# Psychology of Family Ties

## Prof. Raffaella Iafrate

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

**Course aims**

The course will provide the basic elements for a critical reading of the psychological approaches to the family, of the sociocultural changes that have marked it and the problems that it faces in its main legislative and non-legislative transitions.

**Intended learning outcomes**

*Knowledge and understanding*

At the end of the course, students will be able to critically recognise and describe the main theories regarding the family and the main family dynamics which accompany the diverse legislative and non-legislative dynamics families experience.

*Ability to apply knowledge and understanding*

At the end of the course, students will also be able to identify the main objectives of family transitions and the relative tasks of inter-generational development associated with them, so as to develop basic skills for research and intervention for families undergoing these transitions.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course will consider and expand on two basic questions: the identity of the family (what the family is and how it can be defined) and changes that take place in the family (cultural change and the life span of the family). Starting from these two questions, the contribution and development of the different theoretical approaches to study of the family will be examined critically and the relational-symbolic approach illustrated more in depth. In the light of this approach, that will be the main thread of the entire course, the relational dynamics in the main critical transitions of the family will be tackled: the formation of the couple and the construction of the conjugal bond, the birth and development of parental ties, forms of parenting, the departure of the children, the change to adult life and the transition to the final age of life. The essential features of the research methodology on the family will be illustrated and some research on family fostering, adoption, separation, couple relationship, on families and migration…Finally, some possible work implications of these topics will be highlighted.

Specifically, the programme will be arranged as follows:

Unit 0: Introduction to Family Psychology

* Family representations: emotional-representational register / cultural cognitive register
* Thinkability and scientific investigability of the family
* Changes in the family over time

Unit 1: Identity and family change

* Identity = family as a group / family as a system
* Changing = Stress and Coping Theory / Family Developmental Theory
* Models of family functioning

Unit 2: Relational-symbolic model

* Key points of the relational-symbolic model
* Transitions, critical events, development tasks

Unit 3: Family transitions

* Transition to the partnership agreement: goal, development tasks
* Parental bond and its transitions: goals and development tasks
* Unique transitions: separated/recomposed/adoptive/foster/immigrant families
* The latest transitions (detachment of children, old age)

Unit 4: Application aspects of family psychology

* Emerging topics of family psychology
* Research on the family - Research examples
* Interventions for the family

***READING LIST***

For the path based on lecture contents:

Students will prepare by studying the lecture notes and materials published on the Blackboard platform, supported by the following texts:

1. E. Scabini-R. Iafrate, *Psicologia dei legami familiari*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2003.

2. E. Scabin-V. Cigoli,*Alla ricerca del famigliare. Il modello relazionale-simbolico*, Milano, Cortina, 2012, capp. 4-5-6-7-8-10.

For the text-based path

1. E. Scabini-R. Iafrate, *Psicologia dei legami familiari,* Il Mulino, Bologna, 2003.

2. E. Scabini-V. Cigoli,*Alla ricerca del famigliare. Il modello relazionale-simbolico*, Cortina,Milano*,*2012, capp. 4-5-6-7-8-10.

3. A text to be chosen from the list:

Centro D’ateneo Studi E Ricerche Sulla Famglia, *Familiarmente. La qualità dei legami familiari,* Vita e Pensero, Milan, 2012.

Centro D’ateneo Studi E Ricerche Sulla Famglia, *La generatività nei legami familiari e sociali. Scritti in onore di Eugenia Scabini*, Vita e Pensero, Milano, 2017.

Centro D’ateneo Studi E Ricerche Sulla Famglia, *La famiglia sospesa,* Vita e Pensero, Milano, 2021.

D. Bramanti e E. Carrà (a cura di), *Famiglia e povertà relazionale. Studi Interdisciplinari sulla Famiglia*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 2021.

E. Canzi, *Omogenitorialità, filiazione e dintorni. Quaderno n.29*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 2017.

S. Donato-A. Pagani, *La relazione di coppia. Gestire insieme eventi positivi e negativi, Carocci,*2018*.*

O. Greco-I. Comelli-R. Iafrate, *Tra le braccia un figlio non tuo. L’esperienza degli operatori e delle famiglie nell’affidamento di neonati*, Franco Angeli, Milano, 2011.

O. Greco-I. Comelli, *Fratelli in affido: una famiglia o più famiglie?*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 2017

O. Greco, D. Barni, E. Gusmini, R. Iafrate, , & F. Salamino, *The Double Moon Drawing: An Instrument for Intervention and Research in Structurally Complex Family Situations. Psychology Research Progress.* Nova Science Publisher, 2020.

R. Iafrate-A. Bertoni, *Figli dati al mondo. Educare oggi in famiglia*. Editrice Ave, Roma, 2013. + R. Iafrate-A. Bertoni, *Come musica. Il pentagramma della relazione di coppia*, Edizioni San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo, 2015.

C. Regalia, E. Marta (a cura di)  [*Giovani in transizione e padri di famiglia*.](https://centridiateneo.unicatt.it/famiglia-studi-interdisciplinari-sulla-famiglia-2018-studi-n-30-giovani-in-transizione-e-padri-di-famiglia)  Studi Interdisciplinari sulla famiglia n.30, Vita e Pensiero, Milano , 2018

E. Scabini-G. Rossi*, La migrazione come evento familiare,* Studi interdisciplinari sulla famiglia n. 23, Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 2008.

E. Scabini-G. Rossi*, La ricchezza delle famiglie,* Studi interdisciplinari sulla famiglia n. 24, Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 2010.

E. Scabini-G. Rossi*, Family transitions and families in transition,* Studi interdisciplinari sulla famiglia n. 25, Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 2011.

E. Scabini-G. Rossi, *Famiglia e nuovi media,* Studi interdisciplinari sulla famiglia n. 26, Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 2013.

E. Scabini-G. Rossi, *L’allungamento della vita. Una risorsa per la famiglia, un’opportunità per la società,* Studi interdisciplinari sulla famiglia n. 28, Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 2016

E. Scabini-G. Rossi*, Family transitions and families in transition,* Studi interdisciplinari sulla famiglia n. 25, Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 2011.

C. Regalia-E. Marta (edited by) *Giovani in transizione e padri di famiglia.* Studi Interdisciplinari

***TEACHING METHOD***

Lectures in class to present different arguments, presentation of researches and discussions on certain themes introduced by experts.

Teaching method provides, besides lectures, exercises designed to encourage active learning and the direct participation of students. Food for thought wil be provided by examples taken from literature, cinema and other expressive and social communication forms.

Support material, useful for the examination preparation, will be provided on Blackboard.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The exam includes a short, written test with some open-ended questions, and an oral interview. Both tests will take place on the same exam session.

– a preliminary written test containing 5 open-ended questions aimed at testing students’ basic knowledge and specific language. Students must get a pass mark for at least 4 of the 5 questions in order to be able to sit the oral.

– an in-depth oral test on course content will assess students’ ability to connect the various topics covered during lectures.

Students will be assessed on the relevance of their answers, their appropriate use of specific terminology, the structure of their arguments and consistency of discourse, their ability to identify conceptual connections and open-ended questions. The five open-ended questions will carry equal marks, and will be marked out of thirty.

The oral test can lead to an increase or decrease in the evaluation of the written test in a range that varies from 0 to (+/-) 3 points. There will be a single final mark which will take into account the mark of the written test as well as the oral interview.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Students should have basic knowledge of the concepts of social psychology and research methodology.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.