What is Family?
Lecture Define Family

• When you think of your family, whom do you think of? Would you, please, make a list of those who are in your family?

• Have students share some of their lists

• How do you define a family? What's a family and what is not? How do you decide who is a family member and who is not?
Defining Family

• U.S. Census Bureau
  – “A group of two or more persons related by blood, marriage, or adoption and residing together in a household”.

• Anything missing?
The traditional definition of the family is a unit made up of two or more people who are related by blood, marriage, or adoption, and who live together, form an economic unit, and bear and raise children. (Nijole Benokraitis)

A family is any ______________ or ______________ relationship in which people—usually related ____________, __________, or ___________—(1)______________ with commitment, (2) form an ________________ and care ________, and (3) consider their identity to be significantly attached to the group. (Mary Ann Lamanna & Agnes Riedmann)
I define the family as a relatively small domestic group of kin (or people in a kin-like relationship) consisting of at least one adult and one dependent person. (David Popenoe)

A family is a group of people united by certain convictions or common affiliation or a collective body of persons who live in one house under one head or management. (New York City Court of Appeals, 1989)
Nuclear Family

• What assumptions are made when we talk about family but are only referring to the nuclear family?

• What effect do these assumptions have?

• What are they saying without saying it?
Factoid for the Day:

Family Household Composition in the U.S.
A. Married couples without children (28.1%)
B. Married couples with children (23.5%)
C. Female head of household with children (7.2%)
D. Male head of household with child (2.1%)

Quotes for The Day (Families)

There are no individuals in the world--only fragments of families. (Carl Whitaker)

Children...have no choice about being born into a system; nor do parents have a choice, once children are born, as to the existence of the responsibilities of parenthood....In fact, no family relationships except marriage are entered into by choice. (Monica McGoldrick and Elizabeth Carter)
Affiliated Kin vs Traditional Definitions

Descent, Marriage, Remarriage, or Adoption

2. Roommates, Animals, Friends
a. Structure vs function?
Families Today

1. __________________

2. A host of different family forms exist

3. Why do people live in families?
   a. ________
   b. ________
   c. _________
   d. _________

4. Notions about what families are to do?
Welcome to the Family Wars

1. Families
   a. The building blocks of society
   b. American families are falling apart
   c. American society is in a state of decline
   d. Going to hell in a hand basket

2. Nostalgia for the good old days (the 50s)
Welcome to the Family Wars

1. Declining family is a myth
   1. The good old days weren't
   2. Family needs to catch up with rapid social changes
   3. Families are different but still strong
      a. Here to stay
   4. The issue is really one of cultural lag
   5. Support families, don't stigmatize
      a. “It Takes a Village”
Conclusions that may be drawn?

a. Family relationships have become more complex (N)
b. More options for people, especially women (+)
c. Relationships have become easier to exit (+/-)
d. When combined with economic conditions, children are suffering (-)
e. A lot of people are growing up without models of healthy, successful relationships (-)
Fact for the Day:

Only 23.5% of American children live with both parents. (US Census Bureau, 2010)
Family Diversity

1. Class differences in families
2. Racial differences
3. Ethnic differences
Functions of Marriages and Families

Why do people get married and live in families?

1. Intimate Relationships
2. Economic Cooperation
3. Reproduction and Socialization
4. Assignment of Social Roles and Status
So What...

• What is the greatest challenge the family is facing today? Why?

• We need theory and research to address what is “good” and what is “bad”
  – Conventional Wisdom: A divorce was worse for children than a bad marriage
  – Research has indicated that an amicable divorce is better than a high-conflict marriage.
Symbols

• Next Class – What reminds you of your family or represents your family

• Be creative!
Fact for the Day

Family rituals serve three purposes:

1. connecting us __________,
2. defining __________, and
3. showing us a ____________.
The Process of ___________

__________________.

• (Aspects of shared and non-shared environments)
• Explicit teaching and training (via rewards & punishments)
  – Family values & rules
  – Often evident in families with substance abuse

Simons, Beaman, Conger, & Chao (1992)
Modeling/Imitation

• Repeat what you observed & experienced
• Contradictions?
• Patterns of relationships
  – Tracy Chapman (FAST CAR)
• The effects of many family influences often do not come out until we enter relationships
What To Do?

• Seek to understand our "inheritance" from our families
• Recognize what you can change & what you can’t
• Take responsibility to deal with it
• Make peace with the past
  – Therapy
  – Family discussions
  – Explore other possibilities
  – Transitional vs transferential character
Adult Attachment Types

- Hazan & Shaver 3 parenting categories
- Hazan & Shaver 3 attach. categories (OVERHEAD)
- Bart. 4 attach. categories (OVERHEAD)
- Bartholemew's 2 X 2 model (OVERHEAD)
Hazan and Shaver

- I find it relatively easy to get close to others and am comfortable depending on them and having them depend on me. I don’t often worry about being abandoned or about someone getting too close to me.

- I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others: I find it difficult to trust them completely, difficult to allow myself to depend on them. I am nervous when anyone gets too close and often, love partners want me to be more intimate than I feel comfortable being.
Hazan and Shaver (Cont.)

- I find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I often worry that my partner doesn’t really love me or won’t want to stay with me. I want to connect with another person, and this desire sometimes scares people away.
Bartholemew: Four Components

• For each of the following paragraphs, use the scale of 1 (Completely Disagree), to 7 (Completely Agree), to indicate how much each paragraph describes you.

• It is relatively easy for me to become emotionally close to others. I am comfortable depending on others and having others depend on me. I don’t worry about being alone or having others not accept me.
Bartholemew (Cont.)

• I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others, but I find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I am uncomfortable being without close relationships, but I sometimes worry that others don’t value me as much as I value them.

• I am comfortable without close emotional relationships. It is very important to me to feel independent and self-sufficient, and I prefer not to depend on others or have others depend on me.
Bartholemew (Cont.)

• I am somewhat uncomfortable getting close to others. I want emotionally close relationships but I find it difficult to trust others completely, or to depend on them. I sometimes worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others.

• Please choose the one paragraph above which best or most often describes you ________.