

Feeling in a Social World: Integrating Affective Science and Relationship Science

PSYC3665 Fall 2026
Tuesdays 4:10-6pm, Schermerhorn 200C

Essential Course Information

Instructor information:

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Office: Schermerhorn 324

Drop-in hours: by appointment

Course Description:

What is emotion regulation? What does it have to do with the social world? This course dives into the intimate links between our social relationships and emotional lives that unfold over time. We will draw from empirical and theoretical readings from a range of disciplines, with a primary focus on affective science and relationship science. This class will encourage students to lean into their personal experiences to identify consequential phenomena, and be rigorous about operationalizing them using quantitative methodologies. At the end of the course, students will be equipped with a researcher's mindset: a perceptive eye for observing social relationships and emotions, a bold spirit for cross-pollinating ideas across subfields, an informed reviewer of study methodologies, and a clear science communicator of our profound interdependence with one another.

Learning Objectives:

- **Identify** consequential social-emotional phenomena to study
- **Describe** theories and findings from affective science and relationship science
- **Critique** study methodologies common in affective science and relationship science
- **Generate** an original answer to the question: what is the relationship between emotion, emotion regulation and the social world?
- Have epiphanies!

Prerequisites

Instructor permission, plus an introductory psychology course (e.g., PSYC 1001), and one research methods (e.g. PSYC 1420) OR statistics course (PSYC 1610).

Admission to the Seminar

If there is more student interest than there is space, priority will go to undergrad Psychology, Cognitive Science and Neuroscience & Behavior majors and Psychology post-bacs in the Certificate Program. Other things being equal, students who have the best preparation and strongest motivation for our course topics will be selected.

Role in the Psychology Curriculum:

This course fulfills the following requirements of the following programs:

- Psychology Majors & Post-Bacs: Seminar requirement or Group 3 requirement

Learning Philosophy

‘Nothing is a mistake. There’s no win and no fail. There is only make.’ - *John Cage*

A class is a process, an independent organism with its own goals and dynamics. It is always something more than even the most imaginative lesson plan can predict. ~ *Thomas P. Kasulis*

Assessment

Course component	Points	Deadline
Pre-course survey	6	Sep 15
Attendance & Participation	20	-
Insight Labs Discussion	10 10	End of every class
Reading Log	22	Monday 12pm
Student Presentation	20	Based on your presentation time
Mid-course Reflection	6	Nov 3
In-class Thought Paper	26	Dec 8

Grade Breakdown

A+: 97-100	B+: 87-89	C+: 77-79	D: 60-69
A: 93-96	B: 83-86	C: 73-76	F: 0-59
A-: 90-92	B-: 80-82	C-: 70-72	

Pre-course Survey (6 pts)

The purpose of this quiz is to ensure that you have familiarized yourself with the course assignments and policies, and for me to get to know you better. You may reference the syllabus when taking the quiz.

Attendance & Participation (20 pts)

Attendance is mandatory. Everyone gets 1 free pass for missing class, no questions asked, but you do need to email me beforehand. Further absences need to be documented to be excused. Please reach out to me proactively to decide on a plan to make up the materials missed.

Attendance & Participation is graded based on your participation in [Insight Labs](#) and [Discussion](#) during the student presentation.

Insight Labs (10 pts)

Insight Labs are a sandbox for active learning. I will offer exercises (both individual and small-group based) that will help us engage deeply with the material. Each week, you will earn 1 point towards your participation grade (10 points for 10% of your grade). To give you flexibility, I will automatically drop the lowest score. If you are ever concerned about your ability to participate in class or your participation grade, I encourage you to come to me so that we can work out a plan.

Writing Exercises

You will practice synthesizing, analyzing, and applying ideas in the moment with a 10-min writing exercise. I will provide pen and paper. There are two kinds of writing exercises:

1. **AI Labs.** You will be given a short AI-generated summary or response and asked to critique, revise, and/or extend it. The goal is to strengthen your ability to use AI critically, spotting errors or oversimplifications and deepening the analysis. The focus is on *working with AI, not learning from AI*.
2. **Prompt Labs.** You will write a response (1 paragraph, roughly 5-7 sentences, ~100-150 words) to a prompt based on the week's readings. These are meant to strengthen your skills in articulating and synthesizing ideas quickly.

You will complete a total of **11 writing exercises** total across the semester. Your response should be thoughtful and engaged, connect to course ideas, and show clear effort.

Group Challenges

During class, we will do in-class challenges where you will address a prompt as a group. This exercise is meant to help you learn from each other while deepening your understanding of class material.

Discussion (10 pts)

General Guidelines for Student Discussion:

- Be respectful and kind to your peers. Listen actively when others are speaking. Let someone else speak if you have shared your thoughts a few times already in a class period.
- Ask questions that occur to you even if you think it's "stupid." Respond to what others have said and build a conversation.
- Address your comments to your peers and maintain eye contact with them. Whenever possible, cite specific evidence to back up what you're saying.
- Listen actively to class discussion and try to capture the main points. Revisit your notes after class to fill in any gaps and make copy edits.

Reading log (22 pts)

You will be required to keep a reading log to record your thoughts while completing your readings. The reading log will take place on Courseworks Discussion Boards (accessible via the *Assignments* tab). Your log should include a response to the week's guiding questions, as well as a reflection on (at least) 2 quotations from any of the assigned readings.

I will check the reading log each week for completion, timeliness and thoughtfulness of comments. Graded on a two point scale. *2 points* (full credit, thoughtful and engaged response directly addresses the task, connects to course ideas, and shows clear effort); *1 point*: (partial credit, minimal effort, vague response, or partial engagement with the prompt); and *0 points* (no submission, off-topic, or clear lack of effort).

Think of the reading log as a weekly practice that builds up your annotated bibliography for the final [in-class thought paper](#).

Student Presentation (20 pts)

Each student will briefly present a chosen empirical paper during one class period. Your **10- to 15-minute** presentation should briefly cover the paper's important points and scientific value, recap the study's methods and results, and also offer a critical assessment of the work in the context of other course materials, including what is novel, potential pitfalls/misinterpretation, and possible future directions.

Your job as presenter is to be our “resident expert” on the topic for this week, so while you can assume everyone has read the paper, your presentation should help to clarify any particularly tricky methods or results from the studies, and address any questions that your fellow students have. Presentations should also include questions to spark our discussion. This means that even though you’ll only be preparing up to 15 minutes’ worth of material, you likely won’t get to your final slide until 30+ minutes into class.

Presentations will be graded on clarity, command of audience, quality of presentation, and thoughtfulness of ideas. I’ll be there to help you with this as you prepare your presentation and during class, so ask as many questions as you need, and feel free to send me drafts of your slides.

Note: Reading logs are optional during the week of your presentation.

Mid-course Reflection (6 pts)

Halfway through the course, I will ask you to reflect on how you think you are doing in the course. What might you continue doing, and what might you do differently? Do you want to revise the goals you set for yourself at the beginning of the semester? Why? This reflection is graded for completion.

In-class Thought Paper (26 pts)

This two-hour, in-person exam is replacing the traditional 10-page paper that is often submitted as part of seminars. The thought paper will cover the full arc of the course (Weeks 1–13) and will be handwritten. You will demonstrate your ability to connect theories and methods about emotion, emotion regulation and social relationships. The exam will include:

- **One longer integrative essay** (chosen from multiple prompts) that asks you to bring together theories and evidence on topics across affective science and relationship science.
- **One experimental design question** where you will propose a study testing a hypothesis about a socio-emotional phenomena of your choice.
- **One shorter creative essay** asking you to explain a core concept (e.g., emotion, attachment, emotion regulation) to a lay audience or apply theories to real-world social-emotional challenges.

While this may sound intimidating, you will have the preparation and resources you need to tackle this (see [Reading Log](#) and [Writing Exercises](#)). I will also be available for consultations. You may bring a 2-page, single-spaced annotated bibliography to the final exam

(0.5 inch margins, 10 point Arial font). All other materials are closed-book. Grading will emphasize quality of argument, integration across readings, clarity of writing, and originality.

General Lesson Plan

4:10-5pm: Overview + [Insight Labs](#)

5-5:10pm: Break

5:10pm-6pm: [Presentations](#) and [Discussion](#)

Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Readings
Sep 8	Overview + Sign up for presentations	see Readings
Sep 15	What is an emotion?	
Sep 22	What is emotion regulation?	
Sep 29	Can emotion generation and emotion regulation be distinguished?	
Oct 6	Social emotion regulation	
Oct 13	Emotion regulation is motivated	
Oct 20	Attachment	
Oct 27	Emotion regulation and mental health	
Nov 3	Fall Break	
Nov 10	Relationship Science	

Nov 17	Dyadic processes	
Nov 24	Me, you and we-ness	
Dec 1	Implicit emotion regulation	
Dec 8	In-class Thought Paper	

Readings

* refers to empirical papers.

Week 1: What is an emotion?

- Gendron, M., & Feldman Barrett, L. (2009). Reconstructing the past: A century of ideas about emotion in psychology. *Emotion review*
- *Evers, C., Hopp, H., Gross, J. J., Fischer, A. H., Manstead, A. S., & Mauss, I. B. (2014). Emotion response coherence: a dual-process perspective. *Biol Psychol*, 98, 43-49.
- OPTIONAL: Barrett, L. F., Mesquita, B., Ochsner, K. N., & Gross, J. J. (2007). The experience of emotion. *Annu. Rev. Psychol.*, 58(1), 373-403.

Week 2: What is emotion regulation?

- Braunstein, L. M., Gross, J. J., & Ochsner, K. N. (2017). Explicit and implicit emotion regulation: a multi-level framework. *Social cognitive and affective neuroscience*, 12(10), 1545-1557.
- *Troy, A. S., Ford, B. Q., McRae, K., Zanolia, P., & Mauss, I. B. (2017). Change the things you can: Emotion regulation is more beneficial for people from lower than from higher socioeconomic status. *Emotion*, 17(1), 141.
- *Koval, P., Kalokerinos, E. K., Greenaway, K. H., Medland, H., Kuppens, P., Nezlek, J. B., ... & Gross, J. J. (2023). Emotion regulation in everyday life: Mapping global self-reports to daily processes. *Emotion*, 23(2), 357.
- OPTIONAL: Gross, J. J. (1999). Emotion regulation: Past, present, future. *Cognition & emotion*, 13(5), 551-573.

Week 3: Can emotion generation and emotion regulation be distinguished?

- Gross, J. J., & Feldman Barrett, L. (2011). Emotion generation and emotion regulation: One or two depends on your point of view. *Emotion review*, 3(1), 8-16.
- Thompson, R. A. (2011). Emotion and emotion regulation: Two sides of the developing coin. *Emotion Review*, 3(1), 53-61.
- *Sahi, R., Hull, T., Vine, V., & Nook, E. (2025). Large natural emotion vocabularies are linked with better mental health in psychotherapeutic conversations.

Week 4: Social emotion regulation

- *MacCann, C., Double, K. S., Olderbak, S., Austin, E. J., Pinkus, R. T., Walker, S. A., ... & Niven, K. (2025). What do we do to help others feel better? The eight strategies of the Regulating Others' Emotions Scale (ROES). *Emotion*, 25(2), 410.
- Arican-Dinc, B., & Gable, S. L. (2025). Dyadic Emotion Regulation. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 77.

Week 5: Motivated emotion regulation

- Tamir, M., Vishkin, A., & Gutentag, T. (2020). Emotion regulation is motivated. *Emotion*, 20(1), 115.
- *Tran, A., Greenaway, K. H., & Kalokerinos, E. K. (2025). Why do we engage in everyday interpersonal emotion regulation?. *Emotion*, 25(2), 300.

Week 6: Attachment

- *Zayas, V., Mischel, W., Shoda, Y., & Aber, J. L. (2011). Roots of adult attachment: Maternal caregiving at 18 months predicts adult peer and partner attachment. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 2(3), 289-297.
- *Waters, S. F., Virmani, E. A., Thompson, R. A., Meyer, S., Raikes, H. A., & Jochem, R. (2010). Emotion regulation and attachment: Unpacking two constructs and their association. *Journal of psychopathology and behavioral assessment*, 32(1), 37-47.
- Waters, T. E., & Roisman, G. I. (2019). The secure base script concept: An overview. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 25, 162-166.
- OPTIONAL: Fraley, R. C. (2019). Attachment in Adulthood: Recent Developments, Emerging Debates, and Future Directions. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 70(1), 401–422. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-010418-102813>

Week 7: Emotion regulation and mental health

- Lakey, B., & Orehek, E. (2011). Relational regulation theory: a new approach to explain the link between perceived social support and mental health. *Psychological review*, 118(3), 482.
- Hames, J. L., Hagan, C. R., & Joiner, T. E. (2013). Interpersonal processes in depression. *Annual review of clinical psychology*, 9(1), 355-377.
- *Peker, M., & Akkuş, K. (2026). Interpersonal emotion regulation and depression: A longitudinal investigation using bivariate latent change score models. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 262, 113966.

Week 8: Relationship science

- *Brown, C. L., Chen, K. H., Wells, J. L., Otero, M. C., Connelly, D. E., Levenson, R. W., & Fredrickson, B. L. (2022). Shared emotions in shared lives: Moments of co-experienced affect, more than individually experienced affect, linked to relationship quality. *Emotion*, 22(6), 1387.
- Finkel, E. J., Simpson, J. A., & Eastwick, P. W. (2017). The psychology of close relationships: Fourteen core principles. *Annual review of psychology*, 68(2017), 383-411.
- Rusbult, C. E., & Van Lange, P. A. (2003). Interdependence, interaction, and relationships. *Annual review of psychology*, 54(1), 351-375.

Week 9: Dyadic processes

- Back, M. D., & Kenny, D. A. (2010). The social relations model: How to understand dyadic processes. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 4(10), 855-870. (16 pages)
- Iida, M., Seidman, G., & Shrout, P. E. (2018). Models of interdependent individuals versus dyadic processes in relationship research. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 35(1), 59-88.
- *Stadler, G., Scholz, U., Bolger, N., Shrout, P. E., Knoll, N., & Lüscher, J. (2023). How is companionship related to romantic partners' affect, relationship satisfaction, and health behavior? Using a longitudinal dyadic score model to understand daily and couple-level effects of a dyadic predictor. *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being*, 15(4), 1530-1554.
- Burleson, B. R., & Goldsmith, D. J. (1996). How the comforting process works: Alleviating emotional distress through conversationally induced reappraisals. In *Handbook of communication and emotion* (pp. 245-280). Academic Press.
- *Laurenceau, J. P., Barrett, L. F., & Rovine, M. J. (2005). The interpersonal process model of intimacy in marriage: a daily-diary and multilevel modeling approach. *Journal of family psychology*, 19(2), 314.

Week 10: Representations of Self, Other and We-ness

- Andersen, S. M., & Chen, S. (2002). The relational self: an interpersonal social-cognitive theory. *Psychological review*, 109(4), 619.
- Emery, L. F., McGorray, E. L., Hughes, E. K., & Elnakouri, A. (2025). Merging in close relationships. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 34(4), 253-260.
- *Walsh, C. M., & Neff, L. A. (2018). We're better when we blend: The benefits of couple identity fusion. *Self and Identity*, 17(5), 587-603.

Week 11: Implicit emotion regulation:

- Butler, E. A. (2011). Temporal interpersonal emotion systems: The “TIES” that form relationships. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 15(4), 367-393.
- *Hornstein, E. A., & Eisenberger, N. I. (2017). Unpacking the buffering effect of social support figures: social support attenuates fear acquisition. *PloS one*, 12(5), e0175891.

Policies

Academic Integrity

Academic honesty includes presenting only your own work in exams and assignments, and correctly attributing others' ideas where appropriate. Taking credit for work that is not your own is a serious violation within the academic community, and anyone found to be cheating or plagiarizing in this class will be reported to the university. Detailed definitions and examples of academic dishonesty (and a rundown of the consequences) are available in Columbia's Guide to Academic Integrity (<http://www.college.columbia.edu/academics/integrity>).

Course Policy on AI. Generative AI tools like ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini can do a lot of heavy lifting in academic contexts. Such tools aren't inherently good or bad—it's all up to how you use them. To visualize our course policy, imagine AI as something like an e-bike: the electric motor removes most of the effort that would have been required of the cyclist in order to get them to their destination. If the goal is to get somewhere with the least exertion (and sweat) possible, then the e-bike is a godsend. But if part of the goal in cycling was for the rider to get some exercise and build physical strength or endurance, then the e-bike works against

those purposes. A recent study out of MIT supports this idea – researchers found that students using LLM-assisted essay writing (i.e., ChatGPT) engaged their cortical brain circuitry less than those using search engine-assisted (i.e., Google) and brain-only essay writing.

To dismount from this tortured metaphor: the purpose of this seminar is not primarily to teach you content (get you to some destination); our main goals are to give you experience in thinking critically, examining and critiquing past research and theories, and expressing your own ideas both orally and in writing. So: to the extent that AI can help you understand material, it can be useful—e.g., asking it to explain some of the statistical procedures or experimental design details in a paper you're reading. And if you find AI useful in helping to format or polish your presentations, that's fine too.

Ultimately, the ideas and words you share in class and in your written work for this course must all be either your own, or properly attributed to their source. In reading responses, I want to know how each student is thinking about the papers we're reading that week—reading a dozen AI reactions to our papers wastes my time while giving me no guidance for how to direct our next discussion. In presentations, although you're welcome to seek AI help in the aesthetics of your slides, the words presented in them should be your own. And in your policy paper and final papers, it's fine to get AI help with editing, but the ideas, wording, and thoughts on the page need to have been produced by you alone.

I assume you're all here because you're interested in the course topics and enthusiastic to learn as much as you can. But I know that in real life, stuff happens. I always prefer to deal with any issues before they get so bad that they become overwhelming, or so bad that a student feels that cheating or plagiarism is his or her best (or only) option. In the MIT study, students who used LLMs (i.e., ChatGPT) to assist with essay writing had more trouble citing/quoting their sources accurately; this is improper scientific and academic conduct. So please do come to me if you have any questions about how to properly cite a source or build upon others' ideas, or if you're feeling stressed out about the class workload (or about anything else). If you have an issue that you'd rather not talk about with me, you might consider speaking with your academic advisor or dean; with one of the Psych Department's Directors of Undergraduate Studies; or with the counselors at Columbia's Counseling and Psychological Services (<http://health.columbia.edu/services/cps>).

Diversity & Inclusion

Every learning environment should accommodate a wide range of students' backgrounds, opinions, and identities. For seminars, it is even more crucial that everyone in the room feels able to freely express their thoughts, and is willing to respectfully listen to others'. This doesn't mean we all need to be perfectly aligned on everything—or even anything! In the area of our course discussions in particular, disagreement will challenge each of us to hone our own arguments, uncover our misconceptions, and expand our perspectives. But it's equally important to leave space for—and to learn from—non-academic forms of diversity, such as

nationality, sex or gender, sexuality, race, class, religion, differences in ability, and many others. In the service of these goals, please let me know if any of the following is true:

- You have a name and/or set of pronouns that differ from those that appear in SSOL or on Canvas.
- Something that was said in class made you uncomfortable or unwelcome.
- Your ability to take part in our class is being affected by events or experiences outside of our class. Even if its something I cant help with directly, I can try to connect you with resources or support on or off campus.

Nobody is ever finished learning about diverse perspectives and identities, me included. I'm very open to feedback; on this topic (and many others) you can teach me as much as, if not more than, I can teach you.

Accommodations

Students with specific needs who may require accommodations should make an appointment to see me as soon as possible, at least by the end of the second week of class. If you have not already done so, stop by the Office of Disability Services (ODS) on the 7th floor of Lerner Hall to register for support services. ODS often requires two weeks to process an application, so please contact them as soon as you can, preferably before the course begins.

Wellness

All of us at some point experience challenges to our mental health and well-being. This is true at any time, and has been even more so in the past couple of years. I urge you to take care of yourselves—and of each other. Please prioritize your mental health and wellbeing and know that there are many resources available to you both within our classroom community and throughout the university:

<https://health.columbia.edu/content/counseling-and-psychological-services>

<http://blogs.cuit.columbia.edu/nightline/>

<https://universitylife.columbia.edu/student-resources-directory#health>

<https://columbiavirtualcampus.com/>

Please reach out for help if you need it, and if you see others who are struggling, please point them toward these or other sources of help, or encourage them to talk to me or one of the Directors of Undergraduate Studies in the Psychology Department.

Syllabus Credit

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