

PSYC 301 – PSYCHOLOGY OF MARRIAGE

Fall 2008

Instructor: Dr. Theresa A. Polenski
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Room #212

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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 3:00-5:00 p.m.
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:00-3:00 p.m.
Fridays, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Class Schedule: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m.
Bradley Arts & Sciences Building / Room #207

REQUIRED TEXT:

Lamanna, M. A., & Reidmann, A. (2006). Marriage and families: Making choices in a diverse society(9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thompson / Wadsworth.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed to investigate the psychological, physiological, and social characteristics of marriage. Specifically, the dynamics of marriage and the family are explored in such areas as the following: mate selection, the nature of intimacy, communication in intimate relationships, human sexuality, adjustment in marriage, family life stages, and divorce and remarriage. Both theory and practical application of theory are key elements of this course.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to do the following:

1. Outline a variety of factors that impact the process of mate selection.
2. Discuss the challenges involved in the transition from single to married life.
3. Define “intimacy,” and explain its place in human relationships such as marriage.
4. Explain the importance of communication in intimate relationships.
5. Understand the fundamentals of human sexuality and its importance in marriage.
6. Outline the family life stages as they describe the development and evolution of the family over time.
7. Discuss a variety of crises that families can face as well as common coping strategies used to deal with them.
8. Discuss divorce and the factors that can place couples at risk for this.
9. Describe the challenges involved in remarriage.
10. Define what is considered “marital success,” and discuss ways that couples can move toward achieving this state.
11. Understand how the theories and other content of this course can be applied to enhance students’ own relationships.

EVALUATION OF STUDENTS:

Students will be evaluated by their performance on 5 exams, 5 written homework assignments, and a course project paper. The exams will be in multiple choice, short answer, and short essay format and will cover lectures, text readings, films, and other supporting materials. Attendance is required and can affect students' final grades.

GRADING:

There will be a total of 305 points possible.

Grading will be based on the following.

- Exam #1.....45 points
- Exam #2.....45 points
- Exam #3.....45 points
- Exam #4.....45 points
- Exam #5.....45 points
- Homeworks (5).....50 points
- Course Project.....30 points

GRADING SCALE:

- 90-100%.....A
- 87-89%.....B+
- 80-86%.....B
- 77-79%.....C+
- 70-76%.....C
- 67-69%.....D+
- 60-66%.....D
- 0-59%.....F

CLASS POLICIES:

*Each student will have 3 unexcused absences to use during the semester. Further absences will result in a deduction of 1 point per class missed. An absence will be counted if students arrive to class late or leave early. **Students are responsible for obtaining missing notes, announcements, etc.**

*If you are absent the day of an exam, that grade must be made up within 1 week of the missed exam. There will be a 1 point deduction from the make-up exam score for each day that it is delayed beyond that.

*The expectation in this class is that all members will behave in a professional and honest manner. Therefore, any student who engages in an act of academic dishonesty will receive a failing grade for that assignment and will be subject to the University of South Carolina's rules and penalties. Common examples of academic dishonesty include such things as plagiarizing a paper or other written work (Note that copying from any text without references and quotation marks is one example of plagiarism.), signing in an absent student, and cheating on an exam.

*It is expected that all members of the class will be attentive and respectful and that no one will engage in disruptive behavior of any kind, behavior that would compromise the quality of the classroom experience. In the unlikelyhood that this should occur, the offending individual(s) will be asked to leave the classroom, and disciplinary action will be taken.

*Cell phones and pagers are to be in silent mode and out of sight during class (i.e. in a purse, backpack, or pocket).

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

*It is my sincere intention that this class be both informative and enjoyable for students. If you find that you are having difficulty with the course, please see me before or after class, stop in during my office hours, or e-mail or call me. I will be most happy to assist you.

*This syllabus may be amended as necessary.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Readings</u>
August		
21	*Introduction / Overview	* *
26	*An Introduction to Marriage and Families	Chapter 1
28	*American Families in Social Contexts	Chapter 2
September		
2	*Exploring the Family	Chapter 3
4	“ “ “	“ “
9	**EXAM #1**	Chapters 1, 2, 3
11	*Our Gender Identities	Chapter 4
16	“ “ “	“ “
18	*Loving Ourselves and Others	Chapter 5
23	“ “ “ “	“ “
25	*Our Sexual Selves	Chapter 6
30	**EXAM #2**	Chapters 4, 5, 6
October		
2	*Choosing a Marriage Partner	Chapter 7
7	“ “ “ “	“ “
9	**No Class / Fall Break**	
14	*Marriage: A Private and Public Affair	Chapter 8
16	*Alternatives to Marriage	Chapter 9
21	*Parenthood: To Parent or Not to Parent	Chapter 10
23	*Raising Children in a Diverse and Multicultural Society	Chapter 11
28	**EXAM #3**	Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10, 11
30	*Work and Family	Chapter 12

November

4	**No Class / Election Day**	
6	*Communication and Managing Conflicts In Marriages and Families	Chapter 13
11	*Power and Violence in Marriages and Families	Chapter 14
13	**EXAM #4**	Chapters 12, 13, 14
18	*Families, Stress, Crises, and Resilience	Chapter 15
20	*Divorce	Chapter 16
27	**No Class / Thanksgiving Break	
December		
2	*Remarriage and Stepfamilies	Chapter 17
4	*Aging Families	Chapter 18
9	**EXAM #5**	Chapters 15, 16, 17, 18