

PSYCHOLOGY OF CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

Winter 2023

Instructor: Dr. Jessica Maxwell
Email: maxwej9@mcmaster.ca
Lecture: Tues 4:30-6:20pm [in-person];
Thurs 4:30-5:20pm [asynchronous
online; watch on your own time!]
Room: ITB 137

Office: Kenneth Taylor Hall room 206A
Office Hours: Tues 3:30-4:15pm [in
person] and by appointment
TA: [X and XXX]
TA email: [TA email address]

Course Description

This course examines what relationship science can tell us about close relationships, particularly 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? What is the role of sexuality in relationships? And how can we become better romantic partners? We will examine these and other questions from various theoretical perspectives, emphasizing where our scientific understanding of these topics stands and how it can be improved.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- 1. Appreciate the interdisciplinary nature of Social Psychology and evaluate the contributions that different disciplines contribute to the field**
 - Students will learn class material that approaches the study of close relationships from social, developmental, cognitive, and clinical psychological perspectives, as well as perspectives from other disciplines (e.g., communications, sociology, etc.).
- 2. Understand critically the major theoretical perspectives and debates in the field and be able to articulate a position**
 - Students will be exposed to psychological theories regarding the initiation, maintenance, and dissolution of close relationships.
 - Lectures will highlight current and past debates in the literature (e.g., whether there are gender differences in mate choice).
- 3. Demonstrate effective oral and written communication skills through participation in class discussions, debates, activities, presentations, course papers and assignments**
 - By the end of this course, students should be able to demonstrate clear and concise academic writing.

4. Understand and apply a range of qualitative and quantitative research methods relevant to the field

- By the end of this course, students should be able to critically analyze the research methods of empirical papers published within the field of close relationships. The instructor will model how to critique research findings through in-class discussions.

Required Materials and Texts

- Required textbook: Intimate Relationships 9th edition by Rowland Miller
- This textbook is being offered through the McMaster Inclusive Access program. Please see Avenue to Learn for more details.

Class Format

This course is a combined in-person/online course.

Tuesday's lectures will be held in-person from 4:30pm-6:20pm in ITB 137. I expect attendance for Tuesday's lectures; however, the content is captured using Echo360, should you be absent from lecture. The unedited recordings will be posted on Avenue to Learn the day following each lecture.

Thursday's lectures are asynchronous and online, meaning the lecture content will be pre-recorded and uploaded to Avenue to Learn by Thursday morning. You can view this content whenever you like. However, I encourage you to watch the videos during the time allocated for our Thursday lecture so that you do not fall behind. Note. The pre-recorded content may not always total 50 minutes, but it represents the same amount of content I could typically cover in a 50 min in-person lecture period.

Instructor drop-in office hours are before class on Tuesday (3:30-4:15) or by appointment. The TAs do not have set office hours, but will answer questions a few times a week via Piazza (see section on "Piazza" for more information).

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Online Midterm Test - 25%, occurring Thurs Feb 16th 4:30-5:20pm
2. Attachment Assignment - 30%, due Thurs March 16th 11:59pm via Avenue to Learn
3. Course Concepts in the Wild - 5%, submit any time up to Thurs April 6th 11:59pm via Avenue to Learn
4. Final Exam - 40%, held during the final exam period

Specifications for these evaluations, including instructions and rubrics, will be posted on Avenue and discussed in class well before their due dates. Please note that McMaster's policies on academic misconduct governs all course requirements.

Course Evaluation – Details

Online Midterm Test (25%), due Thurs February 16 4:30-5:20pm

The midterm will consist of multiple-choice and short-answer questions. It will take place online in the Avenue to Learn Quiz section and will be based on material covered in Weeks 1-5 (i.e., I will not test you on Feb 16 content). The multiple-choice questions will cover all lecture material from Weeks 1-5, as well as the required readings (i.e., Textbook chapters 1, 2, 3, and 6, and one journal article). Please note that I may assess material covered exclusively in the textbook/readings (and not in lecture) in the multiple-choice questions. Short answer questions will be based only on lecture material. We will go through practice questions in class each week to prepare you for the types of questions asked.

As the midterm is worth 25%, it is not eligible for an online MSAF. If you miss the midterm on February 16th, please contact the Associate Dean's Office in the Faculty of Social Sciences. Where appropriate, I will reweight your final exam to 65% of your final mark. There is no make-up test for a missed midterm.

Attachment Assignment (30%), due Thurs March 16th 11:59pm

The goal of this assignment is to find and describe an example of a fictional character (from TV, movies, books, or a song) that is high in anxious attachment, and another character who is high in avoidant attachment. In a maximum of 5 (double-spaced) pages, please describe the characters' behaviours that support your assessment of their attachment style, providing citations to support your assessment. Conclude with an argument (linking to the examples and broader research) on (a) which form of insecure attachment you think is more detrimental to healthy relationships and why and (b) provide advice as to how that character might become more secure in the future. *Note.* The two characters chosen do not need to be from the same TV show/movie/book/song. You can discuss the character's attachment in *any* type of attachment relationship (e.g., romantic partner, friends, caregiver).

Course Concepts in the Wild (5%), due Thurs April 6th 11:59pm

Part of my aims for this course is for you to reflect on how the course content applies to everyday life, and to notice how relationship concepts are prevalent in the media. Thus, this 'mini-assignment' asks you to notice a song, scene from TV show/movie/book/podcast that illustrates a course concept. Your example cannot be about attachment styles (so as not to overlap with the attachment assignment), or an example I've given in class. In 250 words, you will first link to the media source, and then describe how the media you have chosen illustrates the chosen topic. It is also

okay if your example illustrates the opposite/absence of a course concept (e.g., an unresponsive partner, failure to capitalize on good news, etc.). We will grade you according to how well the example illustrates the course concept, and the clarity of your explanation. See template for this assignment on Avenue to Learn for formatting details. The media example you provide may be used in a lecture in future iterations of the course 😊

Note. We will be marking these periodically throughout the term, so you are welcome to submit early, to receive your grade early!

Final Exam (40%), during the final exam period

The final exam will be arranged by the Registrar's office. The exam will comprise multiple choice, short and long answer questions. The multiple-choice and short-answer sections are non-cumulative (i.e., cover weeks 6-13 only, including lectures and required readings—textbook chapters 5, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14). The long answer section will assess core course concepts and themes from across the semester. We will go over sample questions and advice on how to prepare in class.

As the exam is worth 40%, it is not eligible for an online MSAF. If the exam is missed, please email your respective Faculty office with appropriate documentation for the Faculty to review.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1 Introduction (Jan 10 & 12)

January 10 – Why Study Close Relationships?

Readings: Textbook Chapter 1

January 12– How We Study Close Relationships

Readings: Textbook Chapter 2

Week 2 Attraction (Jan 17 & 19)

January 17 – Attraction

Readings: Textbook Chapter 3

January 19 – Attraction ctd

Readings: Textbook Chapter 3

Week 3 Attachment (Jan 24 & 26)

January 24 – Attachment

Readings: None

Notes: Prior to class, please complete the online Attachment Style questionnaire at <http://www.web-research-design.net/cgi-bin/crq/crq.pl> (option B—4 minutes). I will not see your responses!

January 26 – Attachment ctd

Readings: None

Week 4 Online Dating (Jan 31 & Feb 2)

January 31 – Online Dating

Readings: Journal article: Timmermans, E., Hermans, A. M., & Oprea, S. J. (2021). Gone with the wind: Exploring mobile daters' ghosting experiences. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 38(2), 783-801.

February 2 – Online Dating ctd

Readings: None

Week 5 Closeness (Feb 7 & 9)

February 7 – Closeness

Readings: Textbook Chapter 6 "Interdependency"

February 9 – Closeness ctd

Readings: Textbook Chapter 6 "Interdependency"

Week 6 Love (Feb 14 & 16)

February 14 –Love

Readings: Textbook Chapter 8 "Love"

February 16 – Online Midterm

Readings: None

Notes: Online midterm administered through Avenue to Learn 4:30pm-5:20pm

Week 7 Reading Week (no classes)

Week 8 Sex (Feb 28 & March 2)

February 28 – Sex

Readings: Textbook Chapter 9 "Sexuality"

March 2 – Sex ctd

Readings: Textbook Chapter 9 "Sexuality"

Week 9 Commitment (March 7 & 9)

March 7 – Commitment

Readings: None (work on your assignment!)

March 9– Commitment ctd

Readings: None (work on your assignment!)

Week 10 Communication & Conflict (March 14 & 16)

March 14 – Communication & Conflict

Readings: Textbook Chapter 5 “Communication”

March 16 – Communication & Conflict ctd

Readings: Textbook Chapter 11 “Conflict”

Notes: Attachment Assignment due tonight by 11:59pm

Week 11 Hard times (March 21 & 23)

March 21 – Breakups

Readings: Textbook Chapter 13 “The Dissolution and Loss of Relationships”

March 23– Covid 19 & relationships

Readings: None

Week 12 Singlehood (March 28 & 30)

March 28– Singlehood

Readings: None

March 30 – Singlehood ctd

Readings: None

Week 13 Relationship Growth (April 4 & 6)

April 4 – Relationship Growth

Readings: Textbook Chapter 14 “Maintaining and Repairing Relationships”

April 6 – Relationship Growth ctd

Readings: Textbook Chapter 14 “Maintaining and Repairing Relationships”

Notes: Course Content in the Wild assignment due by April 6th by 11:59pm

Week 14 Review (April 11)

April 11 – Review

Readings: None

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

Please submit an electronic copy of your essay by 11:59pm on March 16th via the dropbox in Avenue to Learn (Assessments → Assignments → SOCPSY 2F03)

Attachment Assignment). This dropbox is Turnitin-enabled. Emailed assignments will NOT be accepted. Your assignment should be typed and double-spaced in 12-point Times New Roman font with one-inch (2.54cm) margins on all sides. Please include a title page with your assignment title, student number (DO NOT INCLUDE YOUR NAME), date submitted, course number, page number (upper right corner), and word count, and a References section at the end. References should adhere to APA style conventions. I will review these conventions in a subsequent lecture, but they should take the following form:

Hazan, C., & Shaver, P. R. (1994). Attachment as an organizational framework for research on close relationships. *Psychological Inquiry*, 5(1), 1-22.

Tip: do not include the title of any papers in the body of your essay as this will deplete your word count unnecessarily (i.e., include the title in the References section only). In-text citations should only include the authors' last names and the publication year (e.g., "Hazan & Shaver, 1994").

Please submit an electronic copy of your "Course Content in the Wild" by 11:59pm on April 6th via the dropbox in Avenue to Learn (Assessments → Assignments → SOCPSY 2F03 Course Content in the Wild). This dropbox is Turnitin-enabled. Emailed assignments will NOT be accepted. This assignment should follow the template provided on Avenue.

Late Assignments

Extensions for course assignments will only be granted under conditions of medical, family, or other extraordinary circumstances. All other late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 5% (of the available marks) per day (including weekends). For example, if you submit the Attachment Assignment on March 18th you would receive a 10% deduction for two days late, or 3 marks deducted out of 30. Late assignments will not be accepted after 7 days beyond the original deadline without appropriate documentation from the Office of the Associate Dean of Social Sciences

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Piazza

Piazza is a free online gathering place where students can ask, answer, and explore 24/7 under the guidance of their instructor. If you have a question about the course,

please use Piazza (<https://piazza.com/mcmaster.ca/winter2023/socpsy2f03/home>). I will give more instructions about signing up and using Piazza during our first lecture. The instructor and TAs will only respond to emails about personal private matters (e.g., extension requests).

Piazza will be used so that:

(1) students have an online learning community based on student-led discussion and feedback, and

(2) TA and instructor responses to student questions will be available for everyone.

1. An online learning community based on student-led discussion and feedback

Students are encouraged to both ask and answer questions on Piazza. When you are struggling to understand a concept, you can ask a question anonymously to your fellow students. Do not be shy about asking an 'easy/simple' question. Some of the greatest learning experiences come from discussing *why* a certain answer is correct/incorrect, particularly to the seemingly straightforward questions that you may be struggling with. If you have a question, somebody else likely does as well.

Students are then encouraged to answer each other's queries. Peer feedback and discussions are a great way of learning how to articulate your understanding and discuss central topics that form the basis of your assignment and the exam. Again, don't be shy about suggesting an answer you think may not be correct. The discussion that follows (and any input by the TAs or instructor; see below) offers a great learning opportunity, and may often demonstrate that there are different ways to answer depending on the theory or research you apply.

2. TA and instructor responses to student questions

All queries should be posted to Piazza (as opposed to email) so that all students have access to the student discussions as well as TAs' and instructor's responses to these questions.

- TAs and the instructor will first allow the opportunity for student discussion/responses to general questions before correcting any misunderstanding or endorsing students' answers.
- TAs and the instructor will also answer questions related to the lecture content, assignments and exam on Piazza.

Please note that TAs and the course instructor will only review the questions posted to their relevant folders (e.g., midterm, attachment assignment). It is imperative that you post your questions to the correct folders.

TAs and the instructor will only review their folders three times a week. You should have ***realistic expectations regarding the time frame in which TAs and the instructor address your query*** – don't leave your assignment and exam-related questions to the last minute!

University Policies

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

AUTHENTICITY / PLAGIARISM DETECTION

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. Avenue to Learn, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software.

All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

COURSES WITH AN ON-LINE ELEMENT

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn, LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

ONLINE PROCTORING

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities (the "Code"). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, whether in person or online.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

REQUESTS FOR RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC TERM WORK

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Policy on Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, including lectures by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, Avenue to Learn and/or McMaster email.

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Course Modification

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-89	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F