PSYC 466-A01, Psychology of Intimate Relationships
Summer 2011
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 12:00-2:15 PM

Instructor: Alexander Afram, M.A.
Class Location: Innovation Hall 131
Email: aafram@gmu.edu Phone: 703-993-5212
Office Hours: By appointment in Aquia 337
Mailbox: Graduate Student Mailboxes, David King Hall 2nd Floor

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
Textbook:

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

Course Expectations
This class is organized in the style of 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 Participation (40 points total, 10%)
   Student participation is an integral portion of making this class both engaging and meaningful. Hence, class participation is factored into grading. Participation encompasses both regular attendance and regular contribution to class discussions. Contribution is not measured solely on quantity; the quality of participation is also important. Similarly, answering questions is not the only way to participate. Coming to class with questions, or forming questions during the course of a lecture is another equally valuable way to contribute to discussion. I will consider granting extra credit at the end of the semester to students whose exceptional contributions to discussions have enriched the class.

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
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 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, June 23rd 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.sonasystems.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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection Papers</td>
<td>120 (3 x 40 points each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>200 (2 x 100 points each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>400</td>
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</tbody>
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A+ (97%+); A (93-96%); A- (90-92%); B+ (87-89%); B (83-86%); B- (80-82%); C+ (77-79%); C (70-76%); D (60-69%); F (59% & below)

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

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: May 27th
Last day to drop: June 3rd

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.

Monday, May 23rd:
Textbook chapter 1

Tuesday, May 24th:
Textbook pgs. 112-117 on Attachment Theory

**Wednesday, May 25th:**
Textbook pgs. 117-135 on Social Exchange Theory and Social Learning Theory

**Thursday, May 26th:**
Textbook pgs. 96-106 on Evolutionary Theory
Textbook pgs. 150-179 on Sex and Gender
Recommended but not required:

**Monday, May 30th:**
**Reflection Paper 1 Due**
Textbook pgs. 179-189 on Sex, Gender and Intimacy

**Tuesday, May 31st:**  **Exam 1**

**Wednesday, June 1st:**
Textbook pgs. 200-228 on Attraction

**Thursday, June 2nd:**
Textbook pgs. 229-244 on Mate Selection

**Monday, June 6th:**
Textbook pgs. 249-267 on Personality Traits in Intimate Relationships

**Tuesday, June 7th:**
Textbook pgs. 285-294 on Communication and Intimacy
Recommended but not required:

**Wednesday, June 8th:**
**Reflection Paper 2 Due**
Textbook pgs. 294-303 on Maintaining Intimacy
Textbook pgs. 308-311 on Sex and Physical Intimacy

**Thursday, June 9th:**  **Exam 2**

**Monday, June 13th:**
Textbook pgs. 411-443 on Motivated Reasoning
Tuesday, June 14th:
Textbook pgs. 303-308 on Forgiveness

Wednesday, June 15th:

Thursday, June 16th:
Textbook pgs. 343-357 on Aggression

Monday, June 20th:
**Reflection Paper 3 Due**
Textbook pgs. 499-539 on Couples Therapy and Preventive/Enhancement Programs for Relationships

Tuesday, June 21st: **Exam 3**

No final exam. Final paper due in my mailbox in David King Hall by Thursday, June 23rd at 5pm.