

## MARRIAGE SYLLABUS

Week	Date		TOPIC	Readings Number:
<b>SECTION I: CONCEPTIONS OF MARITAL INTERACTION</b>				
1	9/28	U	Psychological Study of Intimate Relationships	1, 1T, 2T
	9/30	H	Models of Marital Interaction I: Individual	2, 3T
2	10/5	U	Models of Marital Interaction I: Individual	
	10/7	H	Models of Marital Interaction II: Dyadic Focus	7T
3	10/12	U	Models of Marital Interaction III: Systems Focus	3, 2T*
<b>SECTION II: ASSESSMENT OF INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS</b>				
3	10/14	H	Conceptual and Methodological Issues	4T
4	10/19	U	Assessing Marital Satisfaction	4, 5T, 9T
	10/21	H	Self-report, Quasi-Observational Measures	5, 6T
5	10/26	U	***** FIRST MID TERM ***** Covering 13 Readings	
	10/28	H	Behavioral Observation	6,7
<b>SECTION III: MARITAL THERAPIES AND SPECIFIC MARITAL PROBLEMS</b>				
6	11/2	U	Conceptions of Marital Therapy	8, 16T
	11/4	H	Communication Based Approaches	8T, 10T
7	11/9	U	Cognitive Behavioral Approaches	11T, 12T
	11/11	H	Cognitive Behavioral Approaches (cont'd)	13T
8	11/16	U	Special Topics: Psychopathology, Spouse Abuse	9, 14T, 15T
	11/18	H	Special Topics: Depression	(Article on Reserve)
9	11/23	U	Special Topics: Depression (cont'd)	
<b>SECTION IV: OUTCOME EVALUATION OF MARITAL THERAPIES</b>				
10	11/30	U	Measuring Therapeutic Effectiveness	
	12/2	H	Therapeutic Effectiveness Cont'd	

\*\*\*\*\*TERM PAPERS DUE 12/6/93\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\* SECOND MIDTERM Wednesday December 8th \*\*\*\*\* Covering 13 Readings

Note. -- T = Text chapter;

Numerals = supplementary reading article-number

\* = Re-read

## MARRIAGE

### COURSE DESCRIPTION AND REQUIREMENTS

This course is for psychology majors and graduate students interested in psychological approaches to 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: Abnormal Psychology, Survey of Psychotherapeutic Methods, or a 400-level Personality course.

The readings and lectures will focus on theories and research in the *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. This is a clinically focused psychology course that emphasizes the knowledge generated by empirical studies. *Being able to integrate material from diverse and often quite technical sources is requisite for success in this course.*

#### Consumer Warning!

Please note: This is not a how-to course about marriage! Although much of the course content deals with applied clinical psychology, there is a heavy emphasis on understanding research methodology. 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! Communication skills, writing and oral, are very important in this course. If you have neglected your writing skills and they are not at college level, this course will be especially difficult.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

In this course you will read, write about, and discuss many approaches to adult committed intimate relationships, notably marriage and to a lesser extent family dynamics. 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 emphasize (a) how psychological constructs come about, (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 if time allows, alcoholic relationships. Throughout the course we will emphasize how clinical researchers think about relationships, the evolution of constructs, and how we are scientifically accountable. It is hoped that students will be comfortable with the demands of critical thinking. This course will not be a source of unrelated facts, but rather it will ask you to think like a marital and family researcher. You will be asked to approach the material critically, noting methodological strengths and weaknesses.

### READINGS

For this course we will be reading a book entitled "*Communication in Family Relationships*" (Noller and Fitzpatrick), available at the U of O bookstore, and nine original articles, mostly book chapters and selected articles from journals, monographs and edited volumes. These articles are available as a package from the copy shop in the EMU.

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

The book focuses on current work in communication as it applies to marriage and family interactions. The chapters are short but meaty in that they cover important studies. Given the central role of communication in marital and family adjustment the book provides background material in this area. The book will emphasize material different from that presented in lecture. Although the book overlaps with some lecture material, for the most part book and lectures are organized differently.

In the past, students have found this course (relative to other upper division courses in Psychology) generally somewhat more difficult, requiring greater effort.

### REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

The grade for this course will be based on *three* student products: (1) an in-class midterm-exam and a final --essay and multiple choice-- worth 30% and 20% respectively, (2) your choice of Creative Search Project, worth 20%, and (3) a term paper worth 30% NOTE: The term paper is due on December 6, 1993. The second-midterm will be during exam week. Delaying your preparation for these projects will cause a "FATAL ERROR" that requires reformatting your brain!

### EXAMS

There are two exams for the course. The first mid-term will be an essay-type exam that allows you to demonstrate knowledge of 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, during exam week, will be an objective test (multiple choice) emphasizing facts and methodologies drawn largely (but not totally!) from the second half (after the first mid-term) part of the course.

### CREATIVE SEARCH PROJECT

You must do either of two Creative Search Projects --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.) The idea behind the Creative Search Project is to facilitate your developing themes for your term paper. Therefore, to be maximally useful, both options must be completed BEFORE November 23, 1993 (i.e., before the Thanksgiving break).

*1. Journal Club:* The Journal Club is a small-group meeting (not more than 6 people at a time) held with the instructor or Reneé Lofgrin, the course assistant. During this meeting, lasting approximately 45 minutes, you and the 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). To get credit 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 for me to judge a person's performance on all counts. Journal Club times will be held twice a week, at times to be announced, over a period of 5 weeks.

*Annotated bibliography:* This choice will require your preparing a brief summary of four (4) 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 both will help you define an area of interest 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;

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.

Papers will be due before 5:00PM on December 6, 1993. **PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AFTER THAT DEADLINE.** The paper deadline is firm. Those turning papers in after the deadline must have a bone fide medical emergency excuse; they will automatically receive an Incomplete for the course that can be removed sometime during Winter term. No papers will be accepted after the eighth week of Winter term regardless of excuse.

### **IMPORTANT DATES**

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

In class:  
October 26, 1993 (30%)

Final's Week  
December 8, 1993 (20%)

#### **PAPER DATES:**

Paper DUE 5:00PM  
December 6, 1993 (30%)

Creative Search Project (20%)  
Completed by November 23, 1993

The second midterm will emphasize the second half of the course.  
The exams count 50% toward the final course grade.

**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.

*Now that you have read the course description etc. you are ready to see how much you have learned. Please take this quiz.*

### ***QUIZ***

#### **True/False**

1. This course will teach you how to do marital therapy with friends and family?
2. Critical thinking and (like awesome) clear communication will be emphasized in this course.
3. Communication skills (writing and oral) are important for success in this course.
4. You can write your term paper on any topic you wish without getting prior approval from the professor.
5. Term papers can be handed in for Fall term credit during Xmas vacation.
6. Both midterms for this course are objective multiple guess and only cover the readings.
7. There is a substantial amount of reading for this course.
8. You can get double credit for doing both the Journal Club and the Annotated Bibliography options.
9. The textbook for this course summarizes each lecture topic, so class attendance is optional.
10. Methodology is a major emphases in this course (i.e., how do we know and how do we gather facts).
11. Humor and metaphor are not allowed in this course!
12. If you say something stupid in this course everyone will know you are a worthless person who is not contributing to society!
13. The professor for this course is intimidating, hates students, will not be helpful, and will probably make me feel foolish.