

MARRIAGE SYLLABUS

Week	Date	TOPIC	Readings Number:
SECTION I: BACKGROUND & CONCEPTIONS OF MARITAL INTERACTION			
1	3/31 4/ 2	U Psychological Study of Intimate Relationships H Models of Marital Interaction I: Individual	1,2 3, 4
2	4/ 7 4/ 9	U Models of Marital Interaction II: Dyadic Focus H Models of Marital Interaction III: Systems Focus	5, 6 7
SECTION II: ASSESSMENT OF INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS			
3	4/14 4/16	U Conceptual and Methodological Issues H Marital Satisfaction: Self-Report	8 9, 10, 11
4	4/21 4/23	U Quasi-Observational Measures H Behavioral Observation	12 13
5	4/28	U ***** FIRST MID TERM ***** Covering Readings 1 - 13	
SECTION III: MARITAL THERAPIES AND SPECIFIC MARITAL PROBLEMS			
5	4/30	H Conceptions of Marital Therapy	14
6	5/ 5 5/ 7	U Communication Based Approaches H Cognitive Behavioral Approaches	15,16 17
7	5/12 5/14	U Cognitive Behavioral Approaches (cont'd) H Special Topics: Psychopathology, Spouse Abuse	18, 19
8	5/19	U Special Topics: Depression Last Day for Topic Approval	20
	5/21	H Special Topics: Depression (cont'd) Annotated Bibliography Due	
9	5/26	U Special Topics: Children; Alcoholic Marriages	21
SECTION IV: OUTCOME EVALUATION OF MARITAL THERAPIES			
	5/28	H Measuring Therapeutic Effectiveness	22, 23
10	6/2	U Comparative Outcome Studies Term Papers Due 5:00PM	
	6/4	H ***** SECOND MIDTERM ***** Covering Readings 14 - 23	

MARITAL AND FAMILY THERAPY

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. 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 be troubling to the tender of heart seeking to improve their own relationships! Please note: writing skills are important in this course. If you are having difficulty with college level writing this may not be the best course for you.

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, and 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.

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.

DESCRIPTION OF PSYCH 473/573 (Cont'd)

Experience has shown that, compared to other upper division courses in Psychology, there are more assigned readings for this course. Additionally, because the articles are all originals, as they appeared in the literature, the readings will be difficult if you are a weak reader. 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 *four* student products: two in class midterm-exams (no final) --one essay, one multiple choice-- worth 30% and 20% respectively, an annotated bibliography worth 15% and a paper worth 35% .

IMPORTANT DATES

MID-TERMS:

In class:

April 28, 1992 (30%)

June 4, 1992 (20%)

PAPER DATES:

Last Day for Topic Approval:

May 19, 1992

Annotated Bibliography DUE **May 21, 1991**

Paper DUE **5:00PM June 2, 1992**

The second midterm will cover only the second half of the course. The exams count 50% collectively toward the final course grade. The paper (described below) will be due before 5:00PM on June 2, 1991. **PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AFTER THAT DEADLINE.** The paper deadline is firm; no exceptions for sickness, deaths, other course requirements, etc., etc. Do not bother to hand papers in after the deadlines; they will be returned unread.

Policy on Make-ups: Only the first Midterm can be "made up." The make-up for the first midterm will 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.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

To help with the preparation of your term paper, you should prepare an annotated bibliography comprising a minimum of five journal articles (not book!) that you will use for your paper. Do not copy the abstract of the article! State the title, author, journal citation (all APA style) and a brief summary (two pages maximum!) of the article. I will provide examples of formats before these are due.

PAPER

One of my objectives for this course is to encourage students to work with the concepts and findings representing within the broad selection of the marital literature covered in the course. The term paper (10-15 pages, including references, typed/printed, double-space, APA style) may be on any topic approved by Weiss. Approval of a topic is necessary before you launch into your paper. For example, students may choose to:

- 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;

- 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!

- prepare a "position paper" -- these are fun papers that represent the state of the art on some important issue that could require legislative action. For example, should we provide financial support to pre-marital programs?

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.