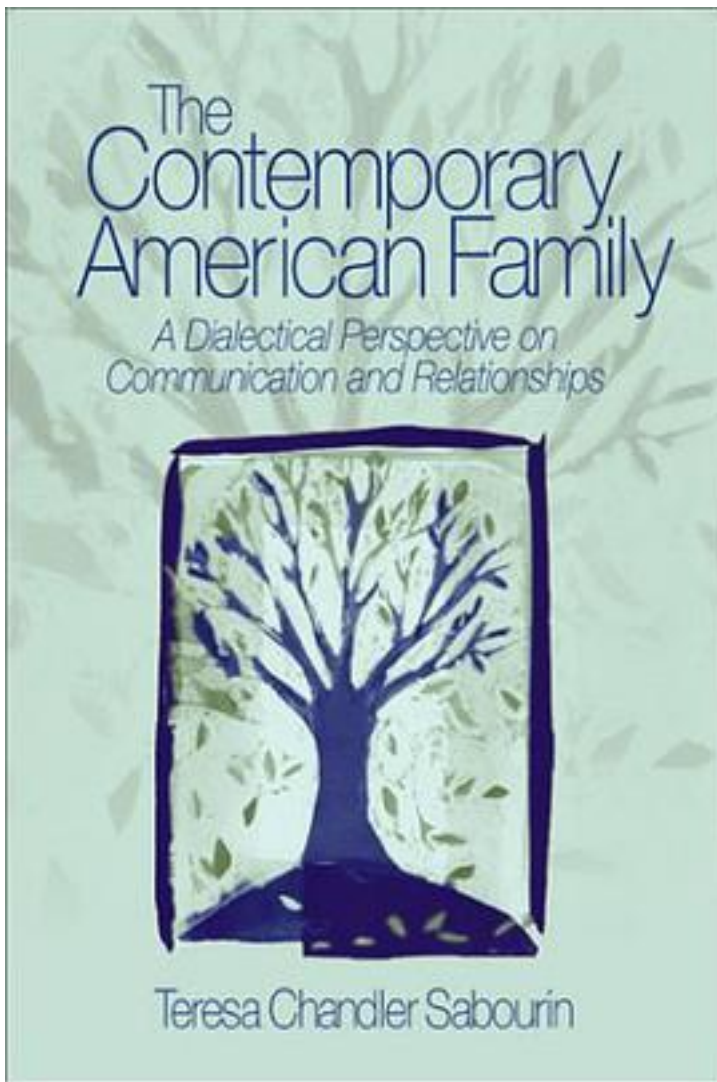


The Contemporary American Family



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Written to expand the definition of the contemporary American family to be more inclusive, this book approaches diversity as the norm and does not assume conventional family values. The theoretical position is the dialectical approach, which assumes paradox and relational tension as normal, rather than a systems approach, which is a form of psychological cause and effect. Chapter One defines 'dialectics' in the context of family communication and family relations. Chapter Two addresses the question, 'What is a real family?' Chapters Three to Six examine four types of family diversity: structural, cultural, developmental, and functional. Chapter Seven takes a bold step by examining the meaning and effects of family spirituality, a topic rarely considered in academic circles but one that has enormous impact on the communication behaviors and relationships within the family.

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