Welcome to the Department of Family Social Science!

Our mission is to enhance the well-being of diverse families in a changing world through teaching, research, and outreach.

An undergraduate, master’s, or doctoral degree in Family Social Science prepares students to use research to discover and apply knowledge, build communication skills, and develop as lifelong learners and effective leaders.

Our Department is focused on student success and preparing them for careers as researchers, trainers, and providers in such fields as family studies, family and community engagement, family therapy, and family financial studies.

Our faculty are mentors, renowned researchers, and committed teachers who provide students learning opportunities to discover and apply new knowledge through face-to-face, online, and blended courses. We also offer international learning opportunities, community-based internships, and opportunities to join on-going, family research projects headed by faculty.

Following graduation, many students pursue graduate degrees in such fields as couple and family therapy, family studies, multicultural studies, prevention science, social work, and public health.

Family Social Science alumni can be found globally in academic appointments, research institutions, and practice-oriented positions in a multitude of settings including family resource services, community-based social services, faith-based organizations, government agencies, and health care and family wellness settings.

Jodi Dworkin
Department Head
Professor

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Teaching Philosophy
The primary goal of teaching is to provide learners with the foundation, motivation, and inspiration to seek out new knowledge by discovering solutions to existing and future problems that define their primary area of interest.

Courses I Teach
FSOS 5701/PREV 8001: Prevention Science: Principles and Practices (face-to-face)

What Students Can Expect From Me
FSOS 5701/PREV 8001: Prevention science research addresses the complex neurobiological and psychosocial processes believed to influence the incidence, prevalence, and maintenance of human dysfunctions. This course will examine theoretical, empirical, and practical foundations of prevention science for designing, implementing, evaluating, and disseminating strategic interventions to prevent mental, behavioral, and chemical health problems and promote healthy development.

Research Interests
Attention & behavior problems | Adolescent psychiatry | Antisocial behavior | Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder | Drug abuse Prevention science

Currently Funded Research Projects
• Center for Personalized Prevention Research in Children’s Mental Health

Future Research Development
• Issues pertaining to the transportability and dissemination of evidence-based prevention programs to community systems of care
• The adaptation of preventive interventions to fit the needs and preferences of children at risk for serious conduct problems
Teaching Philosophy
To create a space in which we can bring academic knowledge, cultural knowledge, and experiential knowledge side-by-side, so that everyone in the classroom environment can work together to spark questions and surface teachings about how to support families from diverse cultural backgrounds and community experiences.

What Students Can Expect From Me
In each of my courses, I invite community teachers into the class to share their knowledge and grassroots perspectives about families and communities.

Community teachers may include cultural elders, youth workers, and staff from community programs. In the service learning courses, students have the opportunity to work with a community based organization, which allows them both to draw important learning from a hands-on experience, and build their professional network.

Undergraduate and Graduate Research Opportunities
While I do not typically have active research projects that graduate students can be a part of, I am happy to meet with students to discuss how community engaged research approaches could enhance their work.
Teaching Philosophy
Learning is a collaborative process between the instructor and students, with each bringing their own unique wisdom, experiences, and skills to create a meaningful environment in which everyone gains important new knowledge.

What Students Can Expect From Me
Students who work with me in a research experience can expect to be actively involved in all aspects of the research process. I have an applied research agenda that involves community members across the United States. Students can participate either in project research or the outreach component of the work.

In my teaching, students can expect to be actively engaged in the learning process with the expectation that they will become knowledgeable consumers of the research related to their topics of interest. Together we will explore new ideas and discuss the implications of topics both in today’s world and in their own lives.

Undergraduate and Graduate Research Opportunities
Students have the opportunity to work on a variety of research projects related to children, youth, and families. These projects include data collection and analysis, curriculum development, and development of other outreach materials.

Research Interests
Children, youth and their families | Youth development | Public policy evaluation | Youth workers

Currently Funded Research Projects
• Children, Youth and Families at Risk
• Youth Development Program Evaluation, Tools, and Coaching
• Youth programs for ages 10-18

Future Research Development
• Families as a context for development
• Community-based programs that promote positive development
• Public policy
Heather Cline

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Research Interests
Parent development | Adult learning & development
Parent education | Parent-child interaction

Teaching Philosophy
Teaching in higher education is the promotion of adult learning and development, which requires me as the instructor to create a learning environment that is engaging, stimulating, challenging, and responsive so that learning becomes an opportunity for expanding and shifting one's perspective and practice rather than simply unquestioned knowledge acquisition or reinforcement of prior beliefs and biases.

Courses I Teach
- FSOS 5937: Parent-Child Interaction (online)
- FSOS 5944: Curricular Design in Parent Education (online)
- FSOS 5945: Teaching and Learning in Parent Education (online)
- FSOS 5949: Student Teaching in Parent Education (online)

What Students Can Expect From Me
Students can expect me to create a learning environment that models the methods I teach to promote adult learning and development. This includes facilitating open, respectful dialogue with peers where you can share and reflect on your own and each other's personal and professional experiences to process course material in a meaningful way. I will also ask you to reflect individually on your own perspectives and experiences in light of this new information and rich dialogue.

Undergraduate and Graduate Research Opportunities
My research focuses on the design and implementation of parenting education that promotes parent development.
Undergraduate and Graduate Research Opportunities
Currently my faculty appointment is part-time and the work I do with students is primarily with students whose interests overlap with my current research agenda. I can open up local and national opportunities for motivated undergraduates and graduate students.
What Students Can Expect From Me
Students can expect to be actively engaged in research, as a collaborator through all phases of the research process – literature review, IRB, data collection, data analysis, manuscript preparation, and conference presentations. Students interested in outreach and engagement have opportunities to do the work of translating research into practice both to develop resources for parents and research updates for professionals who work with youth and families.

Students meet with me weekly and have the opportunity to build relationships and collaborations with other graduate students. Students should expect to be independent, creative, and thinking critically about our work together.

Undergraduate and Graduate Research Opportunities
My research and outreach focuses on risk-taking among adolescents and college students, promoting positive family relationships, parenting adolescents and college students, and the role of technology in family relationships.

Students interested in Extension work and translating research into practice have opportunities to develop resources for families and professionals working with families.
Courses I Teach

- FSOS 1201: Human Development in Families: Lifespan
- FSOS 5701/Prev 8001: Prevention Science: Principles and Practices
- FSOS 8550: Advanced Topics in Family Social Science

Undergraduate and Graduate Research Opportunities

Undergraduates get a range of experiences in our lab - I am a prevention researcher and have a large team of graduate students, postdocs, and professional staff.

Undergrads get experiences (depending on desire and fit) in any or several of the following: data entry, management, coding of parent-child observations, cleaning of physiological data, assisting the assessment team in the field (providing child activities in families’ homes during assessments), assisting the intervention team (providing child activities while parents are participating in the parenting group), assisting with curriculum modifications and other intervention-related activities, becoming assessment technicians (a paid position), and assisting with literature searches, instrument research, etc.

Teaching Philosophy

Family science should reflect the multiple contexts of influence within which families interact and children develop. Teaching (both inside and outside the classroom) allows me to frame my research in ways that make it relevant to broader communities. In turn, my research informs and enriches my teaching. I challenge students to broaden their understanding of the reciprocal influences of multiple contexts (individual, family, community) in development and adjustment.

What Students Can Expect From Me

Students join a busy but fun lab that conducts ‘team science’ in service of helping families thrive in the wake of stressful events. We have high expectations for commitment and responsibility and we welcome all students who share our curiosity about how families work, and how prevention programs can help strengthen parenting and children’s mental health.

Currently Funded Research Projects

- After Deployment Adaptive Parenting Tools/ADAPT (includes several funded grants)
- Center for Resilient Families
- Ambit Network

Future Research Development

- Widespread Implementation of ADAPT for US military families (active duty and reserve component)
- Prevention research across contexts and cultures to serve families affected by war, political and other violence

Abigail Gewirtz

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Research Interests

- Prevention science
- Prevention and intervention research
- Trauma
- Resilience
- Parenting
- Children’s resilience

Teaching Philosophy

Family science should reflect the multiple contexts of influence within which families interact and children develop. Teaching (both inside and outside the classroom) allows me to frame my research in ways that make it relevant to broader communities. In turn, my research informs and enriches my teaching. I challenge students to broaden their understanding of the reciprocal influences of multiple contexts (individual, family, community) in development and adjustment.

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What Students Can Expect From Me
Students can expect me to engage them in the questions that I find deeply meaningful, important, and interesting; particularly complex questions with direct implications for the social good and the well-being of individuals and families. With an emphasis on diversity, positive assets, and resilience, my courses require students to apply learning to their own lives or immediate social contexts.

Courses I Teach
- FSOS 2101: Preparation for Working with Families
- FSOS 3429: Counseling Skills Practicum I
- FSOS 3431: Counseling Skills Practicum II
- FSOS 5150: Special Topics: The African American Family
- FSOS 8013: Qualitative Family Research Methods
- FSOS 8014: Qualitative Family Research Methods II

Teaching Philosophy
I am committed to social justice and equity. This is who I am as a teacher, and who I am as a person. Better equipping students to contribute to our multicultural democracy as part of an informed citizenry, and become agents of social change who can think critically, engage in social analysis, and construct new knowledge is at the core of what I do as an educator.

I strive to engage students in a dynamic learning environment in which they can think critically, engage in authentic dialogue, and construct knowledge. Dynamic learning environments fueled by collaborative inquiry have always appealed to me, and these are the types of environments I try to create in the classroom. I consider students active partners in the process of teaching and learning.

To that end, I develop courses that provide opportunities for students to engage in deep, meaningful discussion with me and with each other. My best classes leave me thinking in ways that I have not considered before and asking new questions. By engaging in collaborative inquiry with my students, including and considering the diversity of their ideas, I create space for self-analysis, the exchange of ideas, and the exploration of important social issues in the classroom from diverse perspectives.

What Students Can Expect From Me
Students can expect me to engage them in the questions that I find deeply meaningful, important, and interesting; particularly complex questions with direct implications for the social good and the well-being of individuals and families. With an emphasis on diversity, positive assets, and resilience, my courses require students to apply learning to their own lives or immediate social contexts.
Teaching Philosophy
To engage students through active and thought provoking conversation and help them find answers, rooted in research and practice, to questions about family health and relational well being.

Courses I Teach
- FSOS 4104: Family Psychology
- FSOS 4110: Introduction to Family Therapy
- FSOS 8034: Marriage and Family Therapy Supervision
- FSOS 8039: Clinical Interventions for Couples

What Students Can Expect From Me
FSOS 4104 provides a life cycle view of family life and problems families can face in normative and non-normative transitions.

The focus of the course is directed to those who are about to embark on a career in human services.

FSOS 4110: Introduction to Family Therapy is a hands on course that presents theories that shape the field of marriage and family therapy.

Undergraduate and Graduate Research Opportunities
Most of the undergraduate research opportunities are not part of a class but part of projects that I'm involved in, including The National Divorce Decision Making Project and the Minnesota Couples on the Brink Project.

I am also serving a four year term as editor of the Journal of Marital and Family Therapy that could provide additional opportunities for undergraduate students.

Research Interests
- Couples, and intimacy
- Prevention of unnecessary divorce
- Divorce ideation
- Family therapy ethics and professional development

Currently Funded Research Projects
- Minnesota Couples on the Brink
- National Divorce Decision-making Project

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What Students Can Expect From Me

Community: you will learn the names of all of your classmates, which is the first step in building community. Individual work is very important in all of my courses, but understanding the perspectives of your classmates and engaging with them is crucial to our classroom.

Commitment to your academic growth: I believe that learning involves hard work and happens in a supportive, yet challenging environment. Constructive feedback is crucial. I actively work with students to help them develop the necessary skills for our coursework, and for future studies.

This is my 15th year teaching at the University of Minnesota. It is an honor and a privilege to work with students. As a senior teaching specialist, the majority of my work involves teaching. Currently I teach FSOS 1211: An Interdisciplinary Look at Family in Multicultural America, and EDHD1525W: First Year Inquiry.

Both of the classes that I teach involve community engaged learning. In other words, learners work in the community at a variety of sites including schools, libraries, food shelves, shelters for families experiencing homelessness, and more. I am committed to helping learners engage with our community in a way that creates connections and curiosity for more learning and engagement.

I come to teaching from the field of Applied Linguistics. I have a MA in Teaching English as a Second Language—Applied Linguistics. My graduate research focused on the interaction between native and nonnative speakers of English and how miscommunication (due to issues of both language and cultural norms) was or was not repaired (fixed). I continue to be interested in communication and miscommunication between people.

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Senior Teaching Specialist

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Research Interests

The interaction between native and nonnative speakers of English and communication, and miscommunication between people

Teaching Philosophy

I believe that learning involves hard work and happens in a supportive, yet challenging environment.

Courses I Teach

FSOS 1211: An Interdisciplinary Look at the Family in Multicultural America (face-to-face)
FSOS 1461: Presentations at Work: Families, Communities, Nonprofits, and Schools (face-to-face)
EDHD1525W: First Year Inquiry: Multidisciplinary Ways of Knowing
FSOS 3222W: Our Addicted World

Margaret Kelly

Teaching Philosophy

I believe that learning involves hard work and happens in a supportive, yet challenging environment.

Courses I Teach

FSOS 1211: An Interdisciplinary Look at the Family in Multicultural America (face-to-face)
FSOS 1461: Presentations at Work: Families, Communities, Nonprofits, and Schools (face-to-face)
EDHD1525W: First Year Inquiry: Multidisciplinary Ways of Knowing
FSOS 3222W: Our Addicted World

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Undergraduate and Graduate Research Opportunities

Students who are interested in learning more about opportunities in Parent and Family Education are welcome to contact me. Our professional programs will develop your skills to plan, coordinate, and teach in an instructional program that addresses the intellectual, emotional, cultural, social, and physical needs of both parents and children. We offer a certificate, license, and master’s degree.

Teaching Philosophy

To engage learners in ways that build their knowledge and skills to enhance both their professional and personal lives. I use the UMN student development outcomes, the UMN student learning outcomes, and the seven writing abilities desired of students to graduate with a degree in FSOS when I design my syllabus.

Courses I Teach

- FSOS 2103: Family Policy
- FSOS 2106: Family Resource Management
- FSOS 5942: Diverse Family Experiences

What Students Can Expect From Me

My goal is to engage students in course topics so that the topics come alive and can be seen as real and relevant to their personal and professional lives. I strive to help students feel connected to CEHD and to envision the wide range of ways that they can use their college degree as they go out into the world.
Undergraduate and Graduate Research Opportunities

My research focuses on sex and gender minority (SGM) persons with a specific focus on family relationships, mental health, and resilience among transgender youth. Undergraduates can complete special projects or do a thesis, or work on an existing project doing data entry or analyses, data collection, surveys or literature reviews.

Graduate students working with me as research assistants or on thesis or dissertation research, or directed research have a variety of project opportunities. I have collected qualitative data from semi-structured interviews, as well as transcribed hotline phone calls. I also have survey data from a measures development project creating gender measures suitable across the spectrum of gender identity and transition. Finally, I work with the National Center for Gender Spectrum Health (NCGSH) and collaboratively collect data with persons seeking gender affirmative care in that context. Interested students can meet with me and we will discuss together the best learning opportunity for the student.

Illustrative Publications


What Students Can Expect From Me
I have a strong background in theater, and use this to make information come alive through charismatic lectures and storytelling, small- and large-group discussions, and use of technology and media. I encourage students to integrate newfound knowledge into real-life, and then bring their experiences back to the classroom and/or supervision for discussion. Finally, I encourage students to think beyond what I am saying, and to openly challenge me when something does not “fit” with their own experiences (or those with whom they work).

Courses I Teach
- FSOS 1101: Intimate Relationships
- FSOS 3431: Counseling Skills Practicum II
- FSOS 4107: Traumatic Stress and Resilience in Vulnerable Families across the Lifespan
- FSOS 8295: Couple/Marriage & Family Therapy Practicum

Supervisor, Undergraduate Clinical Internship: Family Social Science
Supervisor, Doctoral MFT/MedFT Clinical Placement: Family Social Science

What Students Can Expect From Me
I involve both undergraduates and graduate students in my community-based participatory research (CBPR) that targets diabetes prevention and education in the American Indian community. Students work with me in the collection of data (physiological, knowledge, behavioral, experiential) across both quantitative and qualitative methodologies; they also gain experience in independent and collaborative community presentations and writing (for grants, refereed publications, and lay community publications).

Research Interests
Medical family therapy | Trauma and fieldwork | Community-based participatory research | Citizen health care | Families and chronic illness

Currently Funded Research Projects
- East-Metro American Indian Diabetes Initiative
- Adapting health resources into education and outreach in low-income, urban-dwelling American Indian communities
- Preventing Compassion Fatigue in Disaster Responders: Research on the Effectiveness of a Mobile Self Care App

Future Research Development
- Community-based Participatory Research to Eliminate Health Disparities within the Marshallese: Targeting Diabetes Together
- The American Indian Youth, Health, and Wellness Initiative: A Qualitative Analysis of Project Contributions to Improvements in Health

Teaching Philosophy
My role as a teacher incorporates an effective balance between leading (teaching the “science”), coaching (facilitating the connection of knowledge to real-life situations in the field – the “art”), and knowledge co-discovery (interactions between students and instructor).
What Students Can Expect From Me
As a practicing Psychologist and Sex Therapist, in all of my classes students can expect opportunities to apply course information to real-life family situations. They can expect opportunities to learn about future career options and support as they move towards professional goals. I hope to serve as a role model and support to students who are interested in pursuing careers in social work, psychology, MFT, or sex therapy. I hope to create classroom experiences that are lively, personally relevant, and extremely interactive.

Undergraduate and Graduate Research Opportunities
I have provided undergraduate students opportunities to pursue individual research projects subsequent to the completion of FSOS 4101. Students have, for example, done academic research on issues related to cross-cultural issues in sexual relationships, technology and sex, sexual dysfunctions and relationships, and other sex-related topics.

Research Interests
Sexuality and Families  |  Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Families  |  Couple and Family Therapy  |  Sex Therapy

Teaching Philosophy
I am passionate about the courses I teach and my goal is to actively engage students to better develop a sense of their own passions as they move forward in their development as helping professionals.

Courses I Teach
- FSOS 3429: Counseling Skills Practicum I
- FSOS 4101: Sexuality and Gender in Family Relationships
- FSOS 4104: Family Psychology
- FSOS 4110: Introduction to Family Therapy
- FSOS 4152: LGBT People in Families
- FSOS 8151: Preparation for Independent Teaching in Family Studies

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Teaching Philosophy
To actively engage learners through the creation of an interactive
environment and the stimulation of critical thinking.

Courses I Teach
FSOS 2105: Methods in Family Research
FSOS 4104: Family Psychology
FSOS 5014: Quantitative Family Research Methods I
FSOS 5702/PREV 8002: Prevention Science Research Methodology

What Students Can Expect From Me
Students can expect a dedicated and supportive mentor and teacher. As
an instructor, I aim to create an engaging and interactive classroom. I strive
to connect classroom content to “real world” applications and encourage
critical thinking about each topic. As a graduate student mentor, I utilize
a developmental model to help students develop competence in the
research process and other areas of their professional development.
Students have opportunities to be involved in all aspects of my research,
from developing project ideas, engaging with community partners,
collecting data from youth and families, to analyzing data and preparing
manuscripts for publication.

Research Interests
- Prevention science
- Child and adolescent conduct problems and substance use
- Family-focused prevention programming
- Peer relationships and influence
- Translational research
- Quantitative methods

Currently Funded Research Projects
- Mindfulness training for adolescents at risk for conduct problems
- Understanding variable response to family-focused prevention programs

Future Research Development
- Mechanisms of youth conduct problem prevention
- Prevention of adolescent substance use
Teaching Philosophy
I have knowledge to share. You can go farther than me.

Courses I Teach
FSOS 2105: Family Research Methods
FSOS 8014: Quantitative Family Research Methods

What Students Can Expect From Me
FSOS 2105 is designed to help future family practitioners (e.g., family therapists, social workers, etc.) stay current on cutting edge research relevant to their future practice by learning to understand and evaluate the quality of published research.

Undergraduate and Graduate Research Opportunities
Undergraduates working with me on my research projects have engaged in a host of activities, including data analyses, data entry, observational coding, participant interviewing, participant recruitment, data management, literature searching and review, report writing.

Research Interests
Family interactions in families with genetically unrelated parents and children | Adoptive families | Family communication
Child and adolescent adjustment | Family research methods
Family observation methods

Currently Funded Research Projects
• Family Communication Project

Future Research Development
• Child outcomes after in vitro fertilization (IVF) conception.
• Parent-child communication with donor-conceived children
• Parenting children conceived using Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ART)
• Families built using ART (including those whose parents have experienced infertility, and families built by single mothers by choice or by same sex parents)
• Families with multiples (e.g., twins)
Teaching Philosophy
I draw from my research on family processes and family economic well-being to present relevant content in simple and meaningful ways and to provide frequent opportunities for relevant demonstration and practice through mentoring, coaching, and self-reflection.

What Students Can Expect from Me
Because students possess diverse knowledge, skills, and experiences, I strive to be flexible and encourage open communication. I challenge students to think critically and defend their positions using material from textbooks, current research, and other sources. I try to make content relevant through activities that allow students to anchor new concepts to prior knowledge, lived experiences, and current events. I encourage students to solve problems creatively, providing a safe environment for exploring alternative approaches.

Undergraduate and Graduate Research Opportunities
As an Extension Specialist, much of my research occurs in diverse communities of learners including youth and families from low income, immigrant and American Indian populations. I actively engage undergraduate students in applied research projects, working with both high school and college students to raise awareness of their money values and to direct them to free resources available to help them manage their finances more effectively. These interactions provide opportunities for students to develop confidence in their own financial ability as they help other students.

Research Interests
- Coping with financial stress
- Stability and change in financial capability
- Family finances and young adults’ behaviors
- Financial behavior and romantic relationships

Currently Funded Research Projects
- Young Adult Autonomy: Pathways from College to Career
- Student Loan TIPS (Texting Intervention Project)
- Fostering Achievement and Connection To Engage Students (FACES)

Future Research Development
- PEERS: Improving the financial literacy of college students and community youth through peer coaching
Catherine Solheim

Professor and Director of Graduate Studies

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Research Interests
Immigrant and refugee family resettlement and adjustment | Families and culture | Transnational family systems | Ambiguous loss, human ecology, and social justice theories

Courses I Teach
FSOS 4158: Thailand: Global Change, Communities and Families
FSOS 8001: Family Conceptual Frameworks
FSOS 8002: Advanced Family Conceptual Frameworks

What Students Can Expect From Me
Students can expect me to challenge them to think for themselves and critically evaluate what they read, hear, observe, and experience. I work to create a learning environment that is intellectually stimulating and challenging, yet personally relevant. As a result, my courses are theoretical and abstract as well as pragmatic and concrete. My scholarly work is guided by my identity as a postmodern social constructivist feminist who seeks to understand the interdependence of individuals, families, and their environments. I am committed to a scholarly agenda that is relevant for families and has the potential to improve their lives, especially for those who are marginalized in societies around the world.

As an advisor, graduate students can expect a relationship that is grounded in mutual respect, collegiality, accountability, and reciprocity. I believe that advising involves more than developing research skills and giving instrumental/technical advice. My approach is to be a mentor who supports and guides students through the ups and downs of their program, to provide space to talk about personal as well as professional issues, and to challenge and hold students accountable.

Undergraduate and Graduate Research Opportunities
Testing a culturally and contextually relevant financial education program for Karen refugees.

Teaching Philosophy
I strive to engage learners to recognize their own perspectives, to be curious about perspectives different than their own, to critically examine culture, ethnicity, race, gender, and social class in family and community contexts, and to embrace discomfort as opportunity for growth.

Currently Funded Research Projects
• Karen refugee family well-being and adaptation
• Cultural adaptations in financial capability education
• Ambiguous loss in transnational families
Teaching Philosophy
I approach teaching as a collaborative and engaged learning process. I respect and emphasize different ways of “knowing,” and believe developing and refining critical thinking skills is essential.

Undergraduate and Graduate Research Opportunities
Undergraduates can gain research and outreach experience in a range of normative decision making issues affecting elders in the context of intergenerational families.

Graduate students have opportunities to learn and apply family theories, qualitative research skills, and prevention education strategies and translate findings into educational resources. Current projects are in the analyses and writing phases. Later life families are the fastest growing part of the population and having the skills and knowledge to strengthen elder and family well-being will be in demand.

Research Interests
Aging families, economic well-being and financial literacy | Decision–making issues and processes in later life | Intergenerational resource transfers | Interpersonal social justice
Inheritance dynamics | Advance care planning | Long-term care risk management

Currently Funded Research Projects
• Families and Inheritance: Meaning and Experience of “Fairness”
• Elder Familial Financial Exploitation

Future Research Development
• Families and Inheritance decision-making
• Intergenerational and sibling relationships
• Role and meaning of fairness/justice motives
• Elder familial financial exploitation – role of entitlement
What Students Can Expect From Me

Students enrolled in courses that I teach quickly learn that I really do care about their learning. By building a comfortable and enjoyable classroom community developed in the early weeks of the semester by sharing our stories and experiences, I focus on sharing key content related to communication, communication styles, and storytelling while encouraging students to take on their personal challenges and overcome them.

Research Interests

- Family communication
- Refugee resettlement in Minnesota
- Current trends in bereavement counseling

Teaching Philosophy

To create an effective, learner-centered classroom community that allows space for personal exploration, articulation of personal experiences and beliefs, as well as the building and sharing of knowledge.

Courses I Teach

- EDHD 1525W: First Year Inquiry: Multidisciplinary Ways of Knowing
- FSOS 1461: Presentations at Work: Families, Communities, Nonprofits, and Schools
Susan Walker

Associate Professor

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Teaching Philosophy
To facilitate deeper understanding through learner-centered, critical practice, social engagement, and personal application.

Courses I Teach
FSOS 3105: Families and Technology
FSOS 5937: Parent-Child Interactions
FSOS 5946: Assessment and Evaluation in Parent Education

What Students Can Expect From Me
FSOS 3105 uses critical perspectives on our individual use of technology, and influences on personal, intimate and family relationships. Applications for students’ futures as professionals included.

FSOS 5937 develops an understanding of the theory of parent-child relationships, impacts on child and adult development, and application to the delivery of parenting education.

FSOS 5946 prepares practitioners to plan and execute formative and summative evaluations of family education programs.

Research Interests
Social context influences on parent learning | Technology integration in non-formal teaching and adult learning | Parenting education and the preparation of parenting and family educators | Family engagement in education

Currently Funded Research Projects
• Parentopia: Design-based implementation research on technology integration for parent learning in nonformal education programs
• Family education practitioners use of technology

Future Research Development
• Continued implementation, testing, and research on integrating technology in group-based programs, and effects on parent social learning, social support, social capital, and network structures as influences on parenting and family-school engagement.

Undergraduate and Graduate Research Opportunities
With my technology integration research, I have opportunities for students to learn qualitative data coding and analysis and interpretation. In some cases regarding research on parent learning and technology, students have opportunities for observation of parenting education classes and parent-child interaction classes.

And for all projects, students have the opportunity to do literature searching, management, summaries and analysis. Oftentimes, students prepare short reports summarizing research that can be shared with family education practitioners and/or families.

Faculty bio: z.umn.edu/swalker
Courses I Teach
- FSOS 1201: Human Development in Families: Lifespan
- FSOS 4109W: Family Theories
- FSOS 8295: Couple and Family Therapy Practicum
- GCC 3018: What American Dream? Children of the Social Class Divide

Undergraduate and Graduate Research Opportunities
I offer a wide variety of experiences in research, including data collection (via qualitative and quantitative methods) and data analysis. Students are exposed to Qualtrics, Dedoose, SPSS, and other software programs. Students are trained in their specific project protocol and review IRB and relevant literature.

Students may have specific opportunities such as the following: collaborating with community partners, transcribing qualitative interviews and focus groups, analyzing data via statistical software, creating reports and scholarly posters/manuscripts, and presenting research.

Teaching Philosophy
By encouraging students to be collaborators in the learning process, I believe it not only facilitates a solid understanding of the topic, but also an ability to think critically about a variety of issues.

Courses I Teach
- FSOS 1201: Human Development in Families: Lifespan
- FSOS 4109W: Family Theories
- FSOS 8295: Couple and Family Therapy Practicum
- GCC 3018: What American Dream? Children of the Social Class Divide

What Students Can Expect From Me
Students can expect to engage with material and discussion regarding relevant issues facing individuals and families. My courses are interactive and engaging. Students can expect to apply what they’re learning to topics they are passionate about. FSOS 1201, FSOS 4109W, and GCC 3018 are professionally relevant for a wide range of majors (i.e. FSoS, Psychology, Nursing, Kinesiology, Youth Studies, Pre-med and more).

Research Interests
- Prevention science
- Children/adolescent mental health
- Youth mentoring
- Social and community support
- Risk/resilience within the family

Currently Funded Research Projects
- Campus Connections: Therapeutic Mentoring for At-risk Youth
- Fostering Healthy Futures for Maltreated Children
- Autism Mentorship Program
- Caregiver-initiated mentoring

Future Research Development
- Mentoring-based interventions
- Impact of adverse childhood experiences

Faculty bio: z.umn.edu/weiler
Zha Blong Xiong

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Research Interests
Child adjustment in the family context in immigrant & refugee families  |  Community engagement & education  |  Program development and evaluation  |  Southeast Asian American families

Current Research Projects
• Teen pregnancy prevention & intervention in the Hmong community
• Social networks & child adjustment
• Hmong early childhood education

Future Research Development
• Social networks, education, and mentoring
• Family social networks and early childhood obesity

Teaching Philosophy
Students need to feel connected to the instructor and other students to be motivated to learn.

Courses I Teach
FSOS 3102: Family Systems and Diversity
FSOS 4108: Understanding and Working with Immigrants and Refugee Families

What Students Can Expect From Me
I believe in creating an environment that supports students personally and professionally.

Undergraduate and Graduate Research Opportunities
Undergraduate students can enroll in FSOS 4294: Research Internship, apply for UROP, or volunteer to be part of my research projects. I am currently working on the Hmong Children Longitudinal Study with 10 charter and public schools, examining the role of social networks on achievement gap, and women’s perceptions of divorce in the Hmong community. Students will be able to learn how to review the literature, fill out an IRB application, recruit participants for the various studies, conduct face-to-face interviews, build online surveys, administer surveys to students and parents, and/or use SPSS to enter and analyze data.
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Research Interests
Family financial issues & counseling | Families & culture
College students & money management | Social & human capital
Economic well-being of the family | Latino/a families
Family businesses | Family resource management

Currently Funded Research Projects
• Economic Well-being of Diverse Families Residing in the United States and specifically in Minnesota

Future Research Development
• Family financial issues and counseling
• College students and money management
• Economic well-being of the family

Teaching Philosophy
I see myself as a facilitator of knowledge rather than as disseminator of information, which requires a more personal approach to teaching, and places a greater emphasis on one-to-one interactions and small group gatherings inside and outside of the classroom.

Courses I Teach
FSOS 2106: Family Resource Management
FSOS 3101: Personal and Family Finance
FSOS 4153: Family Financial Counseling

What Students Can Expect From Me
FSOS 3101 focuses on personal and family finances, not corporate or government finances. It is designed to be applicable to the student’s personal life decisions and his/her professional role.

FSOS 4153 emphasizes the development of professional skills for assisting individuals and families to cope with financial concerns in their day-to-day lives and is designed to increase awareness and knowledge of the characteristics of persons in serious financial difficulties.

Undergraduate and Graduate Research Opportunities
I am currently working with undergraduate students to develop program materials to teach other students (high school students and college-age students) on topics of money management. As part of a peer-to-peer educator team called PEER$, students contribute to research and practice aimed at improving the financial decision-making of teens and young adults as well as have opportunities to practice communication and presentation skills.
Programs and Degrees

Undergraduate Programs
- Bachelor of Science (two concentrations)
  - Family & Community Engagement
  - Family Therapy
- Undergraduate Minor (three concentrations)
  - Family & Community Engagement
  - Family Therapy
  - Family Social Science

Master’s Programs
- M.A. in Family Social Science
- M.A. in Prevention Science
- M.Ed. in Family Education
- Graduate Minor in Family Social Science

Professional Programs
- Parent Education Certificate
- Parent and Family Education Certificate

Doctoral Programs
- Ph.D. in Family Social Science (two specializations)
  - Family Science
  - Couple & Family Therapy
- Ph.D. Minor in Prevention Science
- Graduate Minor in Family Social Science

Continuing Education
- Ambiguous Loss online certificate

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