

ECYFS 250 Spring 2026

Course Description: Studies the dynamics of family relationships in various family structures. Discusses larger systems' impact on the family, the changing concept of family, family dynamics across the life cycle, issues specific to families, relationship skills, and characteristics of healthy families. Utilizes a functional and scientific approach to studying the family.

Course Objectives: As students of EYCF 250, you will:

1. identify content areas/topics/social influences that are relevant to the study and understanding of family life.
2. demonstrate an understanding of key concepts within these content areas.
3. gain appreciation of diverse family circumstances and strengths.
4. become more aware of your own as well as others' attitudes and values regarding family.
5. improve critical thinking skills around issues important to family life.

To gain the most from this course, students should:

- 1) read the assigned materials (critical for all course objectives),
- 2) review course materials more than once (especially before examinations),
- 3) take every assignment seriously and attempt to gain everything they can from them,
- 4) participate fully in written reactions designed to make course materials more meaningful and applicable to students' lives,
- 5) ask questions about course content,
- 6) bring up concerns they have about the class or assignment early enough for me to address them (don't just wait until course evaluations to make a statement), and
- 7) realize that every learning module can be a learning opportunity, especially when students try to apply course content to themselves and their circumstances. Learning can bring much joy and satisfaction regardless of the grades one receives, but it will most likely benefit grades as well. Enjoy!

Online Resources and Software: A BSU network account for email, Canvas, and Mediasite (for movie clips). Most assignments should be created using word processing software and saved in Microsoft Word (including rich text format-.rtf) or PDF formats. The genogram

diagram can be created using Microsoft Word or PowerPoint (and can be saved in those formats or a PDF or scanned .jpg if you create it by hand).

Become familiar with the class interface before the semester begins and seek help if necessary. BSU provides resources to help you. A lack of Canvas knowledge is not an acceptable excuse for late or incomplete work. If you have technical questions, you can contact Ball State's Help Desk. The helpdesk can be contacted at: 765-285-1517 or email at helpdesk@bsu.edu.

Course Schedule		
Week (Begin date)	Topics/Assignments	Readings
1 (1/5)	1. Making Family Choices in a Changing Society Response Paper	Ch. 1
2 (1/12)	2. Exploring Relationships and Families Response Paper	Ch. 2
3 (1/19)	3. Gender Identities and Families Discussion Board 1	Ch. 3
4 (1/26)	4. Our Sexual Selves Response Paper Family Rituals and Stories Project (Additional reading in Canvas)	Ch. 4
5 (2/2)	5. Love and Choosing a Life Partner Response Paper Test 1: Topics1-5	Ch. 5
6 (2/9)	6. Cohabitation and Marriage Discussion Board 2	Ch. 6 (pp. 147-158) & 7
7 (2/16)	7. Deciding about Parenthood Response Paper Genogram Part I	Ch. 8

8 (2/23)	8. Raising Children in a Diverse Society Response Paper	Ch. 9
3/1-3/8	Spring Break	
9 (3/9)	9. Work and Family Response Paper	Ch. 10
10 (3/16)	10. Communication in Relationships Discussion Board 3 Test 2: Topics 6-10	Ch. 11
11 (3/23)	11. Power and Violence in Families Response Paper	Ch. 12
12 (3/30)	12. Family Stress, Crisis, and Resilience Response Paper	Ch. 13
13 (4/6)	13. Divorce and Relationship Dissolution Response Paper Genogram Part II	Ch. 14
14 (4/13)	14. Remarriages and Stepfamilies Response Paper	Ch. 15
15 (4/20)	15. Aging and Multigenerational Families Response Paper Test 3: Topics 11-15	Ch. 16

Course Requirements and Grading Criteria

All full assignment descriptions and tests appear in the folder of the week in which they are due (see “Modules” on Canvas and the schedule at the end of this syllabus).

Family Genogram, Parts I and II (75 points; meets objectives 1, 3, 4, 5): Students will be asked to construct a family genogram and write a brief essay analyzing their genogram. The graphic portion of the genogram can be created on a computer (I suggest using Microsoft

Word or PowerPoint); otherwise it can be created by hand with ink and scanned and turned in through Canvas. Be sure to save a copy of your genogram. Parts I and II are due by 11:59 pm on the Saturdays in the weeks the assignments appears on the schedule.

Tests (120 points; meets objectives 1, 2, 3, 5): Three multiple-choice tests will be given during the term. These will assess objectively the degree to which students study and understand the content in the presentations and readings. You will be allowed to use your book and notes to help answer questions, **but you will only have 1 hour and 20 minutes to complete each test** (the test will automatically submit after 1 hour and 20 minutes) so you will still need to be prepared. You can take the tests during the given week they appear on the schedule, up until 11:59 pm of the Saturday in that week. Plan ahead for when you have other assignments due near the same time. **You can only take each test once.**

Family Rituals and Story Project (30 points; meets objectives 4, 5): You will evaluate your family's rituals and stories. The assignment is due by 11:59 pm on the Saturdays in the week it appears on the schedule. An additional reading for this assignment appears on Canvas (see "Modules").

Response Papers (65 points; meets objectives 1, 2, 4, 5): For most chapters you should type a response paper. A total of 13 response papers will be due by Saturday at 11:59 pm of the week in which you are assigned that chapter. Your response should contain at least 350 words and include:

- 1) A brief description of one or more ideas/concepts, research findings, or theories presented in the reading that you find interesting/meaningful/controversial in some way. **Use page or numbers (or section numbers/heading from the ebook) to identify where you found the concepts.**
- 2) Explanations of why you find these concepts interesting/meaningful/controversial and how they relate to you/your family personally (past, present, or future)—this should be the longest section.
- 3) At least one question you have about the concepts that demonstrates that you have critically evaluated the concepts and can think of aspects that may not have been discussed in relation to the concepts. Be sure that questions are not answered within the assigned reading!

Format: Be sure to **number each section of your response** (#1, #2, #3) so that I know to which section each statement belongs. I will be very picky about this! Please cut and paste your responses (or type directly) into the fields on Canvas.

Discussion Boards (15 points; meets objectives 2, 3, and 4):

Due Dates and Submitting Assignments: The schedule at the end of this syllabus includes due dates for all assignments. Assignments and tests are due any time that specific week, before the end of the day on Saturdays (11:59:59 pm)—you should thus time your assignments to fit with your own circumstances. A submission window for each assignment and each test will appear in the specific content folder **only** during the week they are due, and will disappear at the end of the week. Late assignments will be accepted for up to 70% credit (***contact me as soon as possible if an emergency arises or if you know ahead of time of an official school activity that prevents access to completing assignments on time***). Please submit Word or PDF files (or an image file for the first Genogram assignment is also fine). Grades will be posted on Canvas.

Course Policies

Attendance – Attendance in Ball State University online classes is measured by your active participation in course activities at least once each week. Be sure to complete your course work as assigned to ensure you are recorded as attending the course.

Students with Disabilities – If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact me as soon as possible. Ball State’s Disability Services office coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or dsd@bsu.edu.

Academic Honesty - Honesty, trust, and personal responsibility are fundamental attributes of the university community. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated, as it threatens the foundation of an institution dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge. To maintain its credibility and reputation, and to equitably assign evaluations of scholastic and creative performance, Ball State University is committed to maintaining a climate that upholds and values the highest standards of academic integrity. Acts of dishonesty include:

- plagiarism (copying the work of others, claiming them as your own)
- facilitation (helping others cheat)
- allowing your own work to be submitted by another student

Students **may not** reproduce, distribute, or publicly post any course materials without my permission. Violations will be referred to the Director of Student Rights and Community Standards.

Writing - It is expected that college graduates will write with proper organization, grammar and spelling. Please be careful not to plagiarize (give proper credit to sources you cite), and rely more on paraphrasing instead of simply quoting sources.

Communication with Professor – Please feel free to email me questions about course content and procedures (please check your syllabus and Canvas first on procedural issues). I intend to respond to student emails within 48 hours, so please do not expect immediate responses according to your schedule. Plan ahead so there is time for communication to take place. I invite you to introduce yourself in an email when you begin the course.

BSU Diversity Statement – Ball State University aspires to be a university that attracts and retains a diverse faculty, staff, and student body. We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse as expressed in our [Beneficence Pledge Links to an external site.](#) and through university resources found at [this link Links to an external site.](#)