

PSYCHOLOGY OF CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

PSYCHOLOGY 4320-01

Semester: Spring, 2017
Instructor: Dr. E. Clark

Time: T Th 12:45 - 2:00 PM

GENERAL ORIENTATION

This course is an overview of theory and research on the psychology of interpersonal relationships, focusing mostly on friendships and romantic relationships, from a social psychological perspective. ***Please note that this course focuses on the research on close relationships and does not emphasize therapy with distressed couples.*** The course has four goals:

- 1) To familiarize students with the variables important to the social psychological study of interpersonal relationships.
- 2) To review the major theoretical foundations and current research, not only from social psychology but also from other disciplines (e.g., communication, personality psychology).
- 3) To give students practice in reading empirical journal articles, writing, and oral presentation.

The course will examine some of the theories and research related to the psychology of interpersonal relationships. The course will cover: theoretical perspectives, research methods, attraction, social cognition, communication, interdependence, friendship, love, stressors in relationships (e.g. infidelity, jealousy), relationship maintenance, conflict, and dissolution.

TEXT

Miller, R. S. (2015). *Intimate Relationships*. Boston: McGraw-Hill. (available from SLU Bookstore). The 2012 edition is probably acceptable also.

Readings for PSY 4320-01 *Readings for Close Relationships* (Electronic Reserve - Pius Library)
Code word is "miller".

GRADING

Your final grade will be based on comment papers, a midterm exam, final paper (review of research), and a presentation.

Weights		Scale	
Comment papers	50%	93 - 100%	A
Midterm examination	25%	90 – 92	A-
Final paper	20%	87 – 89	B+
Presentation	5%	83 - 86	B
		80 – 82	B-
		77 – 79	C+
		73 – 76	C
		70 – 72	C-
		60 - 69	D
		Below 60%	F

COMMENT PAPERS

Students must turn in papers commenting on the readings assigned for that week (paper assignments and due dates are below). Papers are due at class time. The paper may require the student critically evaluate the readings, discuss implications, or apply them to real world situations (see list of questions attached). The comment papers are to be no more than two double-spaced typed pages. **Papers are due at class time. Emailed papers will not be accepted. Late papers will not be accepted but the lowest comment paper grade will be dropped.**

MIDTERM EXAMINATION

The exam will contain short answer and essay items covering the first half of the course.

CLASS PRESENTATIONS

Each student will be assigned to present an article during the last couple of weeks of class. Class discussion will focus around the presentations assigned. The presenters should be able to summarize the readings, discuss their good and bad points, discuss whether they liked it and why and present two questions for the class to discuss. Use of PowerPoint (if the room is equipped) is required. The best presentations are those in which the student lectures and discusses the material and does not merely read a summary. The presentations will be similar to those given at professional conferences such as the annual conferences of the *American Psychological Association* and the *Midwestern Psychological Association* (about 10 minutes per presentation and 5 minutes for questions).

FINAL PAPER – REVIEW OF RESEARCH

Each student will complete a 20-25 page (minimum) final paper reviewing the research literature in some area of close relationships. The paper should provide a comprehensive review of research on a significant topic in the field (not just a description of the topic), following the model of papers in *Psychological Bulletin* or *Psychological Review*. The paper will be graded on the extent to which the paper covers the issues raised, adequacy of references, whether the writer goes beyond the research literature discussed in class, organization, exposition of ideas (spelling, grammar, syntax). ***Make sure to include a title page and outline. See Dr. Clark to have your topic approved by Thursday, March 2 or earlier. The papers are due Tuesday, May 9 at 10am (Study Day). Students must turn in a paper to get a passing grade in the course. Students will lose 10 points (out of 100) for each day that the paper is late. Emailed papers will not be accepted. Turning in final papers early is welcome and encouraged!***

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Members of the class should be prepared to ask and answer questions in class and to discuss the material. Students are expected to read the material before class, attend class and actively participate. Students must show that they have done the reading assignment by their intelligent and informed questions and comments. ***Please turn off all cell phones before class. They disrupt the learning process.***

The use of laptop computers is allowed to engage class related material (e.g. taking notes, following PowerPoint slides). Laptops may not be used for purposes unrelated to the class (e.g. emailing, doing work for other classes, checking Facebook). The instructor reserves the right to penalize non-class related laptop usage.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors. The mission of Saint Louis University is "the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity." Accordingly, all acts of falsehood demean and compromise the corporate endeavors of teaching, research, healthcare, and community service via which SLU embodies its mission. The University strives to prepare students for lives of personal and professional integrity, and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern.

The governing University-level Academic Integrity Policy was adopted in Spring 2015, and can be accessed on the Provost's Office website at:

http://www.slu.edu/Documents/provost/academic_affairs/University-wide%20Academic%20Integrity%20Policy%20FINAL%20%206-26-15.pdf.

Additionally, each SLU College, School, and Center has adopted its own academic integrity policies, available on their respective websites. All SLU students are expected to know and abide by these policies, which detail definitions of violations, processes for reporting violations, sanctions, and appeals. Please direct questions about any facet of academic integrity to your faculty, the chair of the department of your academic program, or the Dean/Director of the College, School or Center in which your program is housed.

Students should be respectful in their comments. We should be able to disagree without being disagreeable.

Title IX

Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual misconduct (e.g., sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic or dating violence), we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident of misconduct, that faculty member must notify SLU's Title IX coordinator, Anna R. Kratky (DuBourg Hall, Room 036; akratky@slu.edu; 314-977-3886) and share the basic facts of your experience with her. The Title IX coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus.

If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the University Counseling Center at 314-977-TALK. To view SLU's sexual misconduct policy and for resources, please visit the following web address: <http://www.slu.edu/general-counsel-home/office-of-institutional-equity-and-diversity/sexual-misconduct-policy> www.slu.edu/here4you .

STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. The Student Success Center, a one-stop shop, which assists students with academic and career related services, is located in the Busch Student Center (Suite 331) and the School of Nursing (Suite 114). Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.
- University-level support (e.g., tutoring services, university writing services, disability services, academic coaching, career services, and/or facets of curriculum planning) by visiting the Student Success Center or by going to www.slu.edu/success.

DISABILITY SERVICES ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Please contact Disability Services, located within the Student Success Center, at Disability_services@slu.edu or 314-977-3484 to schedule an appointment. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Once approved, information about academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors via email from Disability Services and viewed within Banner via the instructor's course roster.

SCHEDULE

Jan 17	Introduction and Overview	
Jan 19-24	Research Methods	
Jan 26 – 31	Attraction	<i>(Comment paper #1 due 1/26)</i>
Feb 2-7	Social Cognition	
Feb 9-14	Communication	<i>(Comment paper #2 due 2/9)</i>
Feb 16-21	Interdependence	
Feb 23-28	Friendship	<i>(Comment paper #3 due 2/23)</i>
Mar 2-7	Love	<i>(Final Paper Topics due 3/2)</i>
Mar 9	<i>Midterm Examination</i>	
Mar 14 - 16	<i>Spring Break – No Class</i>	
Mar 21 - 23	Relationship Maintenance	<i>(Comment paper #4 due 3/23)</i>
Mar 28-30	Stresses and Strains	
Apr 4-6	Conflict	<i>(Comment paper #5 due 4/6)</i>
Apr 11	Dissolution	
Apr 13	<i>Holy Thursday – No Class</i>	
Apr 18	Dissolution (continued)	
Apr 20	Fatal Attractions/Obsessional Relationship Intrusion	
Apr 25 – May 2	Presentations	<i>(Comment paper #6 due 4/20)</i>
May 4	TBA	
<i>May 9 (Tuesday)</i>	<i>Study Day - Final papers due by 10:00 am</i>	

Readings in Close Relationships (PSY 4320-01)

January 17 – 24: Introduction and Research Methods

Miller (2015) text, Chapters 1, 2

January 26 – 31: Attraction

Miller (2015) text, Chapter 3

Peitit, W. E. & Ford, T. E. (2015). Effect of relationship status on perceptions of physical attractiveness for alternative partners. *Personal Relationships*, 22, 348-355.

Parrett, M. (2015). Beauty and the feast: Examining the effect of beauty on earnings using restaurant tipping data. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 49, 34-46.

February 2 - 7: Social Cognition

Miller (2015) text, Chapter 4

Mattingly, B. A., Lewondowski, G. W., & McIntyre, K. P. (2014). “You make me a better/worse person”: A two-dimensional model of relationship self-change. *Personal Relationships*, 21, 176-190.

Cohen, S., Schulz, M. C., Liu, S. R., Halassa, M., & Waldinger, R. J. (2015). Empathic accuracy and aggression in couples: Individual and dyadic links. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 77, 697-711.

February 9 - 14: Communication

Miller (2015) text, Chapter 5

David, P. & Stafford, L. (2015). A relational approach to religion and spirituality in marriage: The role of couples’ religious communication in marital satisfaction. *Journal of Family Issues*, 36, 232-249.

Ramirez, A., Summer (Bryant), E. M., Fleuriet, C. & Cole, M. (2015). When online dating partners meet offline: The effect of modality switching on relational communication between online daters. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 20, 99-114.

February 16 - 21: Interdependence

Miller (2015) text, Chapter 6

Wesselmann, E. D., VanderDrift, L. E., & Agnew, C. R. (2016). Religious commitment: An interdependence approach. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 8, 35-45.

Tan, K., Agnew, C. R., Vanderdrift, L. E., & Harvey, S. M. (2015). Committed to us: Predicting relationship closeness following nonmarital romantic relationship breakup. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 32, 456-471.

February 23 - 28: Friendship

Miller (2015) text, Chapter 7

Hartl, A. C., Laursen, B., & Cillessen, A. H. N. (2015). A survival analysis of adolescent friendships: The downside of dissimilarity. *Psychological Science*, 26, 1304-1315.

Dailey, R. M., Brody, N., & Knapp, J. (2015). Friend support of dating relationships: Comparing relationship type, friend and partner perspectives. *Personal Relationships*, 22, 368-385.

March 2 - 7: Love

Miller (2015) text, Chapters 8 - 9

Zeigler-Hill, V., Maggie Britton, M., Holden, C. J., & Besser, A. (2015). How will I love you? Self-Esteem instability moderates the association between self-esteem level and romantic love styles, *Self and Identity*, 14, 118-134.

Fehr, B., Harasymchuk, C., & Sprecher, S. (2014). Compassionate love in romantic relationships: A review and some new findings. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 31, 575-600.

March 21 - 23: Relationship Maintenance

Miller (2015) text, Chapter 14

Stewart, M. C., Dainton, M., & Goodboy, A. K. (2014). Maintaining relationships on Facebook: associations with uncertainty, jealousy, and satisfaction, *Communication Reports*, 27, 13-26.

Merolla, A. J. (2012). Connecting here and there: A model of long distance relationship maintenance. *Personal Relationships*, 19, 775-795.

March 28 – 30: Stresses and Strains

Miller (2015) text, Chapter 10

Kruger, D. J., Fisher, M. L., & Fitzgerald, C. J. (2015). Factors influencing intended likelihood of exposing sexual infidelity. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 44, 1697-1704.

Weiser, D. A. & Weigel, D. J. (2015). Investigating experiences of the infidelity partner: Who is the “other man/woman”? *Personality and Individual Differences*, 85, 176-181.

April 4 - 6: Conflict

Miller (2015) text, Chapters 11, 12

Brewer, G., Hunt, D., James, G., & Abell, L. (2015). Dark triad traits, infidelity and romantic revenge. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 83, 122-127.

Eaton, J. & Sanders, C. B. (2012). A little help from our friends: Informal third parties and interpersonal conflict. *Personal Relationships*, 19, 623-643.

April 11 - 18: Dissolution

Miller (2015) text, Chapters 13

Fagundes, C. P. (2012). Getting over you: Contributions of attachment theory for post breakup emotional adjustment. *Personal Relationships*, 19, 37-50.

Brumbaugh, C. C. & Fraley, R. C. (2014). Too fast, too soon? An empirical investigation into rebound relationships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*. Published online March 5, 2014.

COMMENT PAPER ASSIGNMENTS

Papers are due at class time on the date indicated at class time. Students should not collaborate on papers. The goal is to show that you're familiar with the readings. Remember to cite appropriate readings (Jones & Smith, 2009). Limit: 2 double-spaced typed pages. Late papers are not accepted. Emailed papers are not accepted.

1) Due Thursday, January 26

Which technological advance has had the most profound effect (good or bad) on intimate relationships – (a) cell phones or (b) online dating sites? Choose one and use the information in Chapters 1 and 2 to support your answer and discuss the effects. Remember to use citations. If you have other references, cite those and a separate References page.

2) Due Thursday, February 9

Using the articles and the text, discuss (a) ways that your romantic partner can make you a better person and (b) ways in which your partner can make you are worse person. Remember to use/cite articles and text.

3) Due Thursday, February 23

How do couples preserve and enhance (whether good or bad) each type of commitment to their romantic partner: constraint commitment and moral commitment. Make sure you discuss each commitment type. Use and cite text and articles to support your explanation.

4) Due Thursday, March 23

Consider the different theories and research on love discussed in the text, articles, and class. What three variables from these theories do you think are the most important for love? Explain your choices (e.g., are they related to good outcomes like rewards, satisfaction, commitment). Use articles and text to support your choices, including readings from any part in the course. All three will probably not come from the same theory.

5) Due Thursday, April 6

First, what types of people (personality traits) are more likely to forgive their partner's infidelity? Second, under what conditions or situations are people more likely to forgive their partner's infidelity (situational factors)? Use and cite text and articles. You can draw from any of the course articles or chapters covered so far.

6) Due, Thursday, April 20

Think of a significant argument with a romantic partner. What was the topic? Which theory of conflict discussed best describes the argument and why? Use and cite text and articles. Only discuss a topic you feel comfortable self-disclosing in a paper or describe one from another couple that you know (do not use real names).