

SPRING '85  
Psych. 473G

MARRIAGE

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WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNED READINGS		
			Readings: Articles	Text: Brehm	Total Pages
<u>SECTION I: CONCEPTIONS OF MARITAL INTERACTIONS</u>					
1	4/ 4 H	The Psychological Study of Intimate Relationships	1,3		39
2	4/ 9 U	Models of Marital Interaction I: Individual	4,7	1	41
2	4/11 H	Models of Marital Interaction II: Dyadic	9,10	3	65
3	4/16 U	Models of Marital Interaction III: Systems	11,12	12	35
<u>SECTION II: ASSESSMENT OF INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS</u>					
3	4/18 H	Conceptual & Methodological Issues	13,15	4,6	82
4	4/23 U	Marital Satisfaction: Self-report	16,18,19	7, 226-249	78
4	4/25 H	Marital Satisfaction: Quasi-Observational Methods	20,22,23		41
5	4/30 U	Observational Methods: Coding Systems	25,26,28		14
5	5/ 2 H	Assessing Marital Communication	29,30		19
6	5/ 7 U	*** MIDTERM # 1 ***	Total Reading for Exam 414 Pages		
<u>SECTION III: INTERVENTIONS: ENRICHMENT, COUNSELING &amp; THERAPY</u>					
6	5/ 9 H	Communication Based Interventions	31,33	8,11,14	108
7	5/14 U	Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions	35,36	10	67
		** Paper Topic Outline Approval Due			
7	5/16 H	Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions	37,38		18
8	5/21 U	Special Topics: Assertiveness, Anger, Abuse	40,41,43	239-254	28
8	5/23 H	Special Topics: Sexual Dysfunction	44	5,13	59
9	5/28 U	Special Topics: Child and Family	46		13
9	5/30 H	Special Topics: Alcoholism	47,48		33
<u>SECTION IV: OUTCOME &amp; EVALUATION OF MARITAL THERAPIES</u>					
10	6/ 4 U	Measuring Therapy Outcomes	49,51	15	41
		** Term Papers Due June 5th!			
10	6/ 6 H	Review of Highlights			
JUNE 13		*** MIDTERM #2 ***	Total Reading for Exam 367 Pages		

Psych 473G  
Spring 1985

## MARRIAGE

R.L. Weiss

### INFORMATION ABOUT TERM PAPER

DUE DATE: June 5, 1985 No Exceptions (Medical, personal, professional)

OUTLINE APPROVAL DATE: MAY 14TH Your outline must be approved by this date!

#### TOPICS:

The focus of the term paper can be selected from a wide range of topics within the outline of the course (Theory and Models, Assessment of Relationships, Interventions and Special Topics, and Evaluation and Outcome). However two of the sections (Theory and Models, and Evaluation and Outcome) probably will prove to be more difficult as term paper topical areas; the theories section may require more integration than most students will feel comfortable with, and the Evaluation and Outcome section has been rather thoroughly covered in the readings, so that students will have little new information to offer. But the other areas are fair game. Probably the most straight forward topical focus will be one that allows a combination of covering theory and the related research. For example, an interesting paper would be one on the relationship between marital behaviors and health variables, e.g., what evidence is there that marital status, adjustment, or longevity is related to psychopathology? Similarly, a paper on spouse abuse might cover the theories of abusive partners within marriages and the related studies of the phenomenon. (A list of topical areas is presented below.) The paper must be from a psychological, not a sociological perspective.

#### FORMAT:

The paper must follow APA style and must use subtitles for organization. A paper that starts with an opening sentence and closes with a period is not acceptable if it does not have subsections that clearly delineate the organization of the paper. (Imagine reading a journal article that had no subtitles in the body!)

#### Introduction:

The introduction should provide a clear statement of what you are attempting to cover, to show, to argue, or whatever. The area, the purpose, the aims (numbered), and the justification for the paper are all included up front. (Why is this topic worthy of your and the reader's time? Make it clear.)

#### Body:

The logical order depends upon your purpose; follow what you learned in Psych. 303. Usually you will want to establish the state of the knowledge from the literature on the topic, citing relevant current literature (studies). If you summarize a number of sources on one topic do not deal with each separately; deal with the totality of what they establish. Similarly, do not pick each study apart, but note methodological weaknesses common to the area if possible. (For example, a paper on mate selection would have to group separately early and later studies, noting the methodological sophistication (or lack of

sophistication) in the respective time periods. But do not string out five or so studies, one after another, saying essentially the same thing, i.e., that each has the same methodological problem. (Grouping makes the reading easier and gives the paper a Psychological Bulletin quality.)

#### References:

The emphasis should be on current empirical literature; if you are into the 1960's beware! This is OLD stuff and may be superceeded. Keep your sources current. Again, follow APA style.

#### Prior Approval:

Either Weiss or Brown must approve your paper outline by May 14th. If we approve the topic then you are not in danger in getting the paper returned as unacceptable on the basis of topic.

#### Grading Criteria:

Papers will be worth a maximum of 100 points. Points will be assigned on the basis of:

1. Clarity of organization and stated purpose
2. Scope of literature covered, e.g., current quality articles vs older "think pieces" and popularization pieces
3. Care with which data are presented to support arguments or to define a summary position vs unsubstantiated opinions;
4. Writer's ideas vs only summarizing what has already been written.
5. Originality includes but is not limited to: (a) writer's own view, (b) methodological astuteness, (c) seeing new implications and connections, (d) original suggestions for further developments in topic area, (e) recommendations for future conceptual developments, (f) making less obvious connections among ideas, and (g) accuracy.
6. Paper is written from a behavioral science perspective, not from personal experience, devine or otherwise!

SOME Suggested Topics:

The list of acceptable topics is really too long to state here. These are SUGGESTED (not all inclusive) topics:

1. Conceptions Papers:

Comparison of the three conceptions of marriage and marital therapy  
Psychodynamic theories of marital therapy: review and critique  
Egalitarian marriages: facts and fictions

2. Assessment Papers:

Measures of marital satisfaction (what are they, how do they work, and what has been shown empirically about them)

Communication-based assessment of marital adjustment  
Communication and marital adjustment (empirically focused paper)  
Conceptions of marital distress and assessment of same  
Behavioral conceptions of marital satisfaction --reviewing the literature

Assessing marital conflict: can it be done?

3. Intervention Papers (Broad):

Communications based interventions  
Enrichment programs --do they work?  
Cognitive-systems-behavioral therapies --what are they, for whom, by whom?

4. Intervention Papers (Narrow):

Therapy for the alcoholic marriage  
Anger/Abuse in intimate relationships: causes and cures?  
Children and marital satisfaction: Are they possible together?  
Sexual dysfunctions in intimate relationships  
Cognitive therapies and specific marital dysfunctions  
Divorce counselling: a contradiction in terms?  
Marriage is bad (good) for your health? (Psychological perspective)  
Premarital counselling: a review of offerings and empirical evaluation

## MARRIAGE

### COURSE DESCRIPTION AND REQUIREMENTS

This course is intended primarily for psychology majors and graduate students interested in psychological approaches to interpersonal problems of adult intimacy. The course assumes prior work in psychology, especially the methodology sequence (Psych. 302 and 303), and from among such background courses as Introduction to Clinical Psychology, Abnormal Psychology, Survey of Psychotherapeutic Methods or work in 400-level Personality. The course is most similar in design to a seminar: students will be reading original selections from the literature on theories and research pertaining to psychological aspects of marital interaction and dysfunction; methods for assessing intimate interactions and conflicts therein, conceptions and techniques of intervention in marital discord, and research findings pertaining to the evaluation of therapy outcomes. Integrating material from diverse and often technical sources is a feature of this course.

#### Consumer Warning!

The course is presented from a clinical-research perspective, emphasizing the empirical literature. It is not intended to serve the questionable objectives of students wishing to improve their own intimate relationships by gaining access to powerful clinical techniques to influence their own potential marriage partners, nor to enable them to provide marital therapy to friends and relatives. Although such benefits may seemingly accrue to specific students, this only could be a fortuitous outcome, one not endorsed by the Department of Psychology or other legally constituted bodies.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

By focusing on the interpersonal and clinical psychological aspects of adult intimate relationships students will gain first-hand knowledge about how psychological constructs are developed, how assessment techniques are developed and utilized clinically and in research, and how, from the literature clinical applications are made in the forms of marital enrichment, counseling and therapy. We will also investigate specific problem areas of intimate relationships, such as spouse abuse, alcoholic relationships and child-marital interactive conflicts. Students will become familiar with these and other important areas of research and methods of clinical application in the broad area of marital conflict and accord.

### READINGS

There are two sources of readings for this course: (a) A packaged collection entitled "Marital Theory and Research: Readings in Assessment, Intervention and Evaluation," containing 51 original articles and chapters selected from journals, monographs and edited volumes, and (b) a paperback text entitled "Intimate Relationships" by Sharon Brehm, written from a social-clinical perspective.

## DESCRIPTION OF PSYCH 473G (Cont'd)

A total of 36 of the 51 articles and 14 "text" chapters constitute the assigned reading. The text is informative yet fairly easy reading, and it will serve to integrate some of the more difficult original papers. Both sets of readings are available at the U of O Bookstore. A list of article titles and their sources will be made available to students who choose to read the original journal articles and book chapters on an-as-available basis in the library.

The amount of assigned reading for this course is probably on the heavy end of the continuum for upper division courses in Psychology, but the reading schedule has been worked out carefully (it is detailed on the separate syllabus sheet) and if followed as planned should not present a problem.

## GRADING

Grades will be based on two midterms (May 5th and June 13th) and a term paper due June 5th. Any term paper submitted after 5:00PM June 5th will be returned ungraded **REGARDLESS OF THE REASON**. An outline for the term paper must be approved before May 14th. Each midterm will count 30% and the term paper will count 40% toward the final grade. The midterms will be combinations of objective and short answer questions. Samples of questions from which exam questions will be taken will be provided before the exams. The second midterm exam is not cumulative; it will reflect only the second half of the course. A separate handout explaining the paper options and stylistic features will be distributed within the first two weeks of class.

### Make-up exam policy:

Only the first midterm can be made up. Since potential exam questions will be given in advance of the in class-exams, the make up policy must not penalize the students who took the exam as scheduled. Questions on the make-up exam therefore will not be among those previously given out prior to the scheduled exam. In addition, the make-up exam will not offer a choice of questions to answer. The make-up exam will be offered once on a group basis within one week of the scheduled exam.