

intimate relationships

HDFS 5340

AUTUMN 2013

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CAMPBELL HALL 143

THE OHIO STATE
UNIVERSITY



Official Course Description: An examination of the individual, couple, and contextual factors that affect the development and maintenance of intimate relationships across the life course. This is a 3rd-level writing course.

Unofficial Course Description: Why doesn't your friend stop her friends-with-benefits relationship that involves texts at midnight? How can your grandparents still be happily married after 40 years? Can you really meet someone online? What does your parents' relationship mean for your relationship? These are topics we are going to explore in this course. We will discuss the concepts, principles, and trends in intimate relationship scholarship, and apply these to relationships we observe, read about, and experience. Because most of you are emerging adults, and one of the critical tasks of emerging adulthood is creating satisfying intimate relationships (Erickson, 1959), you might think that this course will only be relevant to your personal life. But, you would be wrong. Do you want to be a teacher? We will discuss how parental relationships impact child behavior. Do you want to work with older adults? We will discuss grief and its consequences. Do you want to work in a business setting? We will discuss how intimate relationships can be influenced by the workplace. Engage with this course, and you might be surprised what you learn.

Your instructor:

Prof. Claire Kamp Dush

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Email is the preferred way to reach me.

Office hours: by appointment

What's in this syllabus

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Website: <http://carmen.osu.edu>

Required texts:

course details Bradbury, T. N., & Karney, B. R. (2010). *Intimate relationships*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Co.

Plus any one of the following:

Ackerman, D. (2011). *One hundred names for love: A stroke, a marriage, and the language of healing*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company.

Johnson, F. (1997). *Geography of the heart*. New York, NY: Scribner.

Finch, D. (2012). *The journal of best practices: A memoir of marriage, Asperger syndrome, and one man's quest to be a better husband*. New York, NY: Scribner.

All books available at bookstores or online. Used copies available through Amazon sellers.

How to take this course

There are a variety of reasons you might be taking this class. Reflect upon why learning this material might benefit you in your professional career and personal life.

You can do okay in this class without really engaging in the material. Or, you can go deeper, and maybe have a more meaningful experience. It all depends upon your commitment. . .

What stage of courtship do you want?

flirting

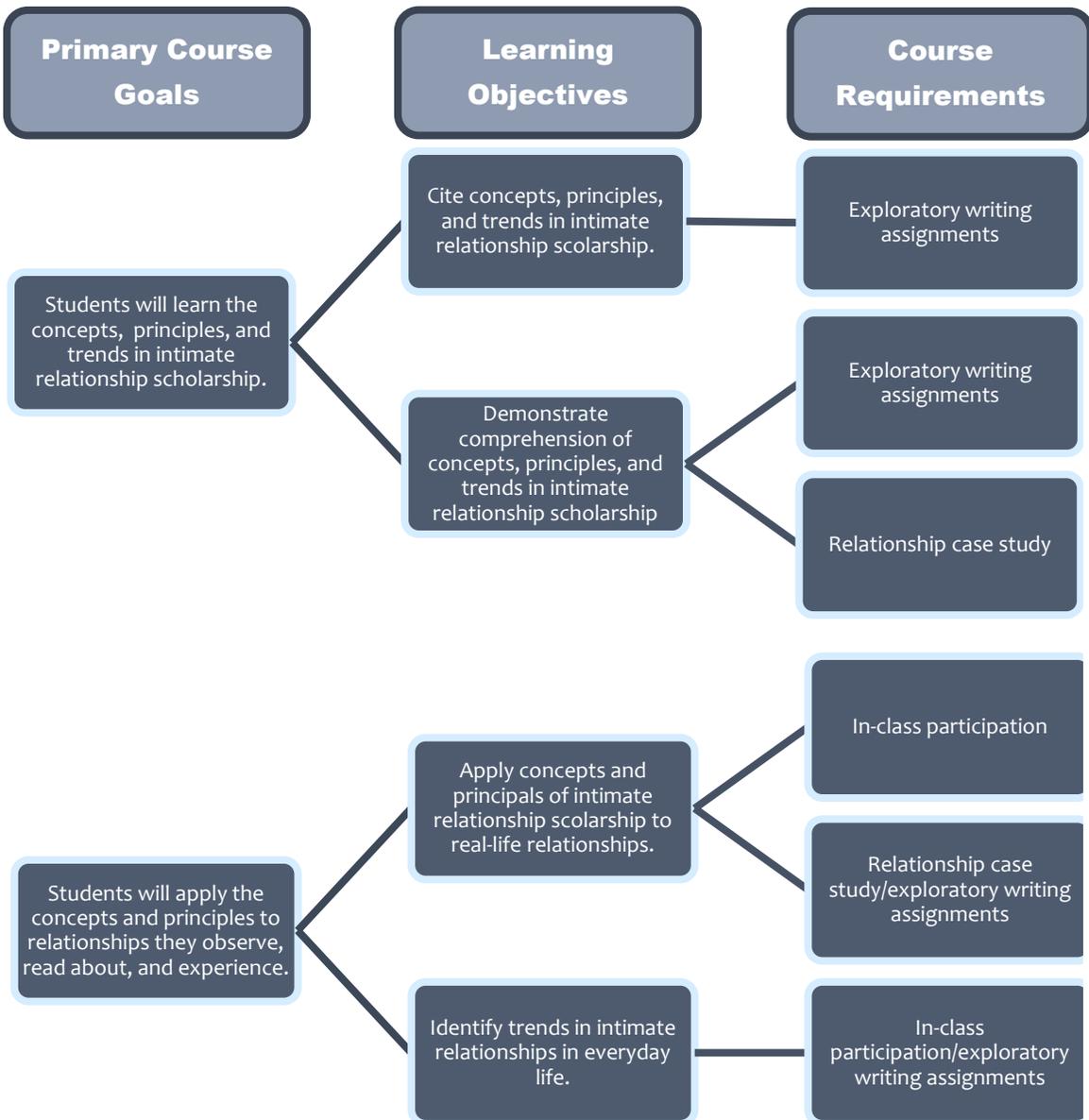
You come to class, but send the occasional text to a friend. You write your reflection papers right before class, if at all. You give only cursory attention to in-class activities, because you are not really that into this course, you have several others. You are really only concerned with course material so that you pass.

dating

You pay attention during lecture and do readings and watch videos before class, when you have time. You engage in reflection papers and in-class activities, and are meet deadlines. The writing assignment doesn't take too long, because you use the first few theories you come across the textbook. Overall, you are interested.

married

You complete readings and videos before class, so you get more out of lectures and in-class activities. You ponder class material in relation to reflection papers and the memoir, and also in your own life and the lives of those around you. You have fun with the writing assignments. You find that you are passionate about the course material.



Frank and Anita Milford celebrated their 80th wedding anniversary in 2008 and say that the secret to a lasting marriage is to iron out your arguments before bedtime and share a kiss and cuddle every night before bed. Above, 1928, below, 2008.

[Source](#)



Secondary Course Goal: Participate in, improve, and *enjoy* writing

Calendar

| Week | Date | Writing Assignment: What's due | Topic | Textbook: What to Read/Watch |
|------|-------|--------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| 1 | 8/22 | | Introduction: What do we want to know about Intimate Relationships? | IR Ch 1, Video 1 |
| 2 | 8/27 | | Tools for Studying Intimate Relationships | IR Ch 2, Video 2 |
| | 8/29 | | | |
| 3 | 9/3 | EW 1 | Theoretical Frameworks for Understanding Intimate Relationships | IR Ch 3, Video 3 |
| | 9/5 | | | |
| 4 | 9/10 | | Men and Women, Gay and Straight | IR Ch 4, Video 4 |
| | 9/12 | EW 2 | | |
| 5 | 9/17 | | Attraction and Mate Selection | IR Ch 5, Video 5 |
| | 9/19 | EW 3 | | |
| 6 | 9/24 | | Individuals in Relationships: Personality and Personal History | IR Ch 6, Video 6 |
| | 9/26 | EW 4 | | |
| 7 | 10/1 | | Communicating Closeness: How Intimate Relationships are Formed | IR Ch 7, Video 7 |
| | 10/3 | EW 5 | | |
| 8 | 10/8 | | Managing Differences: Conflict and Aggression | IR Ch 8, Video 8 |
| | 10/10 | EW 6 | | |
| 9 | 10/15 | | Beliefs and Values: Thinking about Intimate Relationships | IR Ch 9, Video 9 |
| | 10/17 | EW 7 | | |
| 10 | 10/22 | | Explanations and Justifications: Making Meaning in Intimate Relationships | IR Ch 10, Video 10 |
| | 10/24 | EW 8 | | |
| 11 | 10/29 | | Stress and Social Support: Intimate Relationships in Context | IR Ch 11, Video 11 |
| | 10/31 | EW 9 | | |
| 12 | 11/5 | | Peer-review workshop | |
| | 11/7 | NO CLASS | | |
| 13 | 11/12 | RCS v. 1 | Interventions: Making Intimate Relationships Better | IR Ch 12, Video 12 |
| | 11/14 | | | |
| 14 | 11/19 | RCS v. 2 | Intimate Relationships across the lifespan | IR Ch 13, Video 13 |
| | 11/21 | | | |
| 15 | 11/26 | EW 10 | Course Reflection | |
| | 11/28 | NO CLASS | | |
| 16 | 12/3 | RCS Rewrite | | |

EW = Exploratory writing assignment; RCS = Relationship Case Study

On readings and videos

For each class, you will have a chapter and video from the Intimate Relationships textbook to read/watch. Because the videos usually expand upon the readings, I suggest you do the readings first, then follow-up with the video. You will need to keep up with the readings/videos on your own; there is not enough time in class for us to cover everything in the textbook.

Our in-class discussions, writing, and other activities will assume that you completed that class's readings prior to class.



Kim Kardashian and Kris Humphries began dating in October of 2010 and were married on August 20, 2011. After 72 days of marriage, Kim filed for divorce on October 31, 2011, citing irreconcilable differences. Kim has said: "I definitely tried everything I felt like I could ... I want babies. I want forever love. I just felt like, you know, if I feel in my heart that this isn't right, then why wait years to have the same result? " Does she have it now? [Source 1](#), [Source 2](#)

grade breakdown

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|--|
| In-class participation/activities | 20% (20 pts.) | Several activities will happen during class, including informal writing assignments, peer-review workshops, and group work. This work cannot be made up, you must be in class. |
| Exploratory Writing Assignments | 40% (40 pts.) | Short essays worth 5 points each; 8 are required. |
| Relationship Case Study | 40% (40 pts.) | A case study of the relationship described in your memoir utilizing course material. |

grading scale

| | |
|---------------|----|
| 94-100 pts. | A |
| 90-93 pts. | A- |
| 87-89 pts. | B+ |
| 84-86 pts. | B |
| 80-83 pts. | B- |
| 77-79 pts. | C+ |
| 74-76 pts. | C |
| 70-73 pts. | C- |
| 67-69 pts. | D+ |
| 60-67 pts. | D |
| Below 60 pts. | E |

Course Requirements

This course is an upper-level course as well as a 3rd level writing class. It requires reading, writing, and in-class activities and discussion. We will cover a lot of material over the course of the semester. You are going need to do the readings and watch the videos. You are going to need to manage your time, and not wait until the last minute for assignments; you will need to put in a consistent effort across the entire semester.

In-class participation/activities (20 pts.). We are going to do many activities in class. We will do written reflections and other writing activities. We will have group discussions as well as small-group discussions. We will do peer-reviews of each other's writing. These activities will be graded and if you are not in class, you will not receive credit for them. There are 28 lectures, and you are

allowed to miss 3 classes and still receive 20 points for in-class participation.

Relationship case study (40 pts.). The science of intimate relationships does not always seem grounded in real-life. However, upon closer examination, the application of the science of intimate relationships to an actual intimate relationship can be enlightening. This assignment first involves reading one of three memoirs of an intimate relationship. In each memoir, whether through a stroke, an Asperger's diagnosis, or AIDS, each relationship is tested. But, each couple already had resources to draw on at the time of their crisis. This assignment asks you to reflect on this relationship, using theory, concepts, and principles from course material, and complete a case study. A case study is an in-depth analysis of a single person, couple, family, business, or society, depending upon the setting. Here, it will be an in-depth analysis of a couple. Your job will be to write the case study as if you are a couple and family therapist, and the couple from the memoir you read is your client.

Because this is a writing course, I have included time for you to revise your paper to improve your writing, as well as a peer review process that will give each of you experience critiquing your fellow students' writing. In the next one to two years, each of you will be leaving Ohio State for either the workforce or continued education. In each instance, you will be called on to evaluate and/or collaborate with your peers. The process of providing feedback on one another's writing will be an initial foray into your future professional endeavors.



Goldie Hawn and Kurt Russell have been together for 30 years, having never married. Goldie Hawn has said "The question is, 'Why (get married)?' it's not, 'Why not? We're in love. I wake up every morning. I love being with him. He brings me coffee. I give him a kiss. It's 'good morning.' We love each other. We fight the way people are supposed to fight. We love our lives together. Marriage is a thing." [Source](#)



Ellen DeGeneres has been in a relationship with Portia de Rossi since 2004. After the overturn of the same-sex marriage ban in California in 2008, Ellen proposed to Portia and they wed in August of 2008. Same-sex marriage was again outlawed in California in November of 2008, but the supreme court overturned the decision. Ellen has said, about her marriage, "My heart just feels a little bit different, softer and somehow more in love. I don't know how. But it just feels really romantic and lovely. I just feel really blessed." [Source 1](#), [Source 2](#)

Section I of the case study is *Background Information and Description of the Presenting Problem*, that is, about a page or so in which you will present your client's background. Include factors such as age, gender, work, health status, family background, goals and coping skills and weaknesses. If you are going to quote the book word for word, make sure you enclose the quote in quotation marks and cite the page (e.g. (p. 2)). Next, describe the problem or symptoms that the couple presented to you with as their therapist. Be creative, depending upon the book you read. In Section I, you will be graded on the quality and breadth of your description, and your creativity in describing the couples presenting problem.

Section II of the assignment focuses on *Your Diagnosis*. Using theories and concepts we have studied in class, diagnose the problems that this couple are having. Where do the problems come from? How is each partner experiencing the problem? How did class theories and concepts help you as you made your diagnosis? As you analyze the couple's relationship to make your diagnosis, weave theories and concepts from class with the story of the couple.

Section III of the assignment focuses on *Intervention*. Again, using theories and concepts we have studied in class, discuss how the couple weathered the problems they experienced. Many couples who experience stressful events find that their relationship suffers, even when the event is a positive one, such as the birth of a child. The events experienced in the memoirs were stressful for each of the couples. How did they keep their relationship strong? What advice would you give to other couples who may be experiencing similar problems? Again, you

will be graded on how well you synthesize the material from the course with the couple's story from the memoir. **Style** points will be awarded for well-written (i.e. organized, clearly supported arguments, each paragraph has a thesis statement or a clear purpose), grammatically correct papers. Section I should be about 1 page long, double-spaced. Sections II and III should be about 2 pages long double-spaced, each. The font should be 11 or 12 point, and margins should be 1 inch. **THE PAPER MUST BE PRINTED AND TURNED IN DURING THE CLASS PERIOD (11/12) IN WHICH IT IS DUE.** Late papers will not be accepted without documentation of illness, death, or other documented emergency. Documentation is required at least 24-hours before the paper is due. If you do not turn your paper in and do not contact me within 24 hours, you will not be able to turn it in under any circumstance.

If you would like to revise your final paper in order to attain a higher grade, you may do so. The revision is due the final day of class on 12/3. However, you will also have to turn in an introduction to the revision, a one-page single-spaced description of how you revised the paper. You must also turn in the original paper as well as the revised version. This paper will be graded during finals week, and I will email you when it is available to be picked up. Again, you must print the materials and turn them in during the final class period on 12/3.

Exploratory writing assignments (40 pts). As part of your homework for most weeks, you will be asked to produce an informal, one-page, typed, single-spaced exploratory response to a short assignment I will provide. The calendar for the exploratory writing assignments can be seen on the next page. Each is worth 5 points, and 8 are required. You may turn in up to 10, and I will drop the two lowest grades; no late exploratory writing pieces will be accepted. You must bring these "thinking pieces" to class, where they will be collected on the day they are due. To receive a 4 or 5 on an exploratory writing piece, you must address the assignment, show that you have done the required reading, reveal interesting, engaged thinking, and be at least one single-spaced page long.

Exploratory Writing Assignment Calendar

| EW | Due date | Assignment |
|----|----------|---|
| 1 | 9/3 | What is one hypothesis related to intimate relationships you would be interested in testing? What would be the best measurement strategy? Who would be in your sample? |
| 2 | 9/12 | Pick one theory from the readings for this week. Briefly describe the theory. How does it apply to either your own relationship experiences, or the experiences of a friend or family member? |
| 3 | 9/19 | From chapter 4, pick a key concept or idea and write about it in a way that makes sense for one of the following magazines: Glamour, Maxim, Martha Stewart Living, or Time. |
| 4 | 9/26 | Read Armstrong, Hamilton, & England (2010): Is hooking up bad for young women? (See Carmen for the pdf) and Sex on Campus: She Can Play That Game Too by Kate Taylor. What are your thoughts? Is hooking-up good or bad for women? For men? |
| 5 | 10/3 | Kim Kardashian and Kris Humphries divorced after less than three months of marriage (see page 2 of this syllabus). This was Kim's second divorce. According to Chapter 6, could Kim's family experiences have played a role in why she divorced so quickly? If so, how? |
| 6 | 10/10 | Watch an episode of Modern Family that includes at least one conflict between one of the couples on the show. Analyze one or more of the conflicts based on Chapter 7. Please include the title of the episode. |
| 7 | 10/17 | You have a friend who is in an abusive relationship. Write your friend a letter with advice based on Chapter 8. |
| 8 | 10/24 | Read The Dubious Science of Online Dating by Eli J. Finkel and Benjamin R. Karney. Does our course material support or disprove their arguments? What would you tell a friend about online dating? |
| 9 | 10/31 | Your friend has started a new relationship. The friend is very excited and in love! Write your friend an email based on Chapter 10 with advice that could help her keep her relationship going strong. |
| 10 | 11/26 | Read "Life after College: A Return to Dating" by Kathleen Bogle (Chapter 7 from her book <i>Hooking Up</i> ; see Carmen for the pdf) and The End of Courtship by Alex Williams. React to this chapter and the article. What does the future hold? |

Policies

Class norms – We will discuss a variety of potentially sensitive topics in this course. In-class participation is part of your grade. But, you will not be evaluated on the degree to which you ascribe to my beliefs. Further, my own beliefs may not always be obvious. You will most likely have different opinions, different experiences, and different emotional reactions to class material. Given this, I have a variety of expectations for the behaviors of students in this class. I have articulated these as “class norms”.

- Students should respect confidentiality. Specifically, another student’s personal information, experiences, or comments should not be shared outside the classroom.
- Students should listen respectfully to one another; different perspectives should be respected. Specifically, let other students finish their thought before you respond.
- Students should respond to the content of what is said in class. Specifically, you should comment on what the person said, not on the person saying it; your response to another student’s comments should not be personalized.



Taylor Swift has famously dated several men, including Joe Jonas, Taylor Lautner, John Mayer, and Jake Gyllenhaal. Joe Jonas broke up with her on a 27-second phone call. She has written “Love is a tricky business. But if it wasn’t, I wouldn’t be so enthralled with it. . . . Because love is unpredictable, frustrating, tragic and it’s beautiful.” [Source](#)

- Students should use "I statements" (such as "I believe that . . .) rather than generalizing their comments to a group to which they belong (e.g. Christians think. . .) or society or societal groups as a whole (All children of divorce. . .).
- Students should avoid playing the devil's advocate (but don't you think that. . .?) because the other student may not be comfortable having an argument in front of the class.
- All students have the right to be silent in any group discussion.

Disabilities Statement: ODS Statement – Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss specific needs. The Office of Disability Services is relied upon for assistance in verifying the need for accommodations and developing accommodation strategies. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 614-292-3307 (V) or 614-292-0901 (TDD) in room 150 Pomerene Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>. Students are expected to follow Americans with Disabilities Act Guidelines for access to technology.

Academic Misconduct – The Ohio State University Code of Student Conduct (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as “Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process.” Example of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), and copying the work of another student. Ignorance of the University’s Code of Student Conduct is never considered an “excuse” for academic misconduct.

If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course. I am obligated by University rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that you have violated the University’s Code of Student Conduct (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University. For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct). http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_cas.asp

Statement on Diversity – The College of Education and Human Ecology affirms the importance and value of diversity in the student body. Our programs and curricula reflect our multicultural society and global economy and seek to provide opportunities for students to learn more about persons who are different from them. Discrimination against any individual based upon protected status, which is defined as age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status, is prohibited.

Help & Resources

If you are feeling lost or overwhelmed. . .

1. Make an appointment with me

I am more than happy to meet with you. You are welcome to email me, and we can find a time for us to meet. Many problems in any relationship can be resolved through conversation!

2. Use online resources

The [StudySpace Student Website](#) for our textbook includes chapter outlines, summaries, and flashcards, as well as videos, both those referenced in the text as well as other videos including some from the authors of our textbook.

3. Visit the Writing Center often

You may visit the [Writing Center](#) at any point in time over the course of the semester. The Writing Center offers help at any stage of the writing process, and can work with you whether you are drafting Section I, or responding to all the comments you have received as you revise. You can [schedule online](#) or call 614-688-4291.

4. Visit one of the OSU Health and Wellness Resources for Students

Ohio State has a rich set of resources for students who need a little help with a range of issues. There is the [Student Wellness Center](#), the [Wilce Student Health Center](#), and the [Counseling and Consultation Service](#), which provides students with up to 10 free sessions per academic year. If you are struggling this semester, come talk to me sooner rather than later. Do not wait until the end of the semester, when it will be too late.



Joan Didion and John Gregory Dunne were married for just shy of 40 years. Joan wrote the *The Year of Magical Thinking* in which she described the year following his death. She says “Marriage is memory, marriage is time. Marriage is not only time: it is also, paradoxically, the denial of time.” She related to the following quote from C. S. Lewis after the death of his wife. “I think I am beginning to understand why grief feels like suspense. It comes from the frustration of so many impulses that had become habitual. Thought after thought, feeling after feeling, action after action, had H. for their object. Now their target is gone. I keep on through habit fitting an arrow to the string, then I remember and have to lay the bow down.”