

GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION 2010

PSYC 465: The Science of Intimate Relationships

0.1250 EFTS

22 Feb 2010 - 27 Jun 2010

Course Coordinator

Professor Garth Fletcher: Office: Room 205, Ext 6970;

Garth.Fletcher@canterbury.ac.nz

Time: 9:00 – 11:00, Friday

Where: Psychology Building Room 411

Textbook: Fletcher, G. J. O. (2002). *The new science of intimate relationships*.
Oxford, UK: Blackwell

I have an open-door policy, but students may be advised to arrange appointments outside of class hours.

Requirements: None, apart from standard undergraduate requirements to proceed to the graduate level and acceptance into the graduate programme.

Assessment:

- 1) Essay (4000 words): 65%, due on 4 June.
(Note: Late essays will be marked down, unless an extension is granted).
- 2) Poster: 30%.
- 3) Class participation: 5%. *This will be assessed by me in terms of contributing to discussions and asking questions.*

Preamble: Research relevant to human relationships has taken place for decades across several disciplines, including sociology, anthropology, biology, and, of course, the psychological sub-disciplines including clinical psychology, developmental psychology, cognitive psychology, neuropsychology, and social psychology. However, the study of human intimate relationships has been dominated by psychology, with social psychology and evolutionary psychology playing central roles. The scientific study of intimate relationships is beginning to coalesce into a coherent sub-discipline. For example, there are two large international societies that study close relationships, which have their own journals, and courses dealing with intimate relationships are becoming increasingly common in Universities. In short, the study of intimate relationships has become a central and popular area in psychology, especially social psychology.

- The course has clear links with several other courses and programs in the department (e. g., clinical psychology, social psychology, family psychology, and developmental psychology).
- The course has a social psychological/social cognitive orientation, but covers an evolutionary psychological approach, and touches on clinical psychology, neuropsychology, anthropology, and personality psychology. The general focus will be on the psychology of adult heterosexual relationships, although same-sex relationships will be considered.

Course Structure: I will cover 10 sessions in the 11 weeks available. This will leave 1 session at the end of the course for the poster presentations. Students are expected to attend all classes.

Power Point slides of my lectures will be available as hard copies.

Semester 1: Term 1

All chapters refer to textbook.

- Feb 26: Introduction - Chapter 1
- March 5: Mapping the Relationship Mind - Chapter 2
- March 12: Evolutionary Psychology – Chapter 3
- March 19: Love and emotions – Chapter 4
- March 26: Through the eyes of love: Reality and illusion in intimate relationships - Chapter 5

Semester 1: Term 2

- April 30: Communication and predicting relationship success – Chapter 6
- May 7: The Bonds of Intimacy: From Infancy to Adulthood – Chapter 7
- May 14: Mate selection (and deselection) -Chapter 8
- May 21: Sex and passion - Chapter 9
- May 28: The strange case of aggression in intimate relationships - Chapter 10
- June 4 : Poster session

Criteria for Poster Assessment

1. Quality of overall design of poster.
2. Evidence of knowledge and research in the specific area.
3. Ability to answer questions about the poster.
4. Clarity and coherence of poster material.

Poster Topics

I am open to any poster topic, provided that it does not replicate the material I have already covered in my seminars/lectures. Here are some examples:

1. Is our relationship destiny in our genes?
2. What is the role of the self in intimate relationships?
3. Discuss Fisher's approach to love.
4. What are the similarities and differences between parent/child bonding or love and adult/adult bonding or love and what does this tell us about its origins?
5. Gender differences in relationships: Can it be explained by culture?
6. The green-eyed monster - Is David Buss right?
7. Discuss Michael Johnson's claim that there are two kinds of relationship violence - patriarchal terrorism and normal couple violence
8. Why do men kill women in relationships much more than the other way around?
9. What causes sexual orientation?
10. Is divorce bad for children?
11. How different are homosexuals from heterosexuals?
12. Arranged marriage - a good idea?
13. The neurophysiology of love.
14. How unique is the human species (in relationship terms)?
15. Is Geoff Miller right? Did sexual selection drive human evolution?
16. Do women use sex as a resource and why?
17. The psychology of stalking.
18. Love in the workplace.
19. Intimate relationships and psychiatric disorders.
20. Love and depression.
21. Is rape a male adaptation?
22. Is anger good or bad in relationships?
23. Why do people mate assortatively?

Poster Presentations:

- Posters should be between 82 - 85 cm high and 1 meter to 1.15 meters wide.
- The font size needs to be big enough to be easily read.
- The poster is a compromise between detail and readability and concision.
- There should be take-home messages, but not too many.
- Design the poster to read from left to right and/or top to bottom.
- Graphics can make it more attractive, but don't overdo them.
- You can include references in small print, using either APA or numbers (see example posters).
- Be prepared to answer questions about material on your poster. For example, if you have a study or article mentioned, then you should be able to talk about the study and explain the results. I will spend some time asking individuals about their posters.

- Half the class will present their posters in the first 50 mins, and the other students will be the audience (informally looking at the posters and asking questions). This process will reverse for the second 50 mins.
- After the poster session please hang your posters on level 2 of Psychology, where space is available, for 3 to 4 weeks. I will be able to examine them again this way.
- Posters can be prepared in two ways. The poster can be prepared in power point, and then printed off by the Printery Department on Level 2 of the Central Library (you can either e-mail the file or give them a copy on disc). Or, you can prepare separate A4 or A3 sheets and attach them to a backing sheet.
- I will prepare and send feedback and grades on the posters to you by e-mail within 12 weeks.
- As a rough guide, someone should be able to read your poster in 5-10 minutes.
- Pins and blue tack will be available for hanging the posters in class.

Psyc465 - Essay

Marking Sheet/Criteria

- a) Structure and organization
- b) Clarity and concision
- c) Grammar and writing style
- d) Use of appropriate references and use of supporting evidence
- e) Comparison and integration among theories
- f) Critical approach adopted and use of argument
- g) Evidence of originality
- h) Summary comments

Writing an Essay

- I do not read full drafts, but I am more than happy to help in any way I can, including suggestions for references, looking over your essay structure, and so forth.
- Buy and read a book on writing. I recommend a book like William Strunk Jnr. *The elements of style*, 4th ed.
- Use subheadings to structure your essay.
- Use a tier of headings to mirror the structure (see APA regs.). For example, if you have three main sections you might use three headings in the middle of the page, and then flush-left headings for the two or three sub-sections under the main headings.
- Writing well means multiple drafts and being obsessive. Be prepared to kill your own words, and scrap paragraphs.
- Be meticulous in your referencing (APA style, not the style used in my textbook).

- **Don't use** "cited in" references. Either read the said article or reference or don't cite it. The only circumstance for using this kind of reference is when it is not accessible (e. g., it is unpublished).
- The introduction should include a road map of the essay. Tell the reader what is to come in terms of the main sections.
- You can use "I" but don't over-use it.
- Speculations and opinions are fine.
- But, the essay should be evidence based, as far as possible.
- Try to develop your own voice.
- I want to see arguments, not just a string of findings. Try to go beyond the descriptive.
- Include a short conclusion that summarizes the bottom line of the essay.
- Try reading the essay out loud, and ask yourself to what extent someone listening would know what you talking about. The trick in good writing is to empathize with a potential reader.
- Develop an appreciation for the use of punctuation. Don't litter commas and apostrophes around like confetti.
- Writing well means a) using the appropriate words (using a thesaurus will often lead you astray), b) using good clear sentences that are actually sentences, c) selecting good linking words that tell the reader how the current sentence links into the prior material and argument; e.g., however, moreover, in addition, for example, although, thus, finally, in conclusion, in summary, as noted previously, nevertheless, of course, in contrast, consistently, on the other hand, as previously noted, d) using sentences of different lengths, e) using paragraphs well (please no 1-2 page paragraphs).
- **Make sure** you achieve a word target that meets the requirements. I am happy to consider a word total that is within 10% either way. **Note the word length does not include the references.** Put the total words used on the cover.
- Finally, use double-spacing for your final essay and a cover page, and number your pages (makes my marking easier).

Essay topics: Select one essay topic from the following list

1. **Describe and discuss some of the key aspects of the intimate relationship mind, from a cognitive perspective, and give some examples from research and real-life to illustrate your discussion.**
2. **Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of an evolutionary approach to the origin of one of the following topics in intimate relationships: sexuality, love, sexual jealousy, gender differences.**
3. **What is (romantic) love and what are its functions?**
4. **Are relationships all in the mind?**
5. **Is relationship success enhanced by good communication?**
6. **Critically describe and discuss the application of attachment theory to human adult intimate relationships.**

7. **How and why do humans select mates?**
8. **Analyze and discuss the main differences between men and women in sexuality.**
9. **How common is intimate relationship violence and how can it be explained?,**
10. **It has often been noted that within-sex differences in intimate relationships are greater than the between-sex differences. Analyze and discuss this proposition.**
11. **Describe and discuss two of the major lessons (or take-home messages) that the scientific study of intimate relationships has produced for understanding the nature of human intimate sexual relationships.**

Academic Liaison:

The Psychology Department has a Staff/Student liaison committee and at least five students will voluntarily represent postgraduate students. An email asking for volunteers will be sent out early in the first semester.

Students with Disabilities:

You will find Disability Resource Service on Level 1 of the James Hight Building (Central Library). The offices are in the east corner of the building, adjacent to the Mac Lab. Disability car parks are located outside the building, with wheelchair ramp access to the main entrance. Disability Resource Service provides an area for quiet study. You are invited to use it to relax, read, have a coffee or just enjoy some quiet time.

Office hours: 9 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., Monday through Friday

Phone: (03) 364 2350

Fax: (03) 364 2091

disabilities@canterbury.ac.nz

Policy on Dishonest Practice:

Plagiarism, collusion, copying and ghost writing are unacceptable and dishonest practices (please refer to the Psychology Department's 2009 handbook).

- Plagiarism is the presentation of any material (text, data, figures or drawings, on any medium including computer files) from any other source without clear and adequate acknowledgement of the source.
- Collusion is the presentation of work performed in conjunction with another person or persons, but submitted as if it has been completed only by the names author(s).
- Copying is the use of material (in any medium, including computer files) produced by another person(s) with or without their knowledge and approval.
- Ghost writing is the use of another person(s) (with or without payment) to prepare all or part of an item submitted for assessment.

In cases where dishonest practice is involved in tests or other work submitted for credit, the student will be referred to the University Proctor. The instructor may choose to not mark the work.

Reconsideration of Grades:

Students should, in the first instance, speak to the course co-ordinator about their grades. Students can appeal any decision made on their final grade. You can apply at the Registry to appeal within 4 weeks of the end of the semester. Be aware that there are time limits for each step of the appeals process.

Aegrotat Applications:

If you feel that illness, injury, bereavement or other critical circumstances has prevented you from completing an item of assessment or affected your performance, you should complete an aegrotat application form, available from the Registry or the Student Health and Counselling Service. This should be within seven days of the due date for the required work or the date of the examination. In the case of illness or injury, medical consultation should normally have taken place shortly before or within 24 hours after the due date for the required work, or the date of the test or examination. For further details on aegrotat applications, please refer to the Enrolment Handbook. You have the right to appeal any decision made, including aegrotat decisions.