



COURSE SYLLABUS

Course:	EDZU 9984	The Impact of Divorce on Our Students
Credit Hours:	3.0 credits / 45 hours	
Instructor:	Richard Acritelli	

Course Description

Today divorce is one of the biggest issues that we see affecting our students in this educational system. While divorce has always impacted our students, the increase in its numbers has reached staggering proportions. This alarming trend is felt by every school district, teacher and support staff in this country. This course deals with the different problems that children and young adults must handle on a daily basis as a result of the massive family changes. It is often the case that when teachers call or email a parent, they view multiple contacts and addresses for guardians that are no longer married and children who split their time between these different residences. For our students, it could be a difficult challenge to juggle the emotional strains at home while earning suitable grades. There are many situations in which teachers know little about the home life, type of divorce, living arrangements or simply the reasons why some students struggle to handle this situation within an academic setting. All prospective students will learn about the family, legal, educational, social, psychological, health, and criminal aspects of divorce that could negatively impact our students before, during, and after school hours. This class will have insightful readings, statistics, government information, video clips, movies, and current events that will shed a vital light on the growing connection of divorce and education for today and in the future.

Course Goals

To Know:

1. The changing scope of American families that has been seen through the increase in divorce
2. The increase of the risk of suicide between children and even family members that are unable to handle the many different pressures of a divorce
3. The problems that some children face in maintaining their grades and handling the stress of a difficult divorce
4. The changes that we see within divorce rates over the last several decades and how the younger generations view getting married at an older age, being economically stable and having fewer children.
5. The divorce rate in America and how it is organized to show the estimated amount of people and families that are handling this type of living arrangement
6. The connection of divorce to major eating disorders
7. The importance of learning about the home environment of the difficult cases that deal with divorced students. There are times that students act differently when a different man or woman are

incorporated into their lives.

To Understand:

1. That divorce is seen through every type of family, profession, and legal standing in this nation, even through the difficult experience of students who are from split families that might have one parent that is incarcerated.
2. The difficulties that parents and students could face through the alienation of a loved one.
3. The parental importance of making joint custody work at home and at school for the benefit of their children.
4. The psychological toll on students who face divorce and the warning signs that could be observed through the possible changes within a student's demeanor/personality.
5. The challenges that students face with living in a blended family of a new step-parent and children.
6. The ability to have communication with both parents of a divorce situation and to address serious problems that are facing their children.
7. The warning signs that students could possibly be facing possible violence at home.
8. That children and young adults are left open to facing more social concerns through a divorced situation where there is a lack of parenting. It is very possible that some of these students could face greater challenges with drug abuse, early pregnancy, and alcohol consumption.

and To Be Able To:

1. Identify the connection of divorce and academic achievement.
2. Determine the rights of non-custodial parents.
3. Describe the lasting impact of divorce on students as they get older.
4. Analyze extremely serious current events stories that demonstrate a connection between family violence and divorce.
5. Explain how the disruption of a family could lead to possible criminal behavior from our younger adults.
6. Communicate with students and understand that a lack of educational performance could be due to the result of a serious divorce that is a legitimate distraction.
7. Gain a better understanding of divorce and its many different facets of this difficult social problem that has been increasingly seen in this nation.

Course Outline

I. Introduction to the Course

A. The students will analyze the impact of divorce from their own experiences

- I. Parental Contact
- II. Custody Arrangements
- III. Living and family responsibilities
- IV. If this custody is joint or sole custody

- V. Past and current students
- VI. Divorced family conferences

B. Changing Scope of the American family

- I. Family Structure of today compared to years ago
- II. The impact of family structure on education
- III. The role of divorced parents with teachers and schools
- IV. Communication with both parents
- V. Statistics and information of the American household that is becoming more common to be divorced

C. Risks of suicide and divorce

- I. Warning signs with students that could be seen in schools
- II. The role that teachers and support staff play in protecting the health of our students
- III. The ability to speak with parents about extremely sensitive social, educational and family issues that are becoming apparent in school
- IV. Current events of students and family members that have seen suicide within their family over this alarming issue

D. Increased female divorce in America

- I. Why more women are filing for divorce
- II. The female role of single parents
- III. Greater independence amongst females to handle more on their own
- IV. Lack of a willingness for both men and women to work on problems to save their marriages

II. Divorce and Children

A. Older college students and their memories of divorce

- I. Remembrance of the friction between fighting parents
- II. Impact on past and future educational and social development
- III. The aspects of the divorce that remain consistent with these students

B. The grieving process for children

- I. Feelings of sadness
- II. Anxiety/Depression
- III. Economic hardships
 - A. Parents that must work a couple of jobs to pay for child support
 - B. Possible lack of opportunity for future educational opportunities due to split homes and financial resources
 - C. Students who must face a greater burden of working, paying rent, and buying their own goods and services
 - D. A teacher's understanding that nice clothing and a smile from a student who is going through a divorce could be covering up financial difficulties that kids and young adults must endure
- IV. Torn between parents
- V. Poor educational grades, lack of happiness, content with just getting by in school
- VI. Possible health problems that are seen with children that are hurt by divorce

C. Student achievement and divorce

- I. Grades
 - II. Effort
 - III. Distractions
 - IV. Warning signs – Lack of drive, caring, sense of despair, etc.
 - V. Communication between parents, teachers and students
 - VI. The ability of both parents to work well with each other with teachers
 - A. Teachers must be able to understand the importance of keeping both parents informed of both positive and negative news
 - B. Fostering the need to show the importance of divorced parents taking an equal participation within the educational development of their children
 - VII. Need for students to speak with professional resources within the school (teachers, social workers, guidance counselors, psychologists, administration and coaches)
- D. Students, divorce and possible crime**
- I. The lives of these students before divorce
 - II. Issues of drug and alcohol abuse, deterioration of grades and effort
 - III. New friends and influences
 - IV. Students who are looking for attention through negative criminal actions that have received very little direction from their parents
 - V. Well known talented children and young adults that have been completely hurt by the divorce and actions of their parents (Lindsay Lohan)
 - VI. The most recent story of parents and neglect in Center Moriches that saw a young boy completely neglected where the school tried to report on the warning signs. This boy died due to suffering severe cold from living in a garage, he wore dirty clothing and was not in contact with his mother.

Methods of Instruction

The students will complete readings, forums, think-tank studies, government statistics, movies, current events, and news clips that will be present this course information. All students are expected to answer questions, present their own thoughts and experiences within well written and lengthy responses.

Students will connect with each other throughout the course within forums and various other types of online feedback options built into each class.

Methods of Assessment

Graduate level students will complete a paper for an “A,” and they must also submit mandatory course assignments. For a grade of a “B”, graduate level students have the option of submitting a lesson plan including all of its course materials. The assignments are counted out of a range from 0-100 points and they are expected to complete these assignments on a timely basis during the entire length of this course.

Instructors are online each day of the course and correspond with students through the course itself, feedback on assignments, and e-mail.

Time Validation

Assignment	Time (in hours)
Introduction to the Divorced American Students (Questions/Experiences)	1.50
The Changing Scope of the American Family and Divorce Statistics (Reading/Questions)	1.50
Divorce and Parental Suicide (Reading/Questions)	1.50
Women, Mothers and the Growth of Divorce (Reading, Video and Questions)	1.50
College Students and their Memories of being in a Divorced Family (Video, Forum)	1.50
Oprah - A Young Man and the Grieving Proces of being a Divorced Child (Video and Reading, Questions)	1.50
The Impact of Divorce on Children and Education (Reading/Questions)	1.50
By the Numbers, a Break Down of Divorce in America over the Generations (Reading/ Questions)	1.50
The Heartbreaking History of Divorce (Reading/Questions)	1.00
Film Assignment - All students are expected to watch one film that is tied to this course, they will have several options. This assignment deals with a film that deals with divorce, children and the content that we have been examining. All students will watch the film, complete detailed questions and will look at other resources that are tied to this assignment	4.00
The Divorce Rate in America and its Impact on Families - It Actually Going Down? (Reading/Video/Questions)	1.50
Incarcerated Divorced Parents and Children and Oprah (Video/Reading/Statistics/Questions)	2.50
9 Rules to Make Joint Custody Work (Reading/Questions)	1.50
Parental Alienation and Students (Reading/Questions)	1.50
Divorce and Anxiety in Children and Teens (Our Students and the Statistics of some Troubled Children and Young Adults) - (Reading/Questions/Video)	2.00
Doctor Phil and the Strains of Divorce on Children and the Mistakes that are Made by Parents that could be seen with our Students in School (Reading/Questions/Video)	2.00
National Statistics of Divorce and our Students (Reading/Questions)	1.50
Children of Divorce and the Food Eating Disorders (Reading/Questions)	1.50
Parents Teachers and Communication with Schools (Reading/Questions)	1.00
Where do Teachers Stand with Divorced Parents and Students? (Reading/Questions/Forum)	2.00

8 Teachers Tips and Statistics When Dealing With Divorce and Students	2.00
Rights of Non-Custodial Parents in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Acts of 1974 (Reading/Questions)	1.50
Divorce and Student Achievement Statistics and Charts (Reading/Questions)	1.50
Different Types of Divorce within American Society and Schools Teacher Research (Reading/School Based Research and Interview of Support Staff)	2.00
The Risks of Juvenile Delinquency in Children of Divorce, Oprah and Lindsay Lohan (Reading/Video/Questions)	2.00
The Impact of Divorce on Future Relationships of our Students (Reading/Questions)	1.00
Current Events and Divorce, Schools, Children, and Parents Research Story (Reading/Questions/Research)	1.00
Total Time	45.00