

PSYCHOLOGY 407: ATTACHMENT THEORY AND RELATIONSHIPS

CRN 38063

Spring 2013

Tuesdays, 10:00-11:50; Room 139 Straub

Professor: Jennifer Ablow, Ph.D.

Office Hours: Tuesday 3:00-5:00, and by appointment

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No phone calls please

Course Description

Attachment theory has emerged as one of the leading frameworks for the study of close relationships, personality processes, and emotional dynamics. The theory has gained in importance largely because it addresses a wide range of issues that are central to human well being: the development of intimate relationships; the regulation of thought, feeling, and action; and the processes promoting mental health. Moreover, from a scientific and educational point of view, attachment theory is exceptionally compelling because it draws upon the theories and empiricism of multiple perspectives, including ethology, evolution, and virtually all areas of psychology (e.g., clinical, development, cognitive, neuroscience, and social-personality psychology).

Through reading and discussion of original sources (i.e., empirical and theoretical papers), students in this advanced seminar will explore the universality of and individual differences in the development and trajectory of attachment relationships. We will begin by exploring the theoretical underpinnings of attachment theory. Parallels will be made to animal models by exploring evolutionary theory, primate research and biological markers of attachment (e.g., hormones and physiology responsible for caregiving behavior). By examining the literature on infant-parent attachment relationships, core constructs of attachment will be defined, individual differences in patterns of attachment will be outlined, and issues of measurement will be introduced. In addition attachment and romantic and marital relationships and the intergenerational transmission of attachment will be examined. Finally, the course will explore attachment and the development of psychopathology, and breaking the cycle of maladaptive processes related to attachment (e.g., abuse). Throughout the course, issues of attachment across cultures will figure prominently. The course will include lecture, and discussion of videos, assigned readings and observation.

Learning Goals

This course is designed to help students meet the following goals:

1. To understand the foundations of attachment and how it originated
2. To understand how attachment theory has guided empirical research focusing on relationships and how research findings have influenced the evolution of the theory
3. To articulate the associations among the infant's emotional experience, caregiver-child reciprocity, brain development, and ongoing affective regulation
4. To demonstrate knowledge of the longitudinal studies documenting the influence of attachment on the neurobiological, behavioral, cognitive, relational and physiological development of individuals across the lifespan
5. To evaluate the cultural differences of attachment patterns validated through empirical cross-cultural research
6. To engage in critical thinking about attachment theory, research, and its applications

Course Structure

We will meet for 2 hours in a single session once a week. Each week we will read and discuss three to four articles. Early in the quarter, I will spend approximately half the class (not always consecutively) providing introductory overviews and lectures. Once you have learned the basics of the theory, the class will take on more of a discussion-oriented structure. Two or three students will be assigned to help guide the discussion for each meeting. Discussion leaders will be asked to spend approximately 15-20 minutes summarizing the readings to ensure that everyone is on the same page and generating and leading a discussion.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

1. Attendance, Readings and Reaction Papers (5 points per week X 10 = 50 points). Regular attendance, participation in class discussion and responsibility for assigned readings is required. If you need to miss all or part of a class, please let me know in advance. I will give you additional work to make up for your absence. Inadequate attendance will lead to a decrease in your grade. *Please note that text messaging and web surfing during class is strictly prohibited.* Assigned readings must be done prior to the class (except for the readings assigned for the first week) and a brief written reaction paper (less than a page) sent via email to jcablow@uoregon.edu, and to the assigned student discussion facilitators (by 8:00 PM, Monday evening prior to class). Your reactions should focus on insights, conceptual connections, criticisms, and questions regarding the readings. The standard is evidence of having read and thought about the material. The reactions should not be solely a summary of the readings, but also include comments, ideas or questions that come up as you read. Reactions can be personal, conceptual or both. Your reactions will be graded with respect to three factors: (a) whether your reaction was submitted on time, (b) the quality of your writing (i.e., clarity, grammar, coherence), and (c) the quality of your ideas (i.e., Do they reflect a careful reading and thoughtful consideration of the issues? Do they have the potential to generate productive discussion? Do they suggest new directions for research that could actually be pursued?).
2. Class Facilitation (20 points). Two or three students will be assigned to guide the discussion for class meetings, weeks 4-9. Discussion leaders will be asked to spend approximately 20 minutes summarizing the readings to ensure that everyone is on the same page and generating and leading a discussion. To supplement the discussion, discussion leaders should identify an additional one or more recent article (published within the last 2-3 years) on the weekly topic. Please send the identified current article to me by the Friday prior to “your” class.
 - Prepare a powerpoint presentation summarizing the key issues related to your additional search and the weekly topic. Send your presentation to me the Sunday prior to “your” class by 8:00 PM.
 - Prepare to help lead discussion based on a close reading of the assigned readings and consideration of the class’s questions. This additional preparation will help make the facilitators on any given week our “resident experts” who can then spur discussion.
 - Your week for facilitation, you may take a “by” from submitting a weekly reaction paper. Rather, you will automatically receive 5 points.
3. Adult Attachment Interview Assignment (25 points). **Tuesday, April 23rd**, a 3-4-page interview paper will be due. Students will be required to spend one to two hours interviewing an adult about her/his early attachment experiences using the Adult Attachment Interview, and then having somebody interview you. **(Specific guidelines will be provided in Session 3).** As students will not be trained to administer or code the interview, the purpose of this assignment is primarily experiential. Grading

will be based on the quality of student's observations about the content of the interview, thoughtfulness of understanding the individual's experience, application of material learned in class and readings and overall clarity of the presentation of the material. Students may incorporate quotes from the interviews to illustrate points.

4. Patterns of Attachment Observation Assignment (25 points). Infant attachment observation paper of approximately 3-4 pages will be due in class **May 21, 2013**.

To capture the spirit of observation that many of the theorists who have shaped the field emphasized (e.g., Bowlby, Darwin, Ainsworth, Hinde, to name a few), students will be required to spend at least 2 hours making detailed observations about one or more infant's patterns of attachment. Grading will be based on quality of the observations, thoughtfulness of understanding the infant's experience, application of material learned in class and readings, and overall clarity of the presentation of the material. **(Observation protocol and format will be discussed in class).**

5. Final Paper (80 points). Critically review the evidence for one subtopic in attachment theory using recent empirical literature; focus on a small enough area within attachment so that it is a manageable project within the space of your paper; feel free to meet with me to help you identify a topic. Read at least 8 empirical research articles related to the topic, selecting articles not on the syllabus and not from other classes. The articles should be published between 2003-2013. Write an 8-10-page, double-spaced paper. Grading for papers will be based on (1) critical thinking about the topic and the material, (2) thoughtfulness, (3) organization of paper and style of writing, including following correct APA v. 6 format.

- Sample topics. Maltreated children typically manifest 'D' attachment relationships; attachment and physiology; earned secure; changes in attachment security or representations of attachment; attachment and fathers; gay parents and attachment; daycare and attachment, attachment interventions; attachment and psychopathology; non-typical infants and attachment (e.g., blind, deaf, developmentally delayed, autistic).
- There are several deadlines associated with your review paper. Failure to meet deadlines 2, 3, and 4 will result in forfeiting the points indicated below and you will not have the opportunity to receive feedback on your first draft. Late papers will be marked down substantially.

1. Week 3 (by 5:00 PM, Friday, April 19th), email to jcablow@uoregon.edu the topic sentence for your term paper. The topic sentence can be the proposed title for your paper or just a very brief description of what you plan to research, e.g., "I plan to research the relation between the experience of daycare in the first year and the quality of parent-infant attachment." I will read and reply with either a comment that the topic should be more focused or that it looks good.

2. Tuesday, April 30 (or sooner): In class, submit an APA formatted list of references for your paper. (10 points)

3. Monday, May 6 by 4 PM: Peer Review. Email a first draft of your review paper to me. I will print out the papers, remove the cover pages with names, and then in class on **Tuesday, May 7**, I will pass out these papers (with no identifying information) to students in the class for written feedback. Thus, on **May 7**, everyone who sent a paper to me on **May 6** will be given a paper by another student to review. In the past, some students have turned in "papers" at this stage that were little more than outlines – not finished enough to allow another to edit and give feedback. In such cases, your paper will be returned to you and you

will not be given another student's paper to review. Note that the more complete your paper is, the more help the student will be able to give you.

4. Tuesday, May 14: Submit your written peer review plus the edited paper (20 points). On **Tuesday, May 21**, I will give back your own review paper, along with the peer review.

5. Friday, June 7: Turn in the final draft of your paper to SafeAssign (50 points). Make sure to post your paper using MICROSOFT WORD. Follow these directions to post your paper on safe assign:

1. Go to the blackboard course homepage
2. Click on the "Assignments" link in the left-hand menu
3. Click on the "View/Complete" link
4. Click on the "Direct Submit" link
5. Upload your paper

In addition, on **June 7th** submit the following to Dr. Ablow's mailbox in the Psychology Office:

1. A hardcopy of your final paper.
2. The first draft and the feedback you received from another student
3. Your brief assessment of how helpful you found the feedback.

The Psychology office closes promptly at 5:00 PM. Make sure to turn in these materials by 4:00 PM.

If you feel that your writing abilities may be a hindrance and prevent you from expressing your thoughts in a clear and concise manner, I encourage you to seek the services of the **Writing Lab** at the **Academic Learning Services (ALS) (68 PLC, phone 6-3226)**. The Writing Lab (room 72, PLC) is available to all University students on a walk-in basis, and is open Monday-Friday, 9am-4pm. In general, all papers benefit significantly from feedback from others, thus it is encouraged that students have their papers read for typos, awkward phrasing, and clarity prior to turning them in. In addition, tips on writing and editing papers will either be posted on Blackboard.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Week 1: April 2, 2013

Introduction to course, History, Bowlby and the Secure Base of Attachment

Required Readings:

Bowlby, J. (1988). *A Secure Base* (pp. 1-38). NY: Basic Books

Cassidy, J. (2008). The nature of the child's ties. In J. Cassidy & P. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of Attachment: Theory, Research and Clinical Applications* (2nd Ed.). New York: Guilford Press.

Optional

Bowlby, J. (1969/1982). Attachment and loss: Vol. 1. Attachment. New York: Basic Books. [ch. 3]

van der Horst FC. Leroy HA. van der Veer R. When strangers meet": John Bowlby and Harry Harlow on attachment behavior. *Integrative Psychological & Behavioral Science*. 2008. Vol. 42(4):370-388. (*a fun reading – if you read it, tell me if you think it should be required*)

****Due Date: Friday, April 6th: Week 1 Reaction Paper**

****Due Date: Monday, April 8th: Week 2 Reaction Paper**

Week 2: April 9, 2013

Mary Ainsworth and the Strange Situation (SS), Internal Working Models of Attachment (IWM)

Required Readings:

Ainsworth, M. D. S., Blehar, M. C., Waters, E. & Wall, S. (1978). Patterns of attachment. A psychological study of the strange situation. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum. [Chapter 1].

Sroufe, L.A. & Waters, E. (1977). Attachment as an organizational construct. *Child Development*, 48, 1184-1199.

Weinfield, N. S., Sroufe, L. A., Egeland, B., Carlson, E. A. (2008). Individual differences in infant-caregiver attachment: Conceptual and empirical aspects of security. In J. Cassidy & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of Attachment: Theory, Research, and Clinical Applications* (2nd Ed.) (pp. 78-101). New York: Guilford.

optional

Bretherton, I. (1992). The origins of attachment theory: John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth. *Developmental Psychology*, 28, 759-775.

Karen, R. (1990). *Becoming Attached*. The Atlantic Monthly.

****Due Date: Monday, April 15th: Week 3 Reaction Paper**

Week 3: April 16, 2013

Mary Main and the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI)

Required Readings:

Hesse, E. (2008). The Adult Attachment Interview: Protocol, method of analysis and empirical studies. In J. Cassidy & P. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of Attachment: Theory, Research and Clinical Applications* (2nd Ed.). New York: Guilford Press.

Main, M. (2000) The organized categories of infant, child, and adult attachment: Flexible vs. Inflexible attention under attachment-related stress. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*.

Hesse, E. & Main, M. (2000). Disorganized infant, child, and adult attachment: Collapse in behavioral and attentional strategies. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 48, 1097-1127.

optional

Bretherton, I. & Munholland, K. (2008). Internal working models in attachment relationships: Elaborating a central construct in attachment theory. In J. Cassidy & P. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of Attachment: Theory, Research and Clinical Applications* (2nd Ed.). New York: Guilford Press.

****Due Date: Friday, April 19th: Term paper topic sentence**

****Due Date: Sunday, April 21st: Group 1 Powerpoint**

****Due Date: Monday, April 22nd: Week 4 Reaction Paper**

Week 4: April 23, 2013
Culture and Attachment

****Due: Adult Attachment Interview Assignment****

Required Readings:

van IJzendoorn, M. & Sagi-Schwartz, A. (2008). Cross-cultural patterns of attachment: Universal and contextual dimensions. In J. Cassidy & P. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of Attachment: Theory, Research and Clinical Applications* (2nd Ed.). New York: Guilford Press.

Grossmann, K., Grossmann, K.E. & Kindler, H. (2005). Early care and the roots of attachment and partnership representations: The Bielefeld and Regensburg Longitudinal Studies. In K.E. Grossmann, K. Grossmann & E. Waters (Eds.) *Attachment from Infancy to Adulthood: The Major Longitudinal Studies*. New York: Guilford Press.

****Due Date: Sunday, April 28th: Group 2 Powerpoint**

****Due Date: Monday, April 29th: Week 5 Reaction Paper**

Week 5: April 30, 2013

****APA formatted reference list****

The Neurobiology of Attachment and Affect Regulation

Required Readings:

Coan, J. (2008). Toward a neuroscience of attachment. In J. Cassidy & P. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of Attachment: Theory, Research and Clinical Applications* (2nd Ed.). New York: Guilford Press.

Laurent, H.K. & Ablow, J.C. (2012). The missing link: Mothers' neural response to infant cry related To infant attachment behaviors. *Infant Behavior and Development*, 35, 761-772.

****Due Date: Sunday, May 5th: Group 3 Powerpoint**

****Due Date: Monday, May 6th: Week 6 Reaction Paper**

****Due Date: Monday, May 6th: First draft of Paper**

Week 6: May 7, 2013

Intergenerational Transmission of Attachment: Predictors of Stability & Change

Required Readings:

Sroufe, L.A., Egeland, B., Carlson, E. & Collins, W.A. (2005). Placing early attachment experiences in developmental context: The Minnesota Longitudinal Study. In K.E. Grossmann, K. Grossmann & E. Waters (Eds.) *Attachment from Infancy to Adulthood: The Major Longitudinal Studies*. New York: Guilford Press.

Ablow, J.C., Marks, A.K., Feldman, S.S., & Huffman, L.C. (in press). Associations between first-time expectant women's representations of attachment and their physiological reactivity to cry. *Child Development*.

****Due Date: Sunday, May 12th: Group 4 Powerpoint**

****Due Date: Monday, May 13th: Week 7 Reaction Paper**

Week 7: May 14, 2013 **Due: Peer Review**
Abuse, Neglect and Trauma Leading to Disorganization

Required Readings:

Main, M., & Hesse, E. (1990). Parents' unresolved traumatic experiences are related to infant disorganized attachment status: Is frightened or frightening parental behavior the linking mechanism? In M. Greenberg, D. Cicchetti & E. M. Cummings (Eds.), *Attachment in the preschool years* (pp. 161-182). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Lyons-Rth, K. & Jacobvitz, D. (2008). Attachment disorganization: Genetic factors, parenting contexts, and developmental transformation from infancy to adulthood. In J. Cassidy & P. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of Attachment: Theory, Research and Clinical Applications* (2nd Ed.). New York: Guilford Press.

Conradt, E., Measelle, J.R. & Ablow, J.C. (2013). Poverty, problem behavior and promise: Differential susceptibility among infants reared in poverty. *Psychological Science*, 24, 235-242.

****Due Date: Sunday, May 19th: Group 5 Powerpoint**

****Due Date: Monday, May 20th: Week 8 Reaction Paper**

Week 8: May 21, 2013 **Due: Patterns of Attachment Observation Assignment**
Foster Care and Adoption

Required Readings:

Dozier, M. & Rutter, M. (2008). Challenges to the development of attachment relationships faced by young children in foster and adoptive care. In J. Cassidy & P. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of Attachment: Theory, Research and Clinical Applications* (2nd Ed.). New York: Guilford Press.

****Due Date: Sunday, May 26th: Group 6 Powerpoint**

****Due Date: Monday, May 27th: Week 9 Reaction Paper**

Week 9: May 28, 2013
Romantic Attachments

Required Readings:

Holmes, B. M., & Johnson, K. R. (2009). Adult attachment and romantic partner preference: A review. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 26, 33-52.

Roisman, G.I., Collins, W.A. & Sroufe, L.A. (2005). Predictors of young adults' representations of and behavior in their current romantic relationship: Prospective tests of the prototype hypothesis. *Attachment & Human Development*, 7, 105-121.

Simpson, J.A. et al. (2007). Working models of attachment and reactions to different forms of caregiving from romantic partners. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 93, 466-477.

****Due Date: Monday, June 3rd: Week 10 Reaction Paper**

**Week 10: June 4, 2013
Future Directions & Paper Blitz**

Required Readings:

TBD

****Due Date: Friday, June 7th: Final Paper submitted to SafeAssign**

Academic Honesty:

All work submitted in this course must be your own and produced exclusively for this course. No form of cheating or plagiarism will be tolerated, and the consequences are severe (e.g., receiving a "0" on an exam or writing assignment, or failing the course outright, are typical sanctions in the Psychology Department for academic misconduct). Plagiarism is the inclusion of someone else's product, words, ideas, or data as one's own work. When a student submits work for credit that includes the product, words, ideas, or data of others, the source must be acknowledged by the use of complete, accurate, and specific references. By placing one's name on work submitted for credit, the student certifies the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgements. On written assignments, if verbatim statements are included, the statements must be enclosed in quotation marks. Unauthorized collaboration with others on papers or projects can inadvertently lead to a charge of plagiarism. In addition, it is plagiarism to submit work in which portions were substantially produced by someone acting as a tutor or editor. We will be electronically checking all term papers for plagiarism using the SafeAssign feature on Blackboard. If you are in doubt about your work, please consult the professor or teaching assistant, or seek assistance from the staff of Academic Learning Services (PLC 68; 346-3226). If cheating is discovered on the tests or plagiarism on the writing assignments, then the university will be notified and appropriate action will be taken.