

## MARITAL AND FAMILY THERAPIES COURSE DESCRIPTION

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 course is on a *Web page*. <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~rlweiss/473> Using a Web browser is essential: Lectures and other important information is available to you on the Marriage Web page; being comfortable with using the Web for gathering information is a goal of the course;

3. The *assigned readings* for this course are contained in a readings *packet* of 15 articles available at the bookstore;
4. Much of your *reading for the course will be self-directed*, based on journal articles you select from the library;
5. *Journal Clubs* (JC) --(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;
6. Section *paper drafts* -- four short drafts you will use to prepare a major term paper; these will due on specific dates;
7. **Major term paper**, referencing **at least 10 articles**, may include your JC articles but NOT the assigned readings);
8. *Homework assignment* using the Web to locate an interesting study, debate, or information on the leading edge; briefly describe WEB site and what you got from it;
9. Three course related substantive *e-mail postings* (not, "hello, how are you?")

### Detailed Course Requirements

#### 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 upcoming 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 you are working on (see *Major Term Paper*, below). These discussions are supposed to give you practice in oral communication and help you develop your ideas.

Your presentations (approximately 15 minutes including questions) will be graded on 20 total points. There is a grading checklist for you to use so that you will know what to emphasize in your presentation. 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).

#### Major Term Paper

The main product for the course is a major term paper. There are no exams. However, the course requirements are structured so that you will gain the necessary knowledge to write a successful paper. For each section of the course you will write a draft, on the section, as it applies to your paper topic. For example, if you were doing your paper on depression and marriage, your first draft, following Section I of the course, would deal with the theories of how depression and marriage are related. Each section of the course will pertain to your paper topic.

These draft papers (maximum 4 printed pages) 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). The drafts will be graded and you can use the feedback to improve the quality of your paper. Each draft should clearly describe what information you intend to use in the paper. The drafts are your paper in progress, and they reflect your learning up to the point of the section itself. Thus, writing about assessment issues in depression and marriage (Section II) does not mean writing about therapy! Therapy would come later when we cover it.

### Homework Assignment:

For your single homework assignment you will visit a web site that deals with marital research and download information (or summarize it) that is state of the art. I want you to find some information that interests you and that is not otherwise available to you. I have selected web sites as starting places: these list publications, debates, sometimes professional issues. Find a site and tell us what you found most useful and interesting.

### 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 some 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 course related question, exchange references, critique ideas, ask about the homework, etc., but please, no personal disclosures, 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.

### GRADING

- Section paper drafts -- 25%
- Homework assignment -- 10%
- Major term paper, based on readings, lectures, and journal articles -- 40%
- Journal Clubs -- 15%
- 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 missed assignments, and due dates:

- Draft Section papers due dates are April 16, May 5, May 19, and June 2nd by the end of class on those days.
- Homework due date: Not later than April 30, 1998.
- Any work turned in after the due date will lose points, but will not be graded three days after the due date.
- Last day to turn in Term Paper June 8, 1998, by 12:00PM certain. Late papers not accepted.

### IMPORTANT DATES AND INFORMATION

- April 16, 1998 Due date for Section I Draft
- April 30, 1998 Last date to turn in Homework
- May 5, 1998 Due date for Section II Draft
- May 19, 1998 Due date for Section III Draft
- June 2, 1998 Due date for Section IV Draft
- June 8, 1998 Last day to turn in Term Paper

### Email, Offices, and Phones

Class -- marriage@oregon  
Teachers -- psych473@oregon see Schedule below  
Prof. Weiss - rlweiss@oregon 385 Straub 6-4900  
TA: Kristin Penza - penza@darkwing 358 Straub 6-1982

### EMAIL LISTSERV SETUP INFORMATION

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 :

**MAJORDOMO@lists.uoregon.edu**

Leave the SUBJECT line blank

In the body of the message area *write*:

**UNSUBSCRIBE MARRIAGE**

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.

Week	Date	Topic	Reading #
<b>Section I: Models of Marital Interaction</b>			
1	3/31 U	Psychological Study of Intimate Relationships	1
	4/2 H	Models of Marital Interaction I: Individual Focus	2
2	4/7 U	Models of marital Interaction I: Individual Focus (cont'd)	3
	4/9 H	Models of Marital Interaction II: Dyadic Focus	4
3	4/14 U	Models of Marital Interaction III: Systems Focus	5
<b>Section II: Assessing Intimate Relationships</b>			
Sect. Dft	* 4/16 H	Conceptual and Methodological Issues	6
4	4/21 U	Assessing Marital Satisfaction: Self-Report	7
	4/23 H	Quasi-Observational Measures	8
5	4/28 U	Behavioral Observation Approaches	9
HWork	* 4/30 H	Behavioral Observation Approaches (cont'd)	
<b>Section III: Marital Therapies</b>			
Sect. Dft	* 5/5 U	Introduction to Marital Therapies	10
6	5/7 H	Communication Based Approaches	11
7	5/12 U	Cognitive Behavioral Approaches I	12
	5/14 H	Cognitive Behavioral Approaches II	
<b>Section IV: Special Topics</b>			
Sect. Dft	* 5/19 U	Spouse Abuse	13
8	5/21 H	Spouse Abuse (cont'd)	
9	5/26 U	Depression	14
	5/28 H	Depression (cont'd)	
<b>Section V: Measuring Outcomes</b>			
Sect. Dft	* 6/2 U	Measuring Therapeutic Effectiveness	15
10	6/4 H	Measuring Therapeutic Effectiveness (cont'd)	
	* 6/8	<<<<< June 8 <sup>th</sup> Monday -- Term papers due >>>>>>	