PSY 350
The Psychology of Human Relationships
S2 Day 2017

Department of Psychology

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### General Information

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**Credit points**
3

**Prerequisites**
39cp at 100 level or above

**Corequisites**

**Co-badged status**
Unit description
Human beings are fundamentally social creatures who depend on one another for their survival and well-being, both physical and psychological. Everyone is born with powerful needs for love, friendship and belonging; similarly, we fear and avoid rejection, loneliness and the disapproval of others. Despite the central role they play in our lives, however, developing and maintaining happy and healthy relationships with family members, spouses, friends and even workmates is not easy, and professional psychologists spend the bulk of their time dealing with clients' relationship problems. This unit examines a variety of relationship topics from a social psychological perspective including attraction, love- and mate selection; kinship, friendship and enmity; jealousy, betrayal and forgiveness; communication, conflict and aggression; and the processes involved in relationship breakdown and repair. Throughout, there is a strong emphasis on critically examining so-called 'pop' psychological approaches to relationships, and students are encouraged to examine the complexities of relationship structures and processes from different cultural perspectives.

Important Academic Dates
Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at https://students.mq.edu.au/important-dates

Learning Outcomes

1. explain contemporary issues in the psychology of human relationships literature and the theories from which they are derived
2. analyse the strengths and weaknesses of competing explanations of issues in the field of human relationships
3. understand the strengths and weaknesses of research methods used in relationship research
4. apply findings from empirical research on relationships to real-world relationship issues
5. critique so-called pop-psychological approaches to relationships from an informed, scientific perspective and effectively communicate findings

Assessment Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Hurdle</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>During semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Report</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>4th September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>16th October</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

https://unitguides.mq.edu.au/unit_offerings/72446/unit_guide/print
Final examination

Due: **End of semester**
Weighting: **40%**
Hurdle: **No**

Oral presentation

Due: **During semester**
Weighting: **10%**

Each student is to present a brief talk on the paper they wrote about for their Research Report.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- 1. explain contemporary issues in the psychology of human relationships literature and the theories from which they are derived
- 3. understand the strengths and weaknesses of research methods used in relationship research
- 4. apply findings from empirical research on relationships to real-world relationship issues
- 5. critique so-called pop-psychological approaches to relationships from an informed, scientific perspective and effectively communicate findings

Research Report

Due: **4th September**
Weighting: **20%**

The purpose of this report is to give students some experience of finding and critically reviewing relevant psychological literature on a relationship-related question of their own choosing. Markers will be looking for a well-structured, coherent and thoughtful critique of the chosen literature.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- 1. explain contemporary issues in the psychology of human relationships literature and the theories from which they are derived
- 3. understand the strengths and weaknesses of research methods used in relationship research
- 4. apply findings from empirical research on relationships to real-world relationship issues
- 5. critique so-called pop-psychological approaches to relationships from an informed, scientific perspective and effectively communicate findings
**Essay**
Due: **16th October**  
Weighting: **30%**

A 1200-word essay on one of the topics provided in the second week of semester.

On successful completion you will be able to:

1. explain contemporary issues in the psychology of human relationships literature and the theories from which they are derived
2. analyse the strengths and weaknesses of competing explanations of issues in the field of human relationships
3. understand the strengths and weaknesses of research methods used in relationship research
4. critique so-called pop-psychological approaches to relationships from an informed, scientific perspective and effectively communicate findings

**Final examination**
Due: **End of semester**  
Weighting: **40%**

An 80-item, multiple-choice exam on material from lectures and lecture readings.

On successful completion you will be able to:

4. apply findings from empirical research on relationships to real-world relationship issues
5. critique so-called pop-psychological approaches to relationships from an informed, scientific perspective and effectively communicate findings

**Delivery and Resources**

A 2-hour lecture is presented every Tuesday at 4-6pm in C5CT1. Lectures are also accessible via ECHO recordings. Tutorials are compulsory and comprise one, 2-hour class every fortnight, beginning in Week 2.

**Unit Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Lecturer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Unit guide** PSY 350 The Psychology of Human Relationships

https://unitguides.mq.edu.au/unit_offerings/72446/unit_guide/print
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Pages</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Tutorials/Weeks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/8</td>
<td>Human Relationships: Types, functions &amp; processes</td>
<td>Chapters 1 and 2</td>
<td>No tutorials this week</td>
<td>Professor Julie Fitness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8/8</td>
<td>Attraction, attachment and pairbonding</td>
<td>Chapters 5 and 7</td>
<td>Tutorials begin this week</td>
<td>Professor Julie Fitness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>15/8</td>
<td>Mate selection: The psychology of beauty</td>
<td>Chapters 4 and 6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dr. Ian Stephen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>22/8</td>
<td>Relationship cognition – perceiving, thinking, judging and remembering in close relationships</td>
<td>Chapters 3 and 8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Professor Julie Fitness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>29/8</td>
<td>Feelings and emotions in close relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Professor Julie Fitness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>5/9</td>
<td>Communication and conflict in relationships</td>
<td>Chapters 9 and 11</td>
<td></td>
<td>Professor Julie Fitness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>12/9</td>
<td>Families and family dynamics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Professor Julie Fitness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BREAK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3/10</td>
<td>Relationships and the internet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ms. Alessa Teunisse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from Policy Central. Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:


In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the Learning and Teaching Category of Policy Central.

**Student Code of Conduct**

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: [https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/)

**Results**

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in eStudent. For more information visit [ask.mq.edu.au](http://ask.mq.edu.au).

**Student Support**

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit [http://students.mq.edu.au/support/](http://students.mq.edu.au/support/)

**Learning Skills**

Learning Skills ([mq.edu.au/learningskills](http://mq.edu.au/learningskills)) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- Workshops
- StudyWise
- Academic Integrity Module for Students
- Ask a Learning Adviser

**Student Enquiry Service**

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at [ask.mq.edu.au](http://ask.mq.edu.au)

**Equity Support**

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the Disability Service who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

**IT Help**

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit [http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/](http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/).

When using the University’s IT, you must adhere to the Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy. The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.
Graduate Capabilities

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- 1. explain contemporary issues in the psychology of human relationships literature and the theories from which they are derived
- 2. analyse the strengths and weaknesses of competing explanations of issues in the field of human relationships
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Assessment tasks

- Oral presentation
- Research Report
- Essay
- Final examination

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:
Learning outcomes

• 1. explain contemporary issues in the psychology of human relationships literature and the theories from which they are derived
• 2. analyse the strengths and weaknesses of competing explanations of issues in the field of human relationships
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Assessment tasks

• Oral presentation
• Research Report
• Essay
• Final examination

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

• 2. analyse the strengths and weaknesses of competing explanations of issues in the field of human relationships
• 3. understand the strengths and weaknesses of research methods used in relationship research
• 4. apply findings from empirical research on relationships to real-world relationship issues
• 5. critique so-called pop-psychological approaches to relationships from an informed, scientific perspective and effectively communicate findings

Assessment tasks

• Research Report
Creative and Innovative
Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

**Learning outcome**

- 4. apply findings from empirical research on relationships to real-world relationship issues

Effective Communication
We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

**Learning outcomes**

- 4. apply findings from empirical research on relationships to real-world relationship issues
- 5. critique so-called pop-psychological approaches to relationships from an informed, scientific perspective and effectively communicate findings

**Assessment tasks**

- Oral presentation
- Research Report
- Essay

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens
As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:
Learning outcomes

• 4. apply findings from empirical research on relationships to real-world relationship issues
• 5. critique so-called pop-psychological approaches to relationships from an informed, scientific perspective and effectively communicate findings

Assessment tasks

• Essay
• Final examination

Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

• 5. critique so-called pop-psychological approaches to relationships from an informed, scientific perspective and effectively communicate findings

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

• 5. critique so-called pop-psychological approaches to relationships from an informed, scientific perspective and effectively communicate findings

Assessment tasks

• Essay
• Final examination