CHDV 154
Book Club Assignments

Two class discussions will be based on books chosen for two “book club” meetings. You will need to choose ONE of the books below and complete book club assignments prior to the book club meetings. These book club assignments involve reading a portion of the text and responding to a series of reflection questions. As with other discussion assignments, responses to questions should be word-processed and ready to turn in at the beginning of the class session. Late assignments are not accepted and you must be present to receive full credit for the assignment.

BOOK CLUB GROUP ASSIGNMENTS MAY BE FOUND HERE

The Books
Please choose **one of the following three books**, listed with descriptions below. There are many sources for these books (including the public library, book stores, and on line sellers). **Please provide me with your first two book choices by JANUARY 29th.**

1) **How Eskimos Keep Their Babies Warm: And Other Adventures in Parenting (from Argentina to Tanzania and everywhere in between), by Mei-Ling Hopgood.**
   A tour of global practices that will inspire American parents to expand their horizons (and geographical borders) and learn that there’s more than one way to diaper a baby. Mei-Ling Hopgood, a first-time mom from suburban Michigan—now living in Buenos Aires—was shocked that Argentine parents allow their children to stay up until all hours of the night. Could there really be social and developmental advantages to this custom? Driven by a journalist’s curiosity and a new mother’s desperation for answers, Hopgood embarked on a journey to learn how other cultures approach the challenges all parents face: bedtimes, potty training, feeding, teaching, and more. Observing parents around the globe and interviewing anthropologists, educators, and child-care experts, she discovered a world of new ideas. Hopgood tested her discoveries on her spirited toddler, Sofia, with some enlightening results.

2) **Baby, We Were Meant for Each Other: In Praise of Adoption, by Scott Simon**
   In this warm, funny, and wise new book, NPR’s award-winning and beloved Scott Simon tells the story of how he and his wife found true love with two tiny strangers from the other side of the world. Woven into the tale of Scott, Caroline, and the two little girls who changed their lives are the stories of other adoptive families. Some are famous and some are not, but each family’s saga captures facets of the miracle of adoption. *Baby, We Were Meant for Each Other* is a love story that doesn’t gloss over the rough spots. There are anxieties and tears along with hugs and smiles and the unparalleled joy of this blessed and special way of making a family.

3) **Stuck in the Middle with You: A Memoir of Parenting in Three Genders, by Jennifer Finney Boylan with Anna Quindlen.**
   A memoir about gender and parenting that discusses how families are shaped and the difficulties and wonders of being human. A father for six years, a mother for ten, and for a time in between, neither, or both, Jennifer Finney Boylan has seen parenthood from both sides of the gender divide. When her two children were young, Boylan came out as transgender, and as Jenny transitioned from a man to a woman and from a father to a mother, her family faced unique challenges and questions. In this thoughtful, tear-jerking, hilarious memoir, Jenny asks what it means to be a father, or a mother, and to what extent gender shades our experiences as parents. Through both her own story and incredibly insightful interviews with others, Jenny examines relationships between fathers, mothers, and children; people’s memories of the children they were and the parents they became; and the many different ways a family can be.
Book Club Assignments
We will discuss the books twice in small groups during "book club" meetings. In preparation for each meeting, you will need to (a) read the assigned portion of the book and (b) complete a series of reflection questions (c) develop two discussion questions for the group. Responses must be word processed and completed and turned in at the beginning of class on the day they are due. No late assignments will be accepted. You must be present during discussion to receive full credit.

Book Club Assignment #1 (10 points)
1) Reading Assignment
   • How Eskimos keep........Read pp. 1-149
   • Baby, we were....Read 1-100
   • Stuck in the middle...Read 1-156

2) Reflection Questions
   1. Why did you choose this book? What are your impressions thus far?
   2. All three of these books are parenting “memoirs” of a sort. What would your memoir be about? What story do you have to tell about being a parent or having a parent?
   3. Of what value (if any) is it to consider the diversity of parenting portrayed in these books?

3) Discussion Questions
   Develop TWO discussion questions for your book club group - two things you are wondering about and would like to discuss in the group, not factual questions. Be prepared to present and discuss these questions in your group.

Book Club Assignment #2 (10 points)
1) Reading Assignment
   • How Eskimos keep........ Read pp. 150-258
   • Baby, we were....Read 101-192
   • Stuck in the middle...Read 157-285

2) Reflection Questions
   1. What does this book have to say about the influence of culture/gender/family structure on parenting practice and children? Provide examples.
   2. What makes a family “normal”? Are these families ”normal”? Is the fact that they are atypical a problem? Why or why not?
   3. Identify a theme (or "take home" message) from this book. What do you think the author is trying to convey by writing about parental practice in these different circumstances? Do you think this is a worthwhile message? Why or why not?
   4. Do you recommend this book? Why or why not?

3) Discussion Questions
   Develop TWO discussion questions for your book club group - two things you are wondering about and would like to discuss in the group, not factual questions. Be prepared to present and discuss these questions in your group.