



UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

Psych 354, Section 1
Interpersonal Relations
Winter 2023
Tues/Thurs 10:00-11:20, EV3 1408

Instructor: Dr. Megan McCarthy

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Office Hours: Tuesday 11:30-12:30, Thursday 2:00-3:00, or by appointment

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I acknowledge that I live and work on the traditional territory of the Anishnaabeg, Haudenosaunee, and neutral peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, land promised to Six Nations, which includes six miles on each side of the Grand River. As part of acknowledging this territory, I am committed to learning about, understanding, and respecting indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing.

T.A.

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Course Description

This course is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of theory and research in the field of interpersonal relationships. Our study of relationships will take us from the early stages of relationship formation, including first encounters and initial attraction, to the maintenance and dissolution of long-term relationships. For example, we'll discuss the causes of romantic attraction, the nature of love and intimacy, healthy and unhealthy communication, how our self-perceptions impact our romantic partners, conflict and infidelity, break-ups, and the strategies people use to maintain and improve relationships. Our exploration of these topics will be guided by key theoretical perspectives, including attachment theory, interdependence theory, evolutionary theory, the investment model, and more. We will also cover different types of intimate relationships, such as monogamous, consensually nonmonogamous, same-sex, and non-romantic relationships.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

Through lectures, readings, discussions, and class activities and assessments, students will:

- A. Identify and describe the core theories involved in relationships research;
- B. Interpret, critically evaluate, and discuss scientific research on relationships;
- C. Apply theory and findings from the literature to real world experiences and examples;
- D. Find, read, and critically evaluate journal articles in a focused area of study; and
- E. Collaborate effectively with peers through group problem solving.

Required Text

- Bradbury, T. N., & Karney, B. (2019). *Intimate Relationships (Third Edition)*. WW Norton & Company (physical or electronic-only versions available)

Course Requirements and Assessment

Assessment	Date of Evaluation	Weighting
In-Class Midterms	Feb 2, Mar 9, Apr 6	45%
Relationship Wars	Jan 31, Mar 7, Apr 4	10%
Research Paper		
Proposal and Annotated Bibliography	Feb 16	10%
Paper Draft	Mar 16	5%
Peer Review	Mar 23	5%
Revised Paper	Mar 30	20%
Case Study Reflections	Jan 9 – Apr 10	5%
Bonus Research Experience	Jan 9 – Apr 10	(+2%)
Total		100%

Midterm Tests

There are 3 midterms throughout the term, which will be completed in class (in our regular classroom at the regular time). Midterm tests cover material equally from both lecture and assigned readings and consist of multiple choice and short answer questions. Each test will make up 15% of your final grade. Midterms are NOT cumulative.

GUIDELINES FOR MISSED TESTS: If you know in advance that you cannot be present for one of the tests, please see me or your TA as soon as possible so that we can schedule an alternative time. There will be no make-up tests once the test date has passed except for serious, documented reasons.

Relationship Wars

In 3 in-class sessions during the term, teams of 5-6 students will work together to prepare brief demonstrations of the concepts covered in the lecture and readings. I will determine a “battleground” (or task) for each war appropriate for the topics covered and will use random assignment to determine team members at the beginning of each war. The teams will wage battles in different domains to provide practice in the wide range of situations in which you might use or encounter relationship concepts or phenomena. Because the topic for each battle will not be announced in advance, it is important that you try to attend every class and complete all of the assigned readings in order to be prepared to fight. It is my hope that through these exercises you will get to know your classmates and also have fun imagining how relationship processes unfold in everyday situations. At the end of each battle, the class will vote for the winning team (who will receive a perfect score). The instructor and TA ratings of the teams will determine the remaining team scores for that war (out of 5), and all team members will receive the same score. The two best scores for each student will each count toward 5% of the final grade.

Research Paper

If you could ask any question about relationships, what would it be? This is your opportunity to ask a question about love, sex, intimacy, or anything other aspect of relationships you are interested in, and—hopefully—get some answers! For this assignment you will develop a research question about

interpersonal relationships, guided by the topics and theories we cover in class, and conduct a literature review to try to answer your question using published research from peer-reviewed journals. This project will give you experience analyzing and synthesizing research on a topic in the science of relationships while also shedding new light on that topic. Hopefully, you'll also have fun exploring a topic you're interested in and finding answers to your burning questions about relationships. The project will be scaffolded throughout the term so you can benefit from the guidance and support of myself, your TAs, and your peers, and also so you won't have a large amount of work to complete at the end of the term. Your work on this paper will be divided into four stages, which, combined, will make up 40% of your final grade: proposal and annotated bibliography, draft, peer review, final draft.

GUIDELINES FOR LATE SUBMISSIONS: Late submissions (excluding the draft and peer feedback components) will be penalized 5% per day up to a maximum of 50%. After 10 days, late submissions will not be accepted. If you have a legitimate reason for a late submission (such as an illness or family emergency) please see me or your TA as soon as possible with appropriate documentation. If you have other compelling circumstances for a late submission, it is possible that extensions may be granted if you see me or your TA before the assignment deadline. Because of the collaborative nature of peer review, the paper draft and peer feedback components must be submitted by the deadline to be counted.

Case Study Reflections

How can the concepts and theories we discuss in class help you to understand your own relationships or the relationships of the people you care about? For this assignment you will choose an interpersonal relationship from your own life to examine as a case study throughout the term and complete five short, written reflections that apply what we are learning in class to the relationship. You can select any five topics, theories, or concepts that we cover in class to apply to your case study relationship, and you can complete the reflections any time throughout the term as long as they are submitted within one week of the topic coverage. These reflections will give you an opportunity to engage deeply with the material and to consider the real world applications of the topics we cover. Short, informal writing assignments also provide a low stakes way to practice thinking and writing about psychological topics. Each of your reflections will count toward 1% of your final grade (5% overall).

Research Experience

You can earn an additional 2% in bonus marks by participating in research or completing journal article reviews. More information about research experience opportunities is provided below.

Notes/Policies:

1) Website

Please check the LEARN website regularly. I will post announcements, lecture slides, assignment information, grades, etc. Lecture slides will be posted before lecture to help you with your note-taking. However, I recommend that you take your own notes as much as possible; research shows that people have greater memory for the material when they take their own notes.

2) Attendance

I will present a great deal of material not covered in your readings and expand on some of the important points in the readings during class time. For the most part, lectures and readings overlap only minimally. As a result, students who attend all lectures typically do much better than those who attend irregularly.

Remember that “attending” is more than just being physically present! Try to keep your mind focused on the material and free from distractions (see section on technology). You should also exchange contact information with a classmate for notes sharing in case you have to miss a lecture. If you opt in to the peer study group opportunity (see more information on Learn), your study group can also be a great resource to catch up on missed material.

3) Accommodations for Illness or Unforeseen Circumstances

If you need an accommodation for course requirements (e.g., tests, assignments) due to illness, you should complete either a uWaterloo Verification of Illness form OR a self-declaration of illness on Quest, depending on your circumstances. In both cases you must complete the form/declaration within 48 hours of the missed course component and reach out to me or your TA to discuss the appropriate accommodation for the missed component. If you need an accommodation for reasons other than illness (e.g., personal or family emergencies), please reach out to me as soon as possible to discuss options. I am always willing to try to help, but if you wait until the end of the term it may not be possible to make up for the missed components.

4) Technology Regulations

Some studies suggest that students who bring laptops to class perform worse (on average) than their non-laptop using peers, and are less likely to pay attention in class. However, laptops may also be beneficial for engaging with some course content and can facilitate faster note-taking. If you do decide to bring a laptop to class, please be courteous to your fellow students and only use your laptop for the purposes of engaging in course content (e.g., taking notes, completing class activities). Laptop use during lectures for email, gaming, online shopping, or other non-course related activities is not permitted.

5) Important Information

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the [Office of Academic Integrity webpage](#) for more information.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. Check [the Office of Academic Integrity](#) for more information. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances](#), Section 4. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72 - Student Appeals](#).

Note for Students with Disabilities: The [AccessAbility Services](#) office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (NH 1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.

Intellectual Property: Students should be aware that this course contains the intellectual property of the instructor, which can include lecture handouts and presentations (e.g., PowerPoint slides), lecture content, both spoken and written (and any audio or video recording thereof), questions from various types of assessments (e.g., assignments, quizzes, tests, final exams), work protected by copyright.

Making available the intellectual property of instructors without their express written consent (e.g., uploading lecture notes or assignments to an online repository) is considered theft of intellectual property and subject to disciplinary sanctions as described in Policy 71 – Student Discipline. Students who become aware of the availability of what may be their instructor’s intellectual property in online repositories are encouraged to alert the instructor.

6) Mental Health Support

All of us need a support system. The faculty and staff in Arts encourage students to seek out mental health support if they are needed.

On Campus

- Counselling Services: counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca / 519-888-4567 ext. 32655
- [MATES](#): one-to-one peer support program offered by Federation of Students (FEDS) and Counselling Services
- Health Services Emergency service: located across the creek from Student Life Centre

Off campus, 24/7

- [Good2Talk](#): Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Phone: 519-749-4300 ext. 6880
- [Here 24/7](#): Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
- [OK2BME](#): set of support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning teens in Waterloo. Phone: 519-884-0000 extension 213

Full details can be found online on the Faculty of Arts [website](#)

Download [UWaterloo and regional mental health resources \(PDF\)](#)

Download the [WatSafe app](#) to your phone to quickly access mental health support information

7) Additional Student Support

The **Student Success Office** at the University of Waterloo, located on the second floor of South Campus Hall, offers tutoring, workshops, success coaching, and a variety of other resources for students looking for guidance to be successful in university. Their home page is: <https://uwaterloo.ca/student-success/>

The **Writing and Communication Centre**, located on the second floor of South Campus Hall, works across all faculties to help students clarify their ideas, develop their voices, and communicate in the style appropriate to their disciplines. Writing Centre staff offer one-on-one support in planning assignments, using and documenting research, organizing papers and reports, designing presentations and e-portfolios, and revising for clarity and coherence. You can make multiple appointments throughout the

term, or drop in at either the Dana Porter or Davis Centre libraries for quick questions or feedback. Group appointments for team-based projects, presentations, and papers are also available. To book a 50-minute appointment and to see drop-in hours, visit: <https://uwaterloo.ca/writing-and-communication-centre/>

8) Academic freedom at the University of Waterloo

[Policy 33, Ethical Behaviour](#) states, as one of its general principles (Section 1), "The University supports academic freedom for all members of the University community. Academic freedom carries with it the duty to use that freedom in a manner consistent with the scholarly obligation to base teaching and research on an honest and ethical quest for knowledge. In the context of this policy, 'academic freedom' refers to academic activities, including teaching and scholarship, as is articulated in the principles set out in the Memorandum of Agreement between the FAUW and the University of Waterloo, 1998 (Article 6). The academic environment which fosters free debate may from time to time include the presentation or discussion of unpopular opinions or controversial material. Such material shall be dealt with as openly, respectfully and sensitively as possible." This definition is repeated in Policies 70 and 71, and in the Memorandum of Agreement, Section 6.

Sona and Research Experience Marks Information and Guidelines

Experiential learning is considered an integral part of the undergraduate program in Psychology. Research participation is one example of this, article review is another.

Since experiential learning is highly valued in the Department of Psychology, students may earn a **"bonus" grade of up to 2%** in this course through research experience. Course work will make up 100% of the final mark and a "bonus" of up to 2% may be earned and will be added to the final grade if/as needed to bring your final grade up to 100%. The two options for earning research experience grades (participation in research and article review) are described below. Students may complete any combination of these options to earn research experience grades.

OPTION 1: Participation in Psychology Research

Research participation is coordinated by the Research Experiences Group (REG). Psychology students may volunteer as research participants in remotely operated, in lab and/or online (web-based) studies conducted by students and faculty in the Department of Psychology. Participation enables students to learn first-hand about psychology research and related concepts. Many students report that participation in research is both an educational and interesting experience. Please be assured that all Psychology studies have been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Board.

Educational focus of participation in research

To maximize the educational benefits of participating in research, students will receive feedback information following their participation in each study detailing the following elements:

- Purpose or objectives of the study
- Dependent and independent variables
- Expected results

- References for at least two related research articles
- Provisions to ensure confidentiality of data
- Contact information of the researcher should the student have further questions about the study
- Contact information for the Director of the Office of Research Ethics should the student wish to learn more about the general ethical issues surrounding research with human participants, or specific questions or concerns about the study in which s/he participated.

How to earn marks for your Psychology course:

- You will earn “credits” which will be converted to “marks” (1 credit = 1%)
- Students may complete up to half of the credits through online studies, while the other half will need to be completed through either in lab or remote access studies (similar to In lab but held over video conferencing software).
- Participation in remotely operated and in-person in lab studies has increment values of 0.5 participation credits (grade percentage points) for each 30-minutes of participation. Participation in ONLINE studies is worth .25 credits for each 15-minutes of participation. Researchers will record student’s participation and at the end of the term the REG Coordinator will provide the course instructor with a credit report of the total credits earned by each student.

How to participate?

Study scheduling, participation and grade assignment is managed using the SONA online system. All students enrolled in this course have been set up with a SONA account. You must get started early in the term.

For instructions on how to log in to your SONA account and for a list of important dates and deadlines please, as soon as possible go to: [Participating/SONA information: How to log in to Sona and sign up for studies](#)

**** Please do not ask the Course Instructor or REG Coordinator for information unless you have first thoroughly read the information provided on this website.****

More information about the REG program in general is available at: [Sona Information on the REG Participants website](#) or you can check the [Sona FAQ on the REG website homepage](#) for additional information.

OPTION 2: Article Review as an alternative to participation in research

Students are not required to participate in research, and not all students wish to do so. As an alternative, students may opt to gain research experience by writing short reviews of research articles relevant to the course (i.e., scientific journal articles). Each review article counts as one percentage point. Thus, up to 2 reviews should be submitted for full credit. To receive credit, you must follow specific guidelines.

Guidelines:

- The article must be a RESEARCH article from a psychological journal

- Each review should be 1.5 – 2.0 pages, typed and double-spaced with a cover page. A copy of the original article must be attached.
- Content of the review should briefly summarize the research question, methods, variables, results, and implications of the study. In addition, you should indicate the pages in the textbook that are relevant to the article and critically evaluate the application or treatment of those concepts in the article. If inappropriate or incorrect, identify the error and its implications for the validity of the article. You may find, for example, misleading headings, faulty research procedures, alternative explanations that are ignored, failures to distinguish factual findings from opinions, faulty statements of cause-and-effect relationships, errors in reasoning, etc. Provide examples whenever possible. DO NOT COPY WORD-FOR-WORD FROM THE ABSTRACT OR ANY OTHER PART OF THE ARTICLE. Instead, you should paraphrase and cite from the source.
- **The review must be submitted before the [last day of lectures](#). Late submissions will NOT be accepted under ANY circumstances.**

Course Outline

Week	Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments Due
1	Jan 10	Intro to Relationship Science		
	Jan 12	History and Research Methods	Ch. 3	
2	Jan 17	History and Research Methods		
	Jan 19	Attraction	Ch. 7	
3	Jan 24	Love		
	Jan 26	Gender	Ch. 4	
4	Jan 31	<i>Relationship War #1</i>		Jan 31: Relationship War Summary
	Feb 2	MIDTERM 1		
5	Feb 7	Personality and Personal History	Ch. 6	
	Feb 9	Personality and Personal History		
6	Feb 14	Intimacy and Interdependence	Ch. 8	
	Feb 16	Intimacy and Interdependence		Feb 16: Proposal and Bibliography
	Feb 21/23	READING WEEK		
7	Feb 28	The Dark Side of Relationships	Ch. 11	
	Mar 2	The Dark Side of Relationships		
8	Mar 7	<i>Relationship War #2</i>		Mar 9: Relationship War Summary
	Mar 9	MIDTERM 2		

Week	Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments Due
9	Mar 14	Sex and Sexuality	Ch. 9	
	Mar 16	Diversity		Mar 16: Draft for Peer Review
10	Mar 21	Diversity	Ch. 5	
	Mar 23	Maintaining and Improving Relationships	Ch. 12 pp. 406-424	Mar 23: Peer Feedback
11	Mar 28	Maintaining and Improving Relationships	Ch. 15 pp. 505-526	
	Mar 30	Beyond the Dyad		Mar 30: Revised Paper
12	Apr 4	<i>Relationship War #3</i>		Apr 4: Relationship War Summary
	Apr 6	MIDTERM 3		