

MOUNT SAINT VINCENT UNIVERSITY

FSGN 4480/GFSG 6650
Special Topics in Family Studies: Military Families

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Course Outline

Fall 2014

Course Description

The well-being of the families of military members and veterans is related to their experiences with the contemporary realities of military service, particularly the increased tempo of operations undertaken by the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) since 1990. Working from a critical-ecological framework, this course will facilitate an understanding of the pathways through which military culture, family policies, community-based programs, and relational and individual processes interact to develop and maintain resilience for the families of military members and veterans across the life course.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, the student will be able to:

- Analyze the relationship between military service and the well-being of the families of military members and veterans;
- Describe the biological, psychological and social dimensions of well-being associated with their life course, service-related and/or combat-related experiences;
- Explore the pathways to resilience for the families of military members and veterans and identify the risk and protective factors that emerge along the way;
- Review and evaluate programs (primary, secondary, and tertiary programs and health promotion services) and policies designed to build capacity within the families of military members and veterans across the life course;
- Identify gaps in the research focusing on the biological, psychological and social dimensions of military family experience and discuss related implications for theory, research and practice in the field.

Texts & Readings

Blaisure, K. R., Saathoff-Wells, T., Pereira, A., Wadsworth, S. M. & Dombro, A. L. (2012). *Serving military families in the 21st century*. New York: Routledge.

Students taking this course for graduate credit (GFSG 6650) will be responsible for completing readings **in addition to the undergraduate text**. Course readings can be downloaded through the course *Moodle* site. Readings will be organized by topic on the *Moodle* site.

Course Considerations

- This course is offered at both the undergraduate (FSGN 4480) and Graduate (GFSG 6650) level.
- FSGN 4480/GFSG 6650 is delivered using a "blended" format". Students enrolled in **section 01** will participate face-to-face, on campus, while those enrolled in **section 20** will simultaneously participate at a distance through the use of Moodle and Blackboard Collaborate technologies. All students will be capable of interacting with the professor, and will be provided with equal opportunity to ask questions and receive feedback.
- Students will automatically receive access to Moodle once registration is completed (registration is not complete until all documentation is received (including letters of permission for visiting students).
- Assignments are expected on the dates noted. For unique cases of illness, family crises, or work requirements that prevent meeting the deadlines, please consult with the professor as far in advance as possible to make alternate arrangements. These cases will be handled on an individual basis.
- General questions about the course can be posted in the *Course Conversation Forum*. This forum can also be used for general discussion of issues that emerge in class discussion or readings. Course announcements will be posted to the *News Forum*.
- Please review the following resources available to you from the Moodle home page and the "Main Menu" Block as you become familiar with Moodle:
- Moodle Helpful Hints (FAQ)
<http://moodlelive.msvu.ca/mod/resource/view.php?id=55790>
- How to use Moodle (PDF)
<http://moodlelive.msvu.ca/mod/resource/view.php?id=34234>
- How to use Moodle (Video Clips)
<http://moodlelive.msvu.ca/mod/resource/view.php?id=54920>
- If you experience a problem with Moodle, please contact online@MSVU.ca

APA Format

APA (American Psychological Association) format is required for referencing. Please

consult with your professor if you are not familiar with this format. The APA manual is available from the bookstore and the University library. An Internet guide to APA style is also available through: <http://www.msvu.ca/site/media/msvu/StyleGuide.apa6.pdf>

PLEASE TAKE NOTE:

The following information is supplied in accordance with University requirements:

- Correct use of language is one of the criteria used in the evaluation of all written assignments.
- Students are reminded that the university regulations on plagiarism and cheating and other academic offences will be strictly enforced. These regulations are posted on department notice boards and on the website at www.msvu.ca on the Current Students page under Academic Offenses.
- Students who have a disability and who require academic accommodations must register with Disability Services as early as possible in order to receive accommodations. (<http://www.msvu.ca/disabilityservices>)
- Regular attendance is expected of students at all classes and assignments are expected on the dates noted. Failure to attend class and/or late submission of assignments will result in penalties unless prior arrangements are made with the professor.

Evaluation

Assignment	Due Dates	Value
Participation (In-class and through <i>Course Conversation Forum</i>)	Ongoing Assessed on October 16, 2014 & November 13, 2014	15%
Critical Incident Questionnaires (CIQs)	Weekly	15%
Case Studies (2)	September 25, 2014 (1) November 6, 2014 (2)	40%
Take-Home Exam (FSGN 4480 students only)	December 4, 2014	30%
Research Paper	December 4, 2014	30%

Expectations

Participation

Participation is necessary for optimal success in this course. It will be assessed through the *Moodle* site tracking system, though evidence of interaction with fellow students and the professor through the **Course Conversation Forum** and through the timely submission of assignments.

Criteria for the evaluation of participation, particularly through the **Course Conversation Forum**, includes:

- ü Relevance of the issues/questions raised to course lectures (including those facilitated by guest speakers), readings;
- ü Thoughtful and in-depth analysis of the issues raised for discussion;
- ü Capacity to engage in relevant dialogue.

Students will receive confidential emails from the professor on October 16, 2014 and November 13, 2014 providing constructive feedback on their participation in the course.

Critical Incident Questionnaires

Students will complete a *Critical Incident Questionnaire (CIQ)* each week. The CIQs will be emailed to Deborah.norris@MSVU.ca by 4:30 p.m. on the Monday afternoon following each class. Responses will be shared by the professor at the start of the following week's class. Students will not be identified. The following questions will guide the development of each CIQ.

1. At what moment in the class this week did you feel most engaged with what was happening?
2. At what moment in the class this week did you feel most distanced from what was happening?
3. What action that anyone (professor or student) took in class this week did you find most affirming and helpful?
4. What action that anyone (professor or student) took in class this week did you find most puzzling or confusing?
5. What about the class this week surprised you the most? (This could be something about your own reactions to what went on, or something that someone did, or anything else that occurs to you.)
6. What concepts and propositions discussed in the readings discussed this week have been helpful in understanding your experience with the class this week?
7. What questions remain?

Case Studies 1 and 2

Case Study 1

Review Case Study 1 and complete the assignment in accordance with the following steps:

Step 1 – overview of the military family case study (background context)

Read the case study to gain an overview of the case and ask and answer the following questions as you read.

What background facts influence the current problems?

What are the constraints or obstacles in the situation?

Step 2 – identifying the problems

Identify the major problems and their causes

Summarize the findings of three (3) peer-reviewed, scholarly articles (not the articles used in class) that support your analysis of the problems and their causes

Re-read the case study and summarize or list the issues and / or problems in your own words. Make sure you:

Sort the major problems from the minor problems.

Identify evidence from the case study which relates to each of the problems.

Identify underlying causes of the problems.

Step 3 – linking theory to problems and case evidence

Situate the identified issues / or problems within the critical-ecological model of military family resilience

Case Study 2

Students will prepare a case study focusing on one military family experience (e.g. spouse/partner experiencing STSR or PTG, military child's schooling affected by frequent relocations, intimate partner violence) and present the case in accordance with the following steps:

Step 1 – provide an overview of the case (background context)

What background facts influence the current problems?

What are the constraints or obstacles in the situation?

Step 2 – identifying the problems

Identify the major problems and their causes

Summarize the findings of three (3) peer-reviewed, scholarly articles (not the articles

used in class) that support your analysis of the problems and their causes.
Re-read the case study and summarize or list the issues and / or problems in your own words. Make sure you:
Sort the major problems from the minor problems.
Identify evidence from the case study which relates to each of the problems.
Identify underlying causes of the problems.

Step 3 – linking theory to problems and case evidence
Situate the identified issues / or problems within the critical-ecological model of military family resilience.

Take Home Exam (FSGN 4480)

FSGN 4480 students will write an “open-book” exam at the end of the term. The exam will consist of 10 short-answer questions. Questions will focus on course material discussed in lectures and readings. Students will access the tests and submit answers through a drop-box created on the course Moodle site for this purpose. Each test will be accessible for 120 continuous minutes (2 hours) at any time from 8:00 a.m. until midnight on the dates noted. Students must write the tests on the dates noted. Alternate days/times will only be arranged through consultation with the professor well in advance of the test date and only in exceptional circumstances.

Research Paper (GFSG 6650)

The research paper will provide graduate students with the opportunity to review relevant scholarly literature on a topic pertinent to military families. Students will select their topics; however, consultation with the professor is encouraged.

* Papers will be 12-15 pages in length with 12-15 references.

SUPPLEMENTAL SCHOLARLY REFERENCES (JOURNAL ARTICLES) MUST BE USED IN DEVELOPING THE RESEARCH PAPERS, NOT COURSE READINGS.

On-line databases accessible through the University Library will be helpful in sourcing and retrieving the journal articles to be used as references in developing the research papers. Please check out the following databases:

(<http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/library/research/articlesresearch/default.aspx>)

Other resources may also be helpful:

<http://forms.msvu.ca/library/tutorial/onlinejournal3/onlinejournal3.html>

http://forms.msvu.ca/library/PDFs/Online_Library_Guide.pdf

<http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/library/services/askalibrarian/offline.aspx>

<http://libguides.msvu.ca/help>

The APA (American Psychological Association) Style Guide (6th Edition) is required as a guide in referencing citations within the body of the research paper, in preparing reference lists and in organizing the papers by headings. Please consult with your professor if you are not familiar with APA format. The APA Style Guide is available from the bookstore and the University library. An Internet guide to APA format is also available through: <http://www.msvu.ca/site/media/msvu/StyleGuide.apa6.pdf>

Students may find it useful to use RefWorks, software that supports the retrieval and storage of scholarly references. RefWorks will also enable the development of reference lists organized in APA format. Information about RefWorks can be found at:

<http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/library/research/citationrefworks/default.aspx>

Students will find it helpful to refer to the Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL) for support in writing the research paper. This resource can be accessed through:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/03/>

Students will submit their Research Papers through a dedicated Research Paper drop-box created for this purpose at any time from 8:00 a.m. to midnight on the due date.