

Psy. 473/573
E-mail: rlweiss@oregon

Dr. R.L. Weiss
385 Straub Hall

Marital and Family Therapies **Course Information**

This course is intended primarily for psychology majors and graduate students. It covers psychological approaches to problems of adult intimacy. You must have had the research and statistical methodology sequence (Psych. 302 and 303). It is recommended that you do *not* take this course as your very first upper-division core psychology class.

Consumer Warning

Please note: This is not a how-to course about marriage! Although much of the course content deals with applied clinical psychology research, 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 tender-hearts seeking to improve their own relationships! Communication skills, written and oral, are very important to your success in this course. If you have neglected your writing skills and they are not at college level, this course will be especially difficult. *Your grade will reflect the quality of your writing.* Beware...this course will probably require a full 10 or more hours per week.

Readings and lectures will cover current developments in theories and research on the psychological aspects of marital interaction and marital dysfunction; methods for assessing conflict in intimate interactions; examples of techniques used to intervene in marital discord; and research and methodology 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 necessary for success in this course. We will focus on the nature of psychological constructs in the area of marital and family distress.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

One of the objectives of this course is to improve your critical thinking by involving you as much as possible in how psychologists generate knowledge in this area. The course surveys a wide variety of topics and issues in a *very* short time. You will be asked to think like a marital and family researcher. You will be asked to approach the material critically, noting methodological strengths and weaknesses in what you read and hear. This course is designed to allow for a great deal of independent study, given the limits of a large class size. You will be doing much of your learning on your own which may be a blessing or a curse.

Course Requirements

There are a number of required course activities and options, all of which will necessitate careful planning on your part throughout this term. Experience has shown that ignoring this advice you will have major difficulty with this course. **Your grade will be based on your progress throughout the course as measured by a number of activities.** Because there are many different course activities and options, it is essential that you stay on target and that you keep informed about procedures and due dates.

Quick Overview of Course Requirements

1. You **MUST** have an active *e-mail* account for this course! These are available to all students (e.g., *Gladstone* account);
2. The *assigned readings* for this course are contained in a readings *packet* of 15 articles available at the bookstore;
3. Much of your *reading for the course will be self-directed*, based on journal articles you select from the library;
4. *Journal Clubs* (2 articles): you will be presenting an *oral discussion* of 2 different articles, on two different occasions, outside of class, to a small group of classmates;
5. Section *papers* (2, referencing at least 8 articles in each, may include your JC articles but NOT the assigned readings): *10 page papers* (maximum, exclusive of references) integrating material from two out of four possible sections of the course. Totally, a maximum of 20 pages of writing based on 16 references;
6. One *take-home exam* for Section I of the course, based on readings and lectures;
7. Two *homework assignments*, one each, for *Sections III and IV* of the course;
8. Three course related substantive *e-mail postings* (not, "hello, how are you?")

Optional symposium competition. I plan on convening two student generated symposia, four presenters each. Winners of the competition will be excused from one paper! However, any group of 4 people may submit a symposium proposal. *See Symposium details below.*

Open Forum. In addition to office hours, I will set aside one hour per week for *Open Forum*, which will allow ad hoc, *group consultations* with students. Not required, *no credit*. Any student may visit the *Open Forum*, as often as they wish, to discuss any issue generated by the course that may be of *general interest*. (We may also use *Open Forum* for discussion of papers, assignments, and such, so long as it is of general interest; office hours should be used for specific individual problems or concerns.)

Detailed Course Requirements and Options

I. Journal Clubs:

You are required to participate in two *Journal Clubs* during eight of the 10 weeks in the term. JC's are limited to four persons per session. We will provide an advanced sign-up schedule of times for when the JC's will be held during the next week. There will be a sufficient number of sessions so that everyone will be able to participate in the required two sessions. Each session will last for 1 hour, during which time each person will have an opportunity to discuss an article with the other student members in that session. JC's are not to be used as office hour consultations (see below), but rather as an opportunity to exchange ideas in order to foster better understanding of the course material. You do not have to meet with the same group each time.

JC's are supposed to coordinate with sections II -V of the course. *Please do not sign up for two JC meetings dealing with articles for the same section of the course!* The articles you choose to discuss in the JC's should relate to material in the section paper you are working on (see *Section Papers*, below). These discussions are supposed to give you practice in oral communication and help with your writing for that section.

Your presentations (approximately 15 minutes including questions) will be graded on 20 total points. We will provide a checklist used for grading so that you will know what to emphasize. Since this is a major investment of both your and our time we will take missed appointments very seriously (there will be a loss of points if you fail to keep our appointment time, since your slot could have been used by another student).

II. Section Papers:

You will have an opportunity to communicate your understanding of course material by writing two section papers, out of 4 possible sections covered in the course. You choose which two sections you write about. These section papers should reflect your understanding of the material for the specific section, based on lectures, assigned readings, *and your own library work* (e.g., journal articles). Section papers can vary from a minimum of 8 to a maximum of 10 pages (not including references). Section papers are like mini-term papers but more focused and heavily documented. *Section papers are in lieu of exams.* Good idea to have a general outline approved beforehand.

III. Take Home Exam:

There will be one take home exam for Section I, which is largely a review of theories. You will be asked to discuss various constructs and assumptions in the three major theories of marital functioning, based largely on the assigned readings and the lectures for that section.

IV. Homework Assignments:

There will be 2 homework assignments, one each from Sections III and IV. These assignments are intended to help you keep abreast of the materials, help you organize and focus your section papers (if you are also doing one in Sections III or IV). Assignments are due on the dates specified on the syllabus and will not be accepted after those dates.

V. The E-Mail Connection:

During the course we will use e-mail; you should immediately subscribe to the listserv **Marriage@oregon** (see below for details). This will allow you to post and/or read about questions or thoughts connected with this course in an open forum. I will post lecture notes and announcements on the MARRIAGE list, so you will need to check it daily for important course information. You are required to make *at least 3 postings* to the list during the time we have it active. You can ask questions, express ideas that you want others to respond to, mention a good article you found, etc. Questions must be course related, and we expect everyone who makes a posting to observe proper etiquette. Anyone can ask or answer any question, exchange references, critique ideas, ask about the homework, etc., but there will be no personal attacks nor obscenities. Please—this forum is not for personal revelations! Messages you post to MARRIAGE @Oregon go out to everyone on the list. If you want to ask Mary a question (or respond only to Mary) DO NOT send it to MARRIAGE. Do not just blindly use the reply button in your e-mail program if you want to respond only to one person. *There will also be a separate e-mail address for you to send messages to the teaching staff.* These messages will not go out to the rest of the class, but they will be answered by us.

VI. Optional Symposium:

One option will be a symposium competition that can replace one of the section papers. Groups of three or four people can submit a proposal for a symposium that they would like to present to the class, on some topic relevant to the course. The symposium would have to have a common theme, and each person would present a review of important studies that focus on some aspect of the symposium's theme. This would be more than a Journal Club presentation and there would have to be sufficient empirical research to support the topic; the people making the proposal would have to have a serious interest in their presentations and they would have to be able to work together as a group in planning and presentation. I will serve as judge of which proposals will be accepted based on the current importance of the theme, the connections among the suggested topics to be covered, and the qualifications of the presenters (based on an interview with them). This will be a stepwise process, so that no one puts a great deal of work in a proposal only to have it turned

down. Nor is this everyone's cup of tea; it may work well for some folks and not at all for others. This is *not a course requirement*--it is an option that requires a certain front-end investment of time and effort and replaces one paper.

Grading:

Take home exam -- 15%

Homework assignments -- 15%

Two section papers on readings, lectures, and journal articles -- 40%

(May substitute symposium for one paper)

Journal Clubs -- 20%

E-mail Connection -- 10%

I generally use the standard point system to assign letter grades, but I may also tweak the distribution as needed so that it reflects the class's ability. (e.g., if 90 is the highest grade I would be inclined to make that an A rather than an A-.)

Policy on make ups, missed assignments, and due dates:

(A) The take-home exam is due in class October 16, 1997. Exams turned in after 12:20 will lose 5 points per hour regardless of excuse. Persons with valid excuses (e.g., medical, family disaster) may make an appointment to take a one and a half hour make-up exam October 20, 1997 from 12:00 to 1:20PM.

(B) Section paper due dates are November 4, 1997, November 18, 1997, December 2, 1997, and December 8, 1997, by the end of class on those days (or by 12:00PM on the last date). Since you are asked to do only two out of four possible section papers there is no credit for late papers nor any make-up for papers. **Sections will vary in difficulty and interest; do not put off section papers until the end.** You may be surprised to find by waiting to the end you have seriously handicapped yourself since you will have to write on a more difficult (less interesting) topic than you would have had you chosen an earlier section topic.

(C) Homework due dates: November 18 and December 2, 1997.

Important Dates:

October 16, 1997 Take home exam due in class (everyone)

November 4 and 18, 1997 Section papers due on these dates (any 2)

December 2 and 8, 1997 Section papers due on these dates (any 2)

November 18 and December 2, 1997 Homework due dates (I and II)

Email:

Class -- marriage@oregon

Teachers -- psych473@oregon

Prof. Weiss -- rlweiss@oregon

TA: Kristin Penza -- penza@darkwing

Offices & Phones:

Office hours:

see Schedule below

385 Straub 6-4900

358 Straub 6-1982

E-Mail Information & Schedule [Keep this page!]

1. To **subscribe** for the first time to the MARRIAGE@oregon list (necessary to receive important messages and meet course requirements):

NOTE: You must already have an active e-mail account (e.g., Gladstone) to subscribe to a list. The "list" makes every message available to all people on the list; it is a common mailbox,

Use PINE or EUDORA (recommended), or any e-mail program and send a message to:

MAJORDOMO@lists.uoregon.edu

Leave the SUBJECT line blank

In the body of the message area *write*:

SUBSCRIBE MARRIAGE

Send it.

You will get a return message confirming that you are on the list. If not, try again or call the computer center (When you want to get off the list (i.e., no longer want to see this mail) just send

UNSUBSCRIBE MARRIAGE to Majordomo@lists.uoregon.edu.

To send a message to *the entire class*, just send it to MARRIAGE @ Oregon. Messages sent to the Marriage list will go to **everyone on the list**. For example, if you wish to send Sam and the class the same message, just send it to Marriage; don't send one to Sam and also CC to Marriage. If Sam is on the Marriage list he will get it; if you send it to Sam's address AND to Marriage, he will get it twice.

2. To send a message to the **instructor only** (not to the entire class) use the address:

PSY473@oregon. Please use **Psy473@oregon** for course related messages (e.g., "could teaching staff help with a question", or "assignment dates, next scheduled Journal Club meeting time," etc.) You do **not** subscribe to Psy473@oregon; it is just an address like for any other person..

3. To send a personal message to Dr. Weiss, use **rlweiss@oregon** "Personal message" means Weiss needs to respond to you directly. To Kristin Penza: **penza@darkwing.uoregon.edu**. Please use these individual accounts only as necessary since these are our regular mail boxes and we get much mail.

SCHEDULE

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
9:00					
9:30					
10:00		Penza			
10:30		Office Hrs//			
11:00		class	Weiss	class	Journal Club 3
11:30		" "	Office Hrs	" "	139 Straub
12:00		" "	385 Straub	" "	" "
12:30		" "		" "	
1:00	Weiss				Journal Club 4
1:30	Office Hrs			Penza	139 Straub
2:00	385 Straub			Office Hrs	" "
2:30				358 Straub	
3:00	Journal Club 1			Journal Club 2	
3:30	337 Straub/			337 Straub	
4:00	Open Forum			" "	
4:30	139 Straub				
5:00	" "				

Note: *Journal Clubs* meet for 1 hr each; must have signed up in advance for each session.

Open Forum drop-in, no advanced scheduling necessary. / = continues to the full (//= half) hr.

Psych 473/57 Fall 1997
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Syllabus
Marital and Family Therapies

Week	Date		Topic	Reading
Section I: MODELS OF MARITAL INTERACTION				
1	9/30	U	Psychological Study of Intimate Relationships	1
	10/2	H	Models of Marital Interaction I: Individual Focus	2
2	10/7	U	Models of Marital Interaction I: Individual Focus (cont'd)	3
	10/9	H	Models of Marital Interaction II: Dyadic Focus	4
3	10/14	U	Models of Marital Interaction III: Systems Focus	5
Section II: ASSESSING INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS				
Exam	10/16	H	Conceptual and Methodological Issues	6
4	10/21	U	Assessing Marital Satisfaction: Self-report	7
	10/23	H	Quasi-observational Measures	8
5	10/28	U	Behavioral Observation Approaches	9
	10/30	H	Behavioral Observation Approaches (cont'd)	
Section III: Marital Therapies				10
6 SP	11/4	U	Introduction to Marital Therapies	
	11/6	H	Communication-based Approaches	11
7	11/11	U	Cognitive Behavioral Approaches I	12
	11/13	H	Cognitive Behavioral Approaches II	
Section IV: Special Topics				
8 SP HW	11/18	U	Spouse Abuse	13
	11/20	H	Depression	14
9	11/25	U	Depression (cont'd)	
	11/27	H	<i>Holiday</i>	
Section V: Measuring Outcome				
10 SP HW	12/2	U	Measuring Therapeutic Effectiveness	15
	12/4	H	Measuring Therapeutic Effectiveness (cont'd)	
SP	12/8	M	<i>No Class -- Section Paper due</i>	

Note: **SP** = section paper; **HW** = Homework due dates