

Psychology 325

Fall 2014

Theory Paper assignment (a.k.a. midterm)

The **theory paper** will serve as an open-book take-home midterm covering the theoretical perspectives discussed during the first section of class (the material covered prior to spring break). However, it is unlike an exam in that it will be necessary to do some library work (i.e., literature searches, reading articles), and will require original thought in the synthesis of information (rather than simply recalling and re-hashing information presented in class and your texts).

For this assignment, students are to:

- (1)** describe evolutionary, attachment, and interdependence theories,
- (2)** explain the key differences between these theories,
- (3)** find similarities in these perspectives and build a case to show how these theories can be integrated into a "macrotheory" of relationships. This third component of the paper is the most important, and will require students to think integratively and along broad psychological themes (e.g., [un]conscious motivations; temporal orientation; the importance of emotions; goals and needs; cognition in relationships, etc.).

Basically, this is the question you'll be addressing: *"We've been discussing evolutionary, attachment, and interdependence perspectives as distinct theories in this class so far. How can they be integrated into a unified "Theory of Relationship Processes", rather than being viewed separately?"*

From this description it should be apparent that this is a massive undertaking-- this is not a paper that can be "whipped out" in one evening or "all-nighter." It will take time for the ideas to germinate, and a thoughtful and well organized analysis addressing all of the relevant points will most likely require, at minimum, 15 or more (double spaced) pages of text (plus references).

>> Due October 27th <<

(bring your paper to class that day; those papers not handed in during class that day will be considered late)

Some hints about structuring your paper:

Although I don't like to put page limits/requirements on papers, below are some rough guidelines to help you think about organizing your paper. These guidelines are very flexible; a paper deviating from this format may still be excellent, and simply adhering to this structure does not insure a paper will be satisfactory:

- Introductory section-- ~1-2 pages.
- In Section 1 (describe each theory), spend ~2-3 pages on your description of each theory (~6-9 pages total)
- Section 2 (differences between these theories) will probably be ~2-4 pages.
- The integrative section of the paper (section 3) should probably be ~5-7 pages. This section is the most important portion of the paper
- Concluding section-- ~1-2 pages.
- Use headings/section breaks liberally to organize your text.

References:

- Throughout the text of your paper, you will be citing other sources (in APA style).
- You may cite any of the readings for this class that are appropriate.
- In addition, you will be citing outside sources that you find relevant. At minimum, find, read, and include **8 outside sources** other than class readings (although it is very likely you will include more than eight). This means that you have to include some additional information from other papers you gather. You'll likely have use PsycInfo to search for additional materials. In addition, papers that have been cited in your class readings may make appropriate outside sources.
- Outside sources will most likely consist of empirical journal articles, review articles, or chapters from books.
- The TriCo library system should have a lot of the material you need, but it is possible that you may choose to use interlibrary loan (ILL) to get papers that are not in the TriCo holdings. Plan ahead and request ILL items early.
- In addition, there's a chance I may have some of the papers you're looking for. Let me know if you're having a difficult time tracking something down, and I'll see what I can do.
- Be sure to include a references section at the end of your paper, in APA style. Refer to the APA Style manual or see me if you have questions about APA style.

Other thoughts:

- Remember to spell- and/or grammar-check your text, and proofread your paper. Readability and writing style will be considered in grading.
- Please feel free to ask questions. Although I won't look over drafts of your paper or give specific comments or feedback on your work, you can talk to me about the general approach you're taking to make sure you're on the right track.
- This is not a collaborative paper. Please do your own literature searches, and make sure your work is your own.