

# PSYCH 354R INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

Spring 2016

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this course is to provide an overview of research and theory on interpersonal relations. The course will present the principles and processes that affect the nature and progress of close relationships. We will focus mainly on intimate or romantic relationships, from the initial stages of attraction and relationship formation, to the development of commitment and intimacy as well as conflict. We will examine the processes that help us maintain, or lead to the dissolution, of these relationships.

### Objectives

- Appreciate the importance of studying intimate relationships.
- Compare and contrast different approaches, frameworks, and models for studying intimate relationships.
- Consider how different people interpret relationship events based on contextual and personal/social influences, including early family experiences, personality characteristics, and beliefs and values.
- Critically evaluate psychological research on intimate relationships, and apply this evaluation to studies in the media.
- Explore differences and similarities between heterosexual and same-sex relationships, and compare how women and men approach intimate relationships.
- Examine the stages of intimate relationships, and how relationships develop and change across the life span.

## REQUIRED READINGS:

Required text: Bradbury, T.N., & Karney, B.R. *Intimate Relationships*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.

## ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION:

<b>1) Midterm Exam</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>2) Final Exam</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>3) Assignment 1: Article Summary</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>4) Assignment 2: Scenario Analysis</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>5) Participation</b>	<b>10%</b>

You can also earn an additional 3% in bonus marks by participating in online studies. More details are provided later in the syllabus.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Lecture	Topic	Textbook
1	1	Introduction and Research Methods	Ch. 1 & 2
2	2	Theoretical Frameworks	Ch. 3
3	3	Sex & Gender	Ch. 4
4	4	Attraction & Mate Selection <b>Assignment 1 due</b>	All of Chapter 5 except for pages 188-190 (Romantic Attraction in Long-Term vs. Short-Term Relationships) and 208-209 (Courtship: Developing Commitment).
5	5	Individuals in Relationships	Ch. 6
6	6	Communication & Intimacy	Ch. 7
7	7	Conflict & Aggression <b>Midterm</b>	All of Chapter 8 except "quantifying couple communication" on page 269.
8	8	Beliefs & Values	All of Chapter 9 except pages 323-325 (Similarity in Partner's Beliefs and Values).
9	9	Meaning, Memory, & Motivated Reasoning	All of Chapter 10 except pages 353 (selective attention), 366-368 (cognitive complexity), and 369-370 (commitment calibration hypothesis).
10	10	Stress & Social Support <b>Assignment 2 due</b>	All of Chapter 11 except pg. 385-386 (Physiological Effects) and 409-411 (Attributes of Social Networks)
11	11	Relationship Interventions	All of Chapter 12, except pages 445 (Self-PREP evaluation)
12	12	Relationships Across the Lifespan	All of Chapter 13 except pages 462-474 (Sibling Relationships and Childhood Friendships).

## FORMAT OF THE COURSE

### 1) Midterm exam (20%)

The Online Midterm will consist of 40 multiple choice questions. It will cover content from Modules 1 to 6.

### 2) Final exam (40%)

The final exam will include both multiple-choice and short-answer question. It will cover the entire course but will be weighted more heavily toward Modules 7 through 12

### 3) Assignment 1: Article Summary (15%)

There are two purposes of this assignment. The first is to apply what you have learned about research methods to some specific topics in relationships research, which will facilitate your understanding and interpretation of the research studies that will be discussed throughout the rest of the lectures and textbook. The second is to critically evaluate the way scientific research about relationships is conveyed in the media so you will have a better understanding of the meaning and significance of research reports you comes across in the future.

Choose one of the two articles supplied (available through the eReserves widget on the Course Home page). After reading the article carefully, write a short summary (500 words, or 1 page typed single-spaced) introducing the topic and research question, then describing the sample characteristics (e.g., age, gender), methodology (correlation, experiment, longitudinal), measures, and main results. Note any limitations of the research design or analysis. Prepare the summary as if you were writing for a lay audience – that is, for people who have no prior knowledge of psychology or research methods. You will need to decide which details are necessary and which details are either irrelevant or too complicated for your audience to understand the research.

Next, read the short online magazine article written about your chosen research article. In a few paragraphs (again, less than 500 words), comment on the accuracy of the journalist's reporting compared to your own reading of the original journal article.

### 4) Assignment 2: Scenario Analysis (15%)

The purpose of this assignment is to practice your skills in applying psychological research to specific social situations. The assignment will require you to analyze two relationships. Analyze each relationship point by point—every numbered statement requires a specific answer. Be concise. You should fit your answers for both scenarios into 500 words or less.

A sample scenario and response, as well as some tips for your analysis, have been provided for you. Please note that although the sample answers are brief, they demonstrate understanding of the theories, rather than just describe the theories. You will be graded on your ability to integrate the concepts covered in the textbook, lectures, and other learning activities.

### 5) Participation (10%)

There are a number of small activities in this course, and you will be expected to participate in some way each week. These include Discussion Forums, Instructor-Reviewed Learning Activities, and Self-Assessed Learning Activities. Refer to each module page for information about which activities are due each week.

You will not be marked on each individual activity; rather, you will receive a grade out of 10 that reflects the level of your participation in the activities.

## OTHER NOTES AND POLICIES

1) **Website:** Please check the LEARN website regularly. I will post announcements, upcoming due dates, grades, etc. Although all the lecture slides and accompanying audio will be posted, 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:** To succeed, listen to all of the lectures. The lectures generally follow the structure of the textbook, but I'll also talk about some additional research that is not covered in there. On the flip side, there are some topics in the text that I won't talk about in the lectures – mainly things I don't feel need much further explanation or discussion. You should definitely still read about those topics, and be prepared to answer questions about them on the midterm and exam, unless I've specifically indicated in your syllabus not to read those pages in the text.

3) **Accommodation for Illness or Unforeseen Circumstances:** The instructor follows the practices of the University of Waterloo in accommodating students who have documented reasons for missing quizzes or exams. See [http://www.registrar.uwaterloo.ca/students/accom\\_illness.html](http://www.registrar.uwaterloo.ca/students/accom_illness.html).

4) **Cross-listed course:** Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, a PHIL/PSCI cross-list will count in a Philosophy major average, even if the course was taken under the Political Science rubric.

- **Psych 354** is cross-listed with **Psych 354R** (formerly Psych 221R). Only one of these two courses can be taken for credit towards the degree.

### 5) **Academic Integrity:**

**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.

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her 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 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, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm>

**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, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm>

**Appeals:** A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm>

**Academic Integrity website (Arts):** [http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic\\_responsibility.html](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html)

**Academic Integrity Office (University):** <http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/>

6) **Note for students with disabilities:** Accessibility Services, (AS), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, 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 AS at the beginning of each academic term.

## **Research Experience Marks Information and Guidelines**

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Experiential learning is considered an integral part of the undergraduate program in Psychology. Research participation is one example of this, article review is another. A number of undergraduate courses have been expanded to include opportunities for Psychology students to earn grades while gaining research experience.

Since experiential learning is highly valued in the Department of Psychology, students may earn a **"bonus" grade of up to 3%** in this course through research experience. Course work will make up 100% of the final mark and a "bonus" of up to 3% 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 ONLINE (web-based) research studies 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 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 undergone prior ethics review and clearance through the Office of Research Ethics.

#### ***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.

Participation in ONLINE studies has increment values of .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 is available at:  
[REG Participants' Homepage](#)

## **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 (1½ to 2 pages) of research articles relevant to the course. The course instructor will specify a suitable source of articles for this course (i.e., scientific journals, newspapers, magazines, other printed or reliable internet media). *You must contact your TA to get approval for the article you have chosen before writing the review.* Each review article counts as one percentage point. To receive credit, you must follow specific guidelines. The article review must:

- **Be submitted before the last lecture. Late submissions will NOT be accepted under ANY circumstances.**
- Be typed
- Be submitted before the [last day of lectures](#)
- Fully identify the title, author(s), source and date of the article. A copy of the article must be attached.
- Identify the psychological concepts in the article and indicate the pages in the textbook that are applicable. 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-effect relations, errors in reasoning, etc. Provide examples whenever possible.
- Clearly evaluate the application or treatment of those concepts in the article.
- Keep a copy of your review in the unlikely event we misplace the original.