

**Instructor:** Dr. John K. Rempel  
**Office:** St. Jerome's College, STJ 2018  
**Phone:** 884-8111 Ext. 212

**Class Meeting:** 9:30–11:50 Wednesday, STJ 3020

### Course Objectives

My 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 move you beyond an over-simplified analysis of complex issues and provide you with tools that you can use to effectively gather and evaluate information for yourselves. Finally, I strongly believe that it is critical 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 clearly present ideas and information.

### Course Content and Evaluation

In order to achieve the course objectives, I have designed the course around a series of topics and issues that dominate the psychological study of close relationships. You will be required to do two class presentations and a research proposal.

**Article Presentation:** For the first series of classes (in italics) I will be leading the discussion. However, in order to keep the number of course readings to a reasonable level and also give you experience in presenting to the class in a less threatening format, each class member will present a summary of half of one article (i. e two people will present one article). The presentation will be worth 15% and I will choose the articles. Presentations should take 7 to 10 minutes depending on the length of the article, but in all cases the goal is to cut to the heart of the theoretical ideas and research findings in the article. The use of overheads or Powerpoint is encouraged.

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

1. I have listed a series of general topics below. You will need to choose a topic and narrow it by selecting 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 specific topic and I can offer some suggestions for specific authors or articles that you can look up.

3. Your next task is to find one or two longer or two to three shorter key articles that will be read by the class. These articles should be photocopied and handed out in class the week before you are to lead the class.

For this course I do not want to inundate you with large amounts of reading. Rather I want the readings to be short enough to ensure that everyone in class will do the reading in a careful, thoughtful manner. As students in this seminar, I fully expect you to be mature and responsible enough to come to class having carefully read and thought about the assigned readings. However, take note that 15% of your grade is based on class participation. In this seminar you are expected to be present and involved, both in body and in spirit.

4. When you lead the class you need to realize 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.

First, 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.

Second, 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 include a presentation of additional studies that your fellow students will not have read. These will need to be brief and to the point.

Third, 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.

Finally, 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 encourage you to be creative in your presentation. 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 may also help if you prepare handouts and 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 30% 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.

**Research Proposal:** The third 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. Basically you will be writing the introduction and methods sections of an empirical journal article. This need not be a long paper. Introductions are anywhere from 7 to 12 typed pages (double spaced 12-point font with 1-inch margins) and methods sections vary according to the complexity of the measures and procedures. However, this paper will require you to be thoughtful and creative in approaching the challenges of conducting research on close relationships. This proposal, which is due on **December 8**, can be done individually or in groups of 2 or 3, and is worth 40% of your grade.

### **Academic Offenses:**

I wish to remind you that plagiarism and other forms of cheating are very bad. Here is a statement prepared by St. Jerome's University regarding academic offenses: "All students registered in courses at the University of Waterloo and its Federated University and Affiliated Colleges are expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for their actions. Students who are unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who need help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating), or about 'rules' for group work / collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, TA, academic advisor, the appropriate St. Jerome's departmental Chair, or ultimately the Appeals Officer (currently the Associate Dean) for St. Jerome's University. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy #71, *Student Academic Discipline*, <<http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm>>. Students who believe that they have been wrongfully or unjustly penalized have the right to grieve in accord with Policy #70, *Student Grievance*, <<http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm>>".

### **Schedule:**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>
September 15	introduction and organization
22	boundary theory and close relationships
29	<i>trust and power</i>
October 6	<i>adult attachment</i>
13	<i>self-esteem</i>
20	<i>love and hate</i>
27	<b>attraction and partner selection</b>

November	3	<b>commitment</b>
	10	<b>relationship maintenance and success</b>
	17	<b>communication, disclosure, and intimacy</b>
	24	<b>conflict</b>
December	1	<b>relationship dissolution</b>
	8	*** research proposal due ***