Capstone Class on Close Relationships
(Course #4980.3; Class#26803)
Spring Semester, 2011

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Office Hours: Tues 1:00-2:00 p.m. (or by appt)  
Office Hours:

Class Time: T, Th 9:30-10:45
Class Location: 102 McAlester Hall (T & some Thursdays); Middlebush 8 (most Thursdays)
Course Blackboard Website: http://courses.missouri.edu (If you have trouble using Blackboard, you can ask a User Consultant at any IAT Services compute lab or call the Help Desk at 882-5000.)

Required Text/Materials:

Journal articles and other materials as assigned
Jump drive for storing and transferring files

Recommended (but not required):

3. Any research methods textbook from Psych 3010/3020.

Course Description and Objectives:

According to the University of Missouri, the undergraduate capstone experience is designed to “bring reflection and focus to the whole of the college experience. It should encourage students to integrate facets of their area of concentration with important concepts from related disciplines. This culminating college experience should focus on some feature of the student’s area of concentration and should require the disciplined use of skills, methodology, and knowledge taught throughout the undergraduate curriculum.”
http://generaleducation.missouri.edu/requirements/capstone-experience.html

In other words, the capstone class is your chance to pull it all together or consolidate what you have learned as an undergraduate here at Mizzou about how to think, write, and do research on
an important psychological topic. As such, you will be expected to work independently and at a high level, to be conscientious, self-directed, and self-motivated.

In this class, you will design and complete an empirical study on a topic related to close (romantic) relationships. By the end of the semester, you should not only have acquired factual knowledge about psychological research on close relationships, but also on research methods used to study them. You will then write this research up in a brief report format using APA style guidelines and also present your research (as part of a group effort) to the class.

Structure of the Course

The primary focus of this course is a research project which you will design, conduct, analyze, write up, and present. This course will consist of a mix of lecture, hands-on activities completed in class and in the computer lab, group work, and both individual and group consultation.

All projects will be conducted in small groups. Although group work can be trying, it has a number of important advantages in the present context.

1) You are working on a very compressed timeline and collecting your data can be quite time consuming. By working in a small group on a topic of shared interest, you will be able to share the work of collecting the data, which can be substantial.

2) By pooling your efforts, you can obtain a larger sample size, which will result in a stronger project for the same investment of effort.

3) Having fewer projects to oversee (e.g., 6 groups instead of 20 individuals) will enable us to provide you with more focused attention. By having fewer, different projects, we can do a better job of consulting on all of the projects.

4) Working as part of a team is realistic. Most social science research is conducted by teams of individuals, not by individuals working in isolation. So learning how to collaborate and work with others on a research project is good training for the types of experiences you will encounter later in life.

Although we understand that there are downsides to group work, we have tried to structure the experience in two ways to minimize these problems.

1) Although the group will work together to design the study, develop the materials, collect and analyze the data, each of you will complete your own independent write-up of the project. In other words, you will complete your own literature review/introduction, method section, results section, tables and figures, and discussion. In that way, you will have complete and total control over the quality of the written product, which comprises the largest portion of your final grade.

2) 100 of the 1250 total points for this class will be allotted for group effort and participation. This grade will be largely determined by the ratings each of you gives to your team members for their contributions to the group. This, we hope will incentivize individual’s contributions to the group by rewarding those who contribute the most.
The first half of the semester is devoted to reading original research and selecting your research topic, learning about methods appropriate to investigating your topic and analyzing your data; designing your study; and developing or selecting measures and materials. You will begin to collect your data around Mar. 10. Data collection will run approximately 4 to 6 weeks, depending on when you receive final approval of your measures and materials and how quickly you are able to reach your target sample size. From mid-March through mid-April, you will work on readying your data for analysis, completing your analysis, and writing up your results. The last 2 to 3 weeks of the semester will be devoted to writing your discussion and abstract, and preparing and giving your final presentation. Final papers are due during finals week. (See the Weekly Schedule for details.)

Assignments & Points:

A. Quizzes & in-class mini-assignments (100 pts)
B. Topic rankings & rationale (25 pts)
C. Article summaries (2 @ 50 pts = 100 pts)
D. Drafts of the project (225 pts)
   _ search history (10 pts)
   _ preliminary reference list (15 pts)
   _ research question/hypotheses (20 pts)
   _ introduction (30 pts)
   _ method & questionnaires/measures (50 pts)
   _ results with tables & figures (50 pts)
   _ discussion (30 pts)
   _ abstract (20 pts)
C. Final APA-style paper (500 pts)
D. Group presentation (100 pts)
E. Peer graded points (100 pts)

Total Points = 1250

Details regarding each assignment, assigned readings, and updates will be posted on blackboard. It is your responsibility to check the blackboard regularly.

Attendance and Participation:

Attendance and participation are crucial to your success in this class. Active participation not only requires showing up, but also making sure that you are alert and prepared for the day’s activities. If you miss class for any reason, it is your responsibility to ask your fellow students for detailed notes and materials on what you missed.

To encourage participation, attendance will be taken and 100 points will be awarded for attendance across the semester. Attendance/participation points will be deducted if you show up late or leave early, sleep through class, use your cell phone, etc. In addition, a variety of small
assignments and quizzes will be given in class throughout the semester. These will generally not be announced ahead of time. They total 100 points of your grade, and cannot be made up.

**Late Assignments:**

Unless otherwise noted on the detailed course outline, assignments are due at the beginning of the class period. **Points equaling 5% of the assigned grade will be deducted for assignments turned in at the end of the period or by 5:00 on the day they were due; 10% will be deducted from those turned in within one week of the original due date. Assignments turned in more than 1 week late will not be accepted.** Late assignments should be sent by e-mail to Ruixue (so that we have record of the date & time submitted); a hard copy should also be dropped off in my lab (124 Psychology Building). Late assignments will not be graded until the hard copy is received. Note that full credit for late assignments may be given under very unusual circumstances (e.g., written note from the doctor, proof of death in immediate family, etc.).

**Grade Disputes:**

You may request a re-review of any grade you are assigned, provided that you submit your request in writing within 7 days of receiving the grade and that you explain as part of this request the specific reasons why you think your grade should be changed; stating that you deserve or need a higher grade is not sufficient. Verbal requests will not be considered.

**Grading Scale:**

Your grade will be based on the percentage of total points earned. The grading system is as follows:

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<th>Grade</th>
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<td>100% - 97%</td>
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<tr>
<td>96% - 94%</td>
<td>A</td>
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<td>93% - 90%</td>
<td>A-</td>
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**Mutual Expectations:**

As a student in this class, you have a number of rights and obligations. Your obligations include:

1. **Coming to class on time and letting me know in advance if you need to arrive late or leave early.** Coming late and leaving early are disruptive to the class as a whole and should be avoided.
2. **Paying attention and participating in class.** This means no cell phone use in class, no sleeping, and no talking with your neighbor, except during team meetings or class exercises.
3. **Treating fellow students with respect.** This means listening thoughtfully to people’s views and comments during class and in group meetings, and responding respectfully even if you disagree or want to register a counter perspective. Raising questions and
expressing alternative viewpoints is fundamental to good science; making ad hominem attacks or criticizing someone’s ideas in a demeaning or mean-spirited way are not.

4. Following guidelines regarding academic integrity (see details below).

As a student in this class, you have the right to expect:

1. That we will treat you with courtesy and respect.
2. That we will be available to you outside of class on a regular basis to assist you should you need guidance above and beyond what we can provide in class.
   a. However, there are two important caveats to bear in mind. If you miss class, do not expect us to give you a private lesson. If you wait to the last minute to seek help, we may not be able to accommodate your schedule.
3. Timely (generally within 1 week) and thoughtful feedback on all written work turned into us.

**Academic Dishonesty:**

It is unacceptable to write your paper with another student. Likewise it is unacceptable to copy text verbatim from a copy-written document (e.g., published journal articles) or a website. It is also unacceptable to paraphrase without citing the original source. All of these constitute different forms of plagiarism. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, or collaboration, please consult the course instructor or teaching assistant.

In addition, the University website states:
Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards academic dishonesty as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences that range from probation to expulsion. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: looking at someone’s exam during a test, looking at notes during the test, turning in someone else's work as your own, plagiarizing from a printed article. **Instructors at this university are required to report any suspicious behavior to the vice-provost's office.** For a more complete discussion of academic dishonesty go to: [http://web.missouri.edu/~mbookwww/](http://web.missouri.edu/~mbookwww/)

**Students with Special Needs or Disabilities:**

If you need accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please see me privately after class, or in my office.

To request academic accommodations (for example, a notetaker), students must contact Disability Services, AO38 Brady Commons, 882-4696. MU's Adaptive Computing Technology Center, 884-2828, is also available to provide computing assistance to students with disabilities. For more information about the rights of people with disabilities, please see [ada@missouri.edu](mailto:ada@missouri.edu) or call 884-7278.