

PSYCHOLOGY OF CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

Summer 2023

Instructor: Dr. Jessica Maxwell
Email: maxwej9@mcmaster.ca (I aim to respond within two working days)
Lecture: Asynchronous online; watch on your own time! Lectures will be posted each Monday by 9am.
Office: KTH 206A

Office Hours: By appointment over Zoom—I am happy to meet and help you succeed ☺
TA: Kyla Guerriero
TA email: You can reach Kyla over Piazza. They will hold Zoom office hours in weeks 2-5 at **[time 1]** or by appointment

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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? 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 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. Please pay special attention to the opt-out date of June 30th (as **your student account will be automatically charged \$55.95 for the textbook if you do not opt out by June 30th**).
- The textbook goes into additional topics beyond the lecture, and these can (and will!) be tested on the online tests.
- *Disclaimer: Unfortunately, the textbook features some outdated language and is very US-centric. I have made the publisher aware of these issues. Nevertheless, the textbook offers important breadth to topics covered in lectures.*

Class Format

The class is entirely asynchronous and online, meaning the lecture content will be pre-recorded and uploaded to Avenue to Learn each week by Monday 9am. You can view this content whenever you like. However, I encourage you to keep up on the recordings so that you do not fall behind for the tests. The recordings go into the material in much greater depth than do the PowerPoint slides; to perform well in this course, it is necessary to attend to the recordings. There is no synchronous lecture component to this course, but I am happy to schedule individual meetings through Zoom if you have any questions about the course. All tests are administered online, and there is no final exam.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: Summer courses are condensed, meaning we cover the content of a typical semester in a short amount of time. Each week expect recorded material that translates to approximately 6 hours of lectures. Many 'rules of thumb' suggest two hours of study (reading, reviewing notes, preparing assignments) per every one hour of lecture, meaning you may spend 18 hours per week on the course.

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Best two of three Online Tests - 68%, due July 4, 17, and 31 by 8pm
2. Attachment Assignment - 32%, due Friday July 14th 11:59pm
3. *Bonus- Syllabus & Assignment Instruction quiz-1% bonus, June 30 by 11:59pm*

Specifications for these evaluations, including instructions/ 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

Best Two out of Three Online Tests (68%)

Throughout the semester, you will be expected to complete at least **two (2) of three (3)** online tests through Avenue to Learn. These tests will test you on the course content, including lecture recordings, and textbook readings. The tests will only assess the NEW material covered since the previous test. These tests will be approximately 20-30 questions in length, and will be a mix of multiple choice and short answer. You are allowed to access your notes and textbook during the tests.

All tests can be started from 6am up until 7pm to accommodate the maximum amount of people. However, you only have **50 minutes to complete the test** once you begin. NOTE: once you begin the test you must complete it. The tests will time out after 30 minutes of inactivity, and whatever questions were completed to that point will be logged for marking. It is your responsibility to ensure you can be free at some point during these time windows (i.e., change your work shift, ensure you can access reliable WIFI if you will be out of town, etc.). To be fair to all students I cannot move around the test dates, and keep in mind you are allowed to just complete two tests.

****I STRONGLY recommend**** that you complete all three (3) tests during the semester. In this case, only your top two test marks will count towards your final grade.

| Test | Date | Time | Topics Assessed | Textbook Chapters Assessed |
|-------------|-------------|------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | Tues July 4 | Must start the 50 min test between 6am and 7pm | Week 1 & 2 | 1; 2; 3 |
| 2 | Mon July 17 | | Week 3 & 4 | 6; 8 |
| 3 | Mon July 31 | | Week 5 & 6 | 5;11;14 |

Attachment Assignment (32%), due Friday July 14 11:59pm

The goal of this assignment is to find and describe an example of a fictional character (from TV, movies, books, comic book, video game, song, reality TV show, etc.) that is high in anxious attachment, and another character who is high in avoidant attachment. In a maximum of 5 (double-spaced) pages [excluding title page and references], 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), or their general attachment style across different relationships.

Please follow the format of the assignment per the template on Avenue to Learn, and consult the Assignment FAQ for further details.

Students who submit their attachment assignment by the due date (July 14th 11:59pm) will receive a **bonus 1% towards their final grade** in the course.

****Please see important information under "Late Assignments" about the extension policy for this assignment. You have all the information and resources you need to complete the assignment at your fingertips on the first day of the semester (June 19th), so plan your time accordingly.****

Bonus Syllabus & Assignment Instructions Quiz (1%), due Friday June 30 11:59pm

To incentivize you to become familiar with the course policies and assignment information, there will be an optional quiz about these topics posted to Avenue to Learn. You have **three attempts** to complete the quiz. Students who score 80% or higher on their highest attempt (before June 30 11:59pm) will be awarded a bonus 1% for their final grade. Because this is a bonus, optional quiz, no extensions will be offered.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Introduction & Attachment: Week 1 (June 19)

Introduction: Why and How We Study Close Relationships

Readings: Textbook Chapters 1 "The Building Blocks of Relationships" and 2 "Research Methods"

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! Knowing your attachment style will help you appreciate the lecture material.

Attraction & Online Dating: Week 2 (June 26)

Attraction

Readings: Textbook Chapter 3 "Attraction"

Online Dating

Readings: None

Note: Last day to complete the bonus syllabus/assignment quiz

Test 1 & Closeness: Week 3 (July 3)

Online Test 1

Tuesday July 4th available from 6am until 8pm (must be started by 7pm)

Closeness

Readings: Textbook Chapter 6 “Interdependency”

Commitment & Love: Week 4 (July 10)

Commitment

Readings: None

Love

Readings: Textbook Chapter 8 “Love”

Note: Attachment Assignment due Friday July 14th

Test 2 & Communication/Conflict: Week 5 (July 17)

Online Test 2

Monday July 17th available from 6am until 8pm (must be started by 7pm)

Communication & Conflict

Readings: Textbook Chapters 5 “Communication” and 11 “Conflict”

Singlehood & Relationship Growth: Week 6 (July 24)

Singlehood

Readings: None

Relationship Growth

Readings: Textbook Chapter 14 “Maintaining and Repairing Relationships”

Test 3: Week 7 (July 31)

Online Test 3

Monday July 31st available from 6am until 8pm (must be started by 7pm)

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

Please submit an electronic copy of your essay by 11:59pm on July 14th via the dropbox in Avenue to Learn (Assessments → Assignments → Attachment Assignment). This dropbox is Turnitin-enabled. Emailed assignments will NOT be accepted. Your assignment should follow the formatting guidelines of the template document posted on Avenue to Learn. That is, it 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 References section at the end. References should adhere to APA style conventions.

****IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THE UPLOADED DOCUMENT IS THE CORRECT VERSION YOU INTEND TO BE GRADED. Corrupted files or incorrect file uploads may result in a grade of zero.****

Late Assignments

Students will have a 14-hour window in which to complete each test (you can start anytime between 6am and must submit by 8pm). The tests are designed to keep you on track with the course; there will be **no extensions** for online tests. Tests not completed within the available timeslot will receive a mark of zero (but remember your lowest test is dropped, so you can miss a test without it affecting your final grade!).

For the **attachment assignment**, this course employs an **automatic & graduated** grace period. Students who cannot submit their paper in time are automatically allowed up to **an extra 7 days** to hand-in their work, without penalty (you do not need to email your professor to get an extension, or use an MSAF). *Note. SAS accommodations typically offer a week extension, and anything longer needs the permission of a SAS adviser. Thus, any student registered with SAS who needs longer than this week grace period needs special permission from their advisor (as they have already received a week extension).*

You cannot 'stack' an MSAF, or other special considerations on top of the grace period. In other words, **you need to be prepared to submit July 14th, and if life happens** (e.g., dog dies, wifi cuts out, death in the family, computer crashes, etc.), **you have until July 21st 11:59pm** to hand it in without penalty. You have all the information and resources you need to complete the assignment at your fingertips on the first day of the semester (June 19th), so plan your time accordingly.

Starting on day 8 after the deadline, marks will begin being deducted based on the following schedule:

| Days Late | Penalty (of available 32 marks) |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 1-7 (July 15- July 21) | 0 |
| 8 (July 22) | 3.12% (1 mark) off |
| 9 (July 23) | 10% (3.2 marks) off |

| | |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| 10 (July 24) | 20% (6.4 marks) off |
| 11 (July 25) | <i>No Longer Accepted; no Grade</i> |

Grade Submissions made on July 26th or later will not be accepted and a mark of zero will be entered. There will be **no extensions.**

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/summer2023/socpsy2f03summer23>) I will give more instructions about signing up and using Piazza during our first lecture. The instructor and TA will only respond to emails about personal private matters.

Note: You can change your Piazza email preferences under settings to choose whether you want a summary of the posts daily, or do not want to receive emails.

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 TA 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 TA's and instructor's responses to these questions.

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

Please note that the TA 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.

The TA and the instructor will only review their folders three times a week during working hours. You should have ***realistic expectations regarding the time frame in which the TA 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.³

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+ |

| MARK | GRADE |
|-------------|--------------|
| 63-66 | C |
| 60-62 | C- |
| 57-59 | D+ |
| 53-56 | D |
| 50-52 | D- |
| 0-49 | F |