

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
LONDON CANADA
Department of Psychology
2026-2027

Psychology 4790F Section 001
Romantic Relationships

1. 1.0 CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

In this seminar, we will discuss psychological theories within the field of relationship science. The focus will not be on simply presenting a long list of theories (there are hundreds of them), but rather will be on discussing the nature of theories, how to evaluate them, and then applying those discussions to some of the prominent theories of relationship science. When discussing each of the prominent theories, a goal will also be to highlight research opportunities with respect to directly assessing the theories.

For Undergraduate students:

Prerequisite(s): Both Psychology 2801F/G and Psychology 2811A/B, or the former Psychology 2820E, or both the former Psychology 2800E and the former Psychology 2810, PLUS registration in fourth year Main Campus Honours Specialization in Psychology or fourth year Honours Specialization in Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience. Fourth year Main Campus Psychology students and Main Campus Psychology Special Students who receive 75% in the prerequisite courses may enrol in this course.

2.0 COURSE INFORMATION

Instructor: Lorne Campbell

Office: SSC 6328

Office Hours for Graduate Students: by appointment

Office Hours for Undergraduate Students: Information posted by TAs on the Owl/Brightspace site.

Email: lcampb23@uwo.ca

Teaching Assistants (for undergraduate students):

- Karla Kenny (kkenny6@uwo.ca)
- McKell Wells (mwells43@uwo.ca)

Time and Location of the weekly Class:

Lecture/class: Wednesdays from 1:30-4:30pm in UCC-59

3.0 TEXTBOOK

There is not textbook for this class. I have assigned readings for each week/topic that are available online.

4.0 COURSE OBJECTIVES & LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning Outcome	Learning Activity	Assessment
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<i>Depth and Breadth of Knowledge</i>		
Describe , identify and explain the evolutionary, personal, interpersonal, and developmental factors that influence thoughts, feelings and behaviors of partners in romantic relationships	Lecture; Class discussions; Textbook/Readings	Weekly participation and assignments
<i>Application of Knowledge</i>		
Articulate the above concepts when critically evaluating research and building persuasive arguments in this area	Lecture; Class discussions; Textbook/Readings	Weekly participation and assignments
<i>Application of Methodologies</i>		
Explain how personal, situational, and relationship factors apply to the thoughts, feelings and behaviors of partners in romantic relationships	Lecture; Class discussions; Textbook/Readings	Weekly participation and assignments
<i>Communication Skills</i>		
Communicate ideas clearly and concisely, in language accessible to intelligent non-experts (oral and written formats)	Lecture; Class discussions; Textbook/Readings, paper	Weekly participation and assignments, written work
<i>Awareness of Limits of Knowledge</i>		
Describe and explain the limits of research conclusions in the context of methodological practices within the field	Lecture; Class discussions; Textbook/Readings	Weekly participation and assignments, written work
<i>Autonomy and Professional Capacity</i>		
Develop the ability to critique others' writing politely and professionally	Lecture; Class discussions	Weekly participation and assignments, written work

5.0 EVALUATION

The evaluation and testing formats for this course were created to assess the learning objectives as listed in section 4.0 and are considered necessary for meeting these learning objectives.

Because this is an essay course, as per Senate Regulations, you must pass the essay component to pass the course. That is, the average mark for your written assignments must be at least 50%.

This course is exempt from the Senate requirement that students receive assessment of their work accounting for at least 15% of their final grade at least three full days before the date of the deadline for withdrawal from a course without academic penalty.

The expectation for course grades within the Psychology Department is that they will be distributed around the following averages:

70%	1000-level to 2099-level courses
72%	2100-2999-level courses
75%	3000-level courses
80%	4000-level courses

In the event that course grades are significantly higher or lower than these averages, instructors may be required to make adjustments to course grades. Such adjustment might include the normalization of one or more course components and/or the re-weighting of various course components.

Policy on Grade Rounding

Please note that although course grades within the Psychology Department are rounded to the nearest whole number, no further grade rounding will be done. No additional assignments will be offered to enhance a final grade; nor will requests to change a grade because it is needed for a future program be considered.

6.0 ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION SCHEDULE

There are no exams for this course. Undergraduate students are asked to complete reflection papers at the end of some classes (40% of final grade; process to be discussed in class). Additionally, undergraduate students are required to submit a “theory review” due by midnight on the Friday following the last day of class. The details of the theory review will be discussed in class.

7.0 CLASS SCHEDULE

Week of September 7

Lecture 1 Organizational lecture/Introduction

Readings: No readings

Week of September 14

Lecture 2 Karl Popper and falsification

Readings: Popper, K. (2002). The logic of scientific discovery. Chapter 4.

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203994627>

Week of September 21

Lecture 3 Scientific revolutions and protective belts

Readings: Darwin, J. (2010). Kuhn vs. Popper vs. Lakatos vs. Feyerabend: Contested Terrain or Fruitful Collaboration? *Philosophy of Management*, 9, 39-57.

<https://doi.org/10.5840/pom20109117>

Week of September 28

Lecture 4 Hypothesis testing

Readings: Perezgonzalez, J.D. (2015). Fisher, Neyman-Pearson or NHST? A tutorial for teaching data testing. *Frontiers Psychology*.

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00223/full>

Week of October 5

Lecture 5 Data, theories, data, theory development (?)

Readings: Campbell, L. (2026). Theories and research in personal relationships. In A.L. Vangelisti, D. Perlman, & S. Sprecher (Eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Personal Relationships* (pp. 34-51). Cambridge University Press.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009381949.003>

Gray, K. (2017). How to map theory: Reliable methods are fruitless without rigorous theory. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 1-11.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691617691949>

Week of October 12

- No Class—Fall reading week

Week of October 19

Lecture 6 Attachment Theory

Readings: Shaver, P. R., & Mikulincer, M. (2002). Attachment-related psychodynamics. *Attachment & human development*, 4(2), 133-161.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14616730210154171>

Week of October 26

Lecture 7 Interdependence Theory

Readings: Arriaga, X. B. (2013). An interdependence theory analysis of close relationships. *The Oxford handbook of close relationships*, 39-65.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195398694.013.0003>

Week of November 2

Lecture 8 Self-expansion Theory

Readings: Aron, A., Aron, E. N., Tudor, M., & Nelson, G. (1991). Close relationships as including other in the self. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 60(2), 241.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203311851-36>

Week of November 9

Lecture 9 The Ideal Standards Model (ISM)

Readings: Simpson, J. A., Fletcher, G. J., & Campbell, L. (2001). The structure and function of ideal standards in close relationships. *Blackwell handbook of social psychology: Interpersonal processes*, 86-106.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470998557.ch4>

Week of November 16

Lecture 10 Risk Regulation Model

Readings: Murray, S. L., Holmes, J. G., & Collins, N. L. (2006). Optimizing assurance: the risk regulation system in relationships. *Psychological bulletin*, 132(5), 641.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.132.5.641>

Week of November 23

Lecture 11 Investment Model of Commitment

Readings: Rusbult, C. E., Agnew, C. R., & Arriaga, X. B. (2012). The Investment Model of Commitment Processes. In P. A. M. Van Lange, A. W. Kruglanski, & E. T. Higgins (Eds.), *Handbook of theories of social psychology*, Volume 2 (pp. 218-231). Los Angeles: Sage.
<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446249222.n37>

Week of November 30

Lecture 12 Vulnerability-Stress-Adaptation Model

Readings: Karney, B. R., & Bradbury, T. N. (1995). The longitudinal course of marital quality and stability: A review of theory, method, and research. *Psychological Bulletin*, 118(1), 3-34. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.118.1.3>

Week of December 7

Lecture 13: Summary and final assignment

Reading: No readings this week

8 Academic Integrity

Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.

Possible penalties for a scholastic offence include failure of the assignment/exam, failure of the course, suspension from the University, and expulsion from the University.

Plagiarism Detection Software

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between Western and Turnitin.com.

Use of AI

The use of generative AI tools such as ChatGPT to produce written work is not permitted unless permission is granted by the instructor for specific circumstances. Any work submitted must be the work of the student in its entirety unless otherwise disclosed. When used, AI tools should be used ethically and responsibly, and students must cite or credit the tools used in line with the expectation to use AI as a tool to learn, not to produce content.

Multiple Choice Exams

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams will be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

Exam Proctoring Software

Tests and examinations for online courses may be conducted using a remote proctoring service. More information about this remote proctoring service, including technical requirements, is available on Western's Remote

Proctoring website at: <https://remoteproctoring.uwo.ca>.

Personal Response Systems ("Clickers")

In classes that involve the use of a personal response system, data collected will only be used in a manner consistent to that described in this outline. It is the instructor's responsibility to make every effort to ensure that data remain confidential. However, students should be aware that as with all forms of electronic communication, privacy is not guaranteed.

9 Academic Accommodations and Accessible Education

View Western's policy on academic accommodations for student with disabilities at this [link](#).

Accessible Education provides supports and services to students with disabilities at Western.

If you think you may qualify for ongoing accommodation that will be recognized in all your courses, visit [Accessible Education](#) for more information. Email: aeu@uwo.ca Phone: 519 661-2147

10 Absence & Academic Consideration

View Western's policy on academic consideration for medical illnesses this [link](#)

Find your academic counsellor here: https://www.registrar.uwo.ca/faculty_academic_counselling.html

Students must see the Academic Counsellor and submit all required documentation in order to be approved for certain academic considerations. Students **must communicate with their instructors no later than 24 hours** after the end of the period covered SMC, or immediately upon their return following a documented absence.

Medical Absences

Submit a Student Medical Certificate (SMC) signed by a licensed medical or mental health practitioner to Academic Counselling in your Faculty of registration to be eligible for Academic Consideration.

Nonmedical Absences

Submit appropriate documentation (e.g., obituary, police report, accident report, court order, etc.) to Academic Counselling in your Faculty of registration to be eligible for academic consideration. Students are encouraged to contact their Academic Counselling unit to clarify what documentation is appropriate.

Religious Consideration

Students seeking accommodation for religious purposes are advised to contact Academic Counselling at least three weeks prior to the religious event and as soon as possible after the start of the term.

11 Other Information

- Office of the Registrar: <https://registrar.uwo.ca>
- Student Development Services: www.sdc.uwo.ca
- Psychology Undergraduate Program: <https://www.psychology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/index.html>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Health and Wellness@Western <https://www.uwo.ca/health/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you.

If you wish to appeal a grade, please read the policy documentation at: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/appealsundergrad.pdf. Please first contact the course instructor. If your issue is not resolved, you may make your appeal in writing to the Undergraduate Chair in Psychology (psyugrd@uwo.ca).

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12 Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that Western University is located on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton. Nations, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. This land continues to be home to diverse Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) whom we recognize as contemporary stewards of the land and vital contributors of our society.