

Psychology of Marriage & the Family  
PSYC 464  
Course Syllabus  
Fall 2018

Section 52624D

**FINAL**  
**15 AUGUST 2018**

<b>Lecture Meeting Time:</b>	Tu & Th 4:00 - 5:50
<b>Room:</b>	VonKleinSmid Center (VKC), Room 203
<b>Instructor:</b>	Christopher R. Beam, Ph.D.
<b>Office:</b>	Seeley G. Mudd (SGM), Room 934
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Tues 12:00 - 1:30 (or by appointment)
<b>Email:</b>	beamc@usc.edu

## 1 Course Description

The focus of this course is on the psychological science of marital and familial relationships across the life-span. Interpersonal relationships are central to the human condition, both serving as a cause and consequence of positive outcomes, like life satisfaction and social connection, and negative outcomes, like depression, alcoholism and mortality risk. Romantic and familial relationships serve as people's primary relationships across the adulthood. The course is broadly split into 3 components: intimate relationships, family dynamics, and culture as a context for families. The overarching theme of the course is the reciprocal association between individual development and family development.

The three major goals of the course are to provide students with in-depth exposure to psychological theories and social scientific research on marriage and family; broaden knowledge of research methods used to perform scientific investigations of marital and familial research; and deepen students ability to evaluate psychological benefits and costs of marital and familial relationships.

## 1.1 Attendance & Participation

### 1.1.1 Lecture

Students are expected to attend each lecture and are responsible for studying all material covered. Review and take notes of all assigned readings prior to each class in order to participate in discussions. Be on-time, do not be disruptive, and be respectful of others' views on relationships. Participation is expected. All students will be called on at some point in class.

## 1.2 Blackboard

Announcements and emails will be made via Blackboard. Routinely check the course site for updates, as all students are responsible for keeping track of all updates in this course. All grades will be posted on Blackboard.

Grade discrepancies and corrections must be made prior to the final exam. The procedure for contesting a grade is as follows: First, submit a one-page Word document as an attachment in email to Professor Beam describing what you are contesting and why. In this document, you must include supporting documentation from the research literature to support your view otherwise your request will not be declined outright. Second, you must schedule a time to meet with Professor Beam in office hours to discuss your grade contest. Dr. Beam will consider your argument in private. Finally, Professor Beam will provide you with an email to document his final decision. Grade contests and grade changes will not be made after the final exam date, so you are advised to address any grade concern early in the semester rather than later in the semester.

## 1.3 Electronic Devices Policy

Electronic devices of any kind are prohibited. They are not to be used, seen, or heard during lecture. **For every infraction, students will incur a 2% reduction from their final grade. There are no warnings and no exceptions.** If your device is observed, you will be notified at the end of lecture regarding your final grade reduction. Explanations for your behavior (e.g., waiting for an important phone call) will not be considered.

## 2 Readings

There is no textbook to purchase for this course. There is no reason science cannot be open source, so the course is designed for students to be able to download all reading materials from the Blackboard course site as part of your basic USC enrollment charges. One reading is assigned per class.

### 3 Student Evaluation

Course grades are merit-based and will be assigned based on the following assignments:

Assignment	Percentage Contribution
Midterm examination	25%
In-class presentation	30%
Final research paper	35%
Student presentation class attendance	5%
In-class quizzes	5%
<b>Total Grade Basis</b>	<b>100%</b>

The midterm examination is 125 points; the in-class presentation is 150 points; the final research paper is 150 points; in-class quizzes are worth 10 points each (50 points total); and attendance during your peers' presentations is 2 points each (18 points total). Grading rubrics will be provided for graded assignments. Letter grades will be assigned based on the percentage of points earned (traditional rounding rules to 2 decimal places apply):

A:  $\geq 93\%$       A-: 90-92.99  
B+: 87-89.99    B: 83-86.99    B-: 80-82.99  
C+: 77-79.99    C: 73-76.99    C-: 70-72.99  
D+: 67-69.99    D: 63-66.99    D-: 60-62.99  
F:  $\leq 59.99\%$

Late assignments will not be accepted apart from illness, emergency, or university-sponsored athletic events with acceptable documentation and approval from Professor Beam. Late assignments that meet one of the above criteria must be turned in by a date and time approved by Beam.

Extra credit assignments are not offered and none may be requested.

#### 3.1 Midterm Examination

The midterm exam will take place in class and will consist of 25 multiple choice questions (worth 1 point each) and 4 essays (worth 25 points each). You will have the entire class period to complete the examination. The multiple choice questions will be completed on scantron score cards. Essays will be completed in blue books supplied by you. You may purchase blue books in the USC bookstore.

#### 3.2 In-Class Presentation

Students are required to prepare and present a 20-minute presentation that extends your knowledge and the class's discussion of a research area in marriage and family. Every

student must lead the class once during the semester. Students will be responsible for selecting and presenting 2 scientific readings on marriage and family not on the syllabus. Use Web of Science, EBSCOhost, Elsevier, and PsycINFO, for example, to locate articles. Students may run the class however they wish and are encouraged to use multiple sources in developing their presentations, including stories, literature, a popular media article, AV/multimedia, class exercises, panel discussions, etc. Students may elect to give a power point presentation although this is not required. Other formats might be discussion-based presentations, in class role plays or a play, case studies that incorporate the readings, and/or presenting the class with dilemmas (ethical or not). Students are encouraged to be creative while grounding their presentations in the scientific literature.

Topics may include but are not limited to: Affairs, alternative families, asexual relationships, attraction, breaking up, cheating, children, co-parenting, communes, couple's interaction, couple therapy, cultural differences in sexual relationships, culture, custody rights, dating, divorce, divorce mediation, effects of children on marital quality, family therapy, fidelity, gender, grief, history of parenting, hooking up, latchkey children, law, living together, marriage and family in LGBTQ populations, marital quality, marriage and parenting styles, money, morality/virtues, on-line dating, polyamory, polygamy, religiosity, religious influence on dating, same-sex marriage laws, same-sex relationships, separation, sexual assault, sexual dysfunction, transition to parenthood, widowhood.

### **3.3 Research Paper**

Students must write a final paper that extends one of the topics from the course. The paper can be the same or a different topic as your class presentation. The final paper is a formal presentation that should resemble a research proposal (see the Introduction and Method section of one of the empirical papers on the syllabus); a review of the empirical literature (see an Annual Review of Psychology paper on the syllabus or search Psychological Bulletin online for examples); or a conceptual analysis of the literature (see reviews of empirical studies like those published in Perspectives on Psychological Science). The final paper should be no longer than 12 pages, double spaced in 12pt font in Helvetica or Times New Roman with 0.5"-1.0" margins (including references, tables, figures). Follow APA 6th edition style. The final paper is due at the end of the scheduled final examination time via Turnitin on Blackboard - **6:30p on December 6, 2018.**

### **3.4 Student Presentation Class Attendance**

Delivering a class presentation and/or leading a class discussion is stressful. For this reason, all students are required to attend student presentations to facilitate discussion. For every class missed during the student presentations, expect an approximately half

point reduction in your final course grade. **Note that you must attend class *and* arrive on time to receive credit for that session.**

### 3.5 In class quizzes

Five in class quizzes will be given each worth 10 points. Quizzes are administered randomly throughout the semester to ensure that students read the assigned literature; attend lecture; and arrive on time to lecture. Quizzes are cumulative up to the day each quiz is given. Missed quizzes cannot be made up. Students who arrive to class after a quiz is collected may not make up the quiz.

## 4 Academic Accommodations

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in GFS 120 and is open 8:30am-5:00pm, Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

## 5 Academic Integrity

All students are expected to complete their own work. Violations of academic integrity (e.g., plagiarism, resource sharing) are serious and not taken lightly. For more information on Academic Integrity consult the Trojan Integrity Guide at <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/forms/tio.pdf>. Students caught cheating (regardless of level of involvement) will automatically fail the course and a report will be filed with USC's Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards.

## 6 Course Schedule

A schedule of dates, topics and readings are shown below.

Date	Topic	Reading
Tu (8/21)	Course overview & Theoretical foundations	Bradbury & Karney, Ch.3 (Bradbury & Karney, 2013)
Th (8/23)	Theoretical foundations	Bradbury & Karney, Ch.3 (Bradbury & Karney, 2013)

Tu (8/28)	Theoretical foundations	(Fraley & Shaver, 2000)
Th (8/30)	Relationship formation	(Anderson & Cole, 1990)
Tu (9/4)	Sexual identity development	(Tolman & McClelland, 2011)
Th (9/6)	Adolescent romantic relationships	(Collins, Welsh, & Furman, 2009)
Tu (9/11)	Methodology	(Kenny, Kashy, & Cook, 2006)
Th (9/13)	Methodology	(Ickes, Weber, & Harvey, 1994)
Tu (9/18)	Marriage & marital quality	(Glenn, 1990)
Th (9/20)	Marital quality	(Kiecolt-Glaser & Newton, 2001)
Tu (9/25)	Family planning	(Hutteman, Bleidorn, Penke, & Denissen, 2013)
Th (9/27)	Parenting	(Belsky & Rovine, 1990)
Tu (10/2)	Parenting	(Hare, Miga, & Allen, 2009)
Th (10/4)	Grand-parenting	(Hayslip Jr, Blumenthal, & Garner, 2014)
Tu (10/9)	Same-sex relationships	(Peplau & Fingerhut, 2007)
Th (10/11)	Benefits of marriage	(Cherlin, 2004)
Tu (10/16)	Family & psychopathology	(Miklowitz, 2004)
Th (10/18)	Midterm examination	
Tu (10/23)	Partner & family violence	(Andrews, Foster, Capaldi, & Hops, 2000)
Th (10/25)	Couples & Family Therapy	(Doss, Thum, Sevier, Atkins, & Christensen, 2005)
Tu (10/30)	Student Presentations	
Th (11/1)	Student Presentations	
Tu (11/6)	Student Presentations	
Th (11/8)	Student Presentations	
Tu (11/13)	Student Presentations	
Th (11/15)	Student Presentations	
Tu (11/20)	Student Presentations	
Th (11/22)	No class (Thanksgiving)	
Tu (11/27)	Student Presentations	
Th (11/29)	Student Presentations	

## References

- Anderson, S. M., & Cole, S. W. (1990). "do i know you?": The role of significant others in general social perception. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 59(3), 384-399.
- Andrews, J. A., Foster, S. L., Capaldi, D., & Hops, H. (2000). Adolescent and family predictors of physical aggression, communication, and satisfaction in young adult couples: a prospective analysis. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 68(2), 195.
- Belsky, J., & Rovine, M. (1990). Patterns of marital change across the transition to parenthood: Pregnancy to three years postpartum. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 5-19.
- Bradbury, T. N., & Karney, B. R. (2013). *Intimate relationships* (2nd ed.). W. W. Norton & Company.
- Cherlin, A. J. (2004). The deinstitutionalization of american marriage. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 66(4), 848-861.
- Collins, W. A., Welsh, D. P., & Furman, W. (2009). Adolescent romantic relationships. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 60, 631-652.
- Doss, B. D., Thum, Y. M., Sevier, M., Atkins, D. C., & Christensen, A. (2005). Improving relationships: mechanisms of change in couple therapy. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 73(4), 624.
- Fraley, R. C., & Shaver, P. R. (2000). Adult romantic attachment: Theoretical developments, emerging controversies, and unanswered questions. *Review of General Psychology*, 4(2), 132.
- Glenn, N. D. (1990). Quantitative research on marital quality in the 1980s: A critical review. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 818-831.
- Hare, A. L., Miga, E. M., & Allen, J. P. (2009). Intergenerational transmission of aggression in romantic relationships: the moderating role of attachment security. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 23(6), 808.
- Hayslip Jr, B., Blumenthal, H., & Garner, A. (2014). Social support and grandparent caregiver health: One-year longitudinal findings for grandparents raising their grandchildren. *Journals of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, 70(5), 804-812.
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- Kenny, D., Kashy, D. A., & Cook, W. L. (2006). Using multilevel modeling to study dyads. In *Dyadic data analysis* (p. 78-99). The Guilford Press.
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- Peplau, L. A., & Fingerhut, A. W. (2007). The close relationships of lesbians and gay men. *Annu. Rev. Psychol.*, 58, 405–424.
- Tolman, D. L., & McClelland, S. I. (2011). Normative sexuality development in adolescence: A decade in review, 2000-2009. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 21(1), 242-255.