

HDFS 674: CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS IN ADULTHOOD

Fall 2013

Prerequisites: HDFS 653 or permission of instructor; It is best if you have completed at least 6 hours of graduate work prior to taking this course.

Instructor: Dr. Heather Helms
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256-0129
Office Hours: By appointment
E-Mail Address: heather_helms@uncg.edu

Course Meeting Time: Thursdays 9:00 – 11:50pm, Stone 246

Credit Hours: This is a 3 credit course and you are expected to spend, on average, about 9 hours outside of class each week in order to prepare and show mastery. This is approximate and will depend on your level of preparation upon entering the course.

Catalog Description: Interdisciplinary introduction to close relationships in adulthood, including the major theoretical perspectives scholars use to examine close relationships, the methods researchers employ, and the substantive foci that characterize the field.

Blackboard Course Web Page: A web page for the course can be accessed through Blackboard, <http://blackboard.uncg.edu>. The website contains a variety of information, including a copy of the syllabus, course schedule, student grades, handouts, and several links to other sites relevant to this class.

Course Description: This course is designed to provide an interdisciplinary introduction to issues pertaining to close relationships in adulthood, including some of the major theoretical lenses through which scholars have examined close relationships, the various methods researchers have employed, and the substantive foci that have held scholars' attention in recent years. I have designed the course to begin with a historical look at the science of close relationships, followed by a critical analysis of and scholarly dialogue about the field of close relationships, including suggestions for future research. We then spend the next several weeks focusing on contemporary scholars whose work addresses gaps in our knowledge of close relationships. The remaining class sessions are reserved for us to learn more about specific substantive areas of inquiry in the field of close relationships from each other via student-led presentations that are designed to provide in-depth and critical analysis of a specific content area as well as application of that knowledge via a targeted presentation to a chosen applied audience. Throughout the course, I hope to encourage you to think critically about close relationship theory, research, and methodology through writing, integrating readings, lively discussion and dissemination of knowledge via course presentations.

Readings: A collection of course readings are available on Blackboard. Alternatively, many of the readings can be accessed via journal finder on the library web page, <http://library.uncg.edu/>. The plan is for you to access these readings electronically and print them out yourselves.

Optional Text: Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th Edition.

Course Format: We have the luxury of being a very small group, so I will run the class as a seminar. That means that we will do a lot of reading and discussing. Although I will assist in leading discussion (assuming the role of integrator and facilitator), I expect that you will come to class having read the assigned materials and very prepared to engage in discussion. I expect students to demonstrate professional responsibility by attending class and being ready to begin class on time. Class participation will be part of how you are evaluated (both quantity and quality are important), so it's important that you keep up with the readings, ask good questions, think critically about the readings, and contribute your thoughts to class discussion.

In addition to our seminar format class discussions, I have incorporated a Scholar Chat segment to our class sessions. Scholar Chats will occur at the start of class and will include a roughly 45 minute visit (in person or virtual) with leading senior scholars in the field as well as several contemporary scholars who are doing work in areas targeted as important to the field of close relationships. Scholar Chats will provide students the opportunity to dialogue with our guests about the content we are reading and discussing in class. My expectation is that you will be very well-prepared to engage discussion with these scholars who so generously are setting aside time to meet with us.

Course Requirements:

Personal Prerequisites There are several prerequisites for this course: (1) a vivid scholarly imagination — that is, being able to think, read, and write like an advanced student of human development and family studies; (2) an awareness of how to do research in human development and family studies — that is, being familiar with a range of research methods and analysis techniques; (3) an intellectual curiosity with a passion for learning new ways of thinking, doing, and being; (4) and the desire to grow as a scholar and independent thinker.

Class Participation Class meetings are designed with the primary purpose of offering an opportunity to discuss key issues raised in the readings and make inquiries into the assigned topic. Class participation is a very important part of the learning process in this course. For each class, you are expected to be thoroughly familiar with the reading assignments and to be *actively* involved in class discussions. You are expected to contribute insightful, integrative comments and thoughtful questions, while respecting the rights of other class members as participants. Relevant theoretical and applied issues should be raised. Class attendance is mandatory. Each of you is required to contribute to the learning of your colleagues. It is impossible to do this without being in class. In the event of an absence you will be required to write a two-page (single-spaced) paper summarizing the content of the week's material. If it is a planned absence, the paper is due to me the day of class. If it is an unplanned absence, the paper is due by the following class period. Missing more than one class during the term or habitual tardiness represents a serious deficiency and will result in a grade reduction.

Reading Assignments Reading assignments are given to facilitate a basic foundation for the material and to stimulate further inquiry and investigation. As such, everyone is expected to read and take careful notes on all assigned material. You should be prepared to discuss the reading materials in class, particularly the underlying issues/themes addressed by the material, and the utility of the content for the study of close relationships. To understand the readings in the manner requires more than a cursory glance of skimming of the articles. Adequate preparation requires giving yourself enough time to read the articles closely, take notes on the articles, and think in advance about the main points of the readings and how they fit together.

Student Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, you should be able to

1. Synthesize, critically analyze, and apply major theoretical, conceptual, and methodological issues and substantive findings in the study of close relationships.
2. Provide a comprehensive integrative review, critical analysis, and application of a significant substantive topic related to the study of close relationships.
3. Develop spoken skills and presentation of material pertaining to close relationships in adulthood to both an applied and professional audience.
4. Acquire teaching skills in graduate instruction

These goals will be evidenced through both your written work and oral contributions in class via the mechanisms listed below.

Evaluation Methods and Guidelines for Assignments:

This course is intended to be a rigorous academic experience. You will be expected to master substantive scholarship, as well as to demonstrate your skills of critical thinking via oral and written expression. The following exercises are designed to both develop and assess your understanding of the concepts and issues examined throughout the course and to illustrate that understanding through reference to the assigned readings and class activities.

(1) The first assignment involves **preparation for class and class participation**. A graduate course is successful only in so far as participants take the opportunity to read assigned readings carefully and critically and come prepared to discuss the readings and their own ideas, reactions and questions about the readings. Reaction papers are often assigned to assist students with integration, comprehension, and critical thinking skills. Because you are all advanced graduate students who have demonstrated these skills repeatedly, I am not requiring reaction papers this term. I do, however, expect that you have read carefully and expect that you will play an important role in your own and others' learning experience. To facilitate in-depth discussion and to encourage you to read the course materials thoughtfully, I will require that you post a **"Reflection Memo"** on our BB discussion board for each set of readings. *These memos should raise one issue per article that you feel merits detailed discussion in class.* Memos are intended to

provoke you to think seriously about the readings and to thoughtfully prepare for class discussion. In addition to posting your own memo, you will also be expected to make time to review the memos of your peers prior to class time and come prepared to comment on at least 2 memo posts during in-class discussion. **Memos are to be posted to our BB discussion page NO LATER THAN 9:00 pm the day before the corresponding class session.** This means you must plan ahead to complete your readings. As the course moves along, I will be especially interested in memo content and in-class comments that pull together ideas across readings and topics that we are covering. Reflection Memos and in-class comments to others' posts will be factored into your class discussion grade. Students will not receive points for memos that are posted late. (Note: Computer problems are not an acceptable excuse. Plan ahead and don't wait until the last minute.) **Attendance, preparation for class, and participation in class discussion is worth 10 points.**

(2) In addition to preparing very well for each class period, I will ask students to be responsible for **leading one class discussion**. Students may collaborate with a partner or work alone for this assignment.

Leading discussion means thinking in advance about where you want the conversation to go and making sure it goes there. As I introduce the discussant/s for the day, I will give a *brief* introduction to the readings, providing some background as to why I chose them and what I believe they have to offer. Student discussants will then be in charge of facilitating the discussion of the readings. Whatever you choose to do to keep the discussion period stimulating, be sure that your plan is clearly relevant to the topic and readings at hand. I especially want us to be putting together ideas across readings and from various parts of the course in an in-depth manner, so your questions should be designed in part to encourage that. **In order to get a sense of your plans and to provide feedback and direction (if necessary), I ask that each facilitator email me a rough draft outline for class facilitation by the Monday prior to your class. This means that you need to have completed the readings prior to emailing me and have a solid plan in place that I can respond to. You must turn in your final outline/plan for facilitation and copies of any visual aids at the end of the class session you facilitate. Your class discussion leader exercise is worth 10 points.**

(3) **Paper, Translational Application, and Professional Presentation Project:** Throughout the semester, each of you will work on a project comprised of three parts.

- a. First, an **integrative review paper** is required. This paper provides an opportunity for you to thoughtfully examine and critique current research that addresses a particular area of close relationships in adulthood that you find intriguing (e.g., forgiveness, jealousy, sexuality, attraction, infidelity, friendship, relationships and health, domestic violence, loneliness, hooking up, communication processes, couple conflict and intimacy, same-sex relationship development, coparenting, immigrant couples, etc. etc.). You are encouraged to use this paper as an opportunity to focus your thesis, dissertation, or upcoming publication or presentation, or simply to further explore a substantive area about which you are curious. I'm quite flexible about topic choices as long as they have a close relationships' focus (broadly conceived). The integrative review paper should succinctly cover the literature on the topic you have

chosen to address and should include an integrative summary/critique of at least 15 journal articles, 10 of which must be empirical articles. The final paper should be 10 to 15 pages of text and be in APA format (typed, 12 pt font, 1 inch margins, appropriate title page, headings, and references). The paper should be a polished piece of work (i.e., correct grammar and spelling, logical, easy to read).

Your topic should be broad enough to be of interest, but narrow enough that you can focus in on a tightly related set of empirical articles for review and get into some depth about relevant theory and research. The crux of your grade will be based on your ability to summarize, explain, critique, and integrate original empirical articles. Be sure to address the underlying mechanisms/processes that explain reported associations, point out controversies, acknowledge the limitations of prior research, and identify next steps for research. (A grading rubric is available for you to view and download in BB.) **Your integrative review paper is worth 50 points and is due on December 2nd via email by 9am.**

b. Second, you will prepare a **translational application presentation** to be delivered to an applied audience (broadly defined) based on the substantive topic you have chosen for your paper. The field of close relationships is rife with findings applicable to everyday life. Unfortunately, one criticism of the field is that researchers often fail to make their findings accessible to the general public in useful ways. The goal of this assignment is for students to choose a target audience and a format to translate the knowledge learned from basic research to a broader audience. In completing this assignment, students have flexibility in delineating their audience and can choose a group that fits best with their career goals. For example, students who plan on becoming academics may choose to create a lecture for an undergraduate course that they are likely to teach in the future, whereas students who plan to pursue applied careers may choose a relevant community group to whom they will be presenting. Alternatively, students may choose to create a format that may reach a broader audience via the web (i.e., creating a series of youtube clip/s, public service announcements, podcast interviews, etc.) or target a specific community group who may benefit from a series of fact sheets or webinars/podcasts/clips organized by the student. Regardless of the format, students are expected to create presentation to the class in which they either deliver their translational talk directly or present an overview of the instructional materials created. Translational presentations will take place across 2 course periods, and students will have 35 minutes to present, followed by 5 minutes for questions/comments from peers. **Translational presentations are worth 10 points. Presentations will take place on October 17th and 24th.**

c. The, third part of this assignment includes a 15 minute **oral presentation** for a professional/academic audience which you will present in class several weeks prior to the due date for the final paper. The focus of this presentation should stem from your review paper and highlight theoretical underpinnings, key findings, critiques and future directions regarding the research on your topic. You will be expected to create a PowerPoint presentation for your oral presentation. **Your presentation is worth 15 points. Presentations will occur on November 14th and 21st.**

In order to facilitate your work on the project, you will be required to **hand in a 1-2 page topic rationale/prospectus and reference list on Thursday, September 26th via email attachment by noon. Your prospectus/rationale/reference list is worth 5 points.**

Taken together, these assignments account for 80% of your final grade. Assignments handed in any time after the due date and time will be automatically docked 5 percentage points for each day (including weekend days). Late is defined as work that is turned in any time after the assigned deadline (e.g., noon, 5:00 pm, etc.).

Dates to Remember:

September 26th: Propectus/Rationale/Reference List due
 October 17th and 24th: Translational Application Presentations
 November 14th and 21st: Professional Presentations
 December 2 (Note that this is a Monday): Final Paper due

Grading Summary:

Class Preparation and Participation	10 points
Leading Discussion	10 points
Topic Prospectus/Reference List	5 points
Translational Presentation	10 points
Professional Presentation	15 points
Paper	<u>50 points</u>
TOTAL	100 points

Grading Scale (Percentage Based)

93-100	A
90-92.99	A-
87-89.99	B+
83-86.99	B
80-82.99	B-
77-79.99	C+
73-76.99	C
70-72.99	C-
less than 70	F

Course Policies:

1. *Academic Integrity* is the pursuit of scholarly activity free from fraud and deception and is an educational objective of this institution. Violating academic integrity is considered a serious offense by the university and is treated accordingly. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on exams, having unauthorized possession of exams, fabricating information or citations, facilitating the academic dishonesty of others, and submitting the work of another person as your own (plagiarism). Students are expected to read, sign and hand in the “Academic Integrity Statement” found in the course documents section of the web page. Academic dishonesty may result in a failing grade for the particular assignment or exam, a failing grade for the entire course, or suspension or expulsion from the university. We have a good website that outlines the UNCG academic integrity philosophy and procedures. Please take a look at this at your earliest convenience:
<http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/>
2. *University Sanctioned Activities*: Students who miss class due to participation in university-sanctioned activities must identify themselves prior to missing class and make arrangements to complete missed work. In addition, students must provide Dr. Helms with a copy of their travel schedule.
3. *Disability Accommodations*: If you need disability accommodations, please see Dr. Helms as soon as possible. All information regarding disabilities is confidential. If you need information about disability services at UNCG, please visit their website:
<http://ods.dept.uncg.edu/>
4. *Emergencies*: If you have any emergency that interferes with your ability to complete the work in this course, please see me immediately. If you cannot come for a scheduled appointment, please contact me ahead of time. My office phone number and email address is listed on the front page of the syllabus.
5. *Extra credit*: Given the extensive opportunity to be graded in a variety of formats in this course, extra credit is not an option.
6. *UNCG Support Services*: All of us need formal support services from time-to-time. UNCG offers excellent academic and mental health support services. Please take a look at their offerings at your earliest convenience and contact a support person if you are struggling academically and personally. You also might want to consider accessing these services if now is a time in your life in which you can expend time and energy at increasing your social and academic competence.
<http://success.uncg.edu/ss/counseling/>
7. *Classroom environment*: It is my expectation that you will treat your classmates with respect via: arriving to class on time, participating in class discussion, listening to others comments attentively, turning off cell phones, and remaining in the classroom for the entire class period. These positive classroom behaviors are imperative for a successful seminar.

HDFS 674: CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS IN ADULTHOOD AGENDA AND READINGS

INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE AND PARTICIPANTS

WEEK 1, AUGUST 22

IARR: <http://www.iarr.org/>

SPSSI : <http://www.spssi.org/>

Personal Relationships: <http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-PERE.html>

Journal of Social and Personal Relationships:
<http://www.sagepub.com/journalsProdDesc.nav?prodId=Journal200790&>

Journal of Personality and Social Psychology: <http://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/psp/index.aspx>

THE HISTORY OF THE SCIENCE OF CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

WEEK 2, AUGUST 29

Berscheid, E. (1999). The greening of relationship science. *American Psychologist*, 54 (4), 260-266.

Duck, S. (2008). A past and a future for relationship research. *The Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 25, 189 – 200.

Perlman, D. & Duck, S. (2006). The seven seas of the study of personal relationships: From “The Thousand Islands” to interconnected waterways. In A. L. Vangelisti and D. Perlman (Eds.) *The Cambridge Handbook of Personal Relationships*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Reis, H. T. & Collins, W. A. (2004). Relationships, human behavior, and psychological science. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 13, 233-237.

Scholar Chat: Dr. Daniel Perlman, current IARR President

RESEARCH DESIGNS AND THE STUDY OF CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS
WEEK 3, SEPTEMBER 5

Wood, J. T. (1995). The part is not the whole: Weaving diversity into the study of relationships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 12(4), 563-567.

de Jong Giervald, J. (1995). Research into relationship research designs: Personal relationships under the microscope. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 12(4), 583-588.

Kenny, D. A. (1995). Relationship science in the 21st century. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 12(4), 597-600.

Karney, B. R., Kreitz, M. A., & Sweeney, K. E. (2004). Obstacles to ethnic diversity in marital research: On the failure of good intentions. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 21(4), 509-526.

Fingerman, K. L. & Hay, E. L. (2002). Searching under the streetlight? Age biases in the personal and family relationships literature. *Personal Relationships*, 9, 415-433.

Scholar Chat: Dr. Helms

**“CONTEXTUALIZING” THE STUDY OF CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS: A
CONSIDERATION OF SOCIO-HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL NETWORK FACTORS**
WEEK 4, SEPTEMBER 12 Student Facilitator/s: _____

Fingerman, K. L. (2009). Consequential strangers and peripheral ties: The importance of unimportant relationships. *Journal of Family Theory and Review*, 1, 69-82. doi: 10.1111/j.1756-2589.2009.00010.x

Goodwin, R. & Pillay, U. (2006). Relationships, culture, and social change. (pp. 695 – 708). In A. L. Vangelisti and D. Perlman (Eds.) *The Cambridge Handbook of Personal Relationships*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. (1992). Overcoming patriarchal constraints: The reconstruction of gender relations among Mexican immigrant women and men. *Gender and Society*, 6, 393-415.

Milardo, R. M., Helms, H. M., Widmer, E., & Marks, S. (In press). Social capitalization in personal relationships. In C. Agnew (Ed.) *Social influences on close relationships: Beyond the dyad*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Oswald, R. F. (2000). A member of the wedding? Heterosexism and family ritual. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 17 (3), 349-368.

Scholar Chat: Dr. Robert Milardo, Editor of Journal of Family Theory and Review, past President of IARR, past Editor of Journal of Marriage and Family (Report to Stone 186 Teleconference room for virtual chat, 9am – 10:30am)

APPLICATIONS OF RELATIONSHIP RESEARCH

WEEK 5, SEPTEMBER 19

Student Facilitator/s: _____

Bradbury, T. N. (2002a). Invited program overview: Research on relationships as a prelude to action. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 19(5), 571-599.

Reis, H. T. (2002). Action matters, but relationship science is basic. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 19(5), 601-611.

Hendrick, C. (2002). A new age of prevention? *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 19(5), 621-627.

Umberson, D. & Montez, J. K. (2010). Social relationships and health: A flashpoint for health policy. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 51(S) S54-S66

White, J. W. (2009). A gendered approach to adolescent dating violence: Conceptual and methodological issues. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 33(1), 1-15. doi:[10.1111/j.1471-6402.2008.01467.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.2008.01467.x)

Scholar Chat: Dr. Jacquelyn White just returning 2012-2013 AAAS/American Psychological Association Catherine Acuff Congressional Fellow in Washington, DC

****PAPER PREPARATION: NO CLASS SESSION****

****TOPIC PROSPECTUS/RATIONALE & REFERENCE LIST DUE****

****BY NOON VIA EMAIL****

WEEK 6, SEPTEMBER 26

A DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS: EXAMPLES FROM THE MINNESOTA LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF RISK AND ADAPTATION

(<http://www.cehd.umn.edu/icd/research/parent-child/>)

WEEK 7, OCTOBER 3

Student Facilitator: _____

*Sroufe, L. A., Egeland, B., Carlson, E., & Collins, W. A. (2005). The Development of the Person: The Minnesota Study of Risk and Adaptation from Birth to Adulthood. Chapter 1 (pp. 3-22)

Englund, M. M., Kuo, S. I., Puig, J., & Collins, W. A. (2011). Early roots of adult competence: The significance of close relationships from infancy to early adulthood. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 35(6). 490-496. doi: 10.1177/0165025411422994

Salvatore, J.E., Kuo, S. I., Steele, R. D., Simpson, J. A., & Collins, W. A. (2011). Recovering from conflict in romantic relationships: A developmental perspective. *Psychological Science*, 22, 376-383.

Sroufe, A. & Siegel, D (2011, Mar). The verdict is in. *Psychotherapy Networker*, 35, 34-39, 52-53.

*2008 Book Award from the International Association for Relationship Research

In Class Scholar Chat Feature: Dr. W. Andrew Collins

**NEW DIRECTIONS IN CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS' RESEARCH: CASE EXAMPLES
WEEK 8, OCTOBER 10 Student Facilitator: _____**

Diamond, L. M. & Butterworth, M. (2009). The close relationships of sexual minorities: Partners, friends, and family. In M. C. Smith & T. G. Reio, Jr. (Eds.), *Handbook of research on adult development and learning* (pp. 348-375). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Helms, H. M., Supple, A. J., Su, J., Rodriguez, Y., Cavanaugh, A., & Hengstebeck, N. (revise/resubmit). Economic pressure, acculturative stress and marital quality among Mexican-origin couples: A dyadic approach. *Journal of Family Psychology*

Trail, T. E., Goff, P. A., Bradbury, T. N., Karney, B. R. (2012). The costs of racism for marriage: How racial discrimination hurts, and ethnic identity protects, newlywed marriages among Latinos. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 38, 454-465. DOI: 10.1177/0146167211429450

Sturge-Apple, M.L., Davies, P.T., Cicchetti, D., & Cummings, E.M. (2009). The role of mothers' and fathers' adrenocortical reactivity in spillover between interparental conflict and parenting practices. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 2, 215-225.

Scholar Chat: Dr. Roger Mills-Koonce

****TRANSLATIONAL PRESENTATION PREPARATION**
NO CLASS SESSION**

WEEK 9, OCTOBER 17

****TRANSLATIONAL PRESENTATIONS****

WEEK 10, OCTOBER 24

WEEK 11, OCTOBER 31

**FINAL PAPER PREPARATION
NCFR NATIONAL CONFERENCE IN SAN ANTONIO
NO CLASS SESSION**

WEEK 12, NOVEMBER 7

FINAL PAPER PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

WEEK 13, NOVEMBER 14

WEEK 14, NOVEMBER 21

THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY BREAK (NO CLASS)

FINAL PAPER DUE VIA EMAIL BY 9AM, MONDAY, DECEMBER 2ND

**FINALS WEEK
THERE IS NO FINAL EXAM FOR THIS COURSE**

