

Penn State University
College of Health and Human Development
Department of Human Development and Family Studies

HDFS 418--FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Spring Semester, 2007

Monday, Wednesday, & Friday; 10:10 - 11:00, S207 Henderson

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| <u>INSTRUCTOR:</u> Robert Burgess, Ph.D. S-272 Henderson Building 865-2640 RLB8@psu.edu | <u>OFFICE HOURS:</u> T & Th: 10:30-11:30 or by appointment |
| <u>Graduate Assistant:</u> Rachel Johnson rlj146@psu.edu | <u>Undergraduate Assistants:</u> Ashley Barr abb5000@psu.edu Jessica Connell jhc5007@psu.edu Jillian Goltz jvg5000@psu.edu Tanya Gulba tmg216@psu.edu Kelly Joyce klj5006@psu.edu |

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course focuses on several interrelated topics relevant to human mating and marriage. Part I will examine research and theory drawn from behavioral biology pertaining to the unique nature of human sexuality. Part II will examine the strategic nature of human mating from the perspective of evolutionary psychology. Part III will examine why marital relationships are often so fragile drawing upon research from clinical psychology and sociology.

REQUIRED READINGS:

Buss, D. M. (2003). *The evolution of desire: Strategies of human mating*. New York: Basic Books, Second Edition.

Diamond, J. (1997). *Why is sex fun: The evolution of human sexuality*. New York: Basic Books.

Gottman, J. (1994). *Why marriages succeed or fail*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

READINGS ON ANGEL

Burgess, R. L. *Evolutionary theory & human development*.

Ridley, M. *Nature via Nurture*, Prologue.

Judson, O. *Evolution is in the Air*.

Dennett, D. *Show me the science*.

Judson, O. *Why I'm happy I evolved*.

OTHER INFORMATION ON ANGEL

Course Guidelines
Formal Outline
Levels of Analysis
Male, Female Mating Preferences
Sample Term Paper
Term Paper Guidelines
TIPS
To help with your writing

NEW YORK TIMES ON-LINE LINK

nytimes.com/2004/05/30/magazine/30NONDATING.html?

“Friends with Benefits”

COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

To accomplish a high level of learning and scholarly activity requires the following:

- (1) You must maintain an atmosphere of academic integrity, respect and civility. Academic integrity must be accepted as a way of life. Respect for your instructors and fellow students and civility in voice and word is necessary.
- (2) You must have a strong work ethic. Quality learning requires a strong desire to learn, to relearn, and to progress. A university education requires hard work and a major time commitment (typically 46 - 48 hours per week for a 16 credit load). High quality effort is expected.
- (3) You must manage your time wisely. Quality learning requires sufficient time to study, analyze, absorb, and synthesize knowledge into understanding. Careful organization and use of time are therefore essential, including beginning and completing assignments in a timely manner and allowing sufficient time to assimilate knowledge during exam preparation to maximize learning.
- (4) You should participate actively in class. While class attendance is assumed, a strong learner is an active participant in class, mentally and verbally, and students should come to class prepared to clarify understanding from out-of-class readings, assignments, and previous lectures.
- (5) You are ultimately responsible for your own personal learning process and must respond responsibly to your instructor's guidelines. To learn well, it is necessary that assigned readings be studied before class and it is essential that material from previous courses be relearned when needed. Furthermore, the necessity of quality written and oral communications cannot be overemphasized for learning and for your future professional career. You should seek help from your instructor and teaching assistants when needed and you should take advantage of university - wide resources for learning if necessary.

(6) You should recognize that learning is not memorization of facts, but rather the development of understanding and the integration of knowledge. You must, therefore, assimilate new information with material from previous courses and must relearn material as necessary. It is useful to interact with colleagues in the assimilation and clarification of knowledge.

(7) Finally, it is important to engage in self-assessment. You should regularly evaluate your strengths and weaknesses, the effectiveness of your study habits, the level of your responsibility in learning, and your progress toward your educational goals. Effort should be continually directed to improve weaknesses and to strengthen your oral and written communication and group interaction skills.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

In keeping with the course expectations described above, a general educational goal of this class, beyond its particular content, is developing your skills in critical thinking and writing. For this reason, classes will include discussions as well as lectures, and students will be required to participate in the discussion of course material. At random intervals, you will be required to write responses to “attendance assignment” questions designed to encourage and reward attending class, studying, and mastering reading assignments and lectures. In addition, there will be a term paper and three essay examinations. Each of these is described briefly below.

Attendance Assignments

At twelve random times during the semester, you will be asked to write a one-page essay about topics covered within the previous week. These essays are each worth up to ten points and can be done only at the time they are assigned. Nine to ten points will be given for a very well-written and thoughtful essay indicating mastery of class lectures and reading assignments. A “good” essay will be worth eight points and an “average” essay, six to seven points. Five points will be given to students who have a justified absence and to students who are in attendance but who have nothing to write or whose answers are incorrect or unacceptable. We will drop your two lowest scores. These essays are worth a maximum of 100 points.

Term Paper

There will be a term paper required near the end of the semester. The first draft of this paper will be due on April 9. No paper longer than ten double spaced pages will be accepted. Your first draft will be returned to you one week later, April 16. Final drafts are due on April 23. The paper will be worth a maximum of 50 points.

Discussions

There will be one discussion meeting during the semester. It is led by your instructor and involves the class as a whole. Their purpose is to give students the opportunity to address fundamental issues related to course content. There will also be review sessions before exams.

Examinations

There will be three essay examinations of equal weight. Study questions will be provided in class one week prior to the exam. Your instructor will select which of these questions you will be required to answer on the day of the exam. Your answer will be evaluated according to the following criteria: comprehensiveness, organization, originality, and persuasiveness of your argument. Each exam will be worth 50 points.

| <u>Grades</u> | Points | A | = | 92% + |
|---------------------------|------------|----|---|--------|
| 10 attendance assignments | 100 | A- | = | 88-91% |
| term paper | 50 | B+ | = | 84-87% |
| 3 essay examinations | <u>150</u> | B | = | 80-83% |
| | | B- | = | 74-79% |
| | | C+ | = | 68-73% |
| | | C | = | 60-67% |
| | | D | = | 48-59% |
| | | F | = | < 47% |
| Total | 300 | | | |

COURSE OUTLINE HDFS 418

DATE

TOPIC

READING ASSIGNMENT

PART I: THE NATURE OF HUMAN SEXUALITY

| | | | |
|----------|----|-------------------------------|---|
| January | 17 | Introduction to the course | |
| | 19 | Uniqueness of human sexuality | Diamond, Ch. 1; Nature via nurture (Angel) |
| | 22 | The nature of human nature | Burgess, Ch. 1; Evolution is in the air (Angel) |
| | 24 | Continued | Show me the science (Angel); Why I'm happy I evolved (Angel) |
| | 26 | Why sex? | |
| | 29 | The battle of the sexes | Diamond, Ch. 2 |
| | 31 | Men don't breastfeed | Diamond, Ch. 3 |
| February | 2 | Recreational sex | Diamond, Ch. 4 |
| | 5 | What are men good for? | Diamond, Ch. 5 |
| | 7 | Female menopause | Diamond, Ch. 6 |
| | 9 | Review | |
| | 12 | EXAM I | |

PART II: MATING STRATEGIES

| | | | |
|----------|--------------|--|------------------------------|
| February | 14 | Sexual selection | Buss, Ch. 1; Diamond, Ch. 7 |
| | 16 | What do females want? | Buss, Ch. 2 |
| | 19 | Continued | |
| | 21 | What do males want? | Buss, Ch. 3 |
| | 23 | Continued | |
| | 26 | Shared preferences | |
| | 28 | Ancient clues & casual sex | Buss, Ch. 4 |
| March | 2 | Continued | Buss, Ch. 11 |
| | 5 | Attracting a mate | Buss, Ch. 5 |
| | 7 | Continued | |
| | 9 | Sexual conflict and the balance of power | Buss, Ch. 7 |
| | 12-16 | SPRING BREAK | |
| | 19 | Film | |
| | 21 | General Class Discussion | <i>Friends with Benefits</i> |
| | 23 | Jealousy | Buss, Ch. 6 |
| | 26 | Changes over time | Buss, Ch. 9 |
| | 28 | Breaking up | Buss, Ch. 8 |
| | 30 | Unsolved mysteries | Buss, Ch. 12 |
| April | 2 | Review | |
| | 4 | EXAM II | |

PART III: MARITAL SUCCESS AND FAILURE

| | | | |
|--|----|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| | 6 | Making marriages work | Gottman, Ch. 1 |
| | 9 | Marriage styles and the “magic ratio” | Gottman, Ch. 2 |
| | | PAPER DRAFT DUE | |
| | 11 | The “four horsemen” | Gottman, Ch. 3 |
| | 13 | Private thoughts | Gottman, Ch. 4 |
| | 16 | His & Her marriages | Gottman, Ch. 5 |
| | | PAPER DRAFT RETURNED | |
| | 18 | Continued | |
| | 20 | Peer Marriage | |

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|-------|----|-------------------------------|----------------|
| April | 23 | Domestic violence | |
| | | PAPER DUE | |
| | 25 | Four Keys | Gottman, Ch. 7 |
| | 27 | Strengthening the Foundations | Gottman, Ch. 8 |
| | 30 | Recapitulation | |
| May | 2 | Review | |
| | 4 | EXAM III | |