

1061 PSYCH 453: Hons Seminar: Develop Psych

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Times Friday 9:30-11:30

Required Text

Readings are listed under "Lessons" in ACE. Most readings are available on-line in the folder for each topic. For readings that could not be accessed on-line, there is a course readings package available at the bookstore. All readings are required.

Course Description

Psychology 453 is a Senior Honours Seminar in Developmental Psychology. Our focus is on family conflict, which we explore in various family relationships. We place emphasis on the dynamics of conflict in families, exploring the implications of conflict within one family relationship on other family members.

Course Objectives

Goals of the course

- To acquire substantive knowledge concerning processes and consequences of family conflict
- To examine conflict in a variety of family relationships
- To consider the implications of conflict within one relationship for other family members who might witness or intervene as third parties to conflict
- To examine information on family conflict critically, and to apply those critical skills in reading, seminar presentations, written papers, and seminar participation
- To learn to communicate ideas effectively in seminar presentations, written papers and seminar participation

Tentative Schedule

January 6 Introduction*

January 13 Family Conflict Processes*

January 20 Disagreements between Parents and Young Children

January 27 Parent-Adolescent Conflict

February 3 Ethnicity, Immigration and Family Conflict

February 10 Sibling Conflict

February 17 Parents' as Third Parties to their Children's Disputes

February 24 Reading Week

March 3 Marital Conflict

March 10 Impact of Marital Conflict on Children

March 17 Family Conflict in Divorce and Remarriage

March 24 Family Conflict Mediation*

March 31 Mediation Simulations*

* These meetings will be lead by the course instructor, and others will be presented in seminar format by students teams.

Course Requirements

- Student seminars

You will each be responsible for an oral presentation planned with two other students. Readings will be suggested for your group, and you will be responsible for selecting those that you will emphasize. You will organize the seminar and be responsible for the presentation of new material and for leading group discussion on aspects of your topic. The group will be graded on the quality of the seminar presentation, including the style and substance of the presentations, the critical qualities you bring to the evaluation of research and theory in your area, and your abilities to give considered, knowledgeable answers to questions on your topic.

- Written papers

Written work will be four brief essays. Specific topics will be assigned by students who are presenting each week, and each student will select four of the topics for essays. These essays will be limited to three or four pages (typed, double spaced and in readable fonts) and should be prepared in APA style (with respect to references especially). Your essays must be on topics other than your own seminar topic. Essays must be submitted on the day of the scheduled topic (or before that deadline) so that they may serve the goal of preparing you for discussion of each topic. You will receive topic assignments for each paper at least one week before it is due. You may also deviate from the assigned topics with my prior permission. As with the seminars, I expect to see a considered, critical stance toward the theoretical and empirical literature, an accurate and pertinent representation of that literature, as well as the application of ideas from that literature to the specific topics of your papers. I expect to see clear communication of your ideas and attention to style in your written papers.

Grading Policy

Grading for the course will be as follows:

Four essays: Each graded out of 20. You may select among weekly topics, but cannot write about the topic of your own seminar.

One group presentation: Graded out of 20. The group presentation will be graded as a whole, however I reserve the right to provide individual grades that are either higher or lower than the group grade in exceptional circumstances.

Participation: Graded out of 10. Participation grades depend on both attendance and participation in class discussion.

Total = 110. Grades will be prorated $[(\text{your grade}/110) \times 100] = \text{final grade}$.

Attendance Policy

Required

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism, which includes the use of another person's written work without proper citation or representation another persons' written work as your own, is a serious academic offense and University regulations will be followed if plagiarism is suspected.

All students registered in the courses of the Faculty of Arts are expected to know what constitutes an academic offense, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for their academic actions. When the commission of an offense is established, disciplinary penalties will be imposed in accord with Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline) which is supplied in the Undergraduate Calendar (p. 1:10). If you need help in learning how to avoid offenses such as plagiarism, cheating, and double submission, or if you need clarification of aspects of the discipline policy, ask your course instructor for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor and the Undergraduate Associate Dean.

Notes on Class Presentations

Psych 453

Winter 2006

These notes are designed to help you prepare your seminar presentations for class. They result from suggestions made by students in past years and are not meant to constrain you, or to discourage your own creativity in any way.

1. Work together to prepare the seminar.

Early in the semester group members should meet, review the readings for their topic, and identify the core of their presentation and the interesting work that they would like to present. Early in this process you should meet with me because I may be able to give you additional material or to comment on the ideas that you are developing together.

Although you will eventually assign different members of your group to do different tasks in the research and the presentation of your topic, a well-integrated presentation depends upon all group members understanding the scope and detail of the topic and

coordinating your efforts. A poor presentation is one in which the topic is divided totally among the presenters who hardly know at the outset what their fellow group members will say. Such presentations are often redundant and overly long. You should educate one another as you go along, and meet to review, coordinate and comment on the final presentation before you do it.

2. Knowledge of the subject matter

You should all know the material that you are presenting. You should know the central questions in the area, the theories that are relevant, and the methods that are used in the empirical research. These should be critically presented with attention to their strengths and weaknesses.

You should be sure that you have good coverage of the material on the topic, without feeling that you have to present every detail from what you have read. You may assume that students have read the material that you have assigned, and you should use this material (including the topic of the assignment) as a starting point for class discussion rather than presenting it again in lecture format. You should also provide new material to make your presentation more interesting.

Where relevant, theories and questions should be evaluated in relation to the empirical evidence presented in the readings. Appropriate comparisons should also be made among papers so that contradictions or contrasting views can be brought up for discussion.

Group members should be able to handle questions well, and should be able to support one another in this effort. (i.e., if one person is asked a question from the floor, other group members might contribute to answering that question.)

3. Organization of the presentation

A clear agenda should tell us how you are organizing the presentation, what you will cover etc. A good agenda will help you to highlight the important conceptual issues in your presentation and the relation between different aspects of the material you will present. Organization also means that you will make clear to the class where you are on your agenda. This will allow others to see the relationships between different aspects of the subject matter. The organization should also be your own. You will want to integrate material from varied sources so that your organization will seldom simply be presenting from one article, then the next, then the next and so on.

You should engage the class in discussion of interesting issues in your topic area. You should elicit participation with questions for the group or by other means (here's where some creativity helps). You should allow time for questions from the class and for the discussion that might ensue--if one person has an interest in the question they ask, others are also likely to be interested.

In addition, the better your level of organization, the more flexibly you can adapt your presentation to fit whatever circumstances arise. If class discussion leads to some issues arising before you might otherwise have raised them, and you could adapt to that by changing the order, or suggest that discussion wait until you cover the issue later (and tell the class when this will come up.) To do this you should know what fits where, and what must be presented and what might be skipped.

4. Style

Your presentation should be unhurried and clear. You may have notes, but you should not present with your face buried in those notes. What you say should be in your own words—reading from written text doesn't work well; you stumble on words and tend to bore your audience. Make eye contact with class members and do not read from your notes. You will find that powerpoint slides often provide you with all of the clues you

need to do a presentation without any notes, and this might be a great opportunity to try this out.

You should try to introduce some variety into your presentation. Use examples to illustrate your points. Be creative in introducing varied formats, but stay attentive to the goals of the class. You should also create a balance between review/discussion of material read, introduction of new material, presentation of empirical and theoretical material, discussion based on our own perspectives and stemming from the psychological literature.

Have fun. It may not seem possible after all of the cautions above, but give it a try. Take chances, and remember that we're all interested in your topic and in helping you to make this a painless experience. It's an opportunity to do something new, or, if you're already an old hand, to do something better than you have before.

Note. Class members will fill out the following evaluation forms, which I will integrate into written feedback and consider when assigning a grade to each student.

Student Feedback Form for Evaluating Student Seminars

Mark each of the following areas and comment as appropriate.

Best (B) Very Good (VG) Good (G) Adequate (A) Poor (P)

- 1) Clear Organization.
- 2) Presentation well-integrated.
- 3) Good knowledge of subject matter.
- 4) Good balance of novel and assigned material.
- 5) Intelligent evaluation of information.
- 6) Ability to handle questions.
- 7) Encouraged and controlled class discussion.
- 8) Good pace and speaking style.
- 9) Good balance of presentation format.
- 10) Appropriate use of overheads or other A-V.

Overall quality of seminar.

Highlights:

Areas for improvement: