

# PSY424H1-S: SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

WINTER 2023

JANUARY 9 – APRIL 7 (10)

CLASS TIME F 12-3pm  
LOCATION SS 1088

CONTACT INFORMATION	OFFICE HOURS	OFFICE	EMAIL
Dr. Molly Metz (she/her)	By appt only: <a href="https://calendly.com/profmetz/office-hours">https://calendly.com/profmetz/office-hours</a>	<a href="#">Zoom!</a> PW: metz SS 4006	<a href="mailto:molly.metz@utoronto.ca">molly.metz@utoronto.ca</a>
Elaine Hoan, TA (she/her)	TBA, by appointment, and as scheduled throughout the term	<a href="#">Zoom!</a> PW: Psy424	<a href="mailto:elaine.hoan@mail.utoronto.ca">elaine.hoan@mail.utoronto.ca</a>

**PREREQUISITES:** PSY201H1/ ECO220Y1/ EEB225H1/ GGR270H1/ POL222H1/ SOC202H1/ STA220H1/ STA238H1/ STA248H1/ STA288H1/ PSY201H5/ STA215H5/ STA220H5/ PSYB07H3/ STAB22H3/ STAB23H3/ STAB57H3, AND PSY220H1/ PSY220H5/ PSYB10H3/ SOC213H1

**EXCLUSION:** PSY327H5/ PSYD11H3

*It is your responsibility to ensure that you have met all prerequisites listed in the Psychology section of the A&S Calendar for this course. If you lack any prerequisites, you will be removed from the course. No waivers will be granted.*

**COURSE WEBSITE:** <https://q.utoronto.ca>

**TEXT:** *any version of* Miller, R. S. *Intimate Relationships*. New York: McGraw-Hill. (recent is better - most recent version: 9<sup>th</sup>)

In addition, many course materials will be posted on the course website, including the syllabus, required readings/handouts, and links to external sources. Therefore, **internet access** is crucial to your performance in the class. Please make sure to check Quercus frequently for important announcements and reminders.

**EMAILING YOUR INSTRUCTORS:** As your first contact on matters regarding verification of illness, accessibility concerns, comments or concerns about the class, or related matters, you can email your instructor at [molly.metz@utoronto.ca](mailto:molly.metz@utoronto.ca). We are also happy to review material and clarify content in office hours. E-mail should **not** be seen as an alternative to attending office hours with your TAs or instructor.

When emailing us (or any instructors), please use a descriptive subject line, a greeting, complete and grammatically correct sentences, and a signature with your full name (in other words, think of email as professional communication; click [here](#) for a great how-to). In addition, please include “PSY424” and the topic of your email in the subject line. We will try to respond to all emails within 2 business days. Finally, I may not respond to emails between the hours of 8pm and 8am, so please keep this in mind when deciding whether to resend the message. All email must come from an official utoronto.ca account.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

The objective of this course is to review what relationship science can tell us about close relationships, with a particular focus on romantic relationships. We will explore questions such as: Why do we want to be in relationships? What informs our choice of relationship partners? What predicts satisfaction and stability in relationships? Drawing from the developmental, evolutionary, and clinical literatures with a special focus on the theory and methodology of experimental social psychology, our class will include a review of historical and classic approaches to the study of interpersonal relationships, as well as exciting new research on a wide range of relationship phenomena, such as attraction, love, sex and sexuality, monogamy, communication, social support, and singlehood. By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Define and apply classic theories, current research, and common methods in the field of relationship science.
2. Analyze, report, and interpret results of empirical studies to maintain comprehension of concepts and principles of psychology *as a science*.
3. Synthesize a body of empirical findings relevant to underrepresented samples and contextualize them in the broader relationships literature.
4. Reflect on your own relationships and assess when it is (and is not) appropriate to apply findings from relationship science to your own relationships.

# COURSE STRUCTURE & ASSESSMENT

## A. LECTURE

In order to succeed in this course, you are expected to attend (and pay attention in) lectures. During lectures, I will present material not covered in the readings, expand on important points in the readings, and discuss new developments in the field. Classes will be a mixture of lecture and discussion, and I encourage you to participate in the discussions and learn from your classmates. I *will* post lecture slides on Quercus after each class, but keep in mind that they will *not* include all of the information that we go over, and therefore are not a substitute for attending class.

Finally, I welcome your input, insight, and questions. However, I remind you that this is a semi-professional setting, and you should only share things you are comfortable with complete strangers knowing. This applies to both in-class discussion and writing assignments.

### ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Being present in class (or watching lecture recordings) is a great first step toward success, but learning doesn't happen by passively absorbing rogue information from the atmosphere. In order to get the most out of this (or any) class, active engagement is key. This may include: participation in class discussion or activities, taking notes, or even just actually thinking about questions that are posed, even if you don't speak up in class. This definitely does not include: reading the newspaper, doing other work, texting or engaging in side conversations, listening to your headphones, sleeping, etc.

In addition to article discussions, we will have an assortment of in-class activities, small homeworks and surveys, film activities, and so on. These will not be assessed for marks; however, in my experience, deeper engagement with activities is associated with deeper engagement with the material and a more fulfilling class experience.

### FEEDBACK AND REVIEW

At the end of each unit, you will be asked to submit a brief survey online about what the most confusing or muddiest points were for you (as well as what you learned or enjoyed). Then, the week after each lecture, I will review the unclear material in class. As with the lecture, these reviews will be recorded and posted on the course site.

## B. READING

### a. TEXTBOOK

The textbook is a supplement to the lectures; some chapters will review or expand on what we discuss in class, while others will expose you to important topics that we will *not* be discussing together.

### b. PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES

As this is an upper-level course, you should have exposure to a variety of empirical and review papers related to the topics we will be discussing. Many weeks, you will be assigned 1-2 peer-reviewed articles related to that week's topics. Before coming to class, you should be able to summarize the main points of each article: the research question, how they tested it, what they found, and why it matters. You should also consider how this specific article fits in with what you have learned in this class and others so far. You will be responsible for all assigned articles on exams.

- i. **ASK-AN-EXPERT.** For a few select articles, you will submit discussion questions intended for the author of the paper the night before the designated lectures, and in class we will discuss the paper as well as broader career or research related questions with the selected authors. Details on this assignment will be posted on the course website and reviewed in class. **These discussion submissions will be worth 5% of your final grade.**

## C. RESEARCH

### c. WRITING – BUILDING A BETTER TEXTBOOK

Contemporary psychology is often limited by the lack of research (or the lack of coverage of the research) on underrepresented samples, and relationship psychology is no exception. Instead of lamenting what we don't have, we're going to take responsibility for doing better ourselves – you will choose a topic and

underrepresented sample and construct your own textbook portion (including images, key terms, inserts, and end of chapter review) on the relevant literature. We will have multiple in-class and out-of-class discussions and activities meant to support the development of this assignment. Details on this assignment will be posted on the course website and reviewed in class. **A proposal/annotated bibliography will be worth 10% of your final grade; the paper will be worth 25% of your final grade; and a final peer response will be worth 5% of your final grade.**

#### **D. TESTS**

There will be one midterm and one during the final exam period. The tests will ask you to think critically about course themes, connect topics in the course, and apply what you have learned to real-world situations, and your responses should draw on information from lectures, the readings, and videos. These assessments will be open-book and open-note (but *not* open-classmate or open-Google!), and completed individually. All writing must be in the students' own words. You will have approximately 3 days to complete each assessment, but they will be written to take about 3 hours, assuming you study ahead of time as you would for an in-class assessment, and you can do the assessment at any time you wish within the testing window. Therefore, accessibility accommodations for extended time on testing and breaks do not apply, as everyone may take the time and breaks you need. The midterm will review content covered up until that time, and the final will primarily review content introduced since the midterm, although you may draw on course material from the entire semester. Please contact the instructor if you have any questions.

#### **FINAL GRADE CALCULATION**

**There are no extra credit opportunities, but fear not: there are plenty of regular credit opportunities!**

All final grades will be rounded to the nearest tenth of a percent. Your grade will then be determined by the scale below, the official FAS grading scale. Final grades are non-negotiable. Grade changes will be made *only* to correct for grading errors.

##### **Research Paper (40%)**

Proposal – 10%

Final Paper – 25%

Peer Response – 5%

##### **Empirical Articles (5%)**

Ask an Expert – 5%

##### **Tests (55%)**

Midterm – 25%

Final – 30%

**Note:** Any grades posted in the Quercus gradebook are posted for your information only, so you can view and track your progress through the course. No grades are considered official, included any posted in Quercus at any point in the term, until they have been formally approved by the Course Instructor at the end of the course.

# COURSE POLICIES

## LATE WORK AND MAKE-UP POLICIES

### RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION

As a student at the University of Toronto, you are part of a diverse community that welcomes and includes students and faculty from a wide range of backgrounds, cultural traditions, and spiritual beliefs. For my part, I will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling tests, examinations, or other compulsory activities on religious holy days not captured by statutory holidays. Further to University Policy, if you anticipate being absent from class or missing a major course assessment due to a religious observance, please let me know as early in the course as possible, and with sufficient notice (at least two to three weeks), so that we can work together to make alternate arrangements.

### LATE WORK

As a rule, late assignments will not be accepted. Late assignments will only be accepted in the case of extraordinary circumstances and appropriate documentation, and may involve point deductions. Please alert me to these extraordinary circumstances by email within 12 hours of the missed deadline, and we will set up a time to discuss these on a case-by-case basis. Please note, you are already aware of all of the article deadlines for the term; it is your responsibility to account for any technological mishaps and take this into account when submitting your work.

**“Life Happens” Insurance:** However, I definitely recognize that sometimes life happens; therefore, I have built some flexibility into the course to allow for illness, other obligations, and terrible, horrible, no good, very bad days, *no questions asked and no documentation necessary*. First, I will drop the lowest of your discussion activity scores at the end of the term. In addition, I will provide ONE late ticket, good for one 48-hr grace period for any assignment during the term, no questions asked. Use it wisely, because once it’s gone, it’s gone! To use this late ticket, email your TA advance of the time of the original deadline to indicate your intent, and then submit the assignment in the usual way no more than 48 hours later.

### MAKE-UP EXAMS

If you miss a term test, you must submit documentation that demonstrates your inability to complete that assessment (i.e., the ACORN illness self-declaration tool or an email from your college registrar or accessibility counselor). Documentation must be submitted to me via email within 7 calendar days of the missed test. If you do not provide appropriate documentation, you will receive a 0.

As a rule, makeup tests will not be issued. If you miss one term test, your final marking scheme will be reweighted: 40% Final, 40% Paper, 15% Proposal, 5% Discussion. If you miss the final assessment, you will need to contact your College Registrar to file a petition for late term work (<https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/faculty-registrar/petitions>) or work out an alternative plan.

### ACCOMMODATION FOR PERSONAL REASONS

There may be times when you are unable to complete course work on time due to non-medical reasons. If your “life happens” situation is larger or more extended than the above policy covers, contact Dr. Metz to discuss your situation. I am here to support you and will help make accommodations where reasonable, possible, and in fairness to other students. It is also a very good idea to speak with an advisor in your College Registrar’s office; they can support you in requesting extensions or accommodations, and importantly, connect you with other resources on campus for help with your situation.

Please do not feel like you need to perform or share your trauma in order to get the support you need. I *do* need to know when you are struggling and need some extra help, but you do not need to share private details of your life in order to qualify for a discussion of alternative arrangements that can be made

## GRADE DISPUTE POLICY

**24/14 Policy:** You must wait for at least 24 hours following the return of an assignment/assessment before bringing a grade concern to me; use this time to reflect upon your performance and grade. Additionally, grade concerns must be brought to my attention within 14 days of the return of the assignment/assessment (the specific date will be provided upon release of the grades in question). Please write a short paragraph detailing your grade concern (including a) the question(s) in question; b) why you provided the answer you did and where in the course materials you learned this content, and c) why you think the key is incorrect or incomplete and what in the course materials would support your request) and submit it to the required form. Grade disputes are not to be directed to your TA. Only reasonable and well-justified concerns will be considered, and all decisions are final. By submitting a request, you are consenting to a full regrade of the assignment, and your grade may go up, down, or stay the same.

## USE OF COURSE MATERIALS POLICY

Students are free to use all lecture video, slides, and other materials for their own use. Students are, however, NOT permitted to share lecture slides or recordings with others not enrolled in this course. ONLY the instructor has permission to record and post the live student hour.

Uploading course materials to the web or shared server is expressly prohibited. Lectures are the intellectual property of the instructor, and the slides and recordings should be respected thus. Specifically, I do not want to discover that a student has put any of my materials into the public domain, has sold my materials, or has given my materials to a person or company that is using them to earn money (this is a real thing that has happened). The University will support me in asserting and pursuing my rights, and my copyrights, in such matters.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

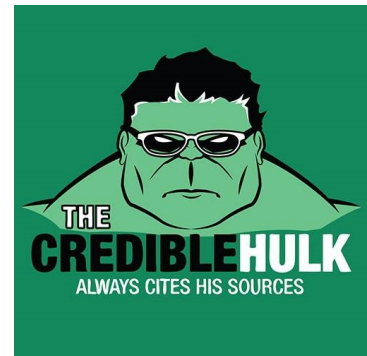
Academic Integrity is at the heart of the mission and values of University of Toronto and is an expectation of all students. Maintaining academic integrity is a means to ensuring that you are achieving the outcomes of this course and that your grades accurately reflect your learning and understanding of the course material. In addition, your performance in the next course in this series depends heavily on your ability to truly learn this material and apply it in future contexts. Ensure that the work you submit for grading represents your own honest efforts.

Academic misconduct will not be tolerated in any form. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Submitting the work of another (whether in part or in whole) as your own.
- Possessing prohibited materials while writing tests and exams.
- Providing or receiving assistance from another student unless explicitly permitted to do so by the instructor. **In this class, this means that unless explicitly stated, all assignments should represent your own work.** You are, however, encouraged to study and practice with peers.

Plagiarism occurs when someone misrepresents the work of another as his or her own. Plagiarism may consist of using the ideas, sentences, paragraphs, or the whole text of another without appropriate acknowledgement, but it also includes employing or allowing another person to write or alter work that a student then submits as his or her own. I strongly recommend you familiarize yourself with the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters*, posted and explained at <https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca>. Ignorance of the policy is not a defense for violating it. If you are at all uncertain about what constitutes academic dishonesty, please see your TA or the instructor – do not risk your grade or integrity!

Plagiarism occurs when someone misrepresents the work of another as his or her own. Plagiarism may consist of using the ideas, sentences, paragraphs, or the whole text of another without appropriate acknowledgement, but it also includes employing or allowing another person to write or alter work that a student then submits as his or her own. Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>)



## HEALTH & WELLNESS

### MASKS & OTHER PROTECTIONS

As of the writing of this policy, the University of Toronto no longer requires ([though recommends](#)) masks, and no longer requires COVID-19 vaccinations [except for students living in residence](#).

That said, medical masks (ideally N95, KN95, or KN94) and vaccinations remain incredibly important public health tools which, when used widely, help to keep viral transmission lower and protect those we are in community with. Because of the contagious nature of the still-circulating coronavirus (and other illnesses, like seasonal colds and flu), decisions to mask are not simply individual choices but instead have consequences for others. In large group settings with high turnover (like lecture halls, dining halls, and public transportation, to name but a few), the odds are very high that someone in a carrier of a contagious virus, even if they are not currently experiencing symptoms.

***I will be continuing to wear my medical mask indoors in public spaces, and I strongly encourage you to do the same*** if you are able. Not just for me, or for you, but for all of those in our community who have compromised immune systems or other vulnerabilities; who have vulnerable family members who may or may not be able to get vaccinated; who come into contact with vulnerable populations and want to avoid transmitting the virus to them; who have been infected with COVID previously and do not want to compound the probability of future long-COVID-related complications; and everyone who wants to avoid infection. Masks will be *especially* beneficial in tightly-packed spaces, spaces with poor circulation (i.e., no open windows, older buildings), and spaces where many people are talking or singing at once (like classrooms during discussions).

### RESOURCES FOR ACCESSING MASKS, VACCINES, AND TESTS

- On campus
  - [Accessing masks on campus](#)
  - [Vaccine clinics at UofT](#)
  - [UofT Discovery Pharmacy](#) (scroll down and select “Rapid Antigen Tests”)
- Off-campus
  - [Canada Strong Masks](#)
    - \*I have no commercial affiliation with this company and am simply offering it as one suggestion for accessing medical masks.
  - [Ontario Vaccine Booking](#)
  - [Rapid Antigen Tests in Ontario](#)
  - [Molecular \(PCR\) Tests in Ontario](#)

### WHAT HAPPENS IF THE PROFESSOR GETS SICK?

Specific actions will depend on just how sick I get! Out of respect for you, I will not come to class if I am concerned that I have been exposed to the coronavirus or if I am sick. If I am able to teach synchronously online, we will have a Zoom class. If I am too sick to facilitate a class session, I will post recorded lectures from previous online semesters, if I have one available. If all else fails, I may need to cancel class, because I am only human. I will give you as much notice as I can, and will provide you an updated class plan as soon as I am able – please attend to all Quercus announcements for the most updated information about the course.

### WHAT HAPPENS IF A STUDENT GETS SICK?

If you believe you may have been exposed to COVID-19 or believe you are infected, please exercise caution when deciding whether to come to class or otherwise go in public. Rapid antigen tests are still available and useful tools in tracking your infection status.

***I understand it may be different in other courses, but please remember that there is sufficient flexibility built into this course to allow you to make choices prioritizing your health and safety and that of others.*** I do not take attendance; lecture slides and recordings will be posted; all small assignments allow for some missed submissions with no penalty; some (though not all) in-class opportunities have alternative options; and some classes allow for late submissions for some assessments. Make sure to read the specific policies for the course in which you are enrolled.



Use the [Absence Declaration Tool](#) on ACORN anytime you are absent from academic work. Please note, however, that your declaration is NOT automatically sent to your instructors, so you should still follow their preferred procedures for contacting them in case of missed classes, work, or deadlines.

Thank you for making considered and considerate choices.

## OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY RESOURCES ON COVID PLANNING

- <https://www.utoronto.ca/utogether/masks>
- <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/covid19-artsci-student-faqs#vaccines-and-masks-accordion-1>
- <https://www.utoronto.ca/utogether/covid-19-planning-update>

## STUDENT RESOURCES

### PEER SUPPORT: CONNECT WITH YOUR CLASSMATES!

**Meet To Complete (MTC) Program:** New this year, Meet to Complete drop-in sessions allow students across academic disciplines to work alongside peers to support motivation and community, set goals with the support of a student staff member, and earn a CCR credit after participating in 6 MTC sessions. Learn more by visiting: <https://sidneysmithcommons.artsci.utoronto.ca/meet-to-complete/>

**Quercus Discussion Board:** You are encouraged to both ask AND answer questions about course content and administration on the course discussion board. The TAs and course instructor will also monitor this board and provide answers or input when needed. For example, if you have any questions about the content presented in this syllabus, the discussion board is a perfect place to ask for clarification - that way everyone can benefit from the response. Before posting a question, please check to see whether it has already been answered/discussed.

### OTHER CAMPUS RESOURCES

**Accessibility Services (AS):** Students with diverse learning and needs are welcome in this course. If you have an ongoing disability issue or accommodation need, you should register with Accessibility Services (AS) (<http://accessibility.utoronto.ca>) at the beginning of the academic year. Without registration, you will not be able to verify your situation with your instructors, and instructors will not be advised about your accommodation needs. AS will then assess your medical situation, develop an accommodation plan with you, and support you in requesting accommodation for your course work. Remember that the process of accommodation is private: AS will not share details of your condition with any instructor, and your instructors will not reveal that you are registered with AS. **Note:** Please submit your letter of accessibility accommodation to the instructor as soon as you can in the term, even if you hope to not request any extensions or accommodations.

**Mental Health and Well-Being:** As a student, you may experience a range of challenges that can interfere with learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, substance use, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These factors may affect your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate fully in daily activities. All of us benefit from support and guidance during times of struggle. There are many helpful resources available through your college Registrar or through Student Life (for example, <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/hwc> or <https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/feeling-distressed>). An important part of the University experience is learning how and when to ask for help. Please take the time as early as possible to inform yourself of available resources and do not hesitate to seek assistance from your Teaching Assistant or the Course Instructor to help learn what supports are available.

**Academic Success Centre:** “Academic Success professional staff are dedicated to helping you reach your highest learning potential. Every student is capable of achieving academic excellence, but not all learning takes place in the classroom, and not everyone learns in the same way. Your life is more complex than your academic responsibilities, so [they] look at the whole picture and take an individualized approach to supporting you. [They] know there is no ‘right’ way to get through university, and [they] welcome the opportunity to explore strategies that might help you find greater balance between life and learning.” Check out their study spaces, attend a workshop or meet with a learning strategist here: <https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/asc/about-us>

**English Language Resources:** For anyone who would like to advance their understanding and command of English, there are many supports available at UofT. Two examples are: <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/english-language-learning> and <https://writing.utoronto.ca/support/english-language-support/>. Your College Registrar will also be able to direct you to other resources.

**Writing:** As a student here at the University of Toronto, you are expected to write well. The university provides its students with a number of resources to help them achieve this. For more information on campus writing centres and writing courses, please check in with your College Registrar or visit <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/>

**Accessing the Course from Mainland China:** <https://isea.utoronto.ca/services/vpn/>

## BONUS SECTION ON LEARNING

**Check out this Study Skills Inventory** – this will help you identify your strong and weak strategies, and offer things to focus on to up your studying game! <https://students.iusb.edu/academic-success-programs/academic-centers-for-excellence/study-skills.html>

**An assignment calculator to help you break down projects into smaller, more manageable chunks:** <https://ctl.utsc.utoronto.ca/assignmentcal/>

### A NOTE ON TAKING NOTES

Research indicates that taking notes by hand results in significantly better retention of conceptual information than taking notes on a laptop, and this is partially explained by the necessity of summarizing and paraphrasing in order to take notes by hand and keep up with the lecture (see Mueller & Oppenheimer, 2014). However, a recent study indicates that even more important than the note-taking method is the presence of *digital distractions* (off-task texting or browsing) – digital distractions were a meaningful predictor of both note quality and learning, and were especially disruptive to laptop note takers (Flanigan & Titsworth, 2020). So, what does this mean?

1. Well, I recommend trying to take notes longhand (i.e., on paper), especially if you haven't tried it in awhile.
2. Whether you take notes on paper or on a laptop, be mindful of process. In other words, as tempting as it can be (especially now that you can pause the lecture video), don't write everything down word-for-word! Be careful to select key points, write things in your own words, and to organize your notes – all of these things will help you better learn the material and be able to retrieve it more effectively on later tests.
  - a. [Note Taking 101](#) from Oregon State University
  - b. [Note taking styles](#)
    - i. One specific note-taking style to try: [Cornell Notes](#)
    - ii. Not sure which to try? Here are a bunch of [templates!](#)
3. Regardless of method, minimize distraction as much as possible. Close all other browser windows and turn off notifications on your phone, if possible.
  - a. <https://getcoldturkey.com/>
    - i. Can block yourself out of certain websites, the entire Internet, apps, etc., during specific time windows (e.g., when you have a class!)
  - b. <http://selfcontrolapp.com/> (for Mac users)
  - c. StayFocusd (Google Chrome extension)
    - i. Limits time spent on distracting websites
  - d. Freedom (available in the app store) – same idea, works on your iPhone, iPad
  - e. Forest (<https://forestapp.cc/>, available for Android and Apple and as a Chrome extension) – While the app is open and you're focusing on your work, a tree grows!
  - f. <https://www.boomerangmail.com/>
    - i. If you use Gmail and email is a major distraction during class/studying – pause your inbox!



4. If you need to take a break or you find you aren't focusing well, don't try to multitask while listening to lecture, just press pause and come back when you can! (Just make sure to come back 😊) This is one of the major benefits of asynchronous online learning, shaping it to fit your patterns and schedule.

More resources here on [studying...](#) On [time management...](#) [On hosting a remote study group...](#) [On prioritizing...](#)

## SOME FINAL WORDS

### WELLNESS STATEMENT<sup>1</sup>

As your professor, I value your health and well-being. In order to succeed in my class, in [university], and beyond, you must work hard AND balance the work with rest... and attention to your mental and physical health. Yes, I plan to challenge you... By the end of this class, I hope you will feel proud of your growth and learning much like the marathoner feels accomplished by their triumphs across the finish line.

However, this work cannot be at the expense of your well-being. **Working until exhaustion is NOT a badge of honour; it shows you are out of balance.**

Audre Lorde once said, "Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare." Please see your wellness as an act of power and perseverance. The core to your success. Hold each other accountable. Hold me accountable. I [want] to... change this "achievement-oriented" culture into one that embraces well-being and growth. Let's start a revolution together.

In addition to the many resources and supports available to you at UofT, you might find [this self-care packet](#) (with a self-assessment, advice, and worksheets) helpful in reaching your self-care goals.

### ADVICE FROM FORMER STUDENTS

#### *On studying...*

My biggest advice for future students is to be aware that many topics are related to the theories we discuss in class. So I would advise them to start making those connections early on in the course, to best prepare for all of the exams. For example, interdependence and attachment styles were discussed many times throughout the course, and it would be beneficial for future students to understand this to create a deeper appreciation of the material learned.

I would advise them to study with other students. Studying with peers is helpful because we all hear and interpret information differently. Sitting and discussing the concepts with a peer helps the student retain the information more completely.

My advice for future students is to make study guides and mnemonics when studying for tests. There are a lot of lists and terms in this class that are new in terms of the actual vocabulary, but not in terms of concepts/content. For this reason, the tests can be challenging if you do not study.

I would tell students to practice their reflective skills and learn how to make connections to practical relationship examples in order to be a good writer, especially for the tests.

#### *On reading...*

Readings are important and half the fun for this class!

My advice would be to just keep on top of the reading – it will be on exams. Break the chapters and the articles into increments so you can read a little each day, while still having time for your other classes and the work required for them.

Read the textbook frequently. The textbook is written in a very easy-to-read manner and explains many topics that are very interesting and may not be covered in class.

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpted from Dr. Nicole Gonzalez Van Cleeve of Brown University, from Twitter (full text [here](#))

### ***On the paper...***

I would recommend to get started on the assignment EARLY! Start doing research as soon as you pick your topic, and take advantage of resources to help with the research, because finding info on such a specific topic is very challenging, and not something you'll have time for last minute.

I would advise future students to start their topic proposal early so that they don't get caught finding out that while they can find many results on PsychINFO, many of those papers are inaccessible, which is what happened to me. This made my literature search quite hard as maybe as many as a third of all papers I found relevant to my paper were inaccessible, but may have been accessible if I worked on the paper earlier and asked the prof or TA for help.

There is unexpected difficulty in the assignment; better research skills are needed compared to [assignments for other] classes because the samples are rare.

My best advice to people taking this course is to put as much detail and hard work into the annotated bibliography as you can. If you have a very basic bibliography and sources that are not the best, it is going to make writing your textbook assignment much harder. Make sure to space out the writing for the textbook assignment too!

### ***On the content of this course...***

The advice I'd offer to future students is to come into the class with an open mind. Part of studying relationship psychology involves delving into topics that some people find uncomfortable, like sex, and understanding alternate forms of relationships that may be atypical and therefore foreign to many people. One of the most important parts of this class is to put away preconceptions and discomfort to analyze all of these topics from a scientific standpoint. It is very important for students in this course to be open to reading and discussing research on some topics that they generally won't see in other coursework.

Do not assume that because you have been in relationships you understand the science. There might be some overlap but there is a lot that individuals do not understand about the topic.

My advice for future students is to try not to rely on intuition because our intuition on these topics is often incorrect. We might think we know all about intimate relationships, but after looking at the research presented in this class, you might not have known as much correct information as you thought you did.

This class will remind you of a lot of your exes. So be prepared to bring back both bad and good memories. Just don't text them.

### **A CAUTIONARY NOTE**

As you read about relationships and reflect on them, you may find yourself noticing and thinking about your own relationships and those of people to whom you are close. Efforts to understand what is happening in these relationships can facilitate your learning of the material you are studying – and this is great! 😊 However, I urge you not to take on the role of “expert” or “therapist” in your own relationships or those of other people, interpreting people’s behavior and explaining to others what it means. Not only is it inappropriate in your current role, it may also may be hurtful to those you love and care about. Instead, talk to people about what you are learning and solicit their ideas and observations to extend your own understanding of relationships and course material.

