

# MARRIAGE SYLLABUS

Week	Date	TOPIC	Readings Number:
<b>SECTION I: BACKGROUND &amp; CONCEPTIONS OF MARITAL INTERACTION</b>			
1	9/29 10/1	U Psychological Study of Intimate Relationships H Models of Marital Interaction I: Individual	1,2 3, 4
2	10/6 10/8	U Models of Marital Interaction I: Individual H Models of Marital Interaction II: Dyadic Focus	5, 6
<b>SECTION II: ASSESSMENT OF INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS</b>			
3	10/13 10/15	U Models of Marital Interaction III: Systems Focus H Conceptual and Methodological Issues	7 8
4	10/20 10/22	U Marital Satisfaction: Self-Report H Quasi-Observational Measures	9, 10, 11 12
5	10/27	U ***** FIRST MID TERM ***** Covering Readings 1 - 12	
<b>SECTION III: MARITAL THERAPIES AND SPECIFIC MARITAL PROBLEMS</b>			
5	10/29	H Behavioral Observation	13
6	11/3 11/5	U Conceptions of Marital Therapy H Communication Based Approaches	14 15,16
7	11/10 11/12	U Cognitive Behavioral Approaches H Cognitive Behavioral Approaches (cont'd)	17
8	11/17 11/19	U Special Topics: Psychopathology, Spouse Abuse H Special Topics: Depression (Article on Reserve)	18, 19 20
9	11/24	U Special Topics: Depression (cont'd)	
10	12/1	U Special Topics: Children; Alcoholic Marriages	21
<b>SECTION IV: OUTCOME EVALUATION OF MARITAL THERAPIES</b>			
11	12/3 12/8	H Measuring Therapeutic Effectiveness U Comparative Outcome Studies *****TERM PAPERS DUE 12/8/92*****	22, 23
	12/10	H ***** SECOND MIDTERM ***** Covering Readings 13 - 23	

## MARRIAGE

### COURSE DESCRIPTION AND REQUIREMENTS

This course is primarily for psychology majors and graduate students interested in psychological approaches to interpersonal problems of adult intimacy. It is assumed that you have had prior work in psychology, especially the methodology sequence (Psych. 302 and 303), and at least one of the following background (or equivalent) courses: Introduction to Clinical Psychology, Abnormal Psychology, Survey of Psychotherapeutic Methods, or some work in 400-level Personality. You will be reading original selections from the literature on theories and research about psychological aspects of marital interaction and marital dysfunction; methods for assessing conflict in intimate interactions, 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!

This is not a how-to course about marriage! Although much of the course content deals with applied clinical psychology, the course is heavily based on understanding research methodology. The assigned readings are primarily literature reviews and research articles. Given the emphasis on marital dysfunctions, some people may find the course content depressing. This course may trouble those with tender hearts seeking to improve their own relationships! Please note: writing skills are important in this course. If you are not writing at the college level getting a good grade in this course will be difficult.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

In this course you will read, write about, and discuss many approaches to adult committed intimate relationships, notably marriage. Among these approaches we will include psychological theories of adult intimacy, issues in, and methods for assessing relationships, together with therapeutic approaches for bringing about changes in marital adjustment. The focus is on the interpersonal and clinical psychological aspects of adult intimate relationships. The course will provide first-hand knowledge about (a) the development of psychological constructs, (b) use of assessment techniques in research and in clinical practice, and (c) methods of marital enrichment, counseling and therapy. We will also investigate specific problem areas of intimate relationships, such as spouse abuse, depression and alcoholic relationships. The course will emphasize how we think and learn about relationships; it is not a fact factory!

### READINGS

The readings for this course are 23 original articles, mostly book chapters and selected articles from journals, monographs and edited volumes. These have been packaged as a collection entitled "Marital Theory and Research: Readings in Assessment, Intervention and Evaluation." The readings package is available at the copy shop in the EMU. A list of source references for these articles is available to anyone who chooses to read the original journal articles and book chapters on an as-available-basis in the library. For simple convenience I would suggest that you get the packet.

Compared to other upper division courses in Psychology, students generally judge the assigned readings for this course as being somewhat more difficult. Because the articles are all originals, as they appeared in the literature, the readings will be especially difficult if you are a weak reader and have dif-

## DESCRIPTION OF PSYCH 473/573 (Cont'd)

faculty integrating non-text book material. The reading schedule has been worked out carefully (it is detailed on the separate syllabus sheet) and if followed as planned it should not present a problem. For example, after the first midterm the reading assignments are less than for the first half of the course. This is to adjust for the work necessary in preparing the term paper.

### REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

The grade for this course will be based on *three* student products: (1) two in-class midterm-exams (no final) --one essay, one multiple choice-- worth 30% and 20% respectively, (2) choice of Creative Search Project, worth 20%, and (3) a term paper worth 30% NOTE: The term paper and the second-midterm both occur in the LAST WEEK OF CLASSES, which means that delaying your preparation for these projects will be a fatal error requiring reformatting your brain!

#### EXAMS

There are two exams for the course (no final during finals week). The first mid-term will be an essay exam requiring demonstration that you know concepts. The exam will be in-class and require you to write definitions of important concepts. I will give you a practice test to demonstrate.

The second mid-term, the last day of class, will be an objective test emphasizing facts and methodologies drawn largely (but not totally) from the second half (post first mid-term) part of the course.

#### CREATIVE SEARCH PROJECT

You have a choice of Creative Search Project --you may do one or the other but not BOTH for credit. (You may do both for fun and learning, but you must choose only one to count for points.)

*Journal Club:* The Journal Club is a small-group meeting held with the TA and a maximum 10 students. For approximately 45 minutes you and others will discuss a recent marriage related article from a major journal. You will be graded on your contribution to the discussion (e.g., relevance of the article, your insights into the material, your awareness of issues and suggestions for other studies that arise from the this article). You will need to attend two (2) different Journal Club meetings, discussing a different article each time. Although grading will be subjective it is entirely possible to judge a person's performance on all counts. Journal Club times will be held frequently and announced well in advance so that you will be able to attend a minimum of two.

*Annotated bibliography:* This choice will require your preparing a brief summary of five (5) current research papers that you find in the journals. There is a format to follow and I will make this available to you.

Both the Journal Club and the Annotated Bibliography options are designed to help you move along in doing library research for your term paper. They will both help you define an area of interest to you that you can then use for your paper.

#### PAPER

One of my objectives for this course is to enable students to work with the concepts and findings represented in the marital literature as covered in this course. The term paper (10-15 pages, typed/printed, double-space, APA style) may be on *any* topic approved by Weiss. However before you launch into your paper please ask me to approve of your topic. Here are just a few examples of topics you may wish to choose from:

compare marital therapies in terms of methods of intervention, assumptions and empirical results that support the therapy;

describe prevention programs, such as Markman's program; discussing the supporting research findings;

### **Paper (cont'd)**

develop a paper one of the special topics, e.g., abuse, depression, sexual adjustment and marriage, influence of child problems on marriage, or alcoholic marriages, indicating how that topic figures in marital therapy.

critically review programs designed to provide marital enrichment to couples (e.g., Guerny's Relationship Enhancement program for one);

do your own creative thing, BUT....all paper topics must be approved by Weiss BEFORE you commit to a topic!

A clearly focused paper is the goal. Papers that only summarize lecture and reading material, failing to make important comparisons or showing evidence of individual thinking, will be marked down. Papers will be graded for organizational clarity and adequacy of writing. There is no one paper format that will fit every situation. You may find it helpful to discuss your paper ideas with me or Erica De Koning before you get to far along.

### **IMPORTANT DATES**

#### **MID-TERMS:**

#### **In class:**

**October 27, 1992 (30%)**

**December 10, 1992 (20%)**

#### **PAPER DATES:**

**Annotated Bibliography (20%)**

**DUE November 24, 1992**

**Paper DUE 5:00PM December 8, 1992 (30%)**

The second midterm will emphasize the second half of the course. The exams count 50% toward the final course grade. The paper (described below) will be due before 5:00PM on December 8, 1992. **PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AFTER THAT DEADLINE.** The paper deadline is firm; no exceptions for sickness, deaths, other course requirements, etc., etc.

**Policy on Make-ups:** Only the first Midterm can be "made up." The make-up for the first midterm must be scheduled not later than one week after the original exam, and will be available only for those people having a legitimate excuse for missing the scheduled exam.

### **QUIZ**

True/False

1. This course will teach you how to do marital therapy with friends and family?
2. Logical reasoning will be emphasized in this course.
3. Writing skills are important for success in this course.
4. You can write your paper on any topic you wish without getting prior approval from the professor.
5. Papers can be handed in during exam week.
6. The midterms for this course are both objective multiple guess.
7. There is a substantial amount of reading for this course.
8. You can get credit for both the Journal Club and the Annotated Bibliography options.
9. There is a text book for this course that summarizes each topic.
10. One of the emphases of this course is methodology; how do we know and how do we gather facts.