



ST. JEROME'S UNIVERSITY

St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo
Department of Sexuality, Marriage, and Family Studies (SMF)
SMF 207: Parents, Children, and Family Relations
Mondays & Wednesdays, 11:30 a.m. to 12:50 p.m.
SJ2 Room 2002

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Angela Underhill
Office: SH2113
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. and by appointment
Email: aunderhi@uoguelph.ca

WELCOME AND COMMUNICATION

WELCOME TO SMF 207! I am delighted that you are taking this class. The best way to reach me this term is via email (see above). I will be holding office hours following every class and welcome anyone to stop by. Office hours are on a first come, first served basis. You are also welcome to email me to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet with me if you need more time and/or are unable to see me during office hours. I am generally only in Waterloo on class days; however, I am very happy to meet via Skype or by phone on alternate days.

I will respond to emails within 24 business hours, and at other times when I am able. If you haven't heard from me within 24 hours during the business week, please resend your email in case I didn't receive it. Always use your UWaterloo email address when reaching out.

Please contact me/come to see me if you are having medical/psychological concerns that are compromising your ability to complete the course successfully. Generally, informing me of these concerns earlier, rather than later in the course, allows for more options.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

We are all human, and we all need support sometimes. For your convenience, please refer to the list below for a list of mental health services.

On Campus

- Counseling Services: counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca / 519-888-4567 x32655.
- MATES: peer support program offered by Federation of Students (FEDS) and Counseling Services.
- Health Services Emergency service: across the creek from the Student Life Centre and across the street from St. Jerome's University.

Off campus, 24/7

- Good2Talk: Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454.
- Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Extended Assessment Unit
Phone: 519-749-4300 x6880.
- Here 24/7: Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247.
- OK2BME: Support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning teens in Waterloo. Phone: 519-884-0000 x222.

Full details can be found online at the Faculty of ARTS website.

[Download UWaterloo and regional mental health resources \(PDF\).](#)

[Download the WatSafe app](#) to your phone to quickly access mental health support information.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines parent-child relationships from a broad interdisciplinary perspective. Topics may include parenting practices, voluntary childlessness, the transition to parenthood, parental separation, gay and lesbian parenting, and care of aging parents.
Prerequisite: SMF 101, or previous SMF 206.

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course provides an interdisciplinary perspective of parent, child and family relations over the lifespan, drawing on family studies, psychology, social psychology, and sociology. The course is comprised of lectures, class discussions (both large and small groups), and activities in order to 1) orient you to the language(s) of various historical, psychological, sociological, anthropological and cultural theories of parent and child relations and families, and 2) facilitate the critical thinking that is required for reading and critiquing research literature.

One of the cornerstones of this course is the opportunity to raise a Virtual Child from birth to age 18, allowing you to consider and apply your own parenting philosophies and relate your experiences and decisions of virtual parenting to the course readings and lecture materials. Participating in My Virtual Child (MVC) is designed to give you some insights into the extent of the challenges and choices that parents face. There is no expectation that people enrolled in this course must or will become parents, but rather that we all develop compassion, insights, and understanding for caregiving roles and the work they entail so we can apply this as citizens and as professionals that work with families and children.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course has been designed so that you will be able to:

- Summarize and understand theories of childrearing.
- Describe and analyze social, cultural and socio-economic influences on parents and children and the impact on childrearing and development across the life span.
- Describe and analyze various family formations and their strengths and challenges.
- Apply critical thinking and self-reflective skills (written and oral) to the analysis of parenting theory and practice.

- Engage in raising a Virtual Child from birth to 18 years to learn about the impact of parenting practices and other socio-economic factors on child development and socialization.
- Articulate the bidirectional process of the parent-child relationship.
- Continue to develop academic writing skills by 1) effectively utilizing academic sources in your Virtual Child assignments as part of your analysis, and 2) demonstrating high APA compliance when referencing.

REQUIRED TEXTS [AND OTHER REQUIRED/SUGGESTED RESOURCES]

- **TEXTBOOK:** Bigner, J.J. & Gerhardt, C. (2019). Parent-Child Relations: An Introduction to Parenting. New York: Pearson. (Available through the bookstore in both hard copy and EBook)
- ****MY VIRTUAL CHILD (NO Textbook):** Also available through the Bookstore Website (ISBN 9780205690336): Cost of the Access code ONLY (no textbook) is \$40
 - Hardcopy of textbook and My Virtual Child Access Code are bundled together for a total cost \$123.20 (see UWaterloo Bookstore)
 - E-text and My Virtual Child Access code can be purchased for a total cost of \$70.93
- ****In lieu of completing the Virtual Child (see below), students may choose the NO COST option of 3 papers**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

Assessments	Date of Evaluation	Weight
Mid-term (in class)	Feb. 12 th in class	25%
Final Exam	(TBA during exam period)	30%
Participation (in class)	Ongoing: self-reflection and log due Apr. 1 by 11:59 p.m. in Dropbox	10%
My Virtual Child Simulation (MVC)	3 Assignments	35%
MVC#1 (Infancy, Toddler, Preschooler)	Sunday, Feb. 9 th by 11:59 p.m. in Dropbox	(10%)
MVC#2 (Middle Childhood)	Sunday, Mar. 1 st by 11:59 p.m. in Dropbox	(10%)
MVC#3 (Adolescence)	Sunday, Mar. 22 nd by 11:59 p.m. in Dropbox	(15%)
OR No Cost Alternative to MVC	See below for details Deadline to inform instructor: Jan. 15	(35%)
		100%

TESTS (25% midterm; 30% final exam)

Understanding of all course readings, materials, lectures, films, activities, discussions, etc., will be evaluated. The final will cover all material following the midterm. The midterm will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions, with some choice regarding which short answer questions (i.e., students will not need to complete all of the short answer questions). The final exam will be multiple choice questions only, and there will be 5 optional questions (i.e., students can pick and choose which 5 they will not answer). This has been discussed and agreed upon in class.

Tests will only be rescheduled under very limited conditions; it is your responsibility to read and abide by the following:

1. You must notify me PRIOR to the test if you are unable to write at the scheduled time due to medical or religious circumstances (or at minimum on the day of the test). Students who fail to do so will receive a grade of zero on the test.
2. You must provide appropriate documentation (see UW Policy Regarding Illness and Missed Tests* - a UW VIF form must be submitted) in order for me to consider rescheduling a test. See <https://uwaterloo.ca/health-services/student-medical-clinic/services/verification-illness>
3. Rescheduling is at the discretion of the course instructor. Verification of Illness Form (VIF) dates will weigh heavily in this decision (i.e., make-up test would be within one week after your VIF has expired).

PARTICIPATION (10%)

You are expected to actively participate in the course; this includes group discussions and class activities. Active participation facilitates your own learning, and supports and augments the learning of your fellow peers.

The idea of speaking in front of a group, even a group of one's own peers, may induce some anxiety among students; however, various forms or degrees of public speaking are essential, and often required, in several aspects of life (e.g., the workplace). It is my hope that we may facilitate a supportive, respectful classroom environment wherein you may feel increased comfort to take risks around contributing your thoughts, ideas, and wonderings to the small and large group discussions.

In the spirit of sensitivity to diverse learning needs and comforts, a variety of activities and ways to participate are worked into this course. **The instructor will assign a participation grade based upon her observations, her review of class activities (some of which will be submitted), and the student's self-reflection and participation log.** Class attendance will not be evaluated directly; simply showing up (or not) does not demonstrate active participation. Similarly, completing the assigned readings does not demonstrate participation; this is a minimal requirement of the course.

See the participation assignment in LEARN for more information.

MY VIRTUAL CHILD (MVC) ASSIGNMENTS (35%; GRADE BREAKDOWN IN ABOVE TABLE)

The complete details and questions for these assignments are contained in a separate document and posted on LEARN.

There will be THREE assignments related to the online simulation MVC and the material in the text, readings and lectures that we will be covering. I have aimed to time these assignments so that we can cover the material in a timely fashion and leave you sufficient time to complete the assignments. Raising your virtual child and being able to integrate your course learning as part of your analysis is a critical aspect to successful completion of this course. You demonstrate this integration through appropriate use of citations (APA).

All assignments are to be submitted on the noted due date by 11:59 p.m. in Dropbox.

NO COST OPTION TO MY VIRTUAL CHILD: THREE RESEARCH PAPERS

In accordance with [UW Guidelines Pertaining to Learning Resources and Field Trips](#) students are NOT required to make any purchase for a course where the item is over \$50 or worth more than 20% of the student's grade. Although the MVC assignments have received approval from the SJU Acting Dean, these assignments exceed the 20% threshold and therefore students have the option of completing alternative assignments that do NOT involve any cost.

First, please approach me privately if the cost of MVC is prohibitive – there may be some ways I can help. One option we can explore is whether some students can work together as “parents” to share the cost of the program. Write-ups for the assignments would be done individually, but the parenting can be shared. This has been done very successfully in the past.

For those students who wish a NO COST option you may choose to complete THREE (3) written research papers that will carry the same percentage weight and due dates as the MVC assignments (your topic will be discussed with the professor). You will write three research papers on each of the age groupings profiling: infancy, toddler & preschool (Birth – 5 years), school age (6-11), and adolescence (12-18). Each paper is expected to provide an accurate and illustrative understanding of parenting at each of these stages. Each paper must be 4-5 pages, double-spaced, 12 pt Times New Roman font, and include 3 academic references (one of which is the course textbook, and two of which are journal articles, academic book chapters, or other assigned readings). Each paper must conform to APA citation and referencing.

YOU MUST notify me by email by January 15th of your decision to elect the research paper option. We will then arrange to meet and discuss the alternate assignment details.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Readings are primarily from the Bigner & Gerhardt text and additional readings may be made available through LEARN/Course Reserves via LEARN (found under the heading “Library Resources”). The outline below is a preliminary list of the readings. I will continue to add readings as we progress through the course and want to explore new themes and territory. You are responsible for all material that is assigned in this course. I will post an item in the

Announcements section of LEARN to alert students about updates. I suggest that everyone subscribe to the Announcements to receive these updates directly to their email.

This syllabus may be subject to change at the discretion of the instructor (e.g., some topics may roll into a future class to ensure adequate coverage; guest speakers may join us and will take precedence in the scheduling).



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Week	Date(s)	Topics	Readings/Action Items
1	Jan. 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome!• Introduction to the course	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Review the syllabus and MVC assignments carefully before next class to help you orient your note taking and reading.2. Complete Intro survey by midnight Jan. 93. Purchase MVC code (online via UW bookstore), sign in and complete preliminaries – welcome to virtual parenthood!
1	Jan. 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Evolving Context of Parenting	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Bigner & Gerhardt: Ch. 1
2	Jan. 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Family Formation and Parenting in LGBT Contexts	<ol style="list-style-type: none">2. Bigner & Gerhad: Ch. 143. DEADLINE: If you are opting for the no cost assignments in lieu of MVC, please email Angela Underhill by January 15 to notify her of your intention.
2	Jan. 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parenting Approaches	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Bigner & Gerhardt: Ch. 22. Read Pediatric Statement (click here)
3	Jan. 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parenting Approaches Cont'd	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Same as Jan. 15
3	Jan. 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Historical & Cultural Approaches;• Theoretical Perspectives on Parent-Child Relations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Bigner & Gerhardt: Ch. 3 & 4
4	Jan. 27	GUEST LECTURE	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Bigner & Gerhardt: Ch. 5
4	Jan. 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parenting: Rights and Responsibilities Cont'd• Transition to Parenthood	<ol style="list-style-type: none">2. Bigner & Gerhardt: Ch. 53. Bigner & Gerhardt: Ch. 6

Week	Date(s)	Topics	Readings/Action Items
5	Feb. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parenting Infants and Toddlers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Bigner & Gerhardt: Ch. 7 RECOMMENDED DEADLINE: upon completing the readings up until this point (ch. 1-7, ch. 14.), raise your virtual baby to 3 years
5	Feb. 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parenting Preschoolers (3-5 years) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Bigner & Gerhardt: Ch. 8 RECOMMENDED DEADLINE: upon reading ch. 8, raise your virtual toddler to a preschooler (ages 3-5 years) DEADLINE: Assignment #1: Infants, Toddlers & Preschoolers DUE Sunday, Feb. 9 by 11:59 p.m. in Dropbox
6	Feb. 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catch-up and/or Special Topic 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ch. 1-8, Ch. 14, plus additional readings and all lecture materials
6	Feb. 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Midterm 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Midterm in class
N/A	Feb. 17, 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> READING WEEK 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> ENJOY!
7	Feb. 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parenting in Middle Childhood 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Bigner & Gerhardt: Ch. 9 RECOMMENDED DEADLINE: upon reading Ch. 9, raise your virtual child to 11 years, 11 months DEADLINE: Assignment #2: Middle Childhood DUE Sunday, Mar. 1 by 11:59 p.m. in Dropbox
7	Feb. 26	GUEST LECTURE	
8	Mar. 2, 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parenting Adolescents and Teens as Parents 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Bigner & Gerhardt: Ch. 10 Available on LEARN: Winters, K.C., & Arria, A. (2011). Adolescent brain development and drugs. <i>Prev Res.</i>, 18(2), 21-24.
9	Mar. 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parenting: Family Composition and Dynamics <p>GUEST LECTURE</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Bigner & Gerhardt: Ch. 11

Week	Date(s)	Topics	Readings/Action Items
9	Mar. 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parenting Interrupted and Fragile Families 	1. Bigner & Gerhardt: Ch. 12
10	Mar. 16, 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blended and Intergenerational Family Systems 	1. Bigner & Gerhardt: Ch. 13 2. RECOMMENDED DEADLINE: raise your VC to 18 years 3. DEADLINE: Assignment #3: Adolescence DUE Sunday, Mar. 22 by 11:59 p.m. in Dropbox
11	Mar. 23	GUEST LECTURE	1. Catch up on readings
11	Mar. 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toward Better Outcomes 	1. Bigner & Gerhardt: Ch. 15
12	Mar. 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special Topic (or make-up for a guest lecture) 	1. Catch up on readings
12	Apr. 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virtual Child Wrap-Up: Final parent meeting Course Debrief Exam Q&A 	
EXAM PERIOD	TBA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All class material, readings, lectures, etc. since midterm 	1. Study hard! 2. Reach out to instructor with questions/concerns before the exam

POLICY ON LATE WORK, MISSED ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments are due in Dropbox on the date and time noted in the syllabus. Any assignment submitted after the Dropbox due date/time will be subject to a 5% penalty per day (including weekends) EXCEPT under documented grounds for compassionate consideration. Time starts to run as soon as the paper misses the date AND time. Assignments submitted 14 days late or more without documented grounds will receive a grade of zero.

RECEIPT OF GRADES

With the exception of the final exam, all grades will be posted within two weeks following an assignment deadline and/or submission (whichever is later). After you receive a grade on LEARN, please review your feedback. If you have questions or concerns, please wait 24 hours following the release of grades to contact the course instructor. Any inquiry or dispute over the grade must be made within two weeks from the date they are posted. If you fail to protest any grade during this time limit, changes to the grade will not be considered.

ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY

I understand that students may have obligations outside of class that require their attention at a moment's notice. I also understand that sometimes topics come up in class that students wish to look up immediately. And, of course, sometimes students need a break. To be respectful to everyone in the class, though, I expect students to keep their devices muted during class and to refrain from social media as much as possible. If at any point a student's electronic device becomes a distraction to those around them, the student will be given a warning; if it happens again, they will be expected to put the device away for the rest of class.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. [Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.]

Plagiarism is one form of academic misconduct. A student guilty of plagiarism, the use of another person's thoughts and writings as his or her own, may experience disciplinary action in the form of academic penalties.

In order to avoid plagiarism, a student must adhere to the following procedures:

1. Every statement of fact not generally known, and every opinion which is not arrived at independently, requires a reference to the literature being used.
2. All direct quotations (i.e., text taken directly from the source) must be in quotation marks, or if a certain length (e.g., 40 words or more) must be indented and single-spaced. Students should use direct quotations sparingly, as they do not adequately demonstrate understanding of the material.
3. Every quotation requires a reference, including page number.
4. In summarizing another person's words, a student would need to use different words and change the sentence structure of the original statements. Such paraphrases must also, of course, be referenced (but no page numbers).

PLEASE NOTE: Professors are required to report suspected cases of plagiarism to the appropriate Dean's office for investigation and, if guilty, an assessment of penalty. Proper APA referencing and appropriate use of quotation marks often goes a long way in avoiding plagiarism.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances, www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/upload_file/PLCY_AOM_Student-Petitions-and-Grievances_20151211-SJUSCapproved.pdf. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the St. Jerome's Advising Specialist, Student Affairs Office, who will provide further assistance.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for their actions. [Check

www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.] A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Discipline, www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Discipline_20131122-SJUSCapproved.pdf. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to University of Waterloo Policy 71, Student Discipline, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm. For typical penalties, check the Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under the St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or the St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to the St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Appeals, www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Appeals_20131122-SJUSCapproved.pdf.

Note for students with disabilities: AccessAbility Services, located in Needles Hall (Room 1401) at the University of Waterloo, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term, www.uwaterloo.ca/accessability-services/.

Turnitin

Turnitin.com: Text matching software (Turnitin®) may be used to screen assignments in this course. Turnitin® is used to verify that all materials and sources in assignments are documented. Students’ submissions are stored on a U.S. server, therefore students must be given an alternative (e.g., scaffolded assignment or annotated bibliography), if they are concerned about their privacy and/or security. Students will be given due notice, in the first week of the term and/or at the time assignment details are provided, about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin® in this course. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor if they, in the first week of term or at the time assignment details are provided, wish to submit the alternate assignment.