PSYC UN3691
Interpersonal Cognition Seminar:
Close Relationships, Identity, & Memory

Course Information
Location: Sch. 200C
Term: Spring 2019
Days: Tuesdays
Time: 2:10-4 PM

Instructor Information
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mr3352@columbia.edu
Office hours: TBD or by appt.
Office: 329 Schermerhorn Hall

Course Overview: What makes people ‘click’? How do close relationships influence our thought processes, behaviors, and identities? How do our conversations with relationship partners change our memories of events and our perceptions of reality? And finally, what are the conscious and non-conscious cognitive mechanisms underlying these processes? The primary objective of this course will be to provide you with the relevant literature, theoretical background, methodological proficiency, and critical thinking and communication skills to articulate your own answers to these questions, and to propose innovative future studies in the field.

Prerequisites: Introduction to Social Psychology (PSYC 2630) and/or Introduction to Social Cognition (PSYC 2640), a Research Methods course, and instructor permission. Students who have taken none of the pre-requisites but who have other relevant background may be admitted with instructor permission.

Course Objectives: My goal is for you to learn to think like a relationships researcher and become a more critical consumer of relationship science. I hope that students will learn to:

1. Talk about relationship science
   a. Gain a broad theoretical understanding of topics related to close relationships
   b. Constructively discuss relevant literature in class
   c. Develop their communication skills, both oral and written

2. Think critically about relationship science
   a. Critically evaluate theoretical approaches and research methods in the field
   b. Critique specific close relationships papers

3. Innovate in relationship science
   a. Draw on course content to develop their own original hypotheses and experimental paradigms
   b. Design & write a research proposal empirically testing one of these hypotheses

Course Description:
This course will explore how close relationships influence our conscious and non-conscious thought processes and behaviors. As an introduction, we will read several articles giving a broad overview of recent developments in the field of close relationships and interpersonal cognition.
Next, in Section 1, we will explore how shared experiences with others influence the initial development of interpersonal closeness (e.g., What kinds of conversations or experiences make people feel close to each other?).

In Section 2, we will focus on how our sense of self—our identity—changes in close relationships, both converging with our partner’s identity (e.g., How do close partners merge their identities?), and diverging from our initial identity (e.g., How do relationships expand the self?).

In Section 3, we will explore how close relationships influence the ways in which we reach our goals and our ideal selves (e.g., How do partners help us become who we want to be, and who they want us to be?) and how partners develop interdependent goal systems and shared goals (e.g., How do partners non-consciously influence each other’s goal pursuit?).

In Section 4, we will explore the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral repercussions of the interaction patterns we develop with our partners, such as attachment styles—the extent to which we are comfortable with intimacy and fear rejection (e.g., How do attachment styles influence both our behaviors in close relationships and the way we relate to the outside world?).

In Section 5, we will focus on the influence of communication in close relationships on our memories, such as storytelling, collaborative remembering, and transactive memory systems (e.g., How does recalling an event together change how we remember it? How do partners develop joint memory systems and co-construct the past?).

Finally, in Section 6, we will synthesize previous topics and delve into shared reality in close relationships—how the process of making sense of the world with our close others influences relationship processes (e.g., How do our interactions with partners shape our perceptions of reality?).

Throughout the course, you will propose several hypotheses related to the material we are covering, and finally, you will write a paper proposing a potential research study in the field.

**Course Role in Departmental Curriculum:**

This seminar is designed particularly for undergraduates who are majoring in Psychology and for students participating in the Psychology Postbac Certificate Program. Senior majors & Postbacs will have priority in registration, followed by junior majors followed by non-majors. The course will fulfill the following degree requirements:

- For the Psychology major or concentration in the College and in G.S., for the Psychology minor in Engineering, and for the Psychology Postbac certificate, it will meet the Group III (Social, Personality, and Abnormal) distribution requirement.
- For Psychology Postbac certificate students, and for Psychology majors who enter Columbia in Fall 2013 or later, it will fulfill the seminar requirement.
- It will meet one term of the social science requirement of G.S., provided that students obtain the necessary permissions and have taken the prerequisite psychology courses. Majors will have priority over students who are taking the course for social science credit.
Schedule of Reading and Assignments:
These articles will be available to download as pdf’s on Canvas. The calendar below outlines topics and reading assignments for each class. This list remains subject to revision.

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<tr>
<th>Week/Date</th>
<th>Discussion Topics</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<td><strong>Introduction &amp; Overview</strong></td>
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<td>TBD</td>
<td>Course objectives &amp; expectations</td>
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<td>Intro to Close Relationships</td>
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<td>Close relationships overview</td>
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<td>Implicit processes in close relationships</td>
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<td>The Interpersonal Self</td>
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<td><strong>Section 1: Attraction &amp; the Development of Closeness</strong></td>
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<td>The development of initial closeness</td>
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<td>TBD</td>
<td>Developing interpersonal closeness</td>
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<td>Online Dating</td>
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<td>Communication &amp; responsiveness</td>
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<td><strong>Section 2: Identification, Identity Overlap &amp; Self-Expansion</strong></td>
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<td>Self-other identity overlap</td>
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<td>Cognitive interdependence</td>
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<td>Identification and ideal selves</td>
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<td>Partner verification</td>
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<td>Michelangelo Phenomenon</td>
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<td>Significant others &amp; goal pursuit</td>
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<td>Capitalization</td>
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<td>Exploration &amp; secure base</td>
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<td><strong>Section 4: Attachment Styles &amp; Relationship Schemas</strong></td>
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<td>Adult attachment styles</td>
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<td>Attachment and compassion</td>
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<td>Priming attachment</td>
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### Section 5: Communication, Memory, & Relationship Narratives

| 11 | TBD | - Storytelling in close relationships  
- Collaborative remembering  
- Relationship narratives | McGregor & Holmes (1999)  
Hirst, W., & Echterhoff, G. (2012)  
Harris et al. (2011) |

| 12 | TBD | - Transactive memory  
- Socially distributed cognition  
- Listening and co-narrating | Wegner et al. (1991)  
Barnier et al. (2008)  
Bavelas et al. (2000) |

**ASSIGNMENT: Hypothesis 5 due**

### Section 6: Shared Reality in Close Relationships & Course Wrap-Up

| 13 | TBD | - Shared reality  
- Shared worldviews  
- Course wrap-up | Echterhoff et al. (2009)  
Hardin & Conley (2001)  
Rossignac-Milon & Higgins (2018) |

| 14 | TBD | - Proposal presentations | **ASSIGNMENT: Final research proposal due** |

### Course Grading & Requirements

| %  | 1. Class participation  
|    | 2. Thought papers  
|    | 3. Mini-Proposals  
|    | 4. Discussion leading  
| 35 | 5. Research proposal (10% presentation, 25% written paper) |

#### 1. Class participation: 18%
You are expected to attend and actively participate in every class. You should not only share your own thoughts on the readings throughout the class, but also raise questions encouraging your peers to share theirs. Additionally, you will be expected to give your peers constructive feedback on their hypotheses. Your participation will be evaluated after every class – as such, you will be penalized for any unexcused absences. Feel free to come see me anytime throughout the course to ask for feedback or suggestions regarding your class participation (or of course, to further discuss an idea that was raised in class!). I aim to help you develop your communication and critical thinking skills throughout the course. You will be required to drop by my office hours for ~10 minutes or schedule an appointment at some point during weeks 4-6, so that we can chat about your class participation and how you’re finding the course thus far. Participating in class can be more difficult for some students, and if that's the case, I encourage you to come see me at the beginning of the semester so that we can work out ways you can contribute. In these cases, later participation will be weighed more heavily to reward improvement.

#### 2. Thought papers: 11%
By 9 PM the night before each class, you will be required to post a thought paper to the Discussion Board on Canvas (roughly 150-250 words in length, single-spaced). The goal of these thought papers is to promote active reading and critical thinking, and to stimulate thoughts to discuss in class: you can raise theoretical or methodological questions related to the readings, share insights or comment on the implications of empirical findings, or relate the readings to previous class discussions. Try to integrate two or more readings into each thought paper. Bring a copy of these to class (electronic is fine) and prepare to share your thoughts with your peers. These will not be formally graded but will be checked for completion/effort (each worth 1 point [those completed but with a clear lack of effort will receive half credit – note that greater length does not necessarily indicate greater effort!]). Discussion leaders will not be required to post thought papers for the class they lead, but they will be encouraged to skim their peers’ before class, with the goal of integrating some of these into the class discussion. Additionally, students can miss one thought paper during the semester at no penalty (but 1 extra credit point will be added to your final grade in the course if you complete all 12 of them!).

3. Mini-Proposals/ Hypotheses: 20%

Five times throughout the course (at the end of each section 1-5), you will complete “mini research proposals” or “Hypotheses”, in which you (1) propose an original hypothesis and study design to test an empirical question raised by the readings in that section, (2) present this hypothesis to your peers in class, and (3) discuss each other’s hypotheses and workshop these as a group.

For each assignment, you will propose a mini-hypothesis drawing on the readings from each section. Roughly ¾ page single-spaced in length, these will briefly outline the purpose, design, and predictions of a potential study one could run to answer a question inspired by the readings. At the top of the paper should be the hypothesis: a bolded, testable prediction, stated succinctly (it should not be more than 2 sentences in length). In addition to the hypothesis, you should briefly describe the method of the study and the results they expect in 1-2 paragraphs. The entire assignment should not exceed one single-spaced page in length. These will be uploaded as a pdf assignment to Canvas (due before the start of class), and then briefly presented and discussed during that class. We will informally workshop these hypotheses in class in pairs, small groups, and through broader class discussions to give each other feedback. I will provide several examples on the first day of class to give an overview of the types of ideas and methodologies you can propose (which we will discuss and critique together), and I will also post an example assignment you can refer back to on Canvas. These will be graded out of 4 points for originality, research logic, relevance to the readings, and clarity (we will discuss each of these concepts at the beginning of the course, so that you have a more concrete idea of what these terms mean). The first hypothesis will be practice: it will be graded on a pass/fail basis (pass=turning it in), given that it will be your first shot, and we will workshop these in pairs and small groups instead of presenting them to the entire class. In addition to the peer feedback during class, for each assignment, I will provide feedback afterwards via Kami on Canvas about how one could improve it for you to keep in mind for the next one. You will then have the chance to edit your hypothesis and post it on your edblog, so that you can have a place with all of the research ideas you generate throughout the course. Throughout our discussions in class, we will be talking about how to best present scientific proposals in a clear way and how to constructively
discuss and critique scientific ideas. The overall goal of these assignments is to develop this skill-set to gear up for the final Research Proposal and Presentation, and more broadly, to become active participants in our discipline and critical consumers of science.

4. Discussion leading: 20%

Once during the semester, you will lead the class discussion (a list of discussion time-slots will be posted on Canvas after the first class so that each student can select a topic of interest). You will give a brief 5-min overview and synthesis of the required readings for that day, describe several supplemental readings (that you and I will arrange beforehand), and then moderate a stimulating class discussion. I encourage you to try integrating your peers’ thought papers when relevant. It will be your role to sustain a constructive discussion involving (ideally) all of your classmates. I will lead the first class discussion to give you an example of what types of discussion questions and moderation styles can be used, along with class activities that you can use to stimulate discussion. Discussion questions might include: What is the hypothesis that is tested in this article? What are the implications/ the meaning of the findings? What alternative explanations did the researchers rule out (or not!) in their study? How do these readings answer a particular question in the syllabus course description? You and I will meet before you lead the discussion to go over your class plan. Additionally, I will provide you with several resources for discussion-leading tips on Canvas, and I will occasionally step in as needed to help moderate the discussion (so you won’t be leading entirely on your own).

5. Research Proposal: 35% (10% presentation, 25% written paper)

On the last day of class, you will submit a research proposal (approximately 12-15 double-spaced pages in length, not including references) to me. Inspired by content covered in class, this proposal can build on a previous hypothesis you posted, or an entirely new idea. We will gear up to this project by work-shopping hypotheses in class, so that you all will feel more comfortable designing your own experiments. You will meet with me individually during week 10 or 11 to discuss your idea, and are welcome to come see me to discuss it earlier (and later) as needed. I am here to help! I will also provide you with tips for conducting literature searches, and we will discuss the proposal in greater detail throughout the semester.

Proposal Breakdown:

a. Introduction (4-5 pages): Research question & relevant literature review
b. Proposed Method (2-3 pages): Experimental procedure & measures
c. Predicted Results (2-3 pages): Description & illustration of anticipated results
d. Discussion (3-4 pages): Implications, limitations, & future directions
e. References (1-2 pages): ideally 14+ references (the majority of which should be beyond class readings)

Your papers will be graded based on creativity and originality of the proposed theoretical idea (15%), thoroughness of the literature review (20%), integration of relevant and empirically valid methodology (20%), logic of the predicted results (20%), thoughtfulness of discussion (20%), and overall presentation (grammar, spelling, APA formatting, etc.) (5%).
See the rubric on Canvas for more specific grading details. We will also discuss each of these components throughout the term. In addition, you will present your research proposal (approximately 10-12 minutes) to your classmates on the last day of class. I will discuss these presentations in more detail throughout the term.

**Course Policies**

**Attendance:**
Absences will be excused with the presentation of proper documentation (i.e. Doctor’s or Dean’s note). Please inform me of the absence as soon as possible. You will still be responsible for completing the work due that particular class session. In the event that you require a make-up assignment (e.g. for leading a discussion), you also need a letter as indicated above. Unexcused absences will result in points deducted from your class participation grade.

**Late work:** Unless excused by a Doctor’s or Dean’s note:
- Thought papers: Given that the purpose of thought papers is to prepare for the class discussion, you cannot submit a thought paper after class. Some leniency will be afforded for timing: half of your grade (0.5 points) will be deducted past the 10 PM deadline as long as it is submitted before 10 am the morning of the class day. This policy is to give your peers leading the discussion adequate time to integrate your posts into their class plan.
- Hypotheses: 20% of your grade will be deducted per day late.
- Research proposal: 5% of your grade will be deducted per day late.

**Class Etiquette:**
Cell phones are not allowed to be taken out in class and should be kept on silent (not vibrate). Laptops or tablets may be used for anything course related. However, out of courtesy to your classmates and respect for your own learning, please refrain from using these for any other purpose.

**Students with Disabilities:**
If you are a student with a disability and have a DS-certified ‘Accommodation Letter’ please come to my office hours by the end of Week 2 to confirm your accommodation needs. If you believe that you might have a disability that requires accommodation, you should contact Disability Services at 212-854-2388 and disability@columbia.edu.

**Academic Integrity:**

**Columbia University Undergraduate Guide to Academic Integrity:**

**Faculty Statement on Academic Integrity:**
The intellectual venture in which we are all engaged requires of faculty and students alike the highest level of personal and academic integrity. As members of an academic community, each one of us bears the responsibility to participate in scholarly discourse and research in a manner characterized by intellectual honesty and scholarly integrity.
Scholarship, by its very nature, is an iterative process, with ideas and insights building one upon the other. Collaborative scholarship requires the study of other scholars’ work, the free discussion of such work, and the explicit acknowledgement of those ideas in any work that inform our own. This exchange of ideas relies upon a mutual trust that sources, opinions, facts, and insights will be properly noted and carefully credited.

In practical terms, this means that, as students, you must be responsible for the full citations of others' ideas in all of your research papers and projects; you must be scrupulously honest when taking your examinations; you must always submit your own work and not that of another student, scholar, or internet agent. Any breach of this intellectual responsibility is a breach of faith with the rest of our academic community. It undermines our shared intellectual culture, and it cannot be tolerated. Students failing to meet these responsibilities should anticipate being asked to leave Columbia.

**Columbia College Honor Code:**
The Columbia College Student Council, on behalf of the whole student body, has resolved that maintaining academic integrity is the preserve of all members of our intellectual community – including and especially students. As a consequence, all Columbia College students make the following pledge:

We, the undergraduate students of Columbia University, hereby pledge to value the integrity of our ideas and the ideas of others by honestly presenting our work, respecting authorship, and striving not simply for answers but for understanding in the pursuit of our common scholastic goals. In this way, we seek to build an academic community governed by our collective efforts, diligence, and Code of Honor.

In addition, all Columbia College students are committed to the following honor code:

I affirm that I will not plagiarize, use unauthorized materials, or give or receive illegitimate help on assignments, papers, or examinations. I will also uphold equity and honesty in the evaluation of my work and the work of others. I do so to sustain a community built around this Code of Honor.

For more information, contact:
Nicole Allicock, CC’18 and CCSC President for Policy
Abigail Porter, CC’17 and CCSC Vice President for Policy
Matthew Forrest, CC’17 and CCSC Academic Affairs Representative

If found guilty of cheating or plagiarism, you will receive a zero for that assignment and be sent to the Dean (www.college.columbia.edu/academics/disciplinaryprocess).

Citation should follow APA guidelines: http://www.apastyle.org/. If you have any doubt throughout the semester about how to cite something, or whether it would constitute as plagiarism, feel free to ask me.

**Academic support services:**
Writing Center - https://www.college.columbia.edu/core/uwp/writing-center
Columbia Libraries - http://library.columbia.edu/
Readings (these will be posted as PDF’s on Canvas):

Week 2:


Week 3:


Week 4:


Week 5:


**Week 6:**


**Week 7:**


**Week 8:**


Week 9:


Week 10:


Week 11:


Week 12:


**Week 13:**

