



ST. JEROME'S UNIVERSITY

St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo
Department of Psychology
Psych 459
Winter 2017
Thursday 2:30–5:20, SJ1 3020

Instructor and T.A. Information

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Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

The goal in this seminar is to examine some current theories and research in the social psychological study of close relationships. An equally important goal is to encourage independent thinking and critical analysis. I want to provide you with tools that you can use to effectively gather and evaluate information for yourselves. Finally, it is vital for students to develop effective oral and written communication skills – regardless of people's future goals and aspirations, everyone can benefit from learning how to present ideas and information in a clear, focused, and precise manner. In order to achieve the course objectives, the course is designed around a series of broad concepts and processes that are central to the psychological study of close relationships.

Course Requirements and Assessment

Class Participation	every class	10%
Article Presentation	January 12 – February 16	15%
Class Group Presentation	March 2 – March 30	35%
Research Proposal Draft of Introduction	February 28	10%
Research Proposal Final Version	April 6	30%
Total		100%

Class Participation: For each class, there will be one or two articles that everyone is expected to read. It is your responsibility to read the assigned articles and be prepared to contribute your observations and ideas. Given the nature of the course, you are obviously expected to be present and involved in each class. Thus 10% of your grade will be based on your attendance and participation. Exceptions will be made for legitimate reasons (e.g. illness, religious observance, compassionate grounds, etc.) and if you cannot attend a class please let me know ahead of time if possible. Simply attending class without contributing to the discussion is the minimal expectation and it will get you a minimal C-level passing grade. Obtaining a higher participation grade will require a higher level of participation.

Article Presentations: In the first six classes (*in italics*) 4 or 5 students will individually present an assigned journal article that we will then discuss as a group. For these classes I will be leading the discussion. These article presentations should take no more than 15 minutes. Depending on the article, you may be able to effectively present a verbal summary, but it is often more effective to have information on slides. Presentations will be graded based on the accuracy and clarity of the information that you convey (15%).

Class Group Presentation: In later classes (**in bold**), students will work in groups of three to four to develop and lead a class session using the following procedures.

1. I have listed general topics that you will need to narrow down and select a more specific set of issues to focus on. You can do this by conducting a literature search and scanning recent abstracts and/or you can ask me for suggestions.
2. Once you have identified some specific topics, you should run them by me in a short meeting. Together we will zero in on a manageable focus and I can offer some suggestions for specific authors or additional articles that you can look up.
3. Your next task is to find 1 to 3 key articles that will be read by the class. These articles should be sent to us at least one week before you are to lead the class and we will post them.
4. When you lead the class, recognize that you will have developed expertise on your topic. In order to convey this knowledge and encourage the development of further ideas, you should do the following.
 - a) You should provide a general overview and introduction of the topic that is being discussed. Clearly you will have read more than your fellow classmates and you should be able to set your specific topic into a broader context. For example, if you are dealing with an aspect of conflict you should provide a brief overview of major issues in the conflict literature and indicate how your specific topic fits into that literature.
 - b) You are expected to give a more detailed overview of the specific theoretical issues or research studies that you are dealing with. You will likely present the results of additional studies that your fellow students will not have read. These will need to be brief and to the point.
 - c) Most importantly, you are expected to generate a meaningful discussion and critical analysis of the topics being discussed. Therefore, you will need to raise provocative and stimulating questions. These questions may occur during your presentation or you may want to ask them at the end. Whatever your procedure, you will need to be prepared to lead the discussion and move people's thinking along.
 - d) You will need to provide a conclusion or summation of the ideas presented in class. This conclusion should include concrete suggestions for directions for future research. Be sure to explain why this research should be done and what you would hope to learn.
5. I welcome creativity in your presentation as a way of fostering engagement and learning. For example, you can use small group discussions, role-plays, music or video clips, questionnaires, etc. to get people thinking, generate a discussion, or make a point. It is also a good idea to prepare a bibliography for the class.
6. This whole process, from choosing a topic and articles to leading the class, will be graded. It is worth 35% of your grade. I will make the final decision on a grade, but the class will have input into the evaluation of your class presentation. Also, each of you will provide a short confidential assessment of your fellow group members. Unless there are very compelling reasons to do otherwise, each person in the group will receive the same grade.

Research Proposal: The third major assignment is a written research proposal. This proposal may be based on the material in one of your presentations or you can choose a different topic. Basically, you will be writing the introduction and methods sections of an empirical journal article (*not* the results or discussion sections). However, this paper will require you to be thoughtful and creative in approaching the challenges of conducting research on close relationships. There are no length requirements. Typically, introductions are anywhere from 5 to 10 typed pages (double spaced Times New Roman 12-point font with 1-inch margins) and methods sections vary according to the complexity of the measures and procedures. This proposal can be completed individually or in groups of 2 or 3 and has three stages.

Stage 1: By the first week of February I expect you to have met with me to finalize a research idea.

Stage 2: On February 28 I expect you to email me an initial draft of *the introduction* to your proposal. This version of your introduction will be graded and is worth 10% of your final grade. I will give you feedback on the ideas, organization, and readability of your introduction.

Stage 3: The final version of your paper, which includes both the introduction and a detailed methods section, is due April 6 and is worth 30% of your grade. My expectations and standards for the final version will be higher than those for the first draft so I recommend that you take the time to edit your paper.

Class Schedule

Date	Topic
January 5	introduction and organization
12	<i>relationship foundations – attachment theory</i>
19	<i>self-esteem</i>
26	<i>self-theory and close relationships</i>
February 2	<i>trust and power</i>
9	<i>love (and hate)</i>
16	<i>commitment</i>
23	*** no class – reading week ***
28	*** research proposal introduction (first draft) due ***
March 2	attraction and partner selection
9	communication, disclosure, and intimacy
16	conflict
23	relationship dissolution
30	relationship maintenance and success
April 6	*** full research proposal (final version) due ***

Important Information

Academic Integrity: To maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo and its Affiliated and Federated Institutions of Waterloo (AFIW) are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. See the [UWaterloo Academic Integrity webpage and the Arts 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 their actions. 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 Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the [St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Discipline](#). For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [University of Waterloo 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 their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read the [St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances](#).

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under the St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or the St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to the [St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Appeals](#).

Note for Students with Disabilities: The [AccessAbility Services](#) office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (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.