

University of Waterloo
Department of Psychology
PSYCH 337
Families, Trauma & Resilience (Online)

Instructor Information

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| Dillon Browne | Email: | dillon.browne@uwaterloo.ca |
| | Office Hours: | Thurs 10:00 – 11:30 pm |
| | Phone: | 519-888-4567 x31555 |

T.A. Information

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| Jasmine Zhang | Email: | jasmine.zhang@uwaterloo.ca |
| | Office Hours: | Monday 1:30-3:00pm |
| Laura Colucci | Email: | lcolucci@uwaterloo.ca |
| | Office Hours: | Tuesday 11:30-1:00pm |
| Rebecca Trossman | Email: | rctrossman@uwaterloo.ca |
| | Office Hours: | Wednesday 1:00-2:30pm |

Synchronous Component

There will be a synchronous component of this class **Tuesday 10:00am-11:20am**. Keeping with University of Waterloo policy, all weekly synchronous content will be recorded and made available by the following day at midnight (on LEARN). To facilitate engagement, students are encouraged to attend the synchronous component if they are able. However, if students cannot attend, this will in no way compromise their capacity to do well in this course.

Course Description

Family Systems Theory posits that the family is an emergent and dynamic entity, comprised of multiple interacting individuals and subsystems, that is ultimately greater than the sum of its parts. In settings of trauma, stress and adversity, the family responds in unique ways to maintain equilibrium (i.e., families, like individuals, show “resilience”). However, this often comes at a cost to relationships and individual functioning. When considering the family as a fundamental unit of analysis that is intricately tied to the broader social context, a model of helping emerges that seeks to create change in the structural and functional elements of family life, while combatting the tendency to make purely intrapsychic or medical attributions for individual and family struggles. This model of intervention is known as Family Therapy. The purpose of this course is to provide an overview of Family Systems Theory and Family Therapy from Trauma-Informed & Resilience frameworks, while embedding conversations in contemporary family psychology and developmental science. Students will get exposure to theoretical and applied content in family psychology and family therapy practice, while becoming increasingly versed in understanding how environmental stress impacts the relationships of families from diverse backgrounds. Moreover, the processes through which many families thrive in the face of adversity (are “resilient”) will be highlighted. Given the pandemic context, recent updates in family science and practice will be emphasized, as students learn how families have been coping during the pandemic from a scientific and clinical standpoint.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- A. Develop familiarity with 4 key models: Family Systems Theory, Family Therapy, Trauma-Informed Practice, & Resilience;
- B. Conceptualize the developmental and family ecosystem and understand various “systems” in psychological life;
- C. Begin to formulate traumatic stress from a systemic perspective that acknowledges multiple levels of analysis;
- D. Develop introductory skills in effective communication and counselling in settings of trauma and stress.

Required Learning Materials

1. Walsh, F. (2016). *Strengthening Family Resilience* (Third Edition). Guilford. (UW Library)
2. Chapters & journal articles available online through Learn.
3. Lecture Content (Recorded + Collaborative Note Taking)
4. Family Therapy Sessions (Recorded)

Note: Readings will not be sufficient to do well in this course!!! Critical content (both theoretical and applied) will be delivered during in video content that students will be responsible for. These recordings will be made available throughout the duration of the course.

Course Requirements and Assessments

Your final grade is based on weekly discussion posts, two tests, a midterm assignment and final assignment. A large amount of information is presented in this course, which places heavy demands on higher-level critical thinking. As such, course content will be divided into two, noncumulative midterm tests to encourage students to stay on top of material and to reduce the amount of material covered on any one test. The break-down of grades is as follows:

| Assessment | Date of Evaluation | Weighting |
|--------------------------------|--|-----------|
| Weekly Discussion | Weekly (Due Monday by 11:59pm, Learn) | 20% |
| Test # 1 | October 19 th (Open all week) | 20% |
| Midterm (Listening Assignment) | November 9 th (Due by 11:59pm, Learn) | 20% |
| Test # 2 | November 30 th (Open all week) | 20% |
| Final Assignment (Case Study) | December 7 th (Due by 11:59pm, Learn) | 20% |
| Total | | 100% |

Family Therapy Workshops

A very exciting component of this course includes weekly observations of family therapy sessions, facilitated by Dr. Browne (therapist) and student actors (from Communication Arts, UW). Course students will get an up-close and personal depiction of the therapeutic process and will link these observations with readings and lecture material. Opportunity for analysis and formulation will occur in class, to be carried over into discussion forums every week. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic (and reflecting how therapy has been delivered over the past 18 months), therapy sessions will be recorded online and made available to students for viewing.

Weekly Discussions

Students are required to participate in an online discussion of the material covered in class this week (both lecture and therapy workshops). A minimum of two posts per week is required (e.g., one personal insight, and one response to another student's comments). The weekly discussion will be graded in two sections: Weeks 1-6 and Weeks 7-13, not only for completeness, but for quality of comments. Each week's discussion posts will be due on Monday by 11:59pm. For a complete grade you only need to submit 10/12 weeks (i.e., you can take two weeks off without penalty, or your highest 10 will be graded). Students will be provided prompts each week for discussion, though students are also encouraged to generate their own questions, observations, and insights.

Tests

Tests are based on assigned readings and in-class material will be multiple choice. Questions require knowledge of basic facts/definitions *and* the ability to apply this knowledge to real-world situations. There will be no make-up dates for tests in this course since correct answers will be reviewed/made available after the examination window. However, an alternative (equally weighted) assignment will be provided for students who miss the midterm (see below).

Midterm Assignment: Active Listening

Students will pair up with another classmate (or a friend, relative, roommate, coworker, etc.) to practice their active listening skills, as showcased in therapy sessions by Dr. Browne. Students will ask the other person to discuss an issue that has been on their mind. As outlined in the assignment description, students will request that the other person stay away from very serious topics, as the student is not a licensed therapist (see Assignment for safety suggestions). The conversation will be transcribed (per the example provided), and students will provide interpretations. The student should show specific skills of active listening (encouragement, paraphrasing, summarizing, providing interpretations, and empathy), and identify these in the transcript. A summary of the content of the mock session should be provided at the end.

Final Paper: Case Study

A final assignment requires students to integrate their theoretical, clinical, and research skills by completing a case study of the "family" that they have been observing Dr. Browne conduct therapy with each week. Students will take notes on the mock therapy sessions throughout the course, supplementing the notes with clinical analysis, and conduct a case study (i.e., a clinical formulation) that integrates Family Systems Theory, Family Therapy, Resilience and the trauma-informed framework into your work. This assignment should be uploaded to the Dropbox on Learn by 11:59pm on the last day of class. There will be no extensions unless agreed upon by the student and instructor. Please see the assignment write-up.

Text matching software (Turnitin®) will be used to verify that use of all materials and sources is documented. Students who do not want to have their assignment screened by Turnitin may submit their assignment directly to the instructor along with hard copies of cited material in which cited information is highlighted. PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU ARE AWARE OF WHAT PLAGIARISM IS AND HOW IT MAY BE AVOIDED IN YOUR WORK (<https://subjectguides.uwaterloo.ca/c.php?g=695453&p=4931525>). Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and assignments that are plagiarized may, at the instructor's discretion, receive a hefty penalty (e.g., a grade of 0) and be referred to the Dean.

Optional Makeup (If students miss a test, related to pandemic disruption)

Students will be expected to review a minimum of three articles that employ a particular methodological and/or statistical approach to answer questions pertaining to family life. They are to review these articles in a coherent and integrated fashion (i.e., not merely a list of what each article did) and discuss the findings of the articles. Students should review statistical methods and discuss the strengths and limitations of the approach. Please see the assignment write-up for a full description.

Roles and Responsibilities

The instructor is available to address questions about any aspect of the course. The instructor and/or TAs are available to review tests, discussion posts, assignments, and to assist with any aspect of the course.

Class attendance (either synchronously or asynchronously, though a review of videos) is mandatory. Lectures and therapy sessions will contain information that will not be covered in the readings nor detailed on the slides. Slides are intended to serve as a framework for note-taking (not as a substitute) and will be posted as pdfs to Learn before each class. Students are encouraged to ask questions when material is unclear – either in class or on Learn (do not email the instructor for course content questions, only personal matters). There will be an “Ask the Instructor” discussion board on Learn for the benefit of all students in the course (if you have a question, it is very likely that your peers do as well).

Intellectual Property

Students should be aware that this course contains the intellectual property of the course instructor as well as others. Intellectual property includes items such as: Lecture content, spoken and written (and any audio/video recording thereof); Lecture handouts, presentations, and other materials prepared for the course; Questions or solution sets from various types of assessments (e.g., assignments, quizzes, tests, final exams); and Work protected by copyright (e.g., any work authored by the instructor or used by the instructor with permission of the copyright owner, course readings, etc.).

Course materials and the intellectual property contained therein, are used to enhance a student’s educational experience. However, sharing this intellectual property without the intellectual property owner’s permission is a violation of intellectual property rights. For this reason, it is necessary to ask the instructor for permission before uploading and sharing the intellectual property of others online (e.g., to an online repository).

Permission from an instructor is also necessary before sharing the intellectual property of others from completed courses with students taking the same/similar courses in subsequent terms/years. In many cases, instructors might be happy to allow distribution of certain materials. However, doing so without expressed permission is considered a violation of intellectual property rights.

Please alert the instructor if you become aware of intellectual property belonging to others (past or present) circulating, either through the student body or online. The intellectual property rights owner deserves to know (and may have already given their consent).

Course Schedule

| Week | Date(s) | Topic | Readings | Assessments |
|------|----------|--|---|--|
| 1 | Sept. 14 | Course Overview | N/A | Discussion Post # 1 (Introductions) |
| 2 | Sept. 21 | An Introduction to Family Systems Theory and Resilience | <p>Walsh, F. (2016). <i>Strengthening Family Resilience</i>, Third Edition. Chapter 1 & 2 (pp. 3-35). New York: Guilford.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 1: <u>Foundation of a Family Resilience Approach</u> Chapter 2: <u>Family Diversity and Complexity in a Changing World</u> <p>Prime, H., Wade, M., & Browne, D. T. (2020). Risk and resilience in family well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. <i>American Psychologist</i>, 75(5), 631–643. https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000660</p> | Discussion Post #2 |
| 3 | Sept. 28 | The Trauma-Informed Model of Care with Families | <p>Walsh, F. (2016). <i>Strengthening Family Resilience</i>, Third Edition. Chapter 6 (pp. 101-130). New York: Guilford.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 6: <u>Assessing Family Resilience: Useful Maps for Practice and Research</u> <p>Racine N, Killam T, Madigan S. Trauma-Informed Care as a Universal Precaution: Beyond the Adverse Childhood Experiences Questionnaire. <i>JAMA Pediatr.</i> 2020;174(1):5–6. https://doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2019.3866</p> | Discussion Post #3 |
| 4 | Oct. 5 | Communication with Individuals and Families in Therapy (during COVID-19) | <p>Walsh, F. (2016). <i>Strengthening Family Resilience</i>, Third Edition. Chapter 7 (pp. 131-153). New York: Guilford.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 7: <u>Practice Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen Family Resilience</u> <p>Racine, N., Hartwick, C., Collin-Vézina, D., & Madigan, S. (2020). Tele-mental health for child trauma treatment during and post-COVID-19: Limitations and considerations. <i>Child Abuse & Neglect</i>, 110, 104698. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2020.104698</p> <p>Browne et al., (2020). Supporting clinician and patient mental health during COVID-19. <i>Canadian Family Physician</i>. https://www.cfp.ca/content/66/7/e190</p> | Discussion Post #4 |
| 5 | Oct. 19 | Family Stress and The Developmental Perspective | <p>Walsh, F. (2016). <i>Strengthening Family Resilience</i>, Third Edition. Chapter 9 (pp. 181-205). New York: Guilford.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 9: <u>Challenges and Resilience over the Family Life Cycle: A Developmental Systems Perspective</u> <p>Browne, D. T., Wade, M., May, S., Jenkins, J.M., & Prime, H. (2021). COVID-19 Disruption gets Inside the Family: A Two-Month Multilevel Study of Family Stress during the Pandemic. <i>Developmental Psychology</i>.</p> | Discussion Post #5 Test 1 Opens online, weeks 1-5 inclusive. |

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| 6 | Oct. 26 | Family Organization - Subsystems & Levels of Organization | <p>Walsh, F. (2016). <i>Strengthening Family Resilience</i>, Third Edition. Chapter 4 (pp. 65-81). New York: Guilford.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 4: <u>Organizational Processes: Relational and Structural Supports</u> <p>Browne, D. T., Plamondon, A., Prime, H., Puente-Duran, S., & Wade, M. (2015). Cumulative risk and developmental health: an argument for the importance of a family-wide science. <i>Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Cognitive Science</i>, 6(4), 397-407. https://doi.org/10.1002/wcs.1349</p> | Discussion Post #6 |
| 7 | Nov. 2 | Family Communication & Beliefs - Relational and Psychological Processes | <p>Walsh, F. (2016). <i>Strengthening Family Resilience</i>, Third Edition. Chapter 3 & 5 (pp. 39-64, 82-100). New York: Guilford.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 3: <u>Belief Systems: The Heart and Soul of Resilience</u> Chapter 5: <u>Communication Processes: Facilitating Meaning Making, Mutual Support and Problem Solving</u> <p>Browne, D. T., Norona, J., Busch, A., Armstrong, K., Crouch, S., Ernst, T., ... & Ihle, E. C. (2021). "Is it us or is it me?": Family experiences of connectedness following a reflecting team intervention. <i>Journal of Marital and Family Therapy</i>, 47(3), 727-748. https://doi.org/10.1111/jmft.12468</p> | Discussion Post #7 |
| 8 | Nov. 9 | Recovery from Trauma and Addiction in Families | <p>Walsh, F. (2016). <i>Strengthening Family Resilience</i>, Third Edition. Chapter 10 (pp. 206-231). New York: Guilford.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 10: <u>Loss, Recovery & Resilience</u> <p>Godleski, S. & Leonard, K. E. (2019). <u>Substance Use and Substance Problems in Families: How Families Impact and are Impacted by Substance Use</u>. In B. Fiese (Ed.), <i>APA Handbook of Contemporary Family Psychology (Volume 2; pp. 587-602)</i>. Washington, DC: APA.</p> | Discussion Post #8 Listening Assignment Due (Submit on Learn) |
| 9 | Nov. 16 | Family Diversity, Resettlement & Stress | <p>Walsh, F. (2016). <i>Strengthening Family Resilience</i>, Third Edition. Chapter 11 & 13 (pp. 232-264, 296-326). New York: Guilford.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 11: <u>Traumatic Loss & Collective Trauma: Strengthening Family and Community Resilience</u> Chapter 13: <u>Nurturing Resilience in Vulnerable, Multi-Stressed Families</u> <p>Browne, D. T., Smith, J. A., & Basabose, J. D. D. (2021). Refugee children and families during the COVID-19 crisis: A resilience framework for mental health. <i>Journal of Refugee Studies</i>, 34(1), 1138-1149. https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/feaa113</p> | Discussion Post #9 |

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| 10 | Nov. 23 | Overview of Family Therapy | <p>Walsh, F. (2016). <i>Strengthening Family Resilience</i>, Third Edition. Chapter 14 (pp. 327-356). New York: Guilford.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 14: <u>Reconnection and Reconciliation: Healing Relational Wounds</u> <p>Lebow J. L. & Diamond, R. M. (2019). <u>Brief History of Couple and Family Therapy</u>. In B. Fiese (Ed.), <i>APA Handbook of Contemporary Family Psychology (Volume 3; pp. 587-602)</i>. Washington, DC: APA.</p> | Discussion Post #10 |
| 11 | Nov. 30 | The Big Picture: Trauma-Informed Systems | <p>Walsh, F. (2016). <i>Strengthening Family Resilience</i>, Third Edition. Chapter 8 (pp. 154-180). New York: Guilford.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Chapter Applying a Family Resilience Framework in Community-Based Services</u> <p>Ko, S. J., Ford, J. D., Kassam-Adams, N., Berkowitz, S. J., Wilson, C., Wong, M., ... & Layne, C. M. (2008). <u>Creating trauma-informed systems: child welfare, education, first responders, health care, and juvenile justice</u>. <i>Professional Psychology: Research and Practice</i>, 39(4), 396-404.</p> | <p>Discussion Post #11</p> <p>Test 2 Opens online, weeks 6-11 inclusive.</p> |
| 12 | Dec. 7 | Review Period and Q&A | <p>The instructor and students will engage in an open discussion to review, synthesize, and integrate all course content. Students are encouraged to prepare questions ahead of time. Topics for coverage also include <u>family therapy sessions and the final assignment</u> in addition to <u>careers in therapy</u>.</p> | <p>Discussion Post #12</p> <p>Case Study Due – Dec 7th to Dec 14th (Learn)</p> |

Academic Integrity

In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the [UWaterloo Academic Integrity webpage](#) for more information.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. 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 professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Concerns about a Course Policy or Decision

Informal Stage. We in the Psychology Department take great pride in the high quality of our program and our instructors. Though infrequent, we know that students occasionally find themselves in situations of conflict with their instructors over course policies or grade assessments. If such a conflict arises, the Associate Chair for Undergraduate Affairs (Richard Eibach) is available for consultation and to mediate a resolution between the student and instructor: Email: reibach@uwaterloo.ca; Ph 519-888-4567 ext. 38790

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances](#), Section 4. When in doubt, please be certain to contact Richard Eibach, the Associate Chair for Undergraduate Affairs who will provide further assistance; reibach@uwaterloo.ca.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72 - Student Appeals](#)

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

The [AccessAbility Services](#) office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), 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 the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.

Accommodations for Course Requirements

Students requesting accommodation for course requirements (e.g., final assignment) due to illness should do the following:

- Seek medical treatment as soon as possible and obtain a completed uWaterloo [Verification of Illness Form](#)
- Submit that form to the instructor within 48 hours.
- (if possible) inform the instructor by the due date for the course requirement that you will be unable to meet the deadline and that documentation will be forthcoming.

In the case of a missed assignment deadline, the instructor will either:

- Waive the course component and re-weight remaining term work as he/she deems fit according to circumstances and the goals of the course, or
- Provide an extension.

In the case of bereavement, the instructor will provide similar accommodations to those for illness. Appropriate documentation to support the request will be required. Students who are experiencing extenuating circumstances should also inform their academic advisors regarding their personal difficulties. Elective arrangements such as travel plans are not acceptable grounds for granting accommodations to course requirements per the [uWaterloo Examination Regulations and Related Matters](#).

Official Version of the Course Outline

If there is a discrepancy between the hard copy outline (i.e., if students were provided with a hard copy at the first class) and the outline posted on LEARN, the outline on LEARN will be deemed the official version. Outlines on LEARN may change as instructors develop a course, but they become final as of the first class meeting for the term.

Cross-Listed Course

Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, a PHIL/PSYCH cross-list will count in the Philosophy major average, even if the course was taken under the Psychology rubric.