  What is Risk? What is Resilience?  Personal windows on risk and resilience  Variability in Resources/Opportunity Structures  Review of approaches, objectives, assignments and policies | - |
| **2** | 9-6-18 | NDEHS Contexts, philosophy and approaches  Guest Speaker: Heidi Beck, Director of NDEHS  Guest Panel: NDEHS Home Visitors | Review: Home Visitor’s Handbook for the Head-Start Home-Based Program  Review: NDEHS Parent Handbook |
| **3** | 9-13-18 | Family Diversity and Contemporary Contexts | CH1 Hanson & Lynch- Families in the 21st century  CH2 Hanson & Lynch- Cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity  CH1 & 2 *Doing the best I can* |
| **4** | 9-20-18 |  | Web resources: ECOMAPS 1 & 2  CH3 Hanson & Lynch- Families in Context: Conceptual Frameworks for Understsanding and Supporting Families  CH4 Hanson & Lynch Traditional and Evolving Family Roles |
| **5** | 9-27-18 | Understanding Risk and Strengths in Contexts | Hanson & Lynch pp. 61-68  Farrall & Arney, F. (2010). Harnessing “resilience” when working with children and families. In F. Arney & D. Scott (Eds.), Working with Vulnerable Families: A partnership approach. (pp. 49-64) New York: Cambridge University Press.  Web Resource: Search Institute  Masten, A.S. (2009). Ordinary Magic: Lessons from research on resilience in human development. Canadian Education Association, 49, 29-32.  CHS 3&4 *Doing the best I can* |
| **6** | 10-4-18 | Family Partnerships and Relationship Centered Practices with Families | Hanson & Lynch- 103-105. CH 9, Creating Family-Professional Alliances  Eshner, G.L. & Clark, D.A. (2011). A framework for best practices. In Relationship-Centered Practices in Early Childhood (pp. 3-14). Baltimore: Paul H. Brooks Publishing Company.  CHS 5&6 *Doing the best I can* |
| **7** | 10-11-18 | Translating Empowerment to Practice  Family Transitions Paper Due | CH 10, 11 & 11A, Hanson & Lynch  Communicating and Collaborating with Families, Strategies for Supporting Families  CHS 7&8 *Doing the best I can* |
| **8** | 10-18-18 | Midterm Exam 1 | General Contexts and Approaches to Families and Children at Risk |
| **9** | 10-25-18 | Poverty & Homelessness | CH 6, Hanson & Lynch, Families Living in Poverty  Web Resource: National Center on Poverty: 10 important questions about childhood poverty and family economic hardship |
| **10** | 11-1-18 | Violence  Doing the Best I Can Analysis Paper Due | CH 7, Hanson & Lynch Family Life at Risk: Pressure from Outside & Turmoil Within |
| **11** | 11-8-18 | Families and Disabilities | CH 5, Hanson & Lynch Families with Children with Disabilities  CH 8, Hanson & Lynch Infant /Family and Early Childhood Mental Health |
| **12** | 11-15-18 | NDEHS Case studies  Midterm Exam 2  NDEHS Field Experience Paper Due | Application of course constructs to case studies |
|  |  | THANKSGIVING BREAK |  |
| **13** | 11-29-18 | Student Presentations | Topical analyses of children and families at risk |
| **14** | 12-6-18 | Student Presentations | Topical analyses of children and families at risk |
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