

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY STUDIES (HDFS)

Degrees Offered: M.S.

This program is offered in Durham.

The Department of Human Development and Family Studies offers two programs of study leading to a master of science degree in human development and family studies: the Marriage and Family Therapy M.S. Program and Core Areas of Study Program (Human Development and Family Studies M.S.).

The goal of both programs is to provide students with an understanding of theory and methods relevant to human development and family studies and to prepare them to work with individuals and families in therapeutic, educational, community or corporate settings. The Marriage and Family Therapy Program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education and requires a minimum of two years of full-time study, including two summers. The Core Areas of Study program has two foci: Adolescent Development and Child Development, and students may elect to complete a thesis or comprehensive exam.

GRADE POLICY

A graduate student who fails a course must immediately attend a mandatory meeting with the instructor of the course, the Human Development and Family Studies Graduate Coordinator, and, if desired, the student's adviser. If a graduate student receives grades below "B--" in **two or more courses**, the Human Development and Family Studies Graduate Coordinator will make a recommendation to the Graduate School that the student be dismissed from the human development and family studies graduate program.

Admission Requirements

Students in good standing with undergraduate degrees in any field and a specific interest in working with individuals and families are encouraged to apply. Candidates for the master's degree program must have completed an introductory statistics course or the equivalent as part of their undergraduate program. If their undergraduate program did not include such a course, students who are accepted into the M.S. program must successfully complete an introductory statistics course before they graduate.

Applicants to the MFT program must answer the 5 questions listed on the department's [MFT admissions website](#). Responses to the MFT questions should be submitted in numbered format, and must address each question separately and explicitly. Individuals applying to the MFT program must submit their five answers with their applications.

Applicants in the Core Area of Study program must also complete a graduate statistics course, see "Program Requirements" for the Core Area of Study. Individuals applying to the Core Areas of Study and Certificate programs must submit a standard personal statement with their applications.

<https://chhs.unh.edu/human-development-family-studies>

Programs

- [Human Development and Family Studies \(M.S.\)](#)
- [Human Development and Family Studies: Marriage and Family Therapy \(M.S.\)](#)

Courses

Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS)

HDFS 834 - Curriculum for Young Children

Credits: 4

This course focuses on the design, implementation, and evaluation of developmentally-appropriate activities in a classroom of young children. This course takes the stance that curriculum is not simply activities or plans, but a product of societal, school, and classroom culture as influenced by particular views of development.

Equivalent(s): FS 834

Grade Mode: Letter Grading

HDFS 841 - Marital and Family Therapy

Credits: 4

This course provides an introduction to the theory and practice of marital and family therapy; major approaches to be examined include strategic, trans-generational, structural, experiential/humanistic, and behavioral.

Equivalent(s): FS 841

Grade Mode: Letter Grading

HDFS 843 - Families, Schools, and Community

Credits: 4

This course takes an ecological approach to emphasize the critical value of effective family-school-community partnerships in enhancing the education of young children. Models of family-school-community partnerships are explored. Practical knowledge regarding the experiences of those from diverse backgrounds to best prepare students to interact with, and support, all children and families is highlighted. Students actively engage within the community to build bridges between families, schools, and the greater community.

Equivalent(s): FS 843

Grade Mode: Letter Grading

HDFS 846 - Human Sexuality

Credits: 4

This course addresses the biological, psychological, and cultural aspects of human sexuality and gender across the lifespan. Opinions, attitudes, and values affecting societal responses to sexual issues are explored in relation to scientific research and theory. Students will be better prepared to deal with sexual issues in their personal and professional lives.

Equivalent(s): FS 846

Grade Mode: Letter Grading

HDFS 857 - Race, Class, Gender, and Families

Credits: 4

This course explores the intersection of race, class, and gender in family life in the US. Theory, research, and other relevant literature is used to examine the variety of family configurations in our society today and the diverse experiences that individuals and families have as the result of existing social, political, and economic institutions.

Equivalent(s): FS 857

Grade Mode: Letter Grading

HDFS 871 - Observation and Assessment of Young Children**Credits:** 4

A comprehensive view of various observation techniques for determining children's strengths and emerging skills. Exploration of issues regarding the use of formal assessments and testing with young children, retention and transitional placements, and the parent's role in testing. Permission. (Fall semester only.)

Equivalent(s): FS 871**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**HDFS 876 - Children, Adolescents and the Law****Credits:** 4

This course is designed to familiarize students with the specialized laws and legal systems that govern children, adolescents and families. Discussion will focus on society's efforts to balance competing interests and goals. The course provides the chance to explore laws and processes that affect children and adolescents as they interact with the court system, their caregivers, families and society at large.

Equivalent(s): FS 876**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**HDFS 894 - Families and the Law****Credits:** 4

This course explores statutory law, case law and the judicial processes that affect families as members interact with each other and society. Students will become familiarized with the family court system and its role in regulating the family.

Equivalent(s): FS 894**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**HDFS 895 - Advanced Independent Study****Credits:** 1-6

This course is designed for students in the HDFS graduate program to undertake advanced study in child development, adolescent development, or lifespan development in consultation with an HDFS faculty member. The result of the study is to be a significant written product of a quality. A learner/sponsor contract will be required.

Grade Mode: Letter Grading**HDFS 897 - Special Topics****Credits:** 1-4

Focused examination of a particular theoretical, methodological, or policy issue.

Repeat Rule: May be repeated for a maximum of 8 credits.**Equivalent(s):** FS 897**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**HDFS 898 - Marriage and Family Therapy Practicum****Credits:** 1-8

Clinical experience under direct faculty supervision. Trainees develop competency in treating individuals in the context of their families and larger systems. May be repeated.

Equivalent(s): FS 898**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**Special Fee:** Yes**HDFS 899 - Master's Thesis****Credits:** 1-6

Master's Thesis.

Repeat Rule: May be repeated for a maximum of 10 credits.**Equivalent(s):** FS 899**Grade Mode:** Graduate Credit/Fail grading**HDFS 911 - Graduate Internship****Credits:** 2-8

Advanced, supervised graduate internship in a professional setting related to Family, Child, or Adolescent Development.

Repeat Rule: May be repeated for a maximum of 8 credits.**Equivalent(s):** FS 911**Grade Mode:** Graduate Credit/Fail grading**HDFS 930 - Play Therapy****Credits:** 4

This course introduces students to the theories and concepts behind play therapy, integrating foundational principles of child development to provide a comprehensive understanding of developmentally appropriate methods for working with children both individually and within the family context (Program Goal 3; SLO #4). The course aims to equip students with the skills to integrate play therapy techniques into existing frameworks of family therapy (Program Goal 1; SLO #1), while also deepening their understanding of child developmental stages and how these impact therapeutic approaches (Program Goal 2; SLO #2).

Additionally, students will learn effective strategies for intervening in parenting issues and for articulating and applying intervention techniques and theoretical models within their practice (Program Goal 4; SLO #5; Program Goal 5; SLO #7).

Equivalent(s): FS 930**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**HDFS 942 - Advanced Systems of Marital and Family Therapy****Credits:** 4

This course provides a critical analysis and integration of selected systems of marital and family therapy.

Prerequisite(s): HDFS 841 with a minimum grade of B-.**Equivalent(s):** FS 942**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**HDFS 945 - Family Therapy Practice I****Credits:** 4

This course is designed to develop beginning practice skills in structural, strategic, systematic family therapies; and assessment and treatment skills necessary to manage specialized problems (e.g., divorce, remarriage, substance abuse, suicidal behavior) encountered in practice.

Equivalent(s): FS 945**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**HDFS 946 - Critical Problems in Family Life****Credits:** 4

This course provides an evaluation of the needs and resources of families with critical problems; maturational and situational sources of stress influencing the contemporary family; students demonstrate mastery of theoretical concepts by developing self-help strategies to be used by families experiencing stress.

Equivalent(s): FS 946**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**HDFS 947 - Family Therapy Practice II****Credits:** 4

This course is designed to develop advanced skills in integrating structural, strategic, and systematic family therapies; sensitivity to gender differences and cultural diversity; and assessment and treatment skills necessary to manage specialized problems (e.g., physical, emotional, and sexual abuse; sexual dysfunction) encountered in practice.

Equivalent(s): FS 947**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading

HDFS 952 - Clinical Interventions in Couples Therapy**Credits:** 4

This course explores interventions that target problems faced by couples at various ages and stages of their relationship. The focus will be on developing and implementing effective strategies for enhancing attachments as well as approaches for improving communication and problem-solving skills in Couples Therapy. The format will be interactive with illustrative demonstration. Majors to include: HDFS: Marriage and Family Therapy and Social Work.

Equivalent(s): FS 952**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**HDFS 954 - Sex Therapy****Credits:** 4

This course begins preparing graduate student therapists to address sexual topics with clients. Using a foundation grounded in the physiology, psychology, and sociology of human sexual development, this course explores problems in sexual interaction and treatment options available through sex therapy, focusing on the integration of sex therapy with couples therapy. Students are encouraged to examine their own attitudes, values, and beliefs regarding sexuality, and will deconstruct "sexual dysfunction".

Equivalent(s): FS 954**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**HDFS 991 - Professional Issues for Family Specialists****Credits:** 4

This course provides an exploration of major ethical, legal, and professional issues facing those working in the areas of marriage and family therapy and child and adolescent development. Focus on ethical decision making, values clarification, and development of professional identity.

Equivalent(s): FS 991**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**HDFS 993 - Theoretical Approaches to Human Development and Family Studies****Credits:** 4

This course provides an in-depth understanding and appreciation of the most significant classic and emerging theoretical frameworks concerning the family and family dynamics. The application of each theory to work in the areas of marriage and family therapy and child and adolescent development will be examined in depth.

Equivalent(s): FS 993**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading**HDFS 994 - Research Seminar****Credits:** 4

This course is a graduate-level introduction to research methods in the social sciences with an emphasis on the fields of Human Development and Family Studies and Marriage and Family Therapy. This course is designed to help students conceptualize and write about research, understand and generate practice-relevant research, gain the foundation for research competency, and understand the research process.

Equivalent(s): FS 994**Grade Mode:** Letter Grading

Faculty

[Human Development and Family Studies Department Faculty](#)