

Arizona State University
Hugh Downs School of Human Communication

Syllabus for:
Communication 691
Relational Initiation
Fall Semester 2010

6:40 – 9:30 p.m. Thursdays

Stauffer Hall A431

Instructor

Paul A. Mongeau
Stauffer Hall A335A
Paul.Mongeau@ASU.edu
480/965.3773

Seminar Assistant

Jennifer Marmo
Stauffer A215
jmarmo@asu.edu

Office Hours

Tuesdays 12:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Tuesdays 10:15-11:45 am and
1:30- 3pm

AND BY APPOINTMENT

Course Goals

This course should provide you with a detailed examination of major theoretical perspectives, contexts, and concepts related to the initiation of relationships. There was a time (e.g., the 1970's) when the study of relationships was synonymous with the study of relationship initiation. Modern relationship research, however, focuses more clearly on either general relationship processes and/or maintenance and dissolution. As a consequence, one purpose underlying the Sprecher, Wenzel, and Harvey book (and, along similar lines, this seminar) is to reignite systematic interest in this particular aspect of relationship life.

We will concentrate upon where we have been, where we are, and where we might want to go concerning the study of the initiation of relationships. Some of the scholarship reviewed will focus on classic work while others will represent current 'hot' topics. The scholarship and authors will come from a variety of disciplines (e.g., Communication, Sociology, and Psychology) and perspectives (though most of the work we will read is quantitative and post-positivistic). This course will concentrate heavily on social science theory and research relevant to relationship initiation. The course will attempt to balance reviews of the literature (i.e., chapters from the primary text) with research reports (i.e., readings that correspond to each chapter). Some previous course work in interpersonal communication, related areas, statistics, and/or research methods (while not required) would assist in understanding course material.

This course is a seminar course. Seminars are *discussion* (rather than lecture) classes. Relatively little lecturing will occur. We plan to begin each part of class with a brief overview of the topics covered in that night's readings. For the most part, however, the nature of the discussion is up to the students. Your active participation is necessary to make this class a positive learning experience for everyone. This course will work best if you have assigned readings done ahead of time and come to class motivated and able to discuss them.

Assignments and Grading

Students must complete all of the following assignments to complete the course successfully. That is, no one may receive a passing grade (i.e., D or above) without completing *all* the following assignments.

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Points Each</u>	<u>Total Points</u>
Examinations	2	100	200
Semester Project	1	200	200
Discussion Leadership	1	50	50
Class Participation		100	<u>100</u>
Total Possible Points			550

Examinations will come in essay format and will be take-home. Each examination will include a relatively small number (i.e., 4 or so) of questions and will include at least one more question than you will be required to answer. Examinations are due one week after distribution. The final examination will be cumulative; however, will focus primarily on the second half of the class. The paper assignment description occurs later in the syllabus.

You will also lead the class discussion of one set of readings (typically a chapter from the book and one additional reading). Evaluation is based on the extent to which the discussion brings out the readings' important points.

On the class sessions that you do lead discussion, you must provide the instructors with a list of your discussion questions *before class begins* (i.e., you can bring the list to class or e-mail it to us earlier in the day). While you may start your discussion leadership off with a brief overview of the reading(s), your task is to lead discussion and *not* to lecture. A subsequent handout provides advice for this assignment.

On the class sessions that you do not lead discussion, you are required to provide a post to the 'discussion' section of the course Blackboard site by **Noon** on the day of class. These posts should include two components. *First*, the post should include a thought-provoking paragraph indicating your reaction to, and/or evaluation of, the reading(s) for that night. Ideally, the information in this paragraph would be useful for stimulating thought about, and generating discussion of, the readings. *Second*, you should include a sentence or two on "*what I would like to talk about in class tonight is...*" This section should include at least two questions (and at least one question for each topic discussed) that you would like to discuss in class. Evaluation of these discussion questions will count toward your class participation grade.

There are 550 points available in this class. Final grades depend upon the number of points you accumulate through the semester. The following scale determines final grading:

544.5 - 550	= A+	[99 – 100%]
511.5 – 544.4	= A	[93 – 98.9%]
495.0 – 511.4	= A-	[90 – 92.9%]
478.5 – 494.9	= B+	[87 – 89.9%]
456.5 – 478.4	= B	[83 – 86.9%]
440.0 – 456.4	= B-	[80 – 82.9%]
418.0 – 439.9	= C+	[76 – 79.9%]
385.0 – 417.9	= C	[70 – 75.9%]
330.0 – 384.9	= D	[60 – 69.9%]
0.0 – 329.9	= E	[0.0 – 59.9%]

Required Readings

There is one required textbook for this course:

Sprecher, S., Wenzel, A., & Harvey, J. (Eds.) (2007). *Handbook of Relationship Initiation*. New York: Psychology Press.

All other course readings are available via Google Scholar and/or the ASU Library web sites.

Policies

Attendance – One hundred points of your grade will come directly from your attendance, class discussion, and your weekly reaction/response entries. Active participation in discussions should be the norm for the class. Class attendance is also important because examinations will come from discussion and readings. Your active participation in class will facilitate all students' understanding of course material.

Incomplete Policy – The instructor gives a mark of “I” (incomplete) only when a student who is otherwise doing acceptable work is unable to complete a course because of illness or other conditions beyond the student's control. The mark of “I” should be granted only when the student can complete the unfinished work with the same instructor. However, an incomplete (“I”) may be completed with an instructor designated by the department chair if the original instructor later becomes incapacitated or is otherwise not on campus. The student is required to complete the appropriate form and receive the instructor's signature before the end of the semester in order to receive an “I” in this class. The College of Liberal Arts and Science requires that incompletes be completed within one year.

Academic Dishonesty - Academic dishonesty can take any of several forms. Perhaps the two most likely forms of academic dishonesty in this class are collusion and plagiarism.

Evidence of *collusion* (two students working together) is when two or more students handing in exams with identical sets of answers. By placing this into my syllabus, I do not want to eliminate study groups. (At the graduate level, study groups are frequently a very good idea.) What I want to avoid is for one person to do the work and for more than one person to submit it.

Plagiarism is using someone else's words or ideas without proper credit being given to that source. Instructors assume a paper to be in the student's own words and to represent his or her original ideas, unless s/he properly credits certain words and ideas to a proper authority. A paper bearing a student's name that does not do this is plagiarized and represents academic dishonesty.

Plagiarism can also occur in many forms. Word-for-word copying of another work without the use of quotation marks or citing that source, paraphrasing another person's ideas without proper citation of that work, providing a misleading citation, and handing in all or part of another student's work (e.g., a paper from a previous year) are all considered plagiarism.

COM 691: Relationship Initiation – Fall Semester 2010
Tentative Semester Schedule

Week	Date	Topics	Readings
<i>WEEK 1</i>	<i>August - 19</i>	Introduction to the Course	Syllabus
<i>WEEK 2</i>	8 - 26	First Romantic Encounters	SWH 1: Bredow et al. <u>Hess et al.</u>
		Relationship Formation	SWH 2: Fehr Mesch & Talmud
<i>WEEK 3</i>	<i>September - 2</i>	Evolutionary Theories	SWH 3: Schmidt <u>Eastwick & Finkel</u>
		Attachment Theory	SWH 4: Greasey & Jarvis Parade et al.
<i>WEEK 4</i>	9 - 9	Nonverbal Flirting	SWH 5: Cunningham & Barbee <u>Weber et al.</u>
		Uncertainty and Initiation	SWH 6: Knobloch et al. Solomon & Theiss
<i>WEEK 5</i>	9 - 16	Information Seeking	SWH7: Afifi & Lucas <u>Afifi & Weiner</u>
		Self-Disclosure	SWH 8: Derlaga et al. Blickle et al.
<i>WEEK 6</i>	9 - 23	Friends to Lovers	SWH 9: Guerrero & Mongeau <u>Guerrero & Chavez</u>
		Environment and Interdependence	SWH 10: Arriaga et al. Sprecher

Week	Date	Topics	Readings
<i>WEEK 7</i>	9-30	Speed Dating Attraction	SWH 11: Eastwick & Finkel <u>Hauser et al.</u> SWH: 14 & 15 Aron et al.
<i>EXAM 1 DISTRIBUTED: Thursday, October 7</i>			
<i>WEEK 8</i>	<i>October - 7</i>	Computer-Mediated Communication	SWH 12: McKenna Ramirez & Wang Pornsakulvanich et al Baker & Oswald
<i>EXAM 1 DUE: Thursday, October 14</i>			
<i>WEEK 9</i>	10 - 14	Online Dating	SWH 13: Sprecher et al. Heino et al. Hall et al. Couch
<i>WEEK 10</i>	10 - 21	Love/Satisfaction/Respect Initiation and Emotions	SWH 16& 17 <u>Riela et al.</u> SWH 18: Metts & Mikucki Knobloch & Solomon
<i>WEEK 11</i>	10 - 28	Hookups	SWH 19: Paul et al. Bogle Paik Epstein et al.

Week	Dates	Topic	Readings
<i>WEEK 12</i>	<i>November - 4</i>	Post-Resolution Initiation	SWH: 20: Fine et al. Koenig-Kellas et al. Dailey et al. Hetherington
<u>No Class: Thursday, November 11: Veteran's Day</u>			
<i>SEMESTER PROJECT DUE: Thursday, November 11</i>			
<i>WEEK 13</i>	<i>11 - 18</i>	Unwanted Relational Pursuit	SWH 21: Cupach & Spitzberg <u>Spitzberg et al.</u>
		Initiation Narratives	SWH 23: Custer et al. Lee
<u>No Class: Thursday, November 25: Thanksgiving</u>			
<i>WEEK 14</i>	<i>December - 2</i>	Goals and Motives	SWH 27: Reeder Sanderson

FINAL EXAM DISTRIBUTED: Thursday, December 2

FINAL EXAM DUE: Monday, December 13

COMMUNICATION 691: RELATIONSHIP INITIATION

FALL SEMESTER 2010

**READING LIST – NOT FROM SPRECHER, WENZEL, AND HARVEY
[IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE]**

1. Hess, J. A., Fannin, A. D., & Pollom, L. H. (2007). Creating closeness: Discerning and measuring strategies for fostering closer relationships. *Personal Relationships, 14*, 25-44.
2. Mesch, G. S., & Talmud, I. (2006). Online friendship formation, communication channels, and social closeness. *International Journal of Internet Science, 1*, 29-44.
3. Eastwick, P. W., & Finkel, E. J. (2008). Sex differences in mate preferences revisited: Do people know what they initially desire in a romantic partner? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 94*, 245-264.
4. Parade, S. H., & Leerkes, E. M. (2010). Attachment to parents, social anxiety, and close relationships of female students over the transition to college. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 39*, 127-137.
5. Weber, K., Goodboy, A. K., & Cayanus, J. L. (2010). Flirting competence: An experimental study on appropriate and effective opening lines. *Communication Research Reports, 27*, 184-191.
6. Solomon, D. H., & Theiss, J. A. (2008). A longitudinal test of the relational turbulence model of romantic relationship development. *Personal Relationships, 15*, 339-357.
7. Afifi, W. A., & Weiner, J. L. (2006). Seeking information about sexual health: Applying the theory of motivated information management. *Human Communication Research, 32*, 35-57.
8. Blickle, G., & Schneider, P. B., Perrewe, P. L., Blass, F. R., & Ferris, G. R. (2008). The roles of self-disclosure, modesty, and self-monitoring in the mentoring relationship: A longitudinal multi-source investigation. *Career Development International, 13*, 224-240.
9. Guerrero, L. K., & Chavez, A. M. (2005). Relational maintenance in cross-sex friendships characterized by different types of romantic intent: An exploratory study. *Western Journal of Communication, 69*, 339-358.
10. Sprecher, S. (2009). Relationship initiation and formation on the internet. *Marriage and Family Review, 45*, 761-782.
11. Houser, M. L., Horan, S. M., & Furler, L. A. (2008). Dating in the fast lane: How communication predicts speed-dating success. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 25*, 749-768.
- 14/15. Aron, A., Steele, J. L., Kashdan, T. B., & Perez, M. (2006). When similar do not attract: Tests of a prediction from the self-expansion model. *Personal Relationships, 13*, 387-396.
12. Ramirez, A., Jr., & Wang, Z. (2008). When online meets offline: An expectancy violations theory perspective on modality switching. *Journal of Communication, 58*, 20-39.
12. Pornsakulavanich, V., Haridakis, P., & Rubin, A. M. (2008). The influence of dispositions and Internet motivation on online communication satisfaction and relationship closeness. *Computers in Human Behavior, 24*, 2292-2310

12. Baker, L. R., & Oswald, D. L. (in press). Shyness and online social network services. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*.
13. Heino, R. D., Ellison, N. B., & Gibbs, J. L. (2010). Relationshopping: Investigating the market metaphor in online dating. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 27, 427-447.
13. Hall, J. A., Park, N., Song, H., & Cody, M. J. (2010). Strategic misrepresentation in online dating: The effects of gender, self-monitoring, and personality traits. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 27, 117-135.
13. Couch, D., & Liamputtong, P. (2008). Online dating and mating: The use of the Internet to meet sexual partners. *Qualitative Health Research*, 18, 268-279.
- 16/17. Riela, S., Rodriguez, G., Aron, A., Xu, X., & Acevedo, B. P. (2010). Experiences of falling in love: Investigating culture, ethnicity, gender, and speed. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 27, 473-493.
18. Knobloch, L. K., Miller, L. E., & Carpenter, K. E. (2007). Using the relational turbulence model to understand negative emotion within courtship. *Personal Relationships*, 14, 91-112.
19. Bogle, K. A. (2007). The shift from dating to hooking up in college: What scholars have missed. *Sociology Compass*, 1, 775-768.
19. Paik, A. (in press). "Hookups," dating, and relationship quality: Does the type of sexual involvement matter? *Social Science Research*.
19. Epstein, M., Calzo, J. P., Smiler, A. P., & Ward, L. M. (2009). "Anything from making out to having sex": Men's negotiations of hooking up and friends with benefits scripts. *Journal of Sex Research*, 46, 414-424.
20. Dailey, R. M., Rossetto, K. R., Pfister, A., & Surra, C. A. (2009). A qualitative analysis of on-again/off-again romantic relationships: "It's up and down, all around." *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 26, 443-466.
20. Koenig-Kellas, J., Bean, D., Cunningham, C., & Cheng, K. Y. (2008). The ex-files: Trajectories, turning points, and adjustments in the development of post-dissolutional relationships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 25, 23-50.
20. Hetherington, E. M. (2003). Intimate Pathways: Changing patterns in close personal relationships across time. *Family Relations*, 52, 318-331.
21. Spitzberg, B. H., Cupach, W. R., & Ciceraro, L. D. L. (2010). Sex differences in stalking and obsessive relational intrusion: Two meta-analyses. *Partner Abuse*, 1, 259-285.
23. Lee, P.-W. (2008). Stages and transitions of relational identity formation in intercultural friendship: Implications for Identity Management Theory. *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication*, 1, 51-69.
- 26 Sanderson, C. A., Keiter, E. J., Miles, M. G., & Yopyk, D. A. (2007). The association between intimacy goals and plans for initiating dating relationships. *Personal Relationships*, 14, 225-243.

COM 691: Relationship Initiation – Fall Semester 2010
Semester Project Assignment

This purpose of this paper is to allow you to investigate an aspect of relationship initiation in great depth. Given the nature of the assignment, it is important that you choose a topic of interest to you. You may choose a topic that we discussed in class (e.g., hookups or Friends with Benefits) or a topic not discussed in class (e.g., clinical issues relevant to initiation) so long as it is an issue, concept, theory, etc. that falls within the boundaries of relationship initiation.

Nature of the Assignment

This paper can come in any of several formats. Students could perform a unique study of relationship initiation, write a state-of-the-art review of the literature, develop a detailed research proposal, convert a conference paper into a journal submission, or write a white paper.

State-of-the-Art Literature Review. A state-of-the-art literature review should review, in depth and detail, the literature relevant to a relatively specific topic within relationship initiation. Part of the literature review should involve defining the concept(s) in question and other important variables. Beyond the definitions, the primary task is to describe what we know (and what we do not know) about the topic you have chosen. You should use appropriate data sources (e.g., books, book chapters, journal articles, and/or conference papers) to synthesize what they have to say into a coherent package. Moreover, your review of the literature should lead to a specific prediction (or set of predictions) or question (i.e., set of questions) that you feel are important as directions for future research. By using the term a “state-of-the-art” review, we mean that your task is to clearly demonstrate your mastery of this particular area of scholarship (think in terms of a handbook chapter).

Research Proposal. If you choose to write a research proposal, the literature review and predictions (see above) should provide a context for a proposed study. We expect the literature review to be nearly as extensive as a state-of-the-art review (see above). In addition to the detailed literature review, you will need to describe the methods used to test the prediction(s) made or the question(s) posed. Follow the standard format for a social science methods section (e.g., participants, design, instrumentation, procedures). Be explicit. Develop your methods to an extent that you (or someone else) could actually perform the study. If you choose to write a proposal, you do not need to carry out the study (though if you want to, you can do so in the future).

Perform a Study. To fulfill this assignment, you may perform a study individually, in a pair, or a group of three. This project will entail several major steps. First, you are to decide, what you want to study and review the relevant literature (or literatures, see above). You are then to develop a (set of) testable research question(s) and/or hypothesis(es) that focus on important issues left unanswered in the literature. Second, you are to develop the methods necessary to test those hypotheses or answer those research questions. This will include gaining IRB approval, through

formal channels, of the project before collecting data. Third, you are to collect, code, enter, and analyze the data following social science principles and methods. Finally, you are to write a research report for submission to the instructor.

The research report should be prepared in a manner consistent with the fifth or sixth edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. (At this point, the sixth edition is likely to be standard soon, so that would probably be the preferred option.) As such, the research report should have a cover page, abstract, and the traditional sections of a social science research report (e.g., rationale, methods, results, and discussion). Each part of the report (e.g., source citations, references, methods, and statistics) should be prepared consistent with APA guidelines.

Develop a Journal Submission. The next option for this assignment would be to take a conference paper you have presented (or will present, say, at NCA in San Francisco) and convert it into a journal submission. This assignment also comes in several parts. First, you are to receive (ideally detailed) feedback on your conference paper. This feedback should go beyond the feedback you might have received in the conference evaluation process or from the respondent at your conference panel. Choose a scholar who is clearly expert in the focus of your paper. Approach that scholar and ask him/her if he/she would have time to provide ample feedback on your work. Once you have received that feedback, modify your paper based on your own evaluation but, importantly, the suggestions of your expert. Students choosing this option should submit the following materials:

- The original conference paper
- The feedback generated by your chosen expert
- A statement of how you modified your conference paper including a point-by-point description of how you modified your paper based on the expert's feedback
- The final version of the paper submitted to the journal
- Notification from the journal acknowledging receipt of your manuscript.

Write a White Paper. This two-part assignment involves writing a white paper. In the first part of the paper, students should take a theory, body of research, or a published research article on some aspect of relationship initiation and writing a white paper of at least 6 and no more than 10 pages (exclusive of title page and references) explaining the theory/article in a manner that is understandable to a lay audience. In addition to explaining the theory/research findings, you should discuss the practical implications the theory/findings has/have for individuals' everyday lives. In the second part of the paper, you are to write a standard academic literature review on the theory or area of research you have chosen. You can locate a number of examples of white papers on the PWWL website.

For each format, semester projects shall be a *maximum* of 30 pages of text (i.e., **not** including cover page, abstract, references, tables, figures, etc.) and our expectation is that most papers, no matter the format, will be in the 20-25 page range (including only text and not counting the cover page, abstract, references, tables, figures, appendixes, etc.). Papers that are substantially longer than the upper limit will be returned for pruning before being evaluated.

Semester projects (no matter the specific format) should be prepared in a manner consistent with the fifth or sixth edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. Where appropriate, each part of the project should include, source citations, references, methods, and statistics prepared consistent with *APA* guidelines.

Evaluative Criteria

The primary criteria used to evaluate your paper will include completeness, organization, clarity, and validity. **Completeness** refers to the extent to which you fulfill the requirements of the particular option that you choose (e.g., rationale and literature review of a body of literature). In this example, completeness would include the extent to which you describe the existing research and theory development relevant to your topic. **Organization** refers to the extent to which your various ideas flow together. Sentences should blend effectively into paragraphs, while paragraphs should blend well in the major sections of your paper. **Clarity** refers to the extent to which you present your ideas in an understandable manner. This would include the extent to which you word your own (and other researchers' and theorists') ideas clearly. Finally, **validity** refers to the extent to which the arguments you provide follow in a clear and organized manner. Evaluation will also tap the technical (or stylistic) issues including *APA* style. For more information on evaluative criteria, see *Mongeau's General Criteria for Evaluating Papers* presented later in this syllabus.

In order to give yourself adequate time to complete the paper, you should choose a topic (and inform me of that choice in writing, e.g., via e-mail) in the next few weeks. If you choose to perform a study, the sooner you get started, the better. Again, the topic may be something we discussed in class or could be a topic not discussed in detail during class. If you chose a topic we covered in detail in class, the paper must go well beyond the readings discussed in class.

I will be available to discuss possible topics and, within reason, to examine your preliminary written drafts of your paper. The phrase "within reason" indicates that at some point I would have to remind you that the paper is a test of your own thinking and communicating skills, and that I should not end up writing the paper for you. In addition, I will not be available to review drafts on the evening before the papers are due. You should set some reasonable period for the submission and return of rough drafts. You should count on a *one-week* turn-around time in returning a variety of drafts (i.e., not only this paper, but also drafts of other papers as well).

DISCUSSION LEADERSHIP ASSIGNMENT

As one of the assignments for this course, you will lead the class discussion of one reading during the semester. Evaluation depends on the extent to which the important points in the reading are brought out in the course of the discussion. There is no single best way of doing this. What follows are some guidelines that I pulled from the past feedback sent to students.

1. Know your readings. The better you know what your readings have to say, the better you will be able to do the things you need to best complete this assignment.
2. Manage your time well. You have approximately 75 minutes (probably a bit less) to lead discussion. Make sure that you do not spend too much time on a single issue (particularly if that issue is tangential to the reading) that might cause you to go over other, more important, issues in less detail later in the discussion. Make sure that the class adequately discusses the important points in the article.
3. Provide a brief introduction to your reading. Provide class with an idea of what the article is about, but do not include much information that might work better as discussion fodder. Remember that your task is to lead discussion, not to lecture.
4. Follow up on student comments (sometimes this can be as simple as asking someone “why?” or “how so?”). This forces you to really *listen* to what students are trying to say and turn their contribution into a question, even if it means bringing a topic up “out of order.”
5. Do not answer your own question. If the class does not respond, wait. They might have to think about your question (especially if it is a complex one). If the class does not understand your question, they will ask you to rephrase it.
6. Handouts might (and might not) be helpful. Handouts should facilitate, rather than restrict discussion. Do not the handout to the class.
7. Be innovative. Try something new. Have fun.
8. Ask good questions.

GOOD DISCUSSION QUESTIONS...

1. Are open-ended. Closed-ended (e.g., yes-no) questions do not give the class any room to *discuss* ideas (e.g., “do you agree?” “Does this make sense?”). Closed-ended questions *can* be useful if you have an open-ended as a follow-up (e.g., asking “why” or “on what grounds” after a “do you agree” type question).
2. Are clear. Do not use vague terms. Do not use terms from outside class that other students will not know (unless you spend the time to explain them).

GOOD DISCUSSION QUESTIONS...(cont.)

3. Are simple. Short questions tend to be clearer than long questions. One thing that can make for unnecessary complexity is that you ask two (or more things at once). Make sure that you are asking only one thing at a time.
4. Do not have objective, verifiable, answer to the question (particularly from the reading). Do not ask questions where the answer is likely to be someone reading from the text (unless you have a good, open-ended, follow-up).
5. Give the class a number of directions that they could go. Don't be afraid to let the class to choose the topic or answer they want to give. Though keep in mind that it is important to manage your time well.
6. Attempt to identify (and/or challenge) implicit assumptions in a particular piece. These questions force students to look beyond what the authors have to say.
7. Relate back to earlier readings from class. Again, this forces students to go beyond what the authors have to say and to start making connections between concepts and theories. Do not be afraid to bring in concepts from other classes or from your own experience (but be prepared to explain that material or experience).
8. Potentially keeps the discussion on track. There will be times when the discussion focus will meander. Under these circumstances, a good question takes the class from the secondary topic back to the reading (though sometimes you have to bring the class' attention to the reading more abruptly).
9. Assumes that students have read and understood the reading. Be prepared, however, to explain basic issues (e.g., definitions).
10. Might ask for applications of theoretical positions (or theoretical explanations for applied issues).
11. Are questions. Do not make a statement, state an opinion, or read a passage without including a question to accompany it. If you do not ask a question, the class will likely not know how to respond.
12. Can be answered by more than one person and in more than one way. Do not fall into the pattern of: question, answer, question, answer...
13. Either specific or general. Neither specific nor general questions are always preferred. All of one kind (especially specific) gets somewhat tedious. Make sure that there is some combination of specific and general questions.

MONGEAU'S GENERAL CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING PAPERS

Across the classes that I teach, some criteria that I use in evaluating written assignments are specific to the particular assignment. On the other hand, while the specific content of the various papers differ, several *general criteria* that I use to evaluate them (and pieces I read in my other professional capacities) remain pretty much the same. I want to spend a bit of time here discussing these general criteria. These criteria are not mutually exclusive (e.g., a lack of organization influences perceptions of clarity); however, I hope that this gives you a good idea of what yardsticks I use when I grade papers. I generally use five general criteria in evaluating student papers.

CRITERION 1: CLARITY

The primary criterion that I use when I evaluate a paper (a draft of my own work, a manuscript that I receive as a reviewer for a professional journal, or a [undergraduate or graduate] student's paper) is clarity. Simply put, are you communicating whatever it is that you are trying to say unambiguously? It does not matter if you are trying to describe a relationship that you have been part of, a reaction to a lecture, or reviewing the theoretical literature on relationship initiation, you must do so clearly. Saying something simply is better than saying something using complex, convoluted, language. Do not feel as though you have to use a lot of technical jargon because the research you have read does it. If I consistently cannot understand what you are trying to say, your grade is going to suffer as a result.

CRITERION 2: COMPLETENESS

I evaluate completeness on two levels. First, I evaluate completeness on a *macro* level. Most of my paper assignment includes multiple parts. For example, a reaction/application paper requires that you first describe course material and then either apply that material to your life experiences or describe how and why you reacted the way that you did. When I evaluate completeness on the macro level, I am looking for the extent to which you actually perform each of the tasks that I require. Failure to complete a major part of a paper is a serious error that will result in substantial point deductions. Therefore, it is important that I know what you are doing as you work your way through your paper. It is in your best interest to inform me where you are and what you are doing in your paper. Signposting and transitions between parts helps immensely in keeping me informed as to what you are doing in your paper.

I also evaluate completeness on a *micro* level. Completeness on a micro level represents the extent to which you adequately tackle each of the tasks required in the paper. The question here is how well did you perform each of the tasks required? How completely you should describe something, of course, depends on the nature and length of your paper. If you are describing Predicted Outcome Value Theory in the relationship paper, it does not make sense to spend five pages of your seven-page paper describing the theory. You need to complete all parts of the assignment given the page restrictions.

CRITERION 3: ORGANIZATION

The third criterion I use in evaluating papers is organization. Your ideas should develop in a logical manner. Words should fit together to form phrases. Phrases should fit together to form sentences. Sentences should fit together to make paragraphs. Paragraphs should fit together to form the major sections of your paper. What I do not want is a paper that rambles from point to point without any connection between them. The paper assignments suggest a particular organizational scheme for the major parts of your papers and I strongly suggest that you stick to them. Within major sections, however, the choice of an organizational scheme is up to you.

CRITERION 4: VALIDITY

The fourth major criterion I use in grading papers has to do with the validity of the presented arguments. The arguments that you make in your papers must be valid. This means that the conclusions of your arguments must follow from the premises. Further, the premises and conclusions that you draw should be explicit. I should not have to dig through a paper to identify and understand the arguments you are trying to make.

Part of the validity of an argument has to do with the data supporting a particular conclusion. Specifically, properly document all statements of fact from a reputable primary source. For example, if you are making the claim that men and women communicate differently in some important ways, you need to support that conclusion (or claim) with a reference from a reputable and primary source.

CRITERION 5: MECHANICS

My evaluation also focuses on the technical (or stylistic) aspects of the paper. I expect that submitted drafts should be devoid of grammatical errors, typographical errors, misspellings, punctuation errors, sentence fragments, and so on. In this respect, it would be helpful to develop the habit of completing rough drafts of your work and then spending time cleaning and polishing your writing. If you try to write the entire paper the last day or two before it is due, you will almost certainly encounter stylistic problems, not to mention substantive ones.

I will also evaluate the format of source citations and references provided (if any). The format of the paper, source citations, and reference lists must be consistent with the fifth or sixth edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*.