

Instructor: Dr. John K. Rempel
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Class Meeting: 9:30 –12:20 Friday, STJ 3020
Office Hours: 10:00 – 11:00 Mondays and Wednesdays or by appointment

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 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 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.

Group Discussions: For the first five classes (in italics) I will be leading the discussion. In order to allow for more in-depth discussion, I will break the class down into two groups of 12 and have two 1-½ hour discussions, one at 9:30 and a second at 11:00. We will cover the same material in each discussion group and the groups and times will change each week according to an assigned schedule. It is your responsibility to read the assigned articles and know when you are meeting each week.

Class Participation: 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.

Reflection Papers: In order to encourage you to read and *think about* the readings, I would like you to come to each class with a one to two page reflection paper based on the readings. These papers can include your thoughts about inconsistencies in the readings, ideas for how the research can be extended, or thoughts about the practical implications of the material. These reflection papers are due at the beginning of each class and I will select two classes at random, in which the papers will be graded. Each graded reflection paper will be worth 10% of your final grade.

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 additional 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.
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 present the results 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 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 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. Unless there are good reasons to do otherwise, each person in the group will receive the same grade.

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 (*not* the results or discussion sections). This need not be a long paper. Introductions are anywhere from 7 to 12 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. 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 **April 5**, 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 the official statement: "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>
January	5 introduction and organization
	12 <i>boundary theory and close relationships</i>
	19 <i>trust and power</i>
	26 <i>adult attachment</i>
February	2 <i>self-esteem</i>
	9 <i>love (and hate)</i>
	16 attraction and partner selection
	23 *** Study Week - no class***
March	2 commitment
	9 relationship maintenance and success
	16 communication, disclosure, and intimacy
	23 conflicts
	30 relationship dissolution

April

5

*** research proposal due ***