

Psychology of Marriage & the Family  
PSYC 464  
Course Syllabus  
Spring 2022

Lecture Meeting Time: Monday and Wednesday 9-1:10

Office hours: By appointment

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## 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 (e.g. life satisfaction, social connection) and negative (alcoholism, longevity) outcomes. Romantic and familial relationships serve as people's primary relationships across the life-span, hence, the important relationship science. The course is broadly split into 3 components: 1.) Intimate relationships, family dynamics, and culture as a context for families. The overarching theme of the course is the reciprocal association between individual and familial development.

There are 3 major goals: 1.) Provide students with in-depth exposure to psychological theories and social scientific research on marriage and family 2.) broaden knowledge of research methods used to perform scientific investigations of marital and familial research; and 3.) deepen students' ability to evaluate psychological costs and benefits of marital and familial relationships.

### 1.1 Attendance & Participation

#### 1.1.1 Lecture

Students are expected to attend each lecture and are responsible for knowing all material covered. Read the assigned reading prior to each class in order to participate actively in discussion. Please be on-time – arriving late is disruptive to other students and to the class.

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 need to be made prior to the final exam. No grade changes will be made via Blackboard after the final exam.

## 2 Student Evaluation

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

Assignment	Percentage Contribution
Weekly discussion questions	45% (180)
In-class presentation	45% (180)
Participation	10% (36)
<b>Total Grade Basis</b>	<b>100%</b>

The in-class presentation is worth 160 points.

The weekly discussion questions are worth 650 points.

Participation is worth 80 points.

Grading rubrics will be provided for the in-class presentation. Percentages earned will not be rounded up. This course is not graded on a curve. Curves limit the number of students who may earn each letter grade—regardless of their performance—and put students in competition with one another. Please note that ***grades will not be inflated based on request, nor will additional assignments be created so that a student may attempt to earn more points.*** If you are struggling, please talk to your instructor or seek out help (see Support Services below) immediately. If you wait until late in the semester, or after you have taken a test or submitted work, there is no retaking or resubmitting of work to try to raise your grade. Students are responsible to ensure their grades are correctly entered into

Blackboard. No changes to scores are made at the end of the semester, regardless of fault.

A	93% and up	C+	77 - 79.9
A-	90 - 92.9	C	73 - 76.9
B+	87 - 89.9	C-	70 - 72.9
B	83 - 86.9	D+	67 - 69.9
B-	80 - 82.9	D	63 - 66.9
		D-	60 - 62.9
		F	<60%

If you take this course pass/fail, please know that a grade of C- (70%) is the minimum to pass.

**Acceptable Excuses for Absences and how they apply to each course component**  
The following will count, with approved documentation: (1) **university-sponsored event** that you are required to attend on an exam/lab date; (2) unanticipated and unavoidable **emergency** on the exam/lab date, such as a documented incident on the way to campus; (3) death or life threatening emergency of a **close relative or friend** within a reasonable timeframe of the scheduled date (paper evidence of the emergency is required, and additional documentation by a university official may also be required); (4) **Medical excuses**: If you go to the student health center, sign the release form. Dated notes on letterhead from private physicians or therapists are also acceptable, but subject to approval. Inconveniences such as traffic, work, parking delays, and non-emergency appointments will not count as acceptable excuses.

#### **Policy on Use of Technology in the Classroom**

Audio and video recording of lecture is **prohibited**. We may use a variety of forms of technology in class, including mobile devices as response systems. Please bring a tablet or cell phone to class, but these must be kept put away at all times when not in use for class content.

**Security of Course Content.** All material presented in class or discussion, sent via email, or posted on Blackboard is “all rights reserved.” In addition, some of it is copyrighted and distributed for in-class use only by a publishing corporation. You

may not store these materials—whether on paper or electronically--for use by students not presently enrolled in this course, nor may you post the materials anywhere on the internet. Out of fairness to all current and future students, please do your part to protect our course content.

Please see the addendum attached to the syllabus for detailed information about Student Support Services and Academic Integrity.

## 2.1 In-class presentation

Students are required to prepare and present a **30 minute** presentation that extends knowledge and discussion of a research area in marriage and family. Students will lead the class once during the course. Students will be responsible for selecting and assigning 2-4 scientific readings on marriage and family. Students may run the class however they desire and are encouraged to use other sources in developing their presentations, including stories, literature, a popular media article, AV/multimedia, class exercises, panel discussions, etc. Powerpoint lectures can be given (but are not required), role playing (involve members of your family!), offer case studies, present the case with dilemmas (ethical or not), etc. 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 interactions, 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 relationships, 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*

## 2.2 Discussion Questions

Weekly discussion questions pertaining to the subject matter will be assigned after class on Thursday, and will be due by the start of class (2 pm) on Tuesdays. These questions are thought questions, requiring the student to think about the subject

matter as it was discussed and respond with at least one paragraph per question. The more effort shown, in terms of depth of thought, the more points will be awarded. The questions will not be marked as “right” or “wrong,” but will be graded based on the depth of thought and engagement with the material.

### 2.3 Participation

Given the intimate nature of this class, you will be graded on participation. Involvement, engagement, and questions asked will fulfill the participation requirement. My goal is to have meaningful discussion about what we have read, or what has been presented, in every class.

### 3. 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/studentaffairs/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.

### 4. Course Schedule

A schedule of dates, topics, and readings are shown below\* May change. Consult Blackboard.

Date	Topic	Assigned Readings (assigned to be read before class)
5/18	Introduction & Course Overview  Sign up for presentation dates	Buss, (2006) Evolution of Love  Cherlin (2004) Deinstitutionalization of Marriage
	Theoretical Foundations of marriage and Evolution	Gottman and Notarius (2000) Observing Marital Interaction

		Becker (1974) The economics of marriage
5/23	Marital Relationships and Family  Choose topic for presentation and submit to Professor George	Lee (2010) Psychology of the Family and the Family of Psychology  Rosengranden (2004) The relationship between marital characteristics, marital interaction processes, and marital satisfaction.
	Attachment theory	Holmes & Johnson (2009) Adult attachment and romantic partner preference.  Peluso, Peluso, Buckner (2004). Measuring Lifestyle and Attachment: An Empirical Investigation Linking Individual Psychology and Attachment Theory.
5/25	Methods for studying marriage and family  Problems measuring family	Glenn, (1990) Quantitative Research on Marital Quality in the 1980s.  Karney and Bradbury (1995) The Longitudinal Course of marriage.
	Adolescent identity development	Worthington et al (2002) Heterosexual Identity Development: A

		<p>multidimensional model of individual and social identity.</p> <p>Jones et al (2018) Stability of Attachment Style in Adolescence. An empirical test of alternative developmental processes</p>
6/1	<p>Sexual identity</p> <p>Same-sex relationships</p>	<p>Grossman, Foss, Daugelli (2014). Puberty: Maturation, Timing and Adjustment. Puberty Developmental milestones among gay, bisexual and lesbian youth.</p>
	<p>Communication and Dating</p> <p>Marriage across the lifespan</p>	<p>Rueda, et al, (2021). Does Gottman's Marital Communication Conceptualization Inform Teen Dating Violence.</p> <p>Umberson, et al (2005). As good as it gets? A life course perspective on Marital quality.</p>
6/6	<p>Marital quality</p> <p>Marriage, health and wealth</p>	<p>Wilmoth and Koso (2002). Does Marital History Matter? Marital Status and Wealth Outcomes among pre-retirement adults.</p>

		Umberson and Williams (2005). Marital Quality, Health and Aging: Gender Equity?
	Gender differences in marriage Benefits of marriage	Jackson, Miller, Oka and Henry (2014). Gender Differences in Marital Satisfaction: A meta-analysis.  Clark, Lemay, Graham, Pataki, & Finkel (2010). Ways of giving benefits in Marriage: Norm Use, Relationship Satisfaction, and Attachment related Variability.
6/8	Fertility and family planning Siblings	Atchison, et al. (2019). Fertility and Family planning characteristics of married women aged 15 to 19 years in Ethiopia, Nigeria and Tanzania.  Vendantam (2017). Research shows birth order really does matter.



	<p>Transition to parenthood</p> <p>Family as a System</p>	<p>Fosco and Grysch (2012) Capturing the family context of emotion regulation: A family systems model approach</p> <p>Howard and Brooks-Gunn(2009) Relationship supportiveness during the transition to parenthood in married and unmarried parents.</p>
	<p>Parenting young children and adolescents</p> <p>Latchkey children</p>	<p>Shapiro (2016). Parent and Community focused approaches to supporting parents of young children: The family networks project.</p> <p>Leung, Robson, Cho, Lim (1996). Latchkey Children</p>
6/13	<p>Family Violence</p> <p>Childhood exposure to domestic violence</p>	<p>Kallstrom and Thunberg (2019) Equal, somehow. What Young people exposed to family violence value in counseling.</p> <p>Kitzman et al (2003) Child Witnesses to Domestic Violence: a meta-analytic review</p>

	<p>Partner violence and sexual assault</p> <p>Psychopathology</p>	<p>Decker, et al (2014). Prevalence and health impact of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence among female adolescents aged 15-19 years in vulnerable communities.</p> <p>Humbad et al (2010). Externalizing psychopathology and marital adjustment in long term marriages: Results from a large combined sample of married couples.</p>
	<p>Infidelity</p> <p>Hooking Up</p>	<p>Manning, Giordano, Longmore (2006). Hooking up: The relationship contexts of nonrelationship sex.</p> <p>Fincham and May (2017) Infidelity in Romantic relationships.</p>
6/15	<p>Marriage and Couples therapy</p>	<p>Wittenborn et al (2018). Randomized controlled trial of emotionally focused couple therapy compared to treatment as usual for depression.</p>

		Doss et al (2005). Improving relationships: Mechanisms of change in couples therapy.
	Marital dissolution Children of Divorce Coparenting after divorce Widowhood	Erickson and Shafer. Divorce and subjective well-being: A counterfactual approach  Amato and Hohmann- Marriott (2007). A comparison of high and low distress marriages that end in divorce.
	Grandparenting & Caretaking	Mendoza, Fruhauf, Macphee.(2019). Grandparent caregivers' resilience: stress, support and coping predict life satisfaction.  Patrick and Hayslip jr (2005). Toward an understanding of diversity among grandparents raising their grandchildren.
6/20	Marriage across culture	Ritter (2015). Tabula Rasa: Cross Racial/Cultural dating preferences among Chinese, Japanese and Korean international

		students at American university.  Irastorza. (2016). Sustainable marriages? Divorce patterns of binational couples in Europe vs. North America.
	3 Student presentations	
6/22	6 Student presentations	
6/27	6 Student Presentations	

### **Addendum: Student Support Services and Academic Integrity Violations**

Here is a quick reference list of support services available to students:

Student Counseling Services (SCS) - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.  
<https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.  
<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 - 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/>

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: <http://sarc.usc.edu/>

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX compliance – (213) 740-5086  
Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. <https://equity.usc.edu/>

*Bias Assessment Response and Support*

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/>

*Student Support & Advocacy – (213) 821-4710*

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student Ex: personal, financial, and academic.

<https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/>

*Diversity at USC – <https://diversity.usc.edu/>*

Tab for Events, Programs and Training, Task Force (including representatives for each school), Chronology, Participate, Resources for Students

All USC students are held to the standards set forth in the SCampus. Sometimes students do not realize that a certain behavior is an academic integrity violation, and misinformation floats about on campus. It's a good idea to review academic integrity standards periodically. Here is a snapshot of things you want to avoid doing. (From Section 11 – Behavior Violating University Standards and Appropriate Sanctions <https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/>).

11.11

A. The submission of material authored by another person but represented as the student's own work, whether that material is paraphrased or copied in verbatim or near-verbatim form.

- B. The submission of material subjected to editorial revision by another person that results in substantive changes in content or major alteration of writing style.
- C. Improper acknowledgment of sources in essays or papers.

Note: Culpability is not diminished when plagiarism occurs in drafts that are not the final version. Also, if any material is prepared or submitted by another person on the student's behalf, the student is expected to proofread the results and is responsible for all particulars of the final draft.

#### 11.12

- A. Acquisition of term papers or other assignments from any source and the subsequent presentation of those materials as the student's own work, or providing term papers or assignments that another student submits as their own work.
- B. Distribution or use of notes or recordings based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study. This includes, but is not limited to, providing materials for distribution by services publishing class notes. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the Internet or via any other media. (See Section C.1 Class Notes Policy).
- C. Recording a university class without the express permission of the instructor and announcement to the class. Recording can inhibit future free discussion and thus infringe on the academic freedom of other students as well as the instructor.

#### 11.13

- A. Any use or attempted use of external assistance in the completion of an academic assignment and/or during an examination, or any behavior that defeats the intent of an examination or other classwork or assignment, shall be considered academically dishonest unless expressly permitted by the instructor. The following are examples of unacceptable behaviors: communicating with fellow students during an exam, copying or attempting to copy material from another student's exam; allowing another student to copy from an exam or assignment; possession or use of unauthorized notes, calculator, or other materials during exams and/or unauthorized removal of exam materials.
- B. Submission of work altered after grading shall be considered academically dishonest, including but not limited to changing answers after an exam or assignment has been returned or submitting another's exam as one's own to gain credit.

11.14

A. Obtaining for oneself or providing for another person a solution to homework, a project or other assignment, or a copy of an exam or exam key without the knowledge and expressed consent of the instructor.

B. Unauthorized collaboration on a project, homework or other assignment. Collaboration will be considered unauthorized unless expressly part of the assignment in question or expressly permitted by the instructor.

11.15

A. Attempting to benefit from the work of another.

B. Any attempt to hinder the work of another student or any act which may jeopardize another student's academic standing.

11.16

Using any portion of an essay, term paper, project or other assignment more than once, without permission of the instructor(s).

11.17

Falsification, alteration or misrepresentation of official or unofficial records or documents including but not limited to academic transcripts, academic documentation, letters of recommendation, and admissions applications or related documents.

11.18

Taking a course, any course work or exam for another student or allowing another individual to take a course, course work, a portion of a course or exam in one's stead.

11.19

A. Accessing, altering and/or using unauthorized information.

B. Misuse of university computer systems or access to those systems as articulated by the university's Computing Policies (including improper downloading of material, see Section F.1. Computing)

11.20

Fabrication: Submitting material for lab assignments, class projects or other assignments which is wholly or partially falsified, invented or otherwise does not represent work accomplished or undertaken by the students.