

## PSYCH 450R CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

Winter 2010

Instructor: Dr. Denise Marigold

**When:** Thurs. 2:30-5:20pm **Room:** REN 0203

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**Office Hours:** Wed. 10:30am-12:00pm or by appointment **Office:** 2607

### COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course will focus on the life cycle of adult close relationships, ranging from stages of initial attraction and the development of an attachment, to growth and maintenance of the relationship, and in some cases, to conflict and dissolution.

My goal in this seminar is to examine some current theories and research in the social psychological study of close relationships. The emphasis will be on understanding the basic processes involved in close relationships. An equally important goal is to encourage independent thinking and critical analysis. You will learn how to successfully gather and evaluate information for yourselves. Finally, the assignments in this seminar will help you develop effective oral and written communication skills. Regardless of people's future goals and aspirations, everyone can benefit from learning how to clearly present ideas and information.

### REQUIRED READINGS:

Course Package, Dr. Marigold, *Psych 450R Close Relationships*  
Available for purchase at the campus bookstore.

### ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION:

1) Attendance and Participation	10%
2) Thought Papers	20%
3) Seminar Leadership	30%
4) Research Proposal	40%

#### 1) Attendance and Participation (10%)

**DUE:** Throughout the course

A seminar course is only successful if students attend and participate regularly. The criteria for evaluating class participation will be based on a student's understanding of material, the ability to foster discussion, demonstration of an understanding for others, and willingness to engage in seminar activities. Discussion is essential to the development and articulation of ideas. Discussion, like writing,

is often hard work, requiring preparation and commitment. It also takes practice. Writing weekly thought papers on the readings and attending class with several critical questions for that week's theme may assist with participation. When you are uncertain about something, please say so during class. You will be helping the group as a whole clarify ideas. If you are having difficulties with participation or course material, do not hesitate to meet with me for strategies.

## **2) Thought Papers (20%)**

**DUE: 5pm on each Wednesday before class (submitted on ACE)**

Each student will complete a one page, double-spaced thought paper each week in response to the required readings (exception: seminar leaders are not required to submit a thought paper). Thought papers are an opportunity for you to describe your reactions to the readings, critique one or two points, or raise new questions. Students are expected to read each others' thought papers prior to class and be prepared to comment on others' ideas to stimulate class discussion.

## **3) Seminar Leadership (30%)**

**DUE: See schedule of readings**

In groups of 3 or 4, students will be responsible for leading two seminars during the term (starting in Week 3). For the class, each member will present a summary of one of the articles listed in the course outline for their chosen week. The summary should include a short description of the background of the topic and the rationale for conducting the study, explanation of the methods and results (presenting these in graphs or tables is helpful), and some conclusions. Seminar leaders should prepare some questions based on their article to generate class discussion. In addition, each leader should provide a one to two page summary of their presented article to classmates for possible reference in the final assignment.

Although each member of the group is responsible for presenting an article individually, group members should work together to come up with examples from television, film, music, books, news media, internet, or other "lay" sources where this topic is represented to examine how scientific research results compare to popular notions of relationship processes. Class activities (e.g. questionnaires, demonstrations, role-plays) may be incorporated in the presentation in addition to the class discussion. Students may use Powerpoint if they wish (but not necessary). Together, group members should present a conclusion that summarizes the articles' findings and includes concrete suggestions for future research.

Seminar leadership will be evaluated according to: demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the topic, critical examination of readings/resources, communication of the material (presentation and summary hand-out), and engagement level of the class (activity). I will provide you with more detailed evaluation criteria early in the course. Seminar leadership is worth 30% of your final grade (15% per seminar) and each student in the group will be marked individually. Students are encouraged to meet with me at least one week in advance to discuss their plans for seminar leadership. Each group is responsible for arranging through me any audio-visual resources they may need.

## **4) Research Proposal (40%)**

**DUE: April 1<sup>st</sup>**

The major assignment in this course is a written research proposal. This proposal may be based on the material in your presentation or you can choose a different topic (either way the proposal must be done individually). You will be writing the introduction and methods sections of an empirical journal article (*not* the results or discussion sections, although your introduction should describe your expected

results). You must use proper citations (i.e. APA format). This paper will require you to be thoughtful and creative in approaching the challenges of conducting research on close relationships. The paper should be between 10-12 pages (double spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font, 1-inch margins). It is recommended that you meet with me to discuss your chosen topic and study idea in early March.

The project is due at the beginning of class on April 1<sup>st</sup>. If you would like your final project and written evaluation returned to you, please provide a self-addressed, stamped envelope along with your submission.

### **Assignment Deadlines**

You are responsible for informing the instructor in advance if you are unable to complete an assignment by the scheduled date. Missed due dates are only acceptable in the case of medical problems (with a medical note) and for serious compassionate reasons. Late submissions, without advance permission, will be given a 10% reduction in the total possible grade for each 24 hours after the due date. No assignments will be accepted if submitted more than one week after the deadline.

Difficulty with assignments is not a sufficient reason for an extension. A student who knows they will have problems with a particular assignment as outlined is encouraged to see me during the first week of term. Any student who finds himself / herself struggling with an assignment during the term is encouraged to meet with me as soon as possible to discuss strategies for success. It is important to begin assignments well in advance of the due date in case of problems.

## **WEEKLY SCHEDULE:**

**Note:** All chapters are printed in the Courseware package. Articles are available in PDF format on the course website.

### **WEEK 1 – January 7: Introduction, Overview, and Organization**

#### **Required Reading:**

Jordan, C.H., & Zanna, M.P. (1999). How to read a journal article in Social Psychology. In R. F. Baumeister (Ed.), *The Self in Social Psychology* (pp. 461-470). Philadelphia: Psychology Press.

\*This chapter is available on the course website.

### **WEEK 2 – January 14: Research Methods and Relationship Initiation**

#### **Required Reading:**

Feeney, J.A. (2006). Studying close relationships: Methodological challenges and advances. In P. Noller & J.A. Feeney (Eds.), *Close relationships: Functions, forms, and processes* (pp. 49-63). New York: Psychology Press.

Leary, M.R. (2005). Interpersonal cognition and the quest for social acceptance: Inside the sociometer. In M.W. Baldwin (Ed.), *Interpersonal cognition* (pp. 85-102). New York: Guilford Press.

### **Seminar Leaders' Articles:**

Luo, S., & Zhang, G. (2009). What leads to romantic attraction: Similarity, reciprocity, security, or beauty? Evidence from a speed-dating study. *Journal of Personality, 77*, 933-964.

Berk, M.S., & Andersen, S.M. (2000). The impact of past relationships on interpersonal behavior: Behavioral confirmation in the social-cognitive process of transference. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 79*, 546-562.

Swann, W.B. Jr., & Gill, M.J. (1997). Confidence and accuracy in person perception: Do we know what we think we know about our relationship partners? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 73*, 747-757.

### **WEEK 3 – January 21: The Self and Relationships**

#### **Required Reading:**

Aron, A., et al. (2005). Including close others in the cognitive structure of the self. In M.W. Baldwin (Ed.), *Interpersonal cognition* (pp. 206-231). New York: Guilford Press.

#### **Seminar Leaders' Articles:**

Murray, S.L., Holmes, J.G., & Griffin, D.W. (1996). The self-fulfilling nature of positive illusions in romantic relationships: Love is not blind, but prescient. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 71*, 1155-1180

Swann, W.B. Jr., De La Ronde, C., & Hixon, G.J. (1994). Authenticity and positivity strivings in marriage and courtship. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 66*, 857-869.

Drigotas, S.M., Rusbult, C.E., Wieselquist, J., & Whitton, S.W. (1999). Close partner as sculptor of the ideal self: Behavioral affirmation and the Michelangelo phenomenon. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 77*, 293-323.

Lockwood, P., Dolderman, D., Sadler, P., & Gerchak, E. (2004). Feeling better about doing worse: Social comparisons within romantic relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 87*, 80-95

### **WEEK 4 – January 28: Library Research Session (Professor away at conference)**

Lois Clifford, the Renison librarian, will be leading a 1.5 hour session starting at 2:30pm.

## WEEK 5 – February 4: Attachment

### Required Reading:

Hazan, C., Campa, M., & Gur-Yaish, N. (2006). Attachment across the lifespan. In P. Noller & J.A. Feeney (Eds.), *Close relationships: Functions, forms, and processes* (pp. 189-210). New York: Psychology Press.

### Seminar Leaders' Articles:

Cook, W. L. (2000). Understanding attachment security in a family context. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 78*, 285-294.

Mikulincer, M., Gillath, O., & Shaver, P. R. (2002). Activation of the attachment system in adulthood: Threat-related primes increase the accessibility of mental representations of attachment figures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 83*, 881-895.

Collins, N. L., & Feeney, B. C. (2004). Working models of attachment shape perceptions of social support: Evidence from experimental and observational studies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 87*, 363-383.

## WEEK 6 – February 11: Self-Regulation and Goals

### Required Reading:

Fitzsimons, G.M., Shah, J., Chartrand, T.L., & Bargh, J.A. (2005). Goals and labors, friends and neighbors: Self-regulation and interpersonal relationships. In M.W. Baldwin (Ed.), *Interpersonal cognition* (pp. 85-102). New York: Guilford Press.

### Seminar Leaders' Articles:

Fitzsimons, G. M., & Shah, J.Y. (2008). How goal instrumentality shapes relationship evaluations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 95*, 319-337.

Gagne, F.M, & Lydon, J.E. (2001). Mind-set and close relationships: When bias leads to (in)accurate predictions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 81*, 85-96.

Finkel, E.J., Campbell, W.K., Brunell, A.B., Dalton, A.N., Scarbeck, S.J., & Chartrand, T.L. (2006). High-maintenance interaction: Inefficient social coordination impairs self-regulation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 91*, 456-475.

Finkel, E.J., DeWall, C.N., Slotter, E.B., Oaten, M., & Foshee, V.A. (2009). Self-regulatory failure and intimate partner violence perpetration. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 97*, 483-499.

## READING WEEK – February 18

## WEEK 7 – February 25: Commitment and Marriage

### Required Reading:

Noller, P. (2006). Marital relationships. In P. Noller & J.A. Feeney (Eds.), *Close relationships: Functions, forms, and processes* (pp. 67-88). New York: Psychology Press.

### Seminar Leaders' Articles:

Rusbult, C.E., & Buunk, B.P. (1993). Commitment processes in close relationships: An interdependence analysis. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 10*, 175-204.

Miller, R. J. (1997). Inattentive and contented: Relationship commitment and attention to alternatives. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 73*, 758–766.

Eagly, A.H., Eastwick, P.W., & Johannesen-Schmidt, M. (2009). Possible selves in marital roles: The impact of the anticipated division of labor on the mate preferences of women and men. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 35*, 403-414.

Doss, B.D., Rhoades, G.K., Stanley, S.M., & Markman, H.J. (2009). The effect of the transition to parenthood on relationship quality: An 8-year prospective study. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 96*, 601-619.

## WEEK 8 – March 4: Sex and Intimacy

### Required Reading:

Sprecher, S. (2006). Sexuality in close relationships. In P. Noller & J.A. Feeney (Eds.), *Close relationships: Functions, forms, and processes* (pp. 267-284). New York: Psychology Press.

### Seminar Leaders' Articles:

Laurenceau, J.P., Barrett, L.F., & Roving, M.J. (2005). The interpersonal process model of intimacy in marriage: A daily-diary and multilevel modeling approach. *Journal of Family Psychology, 19*, 314-323

Gillath, O., Mikulincer, M., Gurit, B.E., & Shaver, P.R. (2008). When sex primes love: Subliminal sexual priming motivates relationship goal pursuit. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 34*, 1057-1069.

Impett, E.A., Strachman, A., Finkel, E.J., & Gable, S.L. (2008). Maintaining sexual desire in intimate relationships: The importance of approach goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 94*, 808-823.

Drigotas, S.M., Safstrom, C.A., & Gentilia, T. (1999). An investment model prediction of dating infidelity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 77*, 509-524.

## WEEK 9 – March 11: Relationship Maintenance and Success

### Required Reading:

Murray, S.L., & Derrick, J. (2005). A relationship-specific sense of felt security: How perceived regard regulates relationship-enhancement processes. In M.W. Baldwin (Ed.), *Interpersonal cognition* (pp. 153-178). New York: Guilford Press.

### Seminar Leaders' Articles:

Wieselquist, J., Rusbult, C. E., Foster, C. A., & Agnew, C. R. (1999). Commitment, pro-relationship behavior, and trust in close relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *77*, 942-966.

Neff, L.A., & Karney, B.R. (2009). Stress and reactivity to daily relationship experiences: How stress hinders adaptive processes in marriage. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *97*, 435-450.

Reissman, C., Aron, A., & Bergen, M.R. (1993). Shared activities and marital satisfaction: Causal direction and self-expansion versus boredom. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *10*, 243-254.

Gable, S.L., Reis, H.T., Impett, E.A., & Asher, E.R. (2004). What do you do when things go right? The intrapersonal and interpersonal benefits of sharing positive events. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *87*, 228-245.

## WEEK 10 – March 18: Insecurity and Self-Fulfilling Prophecies

### Required Reading:

Pietrzak, J., Downey, G., & Ayduk, O. (2005). Rejection sensitivity as an interpersonal vulnerability. In M.W. Baldwin (Ed.), *Interpersonal cognition* (pp. 62-84). New York: Guilford Press.

### Seminar Leaders' Articles:

Stinson, D.A., Cameron, J.J., Wood, J.V., Gaucher, D., & Holmes, J.G. (2009). Deconstructing the "reign of error": Interpersonal warmth explains the self-fulfilling prophecy of anticipated acceptance. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *35*, 1165-1178.

Murray, S.L., Griffin, D.W., Rose, P., & Bellavia, G.M. (2003). Calibrating the sociometer: The relational contingencies of self-esteem. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *85*, 63-84.

Lemay, E.P. Jr., & Clark, M.S. (2008). "Walking on eggshells": How expressing relationship insecurities perpetuates them. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *95*, 420-441.

Marigold, D. C., Holmes, J.G., and Ross, M. (2007). More than words: Reframing compliments from romantic partners fosters security in low self-esteem individuals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *92*, 232-248.

## WEEK 11 – March 25: Conflict

### Required Reading:

Roberts, L.J. (2006). From bickering to battering: Destructive conflict processes in close relationships. In P. Noller & J.A. Feeney (Eds.), *Close relationships: Functions, forms, and processes* (pp. 325-347). New York: Psychology Press.

### Seminar Leaders' Articles:

Christensen, A., & Heavey, C. (1990). Gender and social structure in the demand/withdraw pattern of marital conflict. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 59*, 73-81.

Grote, N. K., & Clark, M. S. (2001). Perceiving unfairness in the family: Cause or consequence of marital distress? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 80*, 281-293.

Simpson, J. A., Rholes, W. S., & Phillips, D. (1996). Conflict in close relationships: An attachment perspective. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 71*, 899-914.

MacDonald, G., Zanna, M.P., & Holmes, J.G. (2000). An experimental test of the role of alcohol in relationship conflict. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 36*, 182-193.

## WEEK 12 – April 1: Relationship Theories and Relationship Dissolution

### Required Reading:

DePaulo, B.M., & Morris, W.L. (2005). Singles in society and in science. *Psychological Inquiry, 16*, 57-83.

### Seminar Leaders' Articles:

Knee, C. R. (1998). Implicit theories of relationships: Assessment and prediction of romantic relationship initiation, coping, and longevity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 74*, 360-370.

Karney, B., & Coombs, R. H. (2000). Memory bias in long-term close relationships: Consistency or improvement? *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 26*, 959-970.

Eastwick, P.W., Finkel, E.J., Krishnamurti, T., & Loewenstein, G. (2008). Mispredicting distress following romantic breakup: Revealing the time course of the affective forecasting error. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 44*, 800-807



## ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), 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 the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.

## EXPECTATION OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

**Academic Integrity:** In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. [Check [www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/](http://www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/) for more information.]

**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, [www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm). When in doubt please be certain to contact the department's administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity [check [www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/](http://www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/)] to avoid committing an academic offence, 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 instructor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate Associate Dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71, Student Discipline, [www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm). For typical penalties check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties, [www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm).

**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) [www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm).

**Note for Students with Disabilities:** The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), 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 the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.

**Turnitin.com:** Plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) will be used to screen assignments in this course. This is being done to verify that use of all material and sources in assignments is documented. In the first week of the term, details will be provided about the arrangements for the use of Turnitin in this course.

Note: students must be given a reasonable option if they do not want to have their assignment screened by Turnitin. See: <http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/Turnitin/index.html> for more information.