

Subject Details	Subject Title, code and credit hours	Family Psychology, PSYC304, 3 KU (6 AKTS)
	Department	Psychology
	Program (bachelor's and master's degree)	Master
	Associated Term	Spring 2026
	Instructor	Sevinj Maharramova
	E-mail:	sevinjmaharramova.telimchi@gmail.com
	Phone	-
	Lecture room/Schedule	Neftchilar campus
	Consultations	Make an appointment in a mail
Prerequisites	-	
Teaching language	English	
Subject type (mandatory/elective)	Mandatory	
Readings	Required Readings 1. Olson, D. H., & DeFrain, J. (2000). <i>Marriage and family: Diversity and strengths</i> (3rd ed.). 2. Farrington, K., & Chertok, E. (1993). <i>Social conflict theories of the family</i> (Chapter 15). Klagenfurt University. https://me.aau.at/~uisop/wordpress/wp-content/social-conflict-theories-of-family.pdf Recommended Readings 3. Becvar, D. S., & Becvar, R. J. (2018). <i>Family therapy: A systemic integration</i> (9th ed.). Pearson. 4. Bowen, M. (2019). <i>Family therapy in clinical practice</i>. Jason Aronson. 5. Carr, A. (2019). <i>Family therapy and systemic interventions for child-focused problems</i> (2nd ed.). Wiley-Blackwell. 6. Carter, B., & McGoldrick, M. (2019). <i>The expanded family life cycle: Individual, family, and social perspectives</i> (5th ed.). Pearson. 7. Goldenberg, H., Stanton, M., & Goldenberg, I. (2021). <i>Family therapy: An overview</i> (10th ed.). Cengage Learning. 8. McGoldrick, M., Giordano, J., & Garcia-Preto, N. (Eds.). (2016). <i>Ethnicity and family therapy</i> (3rd ed.). Guilford Press. 9. Minuchin, S. (2018). <i>Families and family therapy</i>. Harvard University Press. 10. Nichols, M. P., & Davis, S. D. (2020). <i>Family therapy: Concepts and methods</i> (12th ed.). Pearson. 11. Walsh, F. (2020). <i>Strengthening family resilience</i> (3rd ed.). Guilford Press. Note: Lecture slides are not shared with students; however, an expanded text-based version of each presentation is provided in PDF format.	
Course Description	This course provides an in-depth examination of the family as a psychological system and its role in individual development, mental health, and well-being. It explores major theories and models of family psychology, including systems theory, attachment theory, and developmental perspectives. Students will examine family structures, roles, communication patterns, and dynamics across the lifespan. The course addresses how cultural, social, and socioeconomic factors shape family functioning and relationships. Special attention is given to common family challenges such as conflict, divorce, parenting stress, trauma, and mental illness within the family context. Students will also be introduced to basic principles of family assessment and intervention. Ethical issues and professional responsibilities in working with families are discussed throughout	

	the course. By integrating theory, research, and applied perspectives, the course aims to develop students' analytical and critical thinking skills regarding family processes. This course is suitable for students interested in psychology, counseling, social work, and related helping professions.		
Course aims	• To introduce core theories and concepts in family psychology • To examine the family as a dynamic system influencing individual behavior and mental health • To understand family roles, communication patterns, and developmental stages • To explore the impact of cultural, social, and contextual factors on family functioning • To analyze common family-related challenges such as conflict, separation, parenting difficulties, and trauma • To develop skills in observing and assessing family dynamics • To introduce basic principles of family-focused interventions and support strategies • To promote ethical awareness and professional responsibility when working with families • To enhance critical thinking through the integration of theory, research, and applied examples • To prepare students for further study or professional work in psychology, counseling, and related fields		
Learning Outcomes	At the end of the course students will be able to acquire the following: • Define and explain the key concepts, principles, and major theoretical perspectives of family psychology; • Analyze the family as a dynamic psychological and social system and explain its influence on individual development and well-being; • Compare major theories of marriage and family dynamics, including family systems and social conflict perspectives; • Identify and analyze different family structures, roles, power patterns, and developmental stages across the family life cycle; • Explain the factors involved in mate selection and evaluate different perspectives on marriage and partner relationships; • Analyze communication patterns, intimacy, listening skills, and power dynamics within couple relationships; • Identify common sources of conflict in couples and apply evidence-based communication and conflict-resolution strategies to practical cases;		
Teaching methods	Lecture	+	
	Group discussions	+	
	Activities	+	
	Group ppt	+	
	Other		
Assessment and Grading	Components	Deadlines	Percentage (%)
	Midterm exam		30
	Verbal quizz	During semester	5 points
	Active participation in group discussions for each session	During semester	5
	Attendance	During semester	5
	II Group Assignments	17.12.2026	15

	(2 ppts + 1 essay-style written report)		
	Final exam	End of semester	40
	Total		100
Rules and policy	I. Activity - Demonstrate the ability to express a personal approach during question-and-answer sessions, which measures comprehension of the lesson in each discussion. II. Group Presentation / Group Discussion Guidelines - Effectively divide duties to achieve the group's common goal and fulfill individual responsibilities. - Apply active listening and empathy skills when disagreements arise during discussions. - Use positive communication methods to advance one's ideas during the discussion. - Adapt to team dynamics and contribute to achieving a successful outcome. - Avoid monotonous speech during the presentation. - Exhibit team spirit throughout the presentation. - Introducing an "energizer" to stimulate participants - Engage the audience using role-playing, practical demonstrations, equipment, video, and citation from international scientific studies. Group Assignment I — Communication and Conflict Resolution in Couples - 6 points Task: Develop a case illustrating a communication problem within a couple's relationship. Identify the causes of the problem and present a resolution plan based on effective communication methods. Presentation — 5 slides: - Topic and names of group members; - selected situation and main problem; - partners' communication styles and listening skills; - sources of conflict and their impact on the relationship; - practical conflict-resolution strategies. Practical component: Demonstrate the problem and its resolution through healthy communication in a 3–5-minute role-play or video Group Assignment II — Researching Premarital Programmes and Developing a Practical Model for Azerbaijan 8 points (5 points written report + 5 points ppt) Task: Research and compare at least two evidence-based premarital programmes implemented in different countries. Based on the findings, develop a practical programme adapted to the social and cultural characteristics of Azerbaijani families. ✓ Presentation — 5 slides: - Topic and names of group members; - objectives and scientific foundations of the selected programmes; - programme content, similarities, and differences; - needs and cultural characteristics of Azerbaijani families; - structure and implementation plan of the proposed programme for Azerbaijan. The programme must cover: - partners' expectations of marriage; - communication and conflict resolution;		

- gender roles and division of household responsibilities;
- financial matters;
- relationships with relatives and personal boundaries;
- anger styles;
- preparation for parenthood.

Note: The presentation must be based on at least two reliable academic sources, and active links to the sources must be provided.

✓ **Essay-Style Written Report (3–5 pages)**

Introduction

- Importance of premarital education
- Aim of the report
- 1. Review of Two Premarital Programmes
 - Programme names and countries
 - Main content and methods
 - Key scientific findings
- 2. Comparison
 - Similarities and differences
 - Strengths and limitations
- 3. Proposed Programme for Azerbaijan
 - Target group and objectives
 - Main topics
 - Suggested activities
- 4. Conclusion
 - Main findings and expected benefits
- 5. References
 - At least two reliable academic sources and active links

Attendance Policy and Criteria for Being Late for a Lesson:

- A student who arrives late to class will be permitted to enter the auditorium, but their tardiness will be noted. They are expected to sit quietly, listen to the lesson, and join in discussions without causing any disruption.
- It is important for students to attend all classes. If a student is unable to attend due to a valid reason (such as illness or family issues), they must report the matter to the faculty dean. Students who miss more than 25% of the total subject matter hours will not be allowed to take the exam.
- Attends every lesson; 1 point is deducted for every 2 lessons missed.

Criteria for Practical Work:

- Students must identify projects for individual presentation and present them to the group, focusing on innovation and topic-based research.
- Students will be actively involved in questionnaire and questioning methodologies to self-assess and gain insights into new teaching and learning skills for each subject.

Criteria for Assessing Activity:

- Disruptive behavior in the classroom, use of unethical language, inappropriate and unauthorized discussions, use of cell phones, hearing aids, radios, and engagement in activities unrelated to the course (such as reading, writing, taking pictures, etc.) are considered factors affecting activity.
- Active participation in discussions is required.

		AI Policy Students may use AI tools to support learning, brainstorming, research, and the preparation of assignments. However, AI-generated content must not be submitted as the student's own work. Students are responsible for verifying the accuracy of AI-generated information and citing reliable academic sources. AI tools must not be used during examinations unless explicitly permitted by the instructor. Students must also protect confidentiality and must not enter personal, identifying, or sensitive information about children, adolescents, families, or clinical cases into AI systems. Unauthorized or undisclosed use of AI that violates academic integrity rules may result in appropriate academic consequences.	
Week	Date/Day (tentative)	Topics	Textbook/Assignments
1.	17.09.20 26	Getting to know students, ice breaking and discussing the syllabus and rule of the course given. Introduction to family psychology: • Family Psychology and its aim. • Theories about family definitions • Multiple scientific approach to family by various field of sciences, such as sociology, archaeology, humanistic psychology, social psychology due to their investigation data due to their investigation data. • Religious Perspectives on Family Morality • Examining how various religious traditions define and approach moral issues related to family life. • Group work	S. Maharramova, Increased Awareness About "A Definition Of Family", 2nd Ispc «Scientific Goals And Purposes In Xxi Century» (January 19-20, 2022; Seattle, Usa). Psychology And Psychiatry, (p. 318-325)
2.	24.09.20 26	Understanding marriage and family dynamics • Fundamental Concepts of Marriage and Family Dynamics • Theories of Marriage and Family Dynamics • The family systems theory • Understanding the family as a complex system with interrelated parts where changes in one area affect the whole system.	D. H. Olson, J. Defrain. Marriage and the family diversity and strengths. Third edition. 2000. Chapter 4 (p. 80-92)
3.	01.10.20 26	Qualities of strong families • Commitment • Positive communication • Spiritual well-being	D. H. Olson, J. Defrain. Marriage and the family diversity and strengths.

		• Time together • Ability to cope with stress	Third edition. 2000. Chapter 4 (p. 92-96)
4.	08.10.20 26	Family development framework • Social Conflict Theory • Power and Inequality • Resource Distribution • Role of Social Class • Conflict and Change • Gender and Power	1.D. H. Olson, J. Defrain. Marriage and the family diversity and strengths. Third edition. 2000. Chapter 4 (p. 96-111) 2.K. Farrington and E. Chertok, Social conflict theories of the family, Klagenfurt University, Chapter 15, s. 357-377
5.	15.10.20 26	Theories of mate selection . • Criteria for choosing a mate • The Filter theory • The stimulus-value-role theory • Conflict and violence in dating	1.D. H. Olson, J. Defrain. Marriage and the family diversity and strengths. Third edition. 2000. Chapter 4 (p. 153-192)
6.	22.10.20 26	Couple strengths and issues in sexual relationships • Sex education program • Sex education and parents • Premarital sexual behaviour	1.D. H. Olson, J. Defrain. Marriage and the family diversity and strengths. Third edition. 2000. Chapter 7 (p. 211-230)
7.	29.10.20 26	Gender roles and power in the family • Couple strengths and issues in gender roles • Theories about gender role development • Types of power patterns • .Communication and power dynamics	1.D. H. Olson, J. Defrain. Marriage and the family diversity and strengths. Third edition. 2000. Chapter 8 (p. 235-265)
8.	05.11.20 26	Midterm Exam	
9.	12.11.20 26	Communication and intimacy • Perspectives on communication • Couple strengths and issues in communication • Perspectives on communication	1.D. H. Olson, J. Defrain. Marriage and the family diversity and strengths. Third edition. 2000. Chapter 9 (p. 267-282)
10.	19.11.20 26	Developing communication skills • Using communication to maintain intimacy • Listening skills • Styles of communication	1.D. H. Olson, J. Defrain. Marriage and the family diversity and strengths. Third edition. 2000. Chapter 9 (p. 282-294)
11.	26.11.20 26	Conflict resolution • Couple strengths and issues in conflict resolution • Sources of conflict in couples • Approaches to conflict resolution Group Assignment I	1.D. H. Olson, J. Defrain. Marriage and the family diversity and strengths. Third edition. 2000. Chapter 10 (p. 298-323)
12.	03.12.20 26	Marriage • Reasons for marrying • Premarital programs	1.D. H. Olson, J. Defrain. Marriage and the family diversity and strengths.

		Goals for the relationship Types of marriage	Third edition. 2000. Chapter 12 (p. 361-390)
13.	10.12.20 26	Parenthood - The challenge of parenthood - Styles of parenthood - Theoretical approaches to childbearing Group Assignment II	1.D. H. Olson, J. Defrain. Marriage and the family diversity and strengths. Third edition. 2000. Chapter 16 (p. 485-529)
14.	17.12.20 26	Divorce and family problems - Understanding divorce - Family problems and family systems theory - Children during and after divorce	1.D. H. Olson, J. Defrain. Marriage and the family diversity and strengths. Third edition. 2000. Chapter 16 (p. 394-425)
15.	24.12.20 26	Presentations	
16.		Final exam	