



# Psychology of Interpersonal Relationships

## Course Overview

Interpersonal relationships, including romantic relationships and friendships, play a critical role in most people's lives. These relationships motivate our behavior, contribute to our psychological development, help define our identities, and influence our mental and physical health in profound ways. In this class, we will review the scientific psychological literature on interpersonal relationships to answer several questions: Why are relationships so important? Why are we attracted to some people and not others? How do we form and maintain relationships? What are important features of successful relationships? Why do relationships sometimes end? How do relationships affect people? This course will also explore how interpersonal relationships are similar and different across diverse social identities and relationship structures.

This course will help you understand what the research from social, personality, evolutionary, clinical, and other areas of psychology has to say about the development, maintenance, dissolution, and effects of diverse interpersonal relationships, as well the gaps in this literature. My hope is not only that you will become a more informed consumer of psychological research on interpersonal relationships, but also that you will apply insights from the course to your own relationships. This course will benefit future mental health clinicians, psychology researchers, health care professionals, and anyone who has personal relationships of any kind!

## Learning Objectives

After successfully completing this course, you will be able to:

- Describe key theories and research findings about the development, maintenance, dissolution, features, and effects of diverse interpersonal relationships
- Explain how empirical research methods are used in relationship science
- Appreciate the complex interplay of evolutionary, biological, psychological, social, and cultural factors that impact relationships
- Apply course material to better understand everyday life and foster more effective relationships

**Colleen Kase, M.S.**

[ckase@umd.edu](mailto:ckase@umd.edu)

### Class Meets

Tuesdays & Thursdays  
3:30 – 4:45pm  
ESJ 1224

### Office Hours

BPS 2141  
Thursdays 2:00 – 3:00pm  
and by appointment

### Graduate Teaching Assistant

NaYeon (NY) Yang  
[nyyang@terpmail.umd.edu](mailto:nyyang@terpmail.umd.edu)

### Graduate TA Office Hours

BPS 2140A  
Tuesdays, 1:00 – 2:00pm  
and by appointment

### Undergraduate Teaching Assistants

Xander Friedman  
[xfriedman98@gmail.com](mailto:xfriedman98@gmail.com)  
Michelle Ignacio  
[mignacio@terpmail.umd.edu](mailto:mignacio@terpmail.umd.edu)  
Grace Tanaya  
[gtanaya@terpmail.umd.edu](mailto:gtanaya@terpmail.umd.edu)  
Emily Yang  
[emilyyang11@gmail.com](mailto:emilyyang11@gmail.com)

### Prerequisites

PSYC100

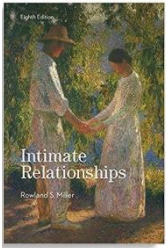
### Course Communication

Please contact our graduate TA ([nyyang@terpmail.umd.edu](mailto:nyyang@terpmail.umd.edu)) for questions and concerns related to attendance, assignments, and grading. All other questions and concerns can be sent to me at [ckase@umd.edu](mailto:ckase@umd.edu).

## Required Resources



Course website: [www.ELMS.umd.edu](http://www.ELMS.umd.edu)



### Textbook

Intimate Relationships  
Miller, R.S.  
Eighth Edition (2018)  
ISBN # 9781259870514



You may use either a physical clicker or the phone/laptop/tablet clicker app. Visit the Students section of [clickers.umd.edu](http://clickers.umd.edu) for details. Your clicker or clicker app should be ready to go by the second week of class.

## Learning Activities & Assessments

Your grade will be based on the following assessments:

1. **Pre-class quizzes:** Prior to many classes, you will be required to complete a brief quiz on ELMS. This quiz will assess your understanding of the required reading materials for the day with several multiple-choice short answer questions. The quizzes are due by 3pm, and no late quizzes will be accepted. These quizzes allow you and I to gauge how well you understand the material covered in the readings and will allow me to fill in gaps in the class's understanding during class time. *You will be able to drop your three lowest quiz scores.*
2. **Participation:** Participating in class will contribute to your own and others' learning and make the class more enjoyable. I encourage everyone to speak up in class and in small group discussions. In each class, I will ask questions about the assigned readings and lecture material, which you will respond to with your clicker or clicker app. These questions will allow you to practice answering the kinds of questions that will be asked on exams, and they will give me an opportunity to assess how well the class understands course concepts. You will receive full clicker participation credit for the day by answering at least 75% of the clicker questions, whether or not your responses are correct. Note that you must be in class and using your own clicker or clicker app to receive credit. In some classes, there will be additional writing assignments or group activities. You will hand in the written product of these activities in order to receive additional participation points. *You will be able to drop your three lowest participation scores.*
3. **Case study assignments:** You will choose an interpersonal relationship in your own life to examine as a case study throughout the semester. You will complete short written assignments about your case study relationship, which will prompt you to apply what we are learning in class to your relationship. Detailed prompts and rubrics for each assignment are available on ELMS. Assignments are due at 3pm and should be submitted electronically via the ELMS portal for that assignment.

4. **Exams:** There will be two midterms and a final exam. These closed-book exams will consist of multiple-choice and short-answer questions based on the readings and class meetings. The final exam will be cumulative.
5. **Extra credit:** Throughout the semester I will offer opportunities to earn extra credit. These opportunities may include attending an outside event relevant to the course and submitting a brief reflection, correctly answering an unannounced clicker quiz in class, or completing an additional assignment. These extra credit opportunities can provide up to an additional 2 percentage points to your final course grade.

Learning Assessments	Category Weight
<b>Pre-class quizzes:</b> pre-class reading quizzes submitted on ELMS	10%
<b>Participation:</b> clicker questions and in-class activities	10%
<b>Case study assignments:</b> six brief writing assignments	25%
<b>Midterm exam #1</b>	15%
<b>Midterm exam #2</b>	15%
<b>Final exam</b>	25%

## Evaluation of Learning

Your learning of course material and accomplishment of the course objectives will be demonstrated by your performance on the tasks listed above. Given that extra credit points are offered, I will not round up your grade. In assigning final course letter grades to your final score, I follow this grading rubric:

89.5-93.49	A-	93.5-97.49	A	97.5-100	A+
79.5-83.49	B-	83.5-87.49	B	87.5-89.49	B+
69.5-73.49	C-	73.5-77.49	C	77.5-79.49	C+
59.5-63.49	D-	63.5-67.49	D	67.5-69.49	D+

59.49 and below F

XF Failure due to academic dishonesty

## Your Responsibilities

This course will require substantial time and effort, both inside and outside of the classroom. My expectation is that you will spend approximately 6 hours per week, on average, on out-of-class preparation and coursework. When you are in class, please be prepared to actively participate in discussions, group work, and other activities with your peers.

I expect all students to take responsibility for their own learning. Your responsibilities include (but are not limited to) being aware of all course policies in this syllabus, coming prepared for all class meetings, and asking questions about material and/or assignments that you do not understand. Note that I will not discuss all topics of importance that I deem sufficiently covered in the text; it is your job to read the text before coming to class and to ask questions about topics that are not clear to you.

## My Responsibilities

I recognize that there are many things that a teacher can do to enhance student learning. My role in this course is to facilitate your learning by:

- Communicating clear expectations.
- Maintaining a respectful class environment.
- Designing and managing the course to help you meet course objectives.
- Staying up to date on the material for this course.
- Providing frequent and timely feedback.
- Answering your questions to the best of my ability and acknowledging if I don't know the answer.

## Course-Specific Policies

### Course Climate and Etiquette

Students will be invited to share their thoughts in class and a diversity of opinions is welcome. Respectful communication is expected, even when expressing differing perspectives. Supporting one's statements with research findings is encouraged. In accordance with free speech statues, speech that contains threats of violence is prohibited.

This is a large class, and I need your help in limiting the number of distractions. I ask that you abide by the following guidelines:

- Do not talk or whisper during lectures or when others are talking.
- Silence all cell phones and other distracting electronic devices.
- Arrive to class on time and wait until the end of the class to leave.
- Treat the teaching team, guest lecturers, and your fellow students with respect and courtesy.

### Attendance Policy

Attending all class meetings is encouraged because it will improve your learning and your performance in this class. Unexcused absences will result in a zero for that day's participation grade. Your three lowest participation grades will be dropped to provide a buffer for clicker malfunctions, emergencies, illnesses, etc.

In accordance with university policy, you may request one excused medical absence via self-signed note and additional medical absences with documentation from a medical professional. Please note that your self-signed absence may not coincide with a major grading event (i.e., midterm or final). Please do **NOT** attend class if you are sick—especially if you have a cold, flu, or other illness that could be easily passed on to others.

All excused absences (including religious absences) should be requested via email, as early as possible. Further requirements for excused absences are described here: <https://president.umd.edu/administration/policies/section-v-student-affairs/v-100g>.

### Late Assignments Policy

All assignments must be submitted on ELMS by 3pm on the day that they are due. Assignments submitted after 3pm will be considered late. Assignments MUST be submitted on ELMS and will NOT be accepted via email or hardcopy. Grades for case study assignments will be lowered by 10% of the total grade for each day that they are late, including weekends. Given that we will drop your three lowest pre-class quiz grades, late pre-class quizzes will not be accepted, except in the case of excused absences. When submitting your homework assignments electronically, please ensure that you have uploaded the correct file and that it is not corrupt or unreadable. Submission of a corrupt or unreadable file will be treated as a non-submission.

## Technology Policy

I expect you to make the responsible and respectful decision to refrain from using your cellphone in class, except if and when you are using it as a clicker. If you have critical communication to attend to, please excuse yourself and return when you are ready. For more information about the science behind the policy watch:

[youtu.be/WwPaw3Fx5Hk](https://youtu.be/WwPaw3Fx5Hk). You may use laptops and tablets to take notes; however, it is expected that you will not use these devices for other tasks during class.

## Personal Disclosures

This course touches on very personal topics, and I encourage you to bring insights and experiences from your own relationships into the classroom – you will have many opportunities to do so! However, I want to balance the personal nature of the course material with respect for your privacy. During class discussions, please only share personal information to the extent that you feel comfortable doing so. Additionally, please do not discuss anything that your classmates share in class outside of the classroom. All clicker questions will be anonymized – the teaching team will be able to see whether you participated, but not which answers you selected. We will also grade in-class writing assignments in an anonymized fashion. Please do be aware that all members of the teaching team are mandated reporters. If you disclose (orally or in writing) sexual abuse, child or elder abuse, or the intent to commit suicide or homicide, we will be required to report your disclosure to the appropriate campus authorities.

## Changes to the Course

In the unlikely event that I must change the course schedule, cancel class, or modify a course policy or assignment, I will announce this change on the course website.

## Campus Policies

It is our shared responsibility to know and abide by the University of Maryland's policies that relate to all courses, which include topics like:

- Academic integrity
- Student and instructor conduct
- Accessibility and accommodations
- Attendance and excused absences
- Grades and appeals
- Copyright and intellectual property

Please visit <http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html> for the Office of Undergraduate Studies' full list of campus-wide policies and follow up with me if you have questions.

## Inclusive Learning Environment

Students will be invited to share their thoughts in class and a diversity of opinions is welcome. Respectful communication is expected, even when expressing differing perspectives. Supporting one's statements with research findings is encouraged. In accordance with free speech statutes, speech that contains threats of violence is prohibited.

## Names/Pronouns and Self Identifications

The University of Maryland recognizes the importance of a diverse student body, and we are committed to fostering equitable classroom environments. I invite you, if you wish, to tell us how you want to be referred to both in terms of your name and your pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.). The pronouns someone indicates are not necessarily indicative of their gender identity. Visit [trans.umd.edu](https://trans.umd.edu) to learn more.

Additionally, how you identify in terms of your gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, and dis/ability, among all aspects of your identity, is your choice whether to disclose (e.g., should it come up in classroom conversation about

our experiences and perspectives) and should be self-identified, not presumed or imposed. I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly, and I ask you to do the same for all of your fellow Terps.

**Statement of Basic Needs**

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live and believes this may affect their performance in this course, is encouraged to use the resources listed below for support.

- Fostering Terp Success: <https://www.studentaffairs.umd.edu/fostering-terp-success>
- UMD Campus Pantry: <http://campuspantry.umd.edu/>
- UMD Student Crisis Fund: <http://www.crisisfund.umd.edu/>
- Counseling Center: <http://www.counseling.umd.edu/CS/>

**Other Resources**

UMD has many resources available to support students—whether you need emotional support, academic support, a sense of solidarity with students with a similar identity, or ideas for healthier living. Please review the [Resource Directory](#) uploaded to ELMS.

## Course Schedule

Week	Date	Readings due	Assignment due (by 3pm)	Topic
1	Tues, 1/28	This syllabus		Course Introduction
	Thurs, 1/30	Miller, Chapter 1: The Building Blocks of Relationships	Pre-Class Quiz #1	Introduction to Relationship Science
2	Tues, 2/4	Miller, Chapter 2: Research Methods	Pre-Class Quiz #2	Research Methods in Relationship Science
	Thurs, 2/6	Miller, Chapter 3: Attraction	Pre-Class Quiz #3	<i>Interpersonal Attraction: Physical Attractiveness</i>
3	Tues, 2/11			<i>Interpersonal Attraction: Exposure, Proximity, Similarity, and Other Factors</i>
	Thurs, 2/13			Relationship Initiation
4	Tues, 2/18	Miller, Chapter 6: Interdependency	Pre-Class Quiz #4	<i>Features of Relationships: Interdependency</i>
	Thurs, 2/20		Case Study Assignment #1	<i>Features of Relationships: Self-Disclosure and Responsiveness</i>
5	Tues, 2/25			<i>Features of Relationships: Trust and Attachment</i>
	Thurs, 2/27			<b>MIDTERM EXAM #1</b> <b>**major grading event**</b>
6	Tues, 3/3	Miller, Chapter 9: Sexuality	Pre-Class Quiz #5	<i>Features of Relationships: Sex &amp; Sexuality</i>
	Thurs, 3/5	Miller, Chapter 8: Love	Pre-Class Quiz #6	<i>Features of Relationships: Love</i>
7	Tues, 3/10		Case Study Assignment #2	<i>Features of Relationships: Monogamy &amp; Nonmonogamy</i>
	Thurs, 3/12	Miller, Chapter 5: Communication	Pre-Class Quiz #7	<i>Features of Relationships: Communication</i>
	Tues, 3/17	<b>**Spring break**</b>		
	Thurs, 3/19			

8	Tues, 3/24			<i>Features of Relationships: Interpersonal Differences</i>
	Thurs, 3/26	Miller, Chapter 7: Friendship	Pre-Class Quiz #8	<i>Features of Relationships: Friendship</i>
9	Tues, 3/31	Miller, Chapter 4: Social Cognition	Pre-Class Quiz #9	<i>Impact of Relationships: Perceiving the Self and the World</i>
	Thurs, 4/2		Case Study Assignment #3	<i>Impact of Relationships: Health and Wellbeing</i>
10	Tues, 4/7			<i>Impact of Relationships: Goal Achievement</i>
	Thurs, 4/9			<b>MIDTERM EXAM #2</b> <b>**major grading event**</b>
11	Tues, 4/14	Miller, Chapter 10: Stresses and Strains	Pre-Class Quiz #10	<i>Relationship Problems: Stressors</i>
	Thurs, 4/16		Case Study Assignment #4	<i>Relationship Problems: Mental Health Concerns</i>
12	Tues, 4/21	Miller, Chapter 11: Conflict	Pre-Class Quiz #11	<i>Relationship Problems: Conflict</i>
	Thurs, 4/23	Miller, Chapter 12: Power and Violence	Pre-Class Quiz #12	<i>Relationship Problems: Power &amp; Violence</i>
13	Tues, 4/28	Miller, Chapter 13: Dissolution and Loss	Pre-Class Quiz #13	Relationship Termination
	Thurs, 4/30		Case Study Assignment #5	Coping with Relationship Loss
14	Tues, 5/5	Miller, Chapter 14: Maintaining and Repairing Relationships	Pre-Class Quiz #14	<i>Relationship Maintenance: Behavior</i>
	Thurs, 5/7			<i>Relationship Maintenance: Cognition</i>
15	Tues, 5/12		Case Study Assignment #6	Wrap-up and Review
	TBD			<b>FINAL EXAM</b> <b>**major grading event**</b>