Course Objectives
The major goal of this course is to gain an in-depth understanding of the psychological processes involved in intimate relationships, with a strong focus on romantic relationships. There will be a heavy focus on applying the understanding of psychological theory to our own lives through assignments and in-class discussions. There will be a heavy focus on applying psychological theory to our own lives through assignments and in-class discussions.

Required Readings

Supplemental journal articles and book chapters will also be made available through blackboard.

Course Expectations
This class is organized in the style an advanced seminar, rather than a lecture, and thoughtful participation is an integral portion of it. You are expected to attend class, to have completed readings beforehand, and to contribute to class discussions.

An open mind is also essential for this class. Intimate relationships are an important part of our lives, and I expect that many of you have strong beliefs about them. Readings and class discussions may lead to closer inspection of such beliefs than we, as humans, typically engage in. While I encourage people to think critically about the topics we discuss and expect that there will be disagreements with both how psychologists have approached these topics, and amongst class members, class discussions are an opportunity for scholarly debate, and respect for fellow classmates and opposing viewpoints is a must.

Course Requirements and Grading Procedures

1. Class Activities (40 points total, 10%)
   Student participation is an integral portion of making this class meaningful. To foster student participation and engagement with the material, there will be a class activity each week (minus week one and the exam weeks), for a total of 10 activities. You will receive the full 1% for each activity provided you are present in class the day of the activity and make a genuine effort to participate. There are no make-ups for the activities but I will allow students to drop one missed activity and receive credit for it, so that emergencies do not result in students being unduly punished.

2. Reflection Papers (120 points, 30%)
   There will be three 2-page reflection papers asking students to apply a specific concept learned in class to their own experiences. Reflection papers will be graded based on two factors: a) Whether they demonstrate a solid understanding of the concept at hand, and b) whether the student has followed the instructions of the reflection paper.

3. Exams (200 points total, 50%)
   There will be three in-class multiple choice exams designed to assess your general comprehension of the topics discussed in class. Prior to the date of each exam, I will provide a study guide to help direct people towards relevant concepts that they will need to study and have a good grasp of for the exam. Your lowest
test grade will be dropped, and thus the 50% of your grade that tests account for will be based on your two best test grades.

4. Final Paper (40 points, 10%)

There will not be a final exam. Instead, student will be required to turn in an extended 3-4 page final reflection paper asking them to consider how various concepts learned in class can be used to help understand their own experiences in intimate relationships, as well as how to consider how this information may be helpful in improving intimate relationships. **A hard copy of this paper will be due in my mailbox in David King Hall by Thursday, December 15th at 5pm. I will not accept emailed papers.**

5. (optional) Extra Credit (up to 12 points, 3%)

You may earn extra credit points for participating in research or attending psychology-related seminars. You can locate studies and seminars through the Sona Systems webpage (http://gmu.sona-systems.com/). You will be able to earn a maximum of 12 extra credit points—3 points for each hour of research participation or seminar attended. Note: these points are not percentage points. **I will also award extra credit for excellent class participation. Students who attend class regularly and make thoughtful contributions will be awarded between 1 and 5 extra percentage points to their final grade** (i.e. between 4 and 20 points), depending on the degree to which their contributions have helped to enrich class discussions. This can only work in your favor if you participate. Please do not ask me to give you a bonus, as I will consider each student as I am doing the final grades.

**Course Policies**

**Given that the a student’s lowest test grade will already be dropped, no make-ups will be given for exams. No exceptions will be made to this policy.** Reflection papers must be turned in on hard copy on the day they are assigned, and will not be accepted late.

**Grade Calculation**

| Class Activities | 40 points (10 x 4 points each) |
| Reflection Papers | 120 points (3 x 40 points each) |
| Exams | 200 points (2 x 100 points each) |
| Final Paper | 40 points |
| **TOTAL** | 400 points |

**GMU Honor Code**

Students are expected to abide by the GMU Honor Code. Violations of the GMU Honor Code can result in failure of an assignment, depending on the severity of violation. All violations will be reported to the Honor Committee. Please review the honor code: [http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm](http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm)

**Course Technology**

Powerpoint presentations will be used during lectures. No technology is required of students for course participation.

**Accommodation of Disabilities**

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. **Last day to add:** September 6th  **Last day to drop:** September 30th  **Important Note:** Please keep in mind that the following is a tentative syllabus and topics and assignments can be changed, added, or deleted at any time at the discretion of the instructor to improve the quality of the course. I will do my best to announce such changes ahead of time in class.
**September 1st:**
Textbook chapter 1

**September 8th:**
Textbook pgs. 112-117 on Attachment Theory

**September 15th:**
1st Reflection Paper Due
Textbook pgs. 117-135 on Social Exchange Theory and Social Learning Theory

**September 22nd:**
Textbook pgs. 96-106 on Evolutionary Theory
Textbook pgs. 150-189 on Sex, Gender and Intimacy

**September 29th:**
EXAM 1

**October 6th:**
Textbook pgs. 200-228 on Attraction

**October 13th:**
Textbook pgs. 229-244 on Mate Selection

**October 20th:**

**October 27th:**

**November 3rd:**
EXAM 2, 2nd Reflection Paper Due

**November 10th:**
Textbook pgs. 303-308 on Forgiveness
Tashiro, T., Frazier, P., & Berman, M. (2006). Stress-Related Growth Following Divorce and Relationship Dissolution. Handbook of divorce and relationship dissolution., ONLY pages 361-369 and 376-377 *Note that this is not the entire article*

November 17th:

November 24th – THANKSGIVING BREAK, NO CLASS

December 1st:
Textbook pgs. 499-504, 508-526 on Couples Therapy

December 8th: EXAM 3, 3rd Reflection Paper Due

No final exam. Final paper due in my mailbox in David King Hall by Thursday, December 15th at 5pm.