



**University of Waterloo  
Centre for Extended Learning**

**Psychology 354  
Interpersonal Relations**

**Spring 2010**

***Instructor Information***

Your instructor's name and contact information will be available on the UW-ACE site for this course at: <https://uwangel.uwaterloo.ca>

***Important***

*Please note that all communication regarding this course should be addressed to your instructor. The course author, John Holmes, is not involved in the ongoing delivery and administration of this course.*

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## Introduction and Overview

This course is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of research and theory on interpersonal relations. We will begin by exploring how we form first impressions of other people. We'll spend a couple of lectures looking at the criteria that we use to choose our relationship partners (e.g., similarity and physical attractiveness). Next, we will explore the developmental basis of individuals' chronic orientations toward the social world, their expectations about other and beliefs about themselves that affect how they approach their close relationships. Next, we will examine issues of self-esteem and social anxiety and consider how they influence our encounters with others. To some extent, the main focus of the course is the development and maintenance of close, personal relationships. Thus the remaining lectures will focus on areas where couples go right and where they go wrong.

In the latter two sections of the course, we will take a look at how we think about our relationships. That is, we'll turn our focus to social cognition. In the first of these social cognition lectures we will look at questions including whether it better to accurately understand exactly who our partners are, or whether a little poetic license in viewing our partners helpful for our relationships? The second lecture on social cognition will address similarity in our relationships and will look at our tendencies to perceive greater similarity between ourselves and our partners than may be warranted by reality. Next, we will take a close look at how traditional gender roles influence our satisfaction with our relationships. Subsequently, we will turn our attention to the accommodation phase where the challenge for individuals is to come to terms with a less than perfect partner and to forge a commitment based on a broader and more realistic perspective of their relationships. We will continue with the theme of social cognition following up the accommodation phase lecture with a series of lectures on strategies for maintaining our relationships, dealing with negativity from our partners and coping with uncertainty. We will then address the question of how we evaluate and appraise our relationships, deciding whether to stay with our partners or not. Finally, we will deal with a pivotal concern in any relationship – the handling of conflicts.

## Objectives

Our main objective in this course is to provide you with a set of conceptual tools for analyzing and understanding the significant social relationships in your own lives and others' lives. "There is nothing as practical as a good theory" according to Kurt Lewin, the father of social psychology. However, that is only true to the extent that you learn how to apply and translate general ideas into specific situations. Both the lectures and the case study assignments are designed to help you develop skills in analyzing social situations and translating theories into practice.

## Textbook

Brehm, S.S., Miller, R.S., Perlman, D., and Campbell, S.M. (2009). *Intimate Relationships*. Fifth Edition. McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

The assigned textbook for this course is *Intimate Relationships* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.) by Brehm et al. This is a very fine textbook. It is well-written and relatively lively, and at the same time, it is sophisticated and gives a balanced presentation. We hope you enjoy it! (Students in our course on campus rate it as one of the best texts they've had in university.) It is a great introduction to the study of close relationships and is new as of last year, meaning the research described throughout the book is up-to-date. You should get the fourth edition of the textbook if you are buying it used or online. **The assigned readings come from the 5th edition of the book and the exam questions will be derived from the 5th edition of the book.**

However, if you already have a 4<sup>th</sup> edition textbook, you may be able to use it for the course. Although this edition was published in 2007, the field of close relationships has been growing rapidly since then. Consequently, our understanding of some concepts is more refined now than it was when the previous edition was published. However, the differences between the two editions are not so significant that you will be at a major disadvantage if you can only obtain the older edition of the book. Your syllabus should contain a reading list with page numbers for both editions of the book, but if you do not have this, please e-mail me and I will forward it to you.

## Contact with the University

### Administrative Matters

Centre for Extended Learning: <http://de.uwaterloo.ca/>

### Instructor

Your instructor's contact information will be available in UW-ACE during the 1<sup>st</sup> week of term.

### Psychology Department

Phone: 519-888-4567 ext. 32813

## Organization of the Course

*Intimate Relationships*, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition

Lecture	Topic	Readings
1	First Impressions	Chapter 1; Chapter 2
2	Interpersonal Attraction	Chapter 3
3	Filter Model	
4	Attachment Styles	Chapter 8
5	Bases of Self-Esteem	Chapter 7, pp. 214-233
6	Impact of Self-Esteem	
7	Social Anxiety	Chapter 7, pp. 233-244
<b>Assignment One</b>		<b>Due: Wednesday of Week 3</b>
8	Social Cognition #1	Chapter 4
9	Social Cognition #2	
10	Gender	Chapter 12, pp. 360-374
11	Accommodation	Chapter 6
12	Relationship Maintenance	Chapter 14, pp. 420-428
<b>Assignment Two</b>		<b>Due: Wednesday of Week 7</b>
13	Negativity	Chapter 10
14	Uncertainty	Chapter 9
15	Appraising Relationships	
16	Communication	Chapter 5
17	Conflict	Chapter 11; Chapter 12, pp. 374-384
18	Therapy	Chapter 13 Chapter 14, pp. 428-440
<b>Assignment Three</b>		<b>Due: Wednesday of Week 11</b>
<b>Assignment Four: Supplementary</b>		<b>Due: Day of the Final Examination</b>

Lecture	Topic	Readings
1	First Impressions	Chapter 1; Chapter 2; Chapter 4, pp. 130-132
2	Interpersonal Attraction	Chapter 3, pp. 75-93
3	Filter Model	Chapter 3, pp. 93-109
4	Attachment Styles	Chapter 8
5	Bases of Self-Esteem	Chapter 7, pp. 219-234
6	Impact of Self-Esteem	Chapter 7, pp. 235-253
7	Social Anxiety	Chapter 14
<b>Assignment One</b>		<b>Due: Wednesday of Week 3</b>
8	Social Cognition #1	Chapter 4, pp. 110-130
9	Social Cognition #2	Chapter 4, pp. 133-142
10	Gender	Chapter 11; Chapter 5, pp. 147-170
11	Accommodation	Chapter 6, pp. 186-201
12	Relationship Maintenance	Chapter 6, pp. 202-214; Chapter 15, pp. 458-464
<b>Assignment Two</b>		<b>Due: Wednesday of Week 7</b>
13	Negativity	Chapter 10, pp. 314-338
14	Uncertainty	Chapter 9, pp. 276-292
15	Appraising Relationships	Chapter 9, pp. 292-301
16	Communication	Chapter 12, pp. 361-372
17	Conflict	Chapter 12, pp. 373-388; Chapter 13
18	Therapy	Chapter 5, pp. 170-177; Chapter 15, pp. 465-477
<b>Assignment Three</b>		<b>Due: Wednesday of Week 11</b>
<b>Assignment Four: Supplementary</b>		<b>Due: Day of the Final Examination</b>

### Online Resources

A course website has been set-up to gain access to the course components and provide information from the instructor. To access the course you need to log into ACE. It is suggested that you login at least once per week.

### Logging Into UW-ACE

Since UW-ACE is a web-based system, you will need a Web browser. Although you may have success with other Web browsers, we strongly recommend that you use the following for best access results:

### PCs

Windows OS: Internet Explorer 7.0 or higher and Firefox

## Macintoshes

Mac OS X: Firefox

**Announcements** regarding UW-ACE (service outages, etc.) are posted **beside** the Log On portion of the screen. It is a good idea to check these regularly.

**Please note that UW-ACE is unavailable on Thursdays between 8:30 AM and 9:30 AM (Eastern Time) due to system maintenance.**

Additional computer requirements can be found at: [http://de.uwaterloo.ca/comp\\_req.html](http://de.uwaterloo.ca/comp_req.html).

Once you have started up your Web browser, type in the following URL: <http://uwace.uwaterloo.ca>. Provide your Quest/UWdir userid and password. Once you have logged in, you should see a list of your UW-ACE courses under the Courses header bar. Clicking on the course name will take you to that course.

### Checking Your Userid and Password

Your password can be checked by going to: <https://ego.uwaterloo.ca/~uwwdir/Passwd.html>. If your password check fails, you can unlock your password and receive a new one.

Only students with courses using UW-ACE will have access to the site.

The course will be available by the first day of the term until the last day of the term.

### Technical Support

To contact Technical Support, please send an email to [extendedlearning.help@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:extendedlearning.help@uwaterloo.ca) (email queries are answered in chronological order) or call +1 519-888-4567, ext. 35348.

### UW Statement on the Use of Computing and Network Resources

Given that online components of this course are hosted on a UW server, there are Guidelines on Use of Computing and Network Resources that you should be aware of at <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infocist/use.htm>.

### Study Guidelines

The assigned readings in the text should be covered in the order listed above. We suggest you read the assigned material before you listen to the lecture. Sometimes the lectures will overlap with the text, expanding on the ideas presented there. However, at other times the lectures will focus on ideas that are not covered in much, if any detail in the book. Our goal in the lectures is to give you more depth on particular topics that we believe are especially significant and to include the most up-to-date findings from the research literature, with the Brehm et al. textbook providing you with the appropriate background material.

We have provided Thought Questions after each lecture. We recommend that you struggle with the issues raised in these questions as a way of integrating ideas from the course and ensuring that you have a good understanding of the concepts. There is often no right or wrong answer to these questions; instead they are intended to get you to consider the ideas in more depth and to realize the complexity and nuances of the issues.

### Final Examination

The final exam will be worth 50% of your grade in the course. The exam will consist of about 75 multiple choice questions, with four options to each question. No marks will be deducted for guessing. You will be allowed a maximum of two hours to complete the exam, although it has been designed to require less time than that in order to avoid your feeling too much pressure. No aids are permitted.

Approximately 60% of the questions will focus on the textbook material and 40% on the lectures. You are not expected to remember details from particular studies or the names of the authors, except in obvious circumstances where a study has received considerable attention. Even then, if you understand the ideas you should be able to deduce the correct answer.

The Brehm et al. textbook provides excellent summaries at the end of each chapter. Use these summaries as a way for reviewing the material and determining where further study is necessary. You are responsible for understanding any of the ideas referred to in the summaries.

## **Assignments**

There are three essay assignments for the course. Your essay grades are worth 50% of your total mark.

A fourth essay is **optional** and may be submitted at any time up to the day of the final exam; your best three grades on the essays will be used if you decide to submit the fourth assignment. (Most students complete only the three essays, using the fourth as a "fallback" if they're unhappy with an earlier grade.) However, the optional paper is only available for students who have completed all of the other three required essays: it is offered as a chance to improve a disappointing grade, not as a chance to replace a missed assignment.

Each essay requires you to discuss a **case study** involving a specific situation that you're asked to analyze in detail. A premium is put on concise, organized writing and the **maximum** length permitted is **3-4 pages of double-space, 12-point** (no smaller please!) typeface. (If you don't have access to a word processor, please write very neatly.)

As we suggested earlier, applying theories and ideas to specific social situations is a tremendously important skill to develop. Try to think like a good detective or scientist, marshaling evidence to support your claims and deducing hypotheses about what might be happening from theories in the course. Remember that these assignments are intended as exercises to get you to apply ideas from the course. It's certainly acceptable to include occasional ideas of your own, but the focus should largely be on untangling the complexities of the case using concepts from the lectures or text. (Don't explain theories in a lot of detail to us. However, you should be persuasive about why a theory applies in this instance and what its implications are in these circumstances. Show us that you understand the ideas by the way you use them.)

Please be careful to note the lecture number that you should have completed before you start the assignment.

### ***Tips on Writing Essays***

The essays that we are asking you to submit for this course are not the typical essays that you may have encountered in other classes. We are asking you to be a detective and carefully analyse the case studies presented, form your conclusions about the particular themes underlying the situations described, and present these theories in your papers.

Keep in mind that the purpose of the essays is to **showcase your understanding of course content**. So when you read the scenarios, think back over the major content areas presented in the lectures preceding the assignment. Specifically think of ways in which you can apply **each** content area to the situations (e.g. if the course covered gender and attachment issues in the previous lectures, then be sure to apply them to your analyses!). However, some content areas are clearly more applicable than others and so should be focused on with greater attention. For example, in Assignment 1, little mention is made of first impressions and so you should not devote more than a few sentences to this topic. In this scenario, the other content areas are more important.

The following tips may also be useful to you when writing your essays:

1. **Read the case study very carefully and make note of ALL the relevant details.** The stories contain many clues that will help you understand which elements of the course content you should look for. If there are explicit details given in a story about particular thoughts or feelings of a character or events that occurred, it is likely that these details point to an element of the course content.
2. **Because the case studies are so detailed, you do not need to elaborate on what is there.** Try not to read too much into the descriptions, in particular, avoid vilifying one character or blaming him/her for the issues in the story.
3. **Remember that the case study is designed to allow you to show off what you have learned in the course thus far.** It is a good idea to look back over the course and isolate the major content areas, and then see how the story points to these issues. For example, if self-esteem was a major course-content area, you should probably apply it to the case study!
4. **Cite the source of your facts and NAME THEORIES.** A simple (Brehm et al. pXX) or (Lec 5) following the information in the sentence is sufficient. Use the correct theory name when you apply it to the story. e.g., Social exchange theory; Leary et al.'s Social Anxiety theory (Brehm et al. p. xx).
5. **Spend more time applying theory to the case study.** Simply name the theory and then spend your time applying it to analysing the situation by citing specific evidence from the story that supports your theoretical claims. If you apply it correctly in your analysis, this will show your understanding. For example, if you wish to say that a certain character has high self-esteem, then you should cite the details from the story that led you to that conclusion, i.e. behaviours, thoughts etc.
6. **In your analysis, after arguing for the relevance of a concept to the story or characters, be sure to consider the implications of consequences of your analysis.** For example, if you argue that a character has high self-esteem, you may wish to consider the consequences of high self-esteem for the character or relationship, if such consequences were not already made clear in the story.

### ***Submitting Assignments Late***

Please make every effort to contact your course coordinator if you require an extension on an assignment **prior to the date it is due**. If you contact your instructor after the assignment due date then you will likely **not** be granted an extension unless there are serious mitigating circumstances which can be documented.

There is a 10% deduction per week that an essay is late (e.g. half a week = 5%, one and a half weeks = 15%). Because of the nature of assignment submission through the Centre for Extended Learning, **with late assignments** there is occasionally a delay between the time you submit any assignment and the time that we receive it to mark. Therefore, if you must submit an essay **late** do two things: 1) submit it in the usual manner to the Centre for Extended Learning and 2) e-mail the instructor with a copy of the essay pasted into the body of the e-mail. No attachments! This e-mail will serve as a time stamp for the date you submitted your assignment. Without this e-mail, we will penalize your grade based on the date we receive the essay.

### **The Supplementary Assignment 4**

Because this is a novel type of assignment for most students, some students may find that they do not do as well as they expected on the first essay. We understand this, and that is why we have given students the option of submitting a fourth essay to help boost their grade. However, **this option is only available to students who submit all of the other three required essays**. We offer this as a chance to improve a disappointing grade, not as a chance to replace an assignment you failed to submit.

Additionally, in writing the optional essay, please be sure to base your analysis on relevant topics from the entire course, rather than only the latter third.

## **Administrative Links**

[UW Statement on use of Computing and Network Resources](#)

[Note on Avoidance of Academic Offences](#)

[How Do I Online?](#)

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