

PSY424H1 S

Social Psychology of Interpersonal Relationships

Winter 2024 Syllabus

Course Meetings

PSY424H1 S

Section	Day & Time	Delivery Mode & Location
LEC5101	Wednesday, 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM	In Person: SS 2125

Refer to ACORN for the most up-to-date information about the location of the course meetings.

Course Contacts

Instructor: Geoff MacDonald

Email: geoff.macdonald@utoronto.ca

Office Hours and Location: Thursdays 3:00 - 4:00, SS4010

Teaching Assistant: Ruth Yilma

Email: ruth.yilma@mail.utoronto.ca

Course Overview

This lecture course focuses on the social psychology of interpersonal relationships between individuals, especially romantic or close relationships and friendships. It surveys what social psychologists have learned about the development, maintenance, disruption or dissolution of personal relationships, as well as current social psychological theories of interpersonal relationships.

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, and what is the role of sexuality in relationships? These and other questions will be examined from a variety of theoretical perspectives and will be applied to better understand real-world relationship functioning.

Course Learning Outcomes

Prerequisites: PSY201H1/ ECO220Y1/ EEB225H1/ GGR270H1/ IRW220H1/ POL222H1/ SOC202H1/ STA220H1/ STA238H1/ STA248H1/ STA288H1/ PSY201H5/ STA215H5/ STA220H5/ PSYB07H3/ STAB22H3/ STAB23H3/ STAB57H3, PSY220H1/ PSY220H5/ PSYB10H3/ SOC213H1

Corequisites: None

Exclusions: PSY327H5/ PSYD11H3

Recommended Preparation: None

Credit Value: 0.5

Course Materials

Required Text: Miller, R. *Intimate Relationships, any edition including used ones.* McGraw Hill.

Marking Scheme

Assessment	Percent	Details	Due Date
-------------------	----------------	----------------	-----------------

<p>Media Report</p>	<p>25%</p>	<p>You are to select one story from a media outlet about relationship research published in the media during or after January 2023 and look up the corresponding journal article (if the story cites more than one article, select one to focus on). You should summarize the media's description of the research, and provide your own more detailed description of the work. Then, critically analyse the fit between the media's description of the research and your own independent reading of the paper. Finally, conclude with reflection on what this specific case might reveal more broadly about when you should and should not trust media reports about research. Specific requirements: The paper should be a maximum of 8 double-spaced pages, not including title page and references (most papers should only require 2 references, the paper you are examining and the media article). There is a 5% penalty for each page over the limit. Papers must be in 12-point Times font.</p> <p>Required sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • opening thesis • media story description: discuss the media report about the study (if the story is online, include a link to the original media story) • research article: provide a description of the logic behind the research, how the study was conducted, the research results, and the authors' interpretation of their results • synthesis: compare the interpretations of the research provided by the media and the original article • conclusion: what does this case suggest about 	<p>2024-01-30</p>
----------------------------	------------	---	-------------------

Assessment	Percent	Details	Due Date
		<p>when media reports are likely to be more or less accurate in presenting relationship research Suggestion: Better papers will incorporate a competent analysis of the research results, so you should select a paper that uses statistics you understand.</p>	
<p>Relationship Evaluation 1</p>	<p>25%</p>	<p>You will be provided with a description of a relationship situation phrased in terms of a request for advice. The relationship story for Assignment 2 will be made available February 7. You will be asked to apply course material from the first half of the course to assess the relationship. Specifically, you should present a piece of course material, describe that piece of course material to demonstrate your understanding, show what part of the story it applies to, and how it applies to that part of the story. You should then summarize the evidence you generate in producing an answer to the request for advice. Specific requirements: The paper should be a maximum of 8 double-spaced pages, not including title page and references. There is a 5% penalty for each page over the limit. Papers must be in 12-point Times font.</p>	<p>2024-02-27</p>

Assessment	Percent	Details	Due Date
Relationship Evaluation 2	25%	<p>You will be provided with a description of a relationship situation phrased in terms of a request for advice. The relationship story for Assignment 4 will be made available March 20. You will be asked to apply course material from the second half of the course to assess the relationship. Specifically, you should present a piece of course material, describe that piece of course material to demonstrate your understanding, show what part of the story it applies to, and how it applies to that part of the story. You should then summarize the evidence you generate in producing an answer to the request for advice. Specific requirements: The paper should be a maximum of 8 double-spaced pages, not including title page and references. There is a 5% penalty for each page over the limit. Papers must be in 12-point Times font.</p>	2024-04-02

<p>Applying Research Findings</p>	<p>25%</p>	<p>The third assignment asks you to find counter-examples for findings in relationship research and use these to generate new research ideas. Select one citation from lectures or the textbook readings and read the paper cited. The paper must be an empirical study and not a review paper. You should first describe the research, then provide one example of a relationship or relationship event that is counter to the phenomenon described by the researchers. These can be from your own experiences with relationships, the experiences of others who you know, or from popular culture (e.g., books, tv, movies). Using the counter-example to illuminate under what conditions the phenomenon may not apply, propose how the research could be improved to better test the applicability of the findings to real-world relationships. The paper should be a maximum of 8 double-spaced pages, not including title page and references. Required sections: • article description: provide a description of the logic behind the research, how the study was conducted, the research results, and the authors' interpretation of their results • contradictory example: provide an example from a relationship that is inconsistent with the research findings, and use the example to comment on the limitations to the applicability of the research. Be specific about what aspects of this relationship or what conditions may have led the research not to apply in this case • research</p>	<p>2024-03-19</p>
--	------------	---	-------------------

Assessment	Percent	Details	Due Date
		<p>ideas: using the variables identified in the previous section as influencing the phenomenon of interest, suggest improvements to the research conducted in the target article that could improve its applicability • references</p> <p>Suggestion: Better papers will include references from the academic literature that examine the variables you identify in the contradictory example section. By examining what research has shown about these variables in past research, you should be able to better refine your research ideas.</p>	

Late Assessment Submissions Policy

Assignments are due at midnight on the due date. The late penalty is 5% per working day (Monday-Friday).

Course Schedule

Week	Description
Week 1 Jan. 10	Lecture: Animal instinct: The deep roots of the desire for intimate connection Relevant Reading: Chapters 1 & 2
Week 2 Jan. 17	Lecture: The mating marketplace: Gender, evolution, and socialization Relevant Reading: Chapter 3

Week 3 Jan. 24	Lecture: Lose yourself or find yourself? Merging self and other Relevant reading: Chapter 4
Week 4 Jan. 31	Lecture: Is monogamy natural? The dynamics of commitment Relevant reading: Chapter 6
Week 5 Feb. 7	***note this class will be held online: *** https://utoronto.zoom.us/my/gmacdonalduoft Lecture: Attachment Relevant Reading: Chapter 8
Week 6 Feb. 14	Lecture: Singlehood: Going it Alone? Relevant Reading: n/a
Week 7 Feb. 28	Lecture: Love, tradition, and family: Relationships across cultures Relevant Reading: n/a
Week 8 March 6	Lecture: Sexuality: Naked Truths Relevant Reading: Chapter 9
Week 9 March 13	Lecture: Communication and conflict

	Relevant Reading: Chapters 5, 11, & 12
Week 10 March 20	Lecture: Survival through growth: Maintaining relationships Relevant Reading: Chapters 10, 13, & 14
Week 11 March 27	Lecture: Relationships and Therapy Relevant Reading: n/a
Week 12 Date	Lecture: Friendship Relevant Reading: Chapter 7

Policies & Statements

Religious Accommodations

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 cultural and religious traditions. 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 activity (such as a test or in-class assignment) 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.

Students with Disabilities or Accommodation Requirements

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have an acute or ongoing disability issue or accommodation need, you should register with Accessibility Services (AS) at the beginning of the academic year by visiting <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/departments/accessibility-services/>. 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 assess your 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 needs or condition with any instructor, and your instructors will not reveal that you are registered with AS.

Academic Integrity

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters \(https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019\)](https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019). If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, please reach out to me. Note that you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from me or from other institutional resources. For example, to learn more about how to cite and use source material appropriately and for other writing support, see the U of T writing support website at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca>. Consult the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters for a complete outline of the University's policy and expectations. For more information, please see [A&S Student Academic Integrity \(https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity\)](https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity) and the [University of Toronto Website on Academic Integrity \(https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca\)](https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca).

Specific Medical Circumstances

If you become ill and it affects your ability to do your academic work, consult me right away. Normally, I will ask you for documentation in support of your specific medical circumstances. This documentation can be an Absence Declaration (via ACORN) or the University's Verification of Student Illness or Injury (VOI) form. The VOI indicates the impact and severity of the illness, while protecting your privacy about the details of the nature of the illness. If you cannot submit a VOI due to limits on terms of use, you can submit a different form (like a letter from a doctor), as long as it is an original document, and it contains the same information as the VOI (including dates, academic impact, practitioner's signature, phone and registration number). For more information on the VOI, please see <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca>. For information on Absence Declaration Tool for A&S students, please see <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/absence>. If you get a concussion, break your hand, or suffer some other acute injury, you should register with Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

Accommodation for Personal Reasons

There may be times when you are unable to complete course work on time due to non-medical reasons. If you have concerns, speak to me or to an advisor in your College Registrar's office; they can help you to decide if you want to request an extension or other forms of academic consideration. They may be able to email your instructors directly to provide a College Registrar's letter of support and connect you with other helpful resources on campus.

Quercus Info

This Course uses the University's learning management system, Quercus, to post information about the course. This includes posting readings and other materials required to complete class activities and course assignments, as well as sharing important announcements and updates.

New information and resources will be posted regularly as we move through the term. To access the course website, go to the U of T Quercus log-in page at <https://q.utoronto.ca>.
SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT GRADES POSTED ONLINE: Please also note that any grades posted are for your information only, so you can view and track your progress through the course. No grades are considered official, including any posted in Quercus at any point in the term, until they have been formally approved and posted on ACORN at the end of the course. Please contact me as soon as possible if you think there is an error in any grade posted on Quercus.

Questions About Grades

You must wait for at least 48 hours following the return of an assignment/assessment before bringing a grade concern to me or the t.a.; this time is useful for thinking through your concern and making sure you can articulate clearly what that concern is. Additionally, grade concerns must be brought to my attention within 14 days of the return of the assignment/assessment. Please write a short paragraph detailing your grade concern, including a copy, photo, or scan of the original assignment, if relevant, and email it to me. Note that in agreeing to resubmit your work for remarking, you are agreeing to a re-evaluation of the entirety of your work; your grade may go up, go down, or stay the same.