# Applying Major Theories to Real Families

HDFS 1300 Development of Contemporary Families

Paper 1 Writing Guide

Welcome to your first paper in this university-designated Writing-in-the-Discipline course! As part of this designation, you are required to write two papers and engage in two peer review sessions. This guide will describe the requirements for your first paper. Students who successfully complete this paper will:

1. Apply major theories in the field of human development and family studies to a real-world family,
2. Paraphrase to communicate an overall message without using direct quotes,
3. Discuss strengths and limitations of specific theories,
4. Utilize the basic elements of APA Style, and
5. Participate in a peer review process.

## Paper Topic

Write a paper that highlights how theories can provide us with various perspectives for examining families. Describe a real family—a family you know personally . (The family should be **unrelated** to you.) Be sure to protect the family members’ identifying information (name, workplace, etc.). Explain how this family might be understood using various theoretical perspectives that are discussed in your textbook. Choose three theories. Provide a summary of each theory, and apply each theory to the family you selected. Finally, explain which theory you find most compelling in terms of examining this family and explain why you find it so compelling. If your own personal experiences are influencing how you personally view the family, be sure to highlight that as your opinion (not as fact). Finally, explain how theories might be useful to professionals.

## Paper Policies

APA Style: A major goal of this Writing in the Disciplines course is to teach you the basics of the APA (American Psychological Association) Style, 7th Edition. The primary goal of APA Style is to give credit to whom credit is due in a predictable, routine manner so that others in the field understand that you are not claiming someone else’s work as your own (otherwise known as plagiarizing). APA Style outlines specific rules to help you cite (or give proper credit where credit is due).

Please note that this writing style is **very** different from MLA Style or other writing styles that you may have used in the past. You will need to pay close attention to the instructions if you want to do well on the APA Style components of this paper. *Please be advised that using automatic APA reference generators often result in incorrect reference formats.*

While both paraphrasing and direct quotes are used in the professional world, we will limit papers in this course to paraphrasing when discussing the work of others. We will **not** use direct quotes because:

1. The papers in this class are extremely short (5 pages) in comparison to typical papers in the field, which average approximately 30 pages. Even using short direct quotes can take up substantial space in your paper.
2. Perhaps most importantly, you can typically include more information when paraphrasing than you can when quoting directly. **A primary goal of this assignment is to paraphrase the *overall* conclusions from the sources you cite.** You should **not** be stringing together random statistics and facts from minor parts of the source that do not reflect the main intended message of the source. Paraphrasing helps you to capture more of the overall message than randomly selecting single sentences from the source.

Writing in APA Style is scientific and objective in nature. It is typically not creative writing or opinion-based. It is important to focus on what a source is communicating as accurately as possible when you are citing it. When you incorporate your opinion or personal perspective/experience, it is important to clearly communicate to the reader that you are doing so rather than trying to state your opinion as fact.

Peer Review: Obtaining feedback from others is fundamental to professional writing within the field of human development and family studies as well as the field of psychology and many other disciplines. We will have a simplified version of the peer review process in this course. Using the Turnitin software, you will provide feedback on a classmate’s rough draft. **Please note that you can only participate in the peer review assignment if you submit your own rough draft before the deadline.**

Formatting: Should you pursue advanced coursework in this field (especially if you pursue a graduate program), you will be exposed to the many formatting rules within APA Style. For our purposes in this course, we will focus only on formatting the title page, the in-text citations, and the reference page. To help you, I am providing a template because I want your primary focus to be on learning how to write in a manner that paraphrases appropriately and that clearly distinguishes your opinions/personal experiences from scientific facts. I do not want you to be so distracted by the formatting that you miss the main point of the writing style.

Here are some formatting rules that I will require you to follow:

* 12-point font (Times New Roman, Cambria, or Calibri)
* Double spacing (only double spacing) throughout the entire document
* Separate paragraphs (your paper should not consist of one long paragraph)
* APA Style title page, reference page, and in-text citations

In addition, your paper should have a professional tone. Avoid slang (ain’t, wanna, gonna, my bad, etc.), contractions (ain’t, don’t, won’t, shouldn’t, etc.), and other more casual features.

You can use some first-person writing. However, be sure that you drop words like “I” when they are unnecessary. For instance, instead of writing, “I believe that individuals interact with their environments,” boldly state, “Individuals interact with their environments.” Instead of writing, “I think that professionals should consider potential environmental influences when working with children in schools,” boldly state, “Professionals should consider potential environmental influences when working with children in schools.” This will make your writing stronger and more concise.

Do **not** include filler information like the title of an article, the title of a book or chapter, etc. in the body of your paper. Save that information for the reference page.

**Do not include subtitles/subheadings in this short paper.**

# Paper 1 Grading Rubric

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Does not meet requirements = 0** | **Needs considerable work = 1** | **Partially meets requirements = 2** | **Good = 3** | **Excellent! = 4** |
| **Introduction** | Section is missing entirely or does not meet the basic requirements | Unclear writing interferes with the intended message | Goal statement is missing or introduction is otherwise insufficient | Creates interest and includes a goal statement but has grammatical or spelling issues | **Creates interest for the reader and ends with a goal statement reflecting the overall objectives of the paper; free from grammatical and spelling issues that interfere with the intended message** |
| **Family Description** | Section is missing entirely or does not meet the basic requirements | Unclear writing interferes with the intended message | Few details about the family are provided OR the family’s privacy is not protected | Provides a detailed description of the family and protects the identity of private families but has grammatical or spelling issues | **Provides a clear and detailed description of the family, protects the identity of private families (families who are not famous), and is free from major grammatical and spelling issues** |
| **Theory Summaries** | Section is missing entirely or does not meet the basic requirements | Clear and accurate description of one theory | Clear and accurate description of two theories | Clear and accurate description of three theories but has some spelling and grammatical issues | **Clear and accurate description of three theories and is free from major grammatical and spelling issues** |
| **Theory Application** | Section is missing entirely or does not meet the basic requirements | Accurate application of at least one theory | Accurate application of at least two theories | Accurate application of at least three theories but has some spelling and grammatical issues | **Accurate application of at least three theories and is free from major grammatical and spelling issues** |
| **Conclusion** | Section is missing entirely | Missing three of the requirements or has unclear writing that interferes with the intended message | Missing two of the requirements | Missing one requirement or has obvious grammatical/spelling errors | **Provides an explanation of which theory is most compelling (according to the writer) and explains how one’s own personal experience (based on your own family of origin) might influence how you view families. Offers an explanation for how theories might be useful for professionals who work with families or conduct research.** |
| **Total** |  |  |  |  | **20 POINTS** |