Instructor: Kristy Burkholder, PhD  
Office: 4117 Nancy Nicholas Hall  
Office hours: Monday - Thursday (please email me for an appointment)  
Email: kburkholder@wisc.edu  
Mailbox: HDFS Departmental Office, 4th Floor, Nancy Nicholas Hall

Teaching Assistant: Qi Wei  
Office: 4186 Nancy Nicholas Hall  
Office hours: Thursdays, 2:30 – 4:00 PM and by appointment  
Email: qwei4@wisc.edu  
Class Meetings: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00 – 12:15 PM, Room 351 Moore Hall

Course Description: This course will examine family stress and coping across the life cycle. The first part of the course is devoted to the study of psychological, sociological, and biosocial theories and perspectives related to stress and coping in families. The remainder of the course is devoted to an in-depth exploration of research relating to normative and non-normative family stress and strains. Topics include parenting, poverty, work and family, violence, disability, health and wellness, caregiving, aging, and bereavement. Risk factors that threaten family functioning as well as protective and resiliency factors that facilitate recovery from hardship and adversity will be examined.

Course Prerequisites: In order to register for this course, students must have completed two courses from any of the following disciplines: sociology, psychology, and/or women’s health.

Course Credits: 3 credits

Course Format: A combination of lecture material, class discussion, case studies, group activities, and videotaped exemplars of stress and coping will constitute our class time.

Learn@UW: Learn@UW will be used to post announcements, reminders, course readings, and to keep track of students’ grades and progress in the course. Assignments can be submitted to the appropriate dropbox.

Course Purpose and Learning Outcomes

The content of this course will help students achieve the following learning outcomes for the Human Development and Family Studies major:
‘Knowledge’ Learning Outcomes
Upon completion of the course, students will demonstrate knowledge of:

- Internal family processes, including parenting and parent-child relations, couples and family relationships across generations and family health and well-being (e.g., mental health, substance abuse, wellness, child maltreatment) [Learning Outcome #3 for the HDFS major].
- Various theories, models, and perspectives on family stress and coping across the lifespan.
- Research and application of these models to specific contemporary topics relevant to individual and family functioning, including risk and resiliency processes.
- Current issues and areas of investigation in the field of family stress and coping and their application to ‘real world’ challenges.

‘Professional Skills’ Learning Outcomes
In order to complete the course requirements, students will participate in the following professional and career-related skills:

- Engage in critical reasoning and evaluation of research articles about stress, coping, emotion and the variety of experiences contextualized by race/ethnicity, class, and gender
- Examine a contemporary component of family stress and coping, and to communicate those findings clearly and concisely by writing a paper based on 5-10 research-based journal articles
- Use professional speaking skills to implement an instructional activity or presentation
- Collaborate effectively with others on a group activity
- Use relevant technology to enhance an oral presentation

Course Format and Etiquette

Class meetings will be very interactive. Students are expected to come to class prepared and to be actively involved in class discussions and activities. Class meetings will consist of discussions of assigned readings and exercises, guest speakers, and student-led activities.

Student presenters and guest speakers will be sharing helpful and carefully prepared information with us. It is fair and courteous for them to have our undivided attention. Therefore, the use of laptops and other electronic devices is permitted only for recording class notes.
In order to learn, we must be open to the views of people different than ourselves. Each and every voice in the classroom is important and brings with it a wealth of experiences, values and beliefs. Please honor the uniqueness of your fellow classmates, and appreciate the opportunity we have to learn from each other. Please respect your fellow students’ opinions and keep confidential all issues of a personal or professional nature that are discussed in class.

**Disability Act Statement**
Your success in this class is important. I wish to fully include all students in this course. Please inform me if you need special accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or evaluation procedures in order for you to participate fully. If there are circumstances that may affect your performance in this class, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can work together to develop strategies for adapting assignments to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course.

The McBurney Center ([www.mcburney.wisc.edu](http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu), 608-263-2741, 702 W. Johnson) provides assistance and documentation regarding physical, learning, sensory, or psychological disabilities. If you have a “visa” from the McBurney Center for special accommodations, please provide me with a copy within the first two weeks of the semester.

**Academic Integrity**
Academic integrity is an expectation in all classes. Academic integrity requires that the work a student presents to an instructor honestly and accurately indicates the student’s own academic efforts. Students in this class have the right to expect that their fellow students and instructors are upholding the academic integrity of this University. Students should become familiar with the University’s policies regarding academic integrity and the Writing Center’s guidelines for citing sources ([www.wisc.edu/students/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html](http://www.wisc.edu/students/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html) and [www.writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/AcknowledgingSources](http://www.writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/AcknowledgingSources)).

**Campus Resources**

**The Writing Center.** The Writing Center offers free classes in writing essay exams and individual help is offered to assist students with written assignments. For information or a listing of services please contact the Writing Center ([www.writing.wisc.edu](http://www.writing.wisc.edu); 263-1992, 6171 Helen C. White Hall). Their website offers detailed information about the Writing Center, descriptions and schedules of classes, handouts on writing, and instruction via email.

**Mogridge Center for Public Service.** One way to learn more about family stress and coping is to become a volunteer in a program that serves children, adults, and/or families. Although no course credit is given, direct experience with children, adults, and/or families will enhance your learning and may help you find a job after you graduate. If you are interested, information is
available at the Volunteer Services Office – Morgridge Center for Public Service (located in Room 154 of the Red Gym, 716 Langdon Street). Please call 263-2432 for more information.

DoIT (Division of Information Technology). Employers who hire HDFS undergrads value applicants who have strong skills in technology. The Division of Information Technology (DoIT) offers free training for technology skills such as database management, desktop publishing, graphics/animation, multimedia use, and web development. Training is also available for programs such as Access, Excel, Google Docs, Illustrator, InDesign, and Powerpoint. A complete listing of classes and training opportunities are available on the DoIT website (www.doit.wisc.edu/training/student/classlist).
Course Requirements

**Class attendance and citizenship.** Much of what you learn or fail to learn in this course is dependent on the nature of the classroom community we are able to construct collectively. Therefore, each student is a valued citizen of the course and is expected to attend each class, to have read the assigned readings, to have formulated one or two written questions, and to be ready to participate in class discussions. Good citizenship means acquiring knowledge and sharing knowledge with one another in a respectful and exploratory manner. A student's attendance and good citizenship (i.e., active listening and *informed*, respectful participation) will be considered in assigning a final grade.

**Distributed exam questions.** Over the course of the semester you will be given seven discussion questions that require you to reflect about and integrate information that we will be reading and discussing in class. Across the course, these questions can be conceived as a distributed exam that demonstrates your ability to think productively about the course material. The questions are "thought questions" and not simple fact-finding questions. They are designed to make you think creatively about the material covered in the course. In most instances, these questions will ask you to apply course concepts and material to some practical situations involving families. You are responsible for responding to 5 of the 7 questions. Responses should not exceed four typewritten, double-spaced pages. **Your response to an exam questions is due one week after it is assigned.**

**Assessment quiz.** Your knowledge of key terms and concepts covered in the course will be assessed approximately one-third of the way into the course. More information about this quiz will be provided during class.

**Instructional group activity.** Working cooperatively with others to create interesting instructional activities is a useful skill in most professions. Each group of students will create and implement a 25-30 minute activity that explores a day's topic and/or readings. This activity is not meant to be a summary of the topic and/or readings; rather, students will brainstorm ideas, questions, and/or exercises that focus on one or more aspects of the day's topic. Each group member will come to the group's first brainstorming meeting with at least two ideas or questions. The group will then use these ideas for designing an instructional activity for the rest of the class. These activities will be scheduled throughout the semester. **Students sign up for group activity topics during class on Tuesday, February 3.**

**Research paper or project.** Because expressing one's knowledge in written form is crucial to success in nearly all professions, students will complete a paper on a contemporary, family-focused topic that uses and/or challenges the perspectives or models discussed in class. This 8 – 10 page exploratory paper (not including references) must include a relevant background literature review as a foundation; from there the exploration may take a variety of forms, from library research paper to community investigation, ethnographic interview, media critique, etc. The goal of this assignment is an engaged investigation of a family stress and coping issue which is grounded in course material and independent research and then expanded into new ideas, application, and/or exploration. **A 1 – 2 page description of your proposed research paper or**
project (including 5 – 10 references) is due no later than Tuesday, March 24. The final paper or project is due no later than 5:00 PM on Monday, May 11, to the course dropbox on Learn@UW.

**Evaluation Method and Grading Scale**

Grades are based on the number of points earned. Points will be distributed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and citizenship</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributed exam questions (5 @ 10 points each)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class Assessment ‘Quiz’</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional group activity</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research paper/project</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total points</strong></td>
<td><strong>125</strong></td>
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Final grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100 %</td>
<td>117 - 125 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>90-93 %</td>
<td>112 - 116 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-89 %</td>
<td>104 - 111 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>79-82 %</td>
<td>99 – 103 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-78 %</td>
<td>87 – 98 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69 %</td>
<td>86 – 75 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0 - 59 %</td>
<td>0 – 74 Points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Guidelines for written work (i.e., exam questions, research paper or project):**

Students’ written and presented work will be evaluated based on:

- understanding of course material and concepts
- critical thinking skills
- completeness
- ability to integrate and apply course material

Written work is due on the designated dates. Extensions may be negotiated, but not guaranteed, if you contact me at least 24 hours in advance. No credit will be given if work is received late without this notice.

**Guidelines for class attendance:**

Please contact me by email if you will be missing class. Students who miss more than 6 class meetings are not eligible to receive higher than a ‘C’ for the course.
Course Schedule, Assigned Readings and Due Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>January 20 &amp; 22</th>
<th>Course Introduction</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is a family? What is stress? What causes stress today?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Welcome to the course! We will discuss learning outcomes, course syllabus, course content, and expectations for participation during our first class meeting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>January 27 &amp; 29</th>
<th>Stress, Coping and Diversity of Experience</th>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>February 3 &amp; 5</th>
<th>Social Support and Its Relationship to Stress and Coping</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Students sign-up for instructional group activity topics on Tuesday, February 3.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
February 10 & 12  
Resiliency and Positive Psychology

Distributed Exam Question 1 due on Thursday, February 12


February 17 & 19  
Parenting and Human Development

Distributed Exam Question 2 due on Thursday, February 19


February 24 & 26  Economic and Financial Stress

**Distributed Exam Question 3 due on Thursday, February 26**


March 3 & 5  Physical Health and Mental Wellness

**Distributed Exam Question 4 due on Thursday, March 5**


March 10 & 12  
Conflict and Violence


March 17 & 19  
Student Research Days (No Assigned Readings)

Students should use this time to work independently on their research papers or projects. If applicable, this is also a useful time to schedule interviews or site visits related to research papers or projects.

March 24 & 26  
Disabilities

A 1 – 2 page description of your proposed research paper/project (including 5 references) is due Tuesday, March 24.


**April 7 & 9**

Infertility & Pregnancy Outcomes: Adoption and Surrogacy

**Distributed Exam Question 5 due on Thursday, April 9**


**April 14 & 16**

Work and Family Issues: Managing Multiple Roles


### April 21 & 23  
**Aging, Social Support, and Caregiving**

**Distributed Exam Question 6 due on Thursday, April 23**


### April 28 & 30  
**End-of-life Issues and Bereavement**

**Distributed Exam Question 7 due on Thursday, April 30**


### May 5 & 7  
**TBD**

### May 11 (Monday)  
**Research papers or projects due by 5:00 PM**

Research papers or projects are due no later than 5:00 PM on Monday, May 11, to the course dropbox on Learn@UW. Thank you!