



PSY 317

Intimate Relationships

Instructor: Aslihan Nisanci

Email: aslihan.nisanci@marmara.edu.tr

Office Hours: TBA

Course Description:

This course is about intimate relationships and explores the topic from empirical and theoretical perspectives. The examination of intimate relationships in this course will look at the subject through cultural, biological, social and developmental lenses and will explore specific topics such as attraction, communication, online relationships, friendship, sexuality, love, conflict, power and violence, culture and diversity, loss, social cognition, and repairing relationships.

Course Objectives:

- Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of the psychology of intimate relationships.
- Articulate trends in intimate relationships of psychology.
- Present and evaluate research on the psychology of intimate relationships in written form.
- Describe and explain limits to generalizability of research findings in the psychology of intimate relationships.
- Demonstrate ability to relate information on the psychology of intimate relationships to own and others' life experiences.

Textbook:

Bradbury, T. N., & Karney, B. (2014). *Intimate Relationships*, Third Edition. NY: WW Norton & Company.

Suggested Books:

Miller, R. S. (2015). *Intimate Relationships* (7th Edition). New York, NY: McGrawHill Companies, Inc.

Garth Fletcher (2002). *The New science of intimate relationships*.

Assignments:

In class assignment: Your first assignment is to write a 1-page paper on the value of intimate relationships in the first week of the class.

In class group presentation: See the attached assignment guide.

Weekly Content

Week 1, October 5: Introduction to course. Review syllabus. Overview of expectations and class assignments. 1st Paper

Week 2, October 12: Why and how do we study relationships? Chapter 1 & 3

Week 3, October 19: Getting together: Initial attraction and selecting a partner Chapter 7

Week 4, October 26: Staying together: Theories of attachment and commitment Chapter 2

Please let me know the names of your group members by the end of this week.

Week 5, November 2: Maintaining intimacy: Responsiveness and support Chapter 8

Week 6, November 9: Maintaining intimacy: Sacrifice, self-expansion, capitalization, gratitude Chapter 8

Week 7, November 16: Sexuality in relationships Chapter 9

Week 8: Midterm

Week 9, November 30: Diversity in relationships Chapter 4 & 5

Week 10, December 7: Beliefs and expectations about relationships Chapter 12

Week 11, December 14: Conflict

When things go wrong: conflict, betrayal and jealousy Chapters 10 & 11

Week 12, December 21: Breaking up and being single

Week 13, December 28: Online intimacies - social media & personal relationships

Week 14, January 4: TBD

Week 15, January 11: Student presentations

Week 16, January 18: Student presentations

Group Assignment Guidance

In this assignment, you will form groups of 5-6 students and choose one of the options listed below for a group work. Your group will either do an in-class presentation or prepare a Youtube/Tiktok video. If you prefer to present in class, you are expected to prepare a PowerPoint (or you can use another program such as Prezi) and do your presentation in class. If your group choose the video option, we will watch the video in class. All group members are expected to participate in the preparation and presentation processes fully. This means that each group member will either **personally present** in class or be visible in the video and talk. If you have any legitimate reason to be exempt from this criterion, please contact me via email.

You should let me know your group members' names by **29 October, Friday**, and your topics by **November 12, Friday latest**, via email.

Grading: This assignment consists of **30% of your final grade**. All group members will receive the same grade. However, each member's grade may differ as all group members will **anonymously** grade the other group members to assess their participation levels. The average of the rest of the group members' grade will consist of 10% of the assignment grade for each member. Here is the detailed rubric for grading:

Grading Rubric	
Content (Critical analysis, use of literature, relevancy of the arguments)	50%
Presentation layout/video quality and originality:	20%
Visibility in the video/personal participation in the presentation	20%
Average group participation assessment	10%

Options for the group assignment:

Option 1: Youtube/Tiktok video

In this option, you will prepare a video on an issue related to intimate relationships. While this video will answer a research question or explain a topic from several aspects, the video should be prepared to address the lay audience. In other words, the information you present should be easily understood by the majority of the audience. On the other hand, the information you present needs to be research-informed and you should use **at least** six research articles from peer-reviewed journals and two books (textbook included). Here are some example topics/questions (You may prefer another topic/question, or narrow these topics down and be more specific):

- Jealousy in intimate relationships (or you can choose another emotion)
- How does having a baby affect intimate relationships? (or another outside relationship dynamic such as the effects of in-laws)
- What do you experience if your partner is a narcissist? (or choose another characteristic)

Please feel free to use your creativity in the content and design. You can consult me if you need to. The length of the video should be **15 minutes minimum** and **20 minutes maximum**. Each group member should talk in the video.

Option 2: Therapy session with a couple (Role play)

In this option, you will design a 10-minute-long therapy session and a 10-minute assessment of the session (20 minutes in total). Identify an issue that brings the couple into therapy and design the details of the session (scenario) as a role play. 3 people in the group will role play as the therapist and the couple; and 2-3 people will present the assessment. During the 10-minute session with the therapist, the therapist will learn what brought the couple into therapy after receiving the informed consent. The therapist will explore the perspective of each member of the couple on the presenting issue. I can support you with the content of the assessment session with more structure (please let

me know). In the assessment part of the presentation, as a group, you will consider: (1) What is the primary problem bringing this couple into therapy? (2) What factors may be exacerbating the problem? (3) Are there any features of the relationship that are strengths? (4) What would be your evidence-based recommendations for this couple? The group members taking part in the role play may or may not present the assessment. However, all members should contribute into the assessment preparation. Be sure to reference concepts and/or findings from the readings and class discussion. You should use **at least** six research articles from peer-reviewed journals and two books (textbook included). You can either videotape the session or present live in the classroom.

Option 3: Relationships in Pop Culture/Literature

In this option, you will explore relationships in pop culture. If you choose this option, you will present the content live in class and will have a PowerPoint presentation. Your target of analysis can be a song, movie, a TV show, a Youtube video, or a book. We can learn a great deal about cultural expectations and beliefs about relationships from the ways in which they are portrayed in entertainment mediums such as music and film. Please analyze a song or film with an emphasis on **the message being conveyed about relationships**. What myths or cultural beliefs and expectations are being transmitted? Do expectations differ for different groups of people, or do they apply toward everyone? Does the message indicate what will happen if these expectations are not met? Who is the target audience of the message? Support your analyses with concepts drawn from readings and class discussion. Make sure you use **at least** six research articles from peer-reviewed journals and two books (textbook included). The presentation will be 20-minute long maximum.

Important: You will share the PowerPoint presentation/ the video with me. If you prepare a presentation, you should include the resources in APA 6 format at the end of the slides. If it is a video, you can send me the references list to me as a separate word document via email:

aslihan.nisanci@marmara.edu.tr