

HDPS #340-0
MARRIAGE 101:
Building Loving and Lasting Relationships
Spring Quarter 2012

Course Coordinator

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Lecturers

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Class times: Lectures, Thursdays 3:30 to 4:50 PM
Breakout groups: Tuesdays 3:30 to 4:50.
The course begins with a lecture on Thursday, March 29
There are no breakout group meetings on Tuesday, March 27
The last breakout group meeting is June 5 (or a date TBA)

Location: Lectures will be in the Tech Building, 2145 Sheridan Road, Room M345.
Breakout groups will be Annenberg Hall.

Purpose: To familiarize students with the intricacies and problems of close, committed, interpersonal relationships, especially marriage. This course will increase each students' formal knowledge about marriage and intimate relationships, while also improving their chances for success in such relationships. After taking the course, students should be better prepared to choose compatible partners, to face inevitable relationship challenges, and to experience greater marital/relationship satisfaction.

Format: Marriage 101 combines traditional academic methods (lectures, class discussions, readings) with experiential and self-discovery assignments coordinated with the subject matter. Each week's experience consists of a lecture and class discussion, assigned readings, and an elaboration of the

week's topic through experiential tasks and discussion in small groups. Each week students will also respond to relevant self-inquiry questions in a private, ungraded journal. Equivalent to "labs" in other courses, students do two outside class experiential assignments and interview two real couples—a married couple from the community and their own parents. These assignments are explained in more detail below. The development, rationale, components and overall philosophy of the course are described in: Nielsen, A., Pinsof, W., Rampage, C., Solomon, A., Goldstein, S. (2004) Marriage 101: An integrated academic and experiential undergraduate marriage education course." *Family Relations*, 53: 485-494.

Office hours: Appointments with teaching staff can be made via e-mail. Most issues should be referred to your small group leader.

Written Assignments: Four written assignments are required and explained later in this syllabus.

Quizzes: There will be three multiple choice **quizzes on the required readings and the lectures**. Each quiz will consist of 5 multiple-choice questions for each week covered (15 or 20 questions depending) and will be 15 minutes long. Quiz grades will be curved, and, additionally, your worst grade on the three quizzes will be discarded in arriving at your quiz average. There will be no makeup exams. Students missing one quiz will have that one counted as their lowest score and will have their grade based on the sum of the other two scores.

Class participation and lateness: Class participation will be graded based on promptness and attendance at both lectures and breakout groups, and on the quality and level of involvement in class discussions.

Grading: Final course grades will be calculated on the following basis:

Quizzes: 20%
Mentor couple interview report: 20%
Parent interview report: 20%
Research paper: 25%
Self-Inquiry Journal (pass-fail): 5%
Class participation: 10%

Emotional demands: Some assignments in Marriage 101 are emotionally-demanding. This is especially true of interviews with parents and some of the small group experiential exercises and discussions. Students who become upset in response to assignments should discuss this with their breakout group leaders.

Readings:

Books: There are extensive assignments from each of the following books, which will be available at the bookstore or online via www.NUOnlineBooks.com. **Because the books are expensive, you may want to share the expense and purchase these texts with your student partner. All three books are also available in Kindle editions** which are cheaper than the paperbacks, though Hamburg is slightly more expensive.

1. Christensen, A. & Jacobson, N. (2000). *Reconcilable differences*. New York: Guilford.
2. Hamburg, S.M. (2000). *Will Our Love Last?: A Couple's Road Map*. New York: Scribner.
3. Markman, H., Stanley, S., Blumberg, S. (2010). *Fighting for your marriage*, 3rd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Articles: The remainder of the readings are articles that are available for downloading on our Blackboard site.

Guests: If space allows, guests are welcome at the lectures, but not at the breakout groups.

Laptops and cellphones: Because of abuse in the past and in fairness to our lecturers, students should not have laptops open or cell phones on (for texting) during lectures. We will provide lecture outlines to which you can add written notes.

SYLLABUS

March 29 Introduction to Marriage 101, and “Everything you always wanted to know about marriage and marital happiness,” a Round-Table Question and Answer Session with Profs. Nielsen, Anderson, Chambers, Rampage & Solomon.

Readings on current state of marriage: What science tells us (so far).

1. Nielsen, A.C., Pinsof, W., Rampage, C., Solomon, A., Goldstein, S. (2004). Marriage 101: An integrated academic and experiential undergraduate marriage education course.” *Family Relations*, 53: 485-494.
2. Wallerstein, J. & Blakeslee, S. (1995). *The good marriage*. New York: Warner Books.
 - a. Chapter 1: Happy Marriages: Do They Exist? pp. 3-18,
 - b. Chapter 2: Patterns in Marriage, pp. 19-29.
3. Real, T. (2011). A matter of choice. *Psychotherapy Networker*, 35, 37-43, 56-57.

OPTIONAL

4. Gottman, J.M.; Coan, J.; Carrera, S. & Swanson, C. (1998). Predicting marital happiness and stability from newlywed interactions. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 60, 5-22.

- April 5 Developing emotional strength: Self-awareness, boundaries and self-esteem.**
1. Real, T. (2007). *The New Rules of Marriage*. New York: Ballantine Books.
 - a. Chapter 3: Second consciousness: Stepping out of your bad deal. pp. 65-92.
 - b. Chapter 5: Get yourself together: Healthy self-esteem and boundaries. pp. 120-157
 2. Markman, H.J., Stanley, S.M., Blumberg, S.L. et al. (2004). Understanding Hidden Issues, pp. 72-75 in *12 Hours to a Great Marriage*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.
 3. Kernberg, O. (2011). Limitations to the capacity to love. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 92, 1501-1515.
- April 12 Intimacy, friendship, and romantic love.**
1. Fisher, H. (2009). Why him? Why her? *Psychotherapy Networker*, May/June.
 2. Johnson, S. (2006). Are you there for me? *Psychotherapy Networker*, September/October.
 3. Parker-Pope, T. (2010). *For better: The science of a good marriage*. New York: Dutton. Chap 3: To love and to cherish: Flirting, attraction and chemical passion.
 4. Real, T. (2002). The awful truth. *Psychotherapy Networker*, November/December.
 5. Schnarch, D. (1997). Intimacy is not for the faint of heart, pp. 100-126 in *Passionate marriage: Keeping love and intimacy alive in committed relationships*. Henry Holt and Company: New York.
- April 19 Sexuality in long-term, committed relationships.**
1. Perel, Ester (2006). *Mating in Captivity: Reconciling the Erotic with the Domestic*. New York: HarperCollins Books.
 - a. Chap. 6: Sex IS Dirty, pp. 89-105.
 - b. Chap. 7: Erotic Blueprints, pp. 107-124.
 - c. Chap. 8: Parenthood, pp. 125-151.
 - d. Chap. 9: Of Flesh and Fantasy, pp. 152-174.
 2. Markman et al.: Chap. 12: Sense and Sensuality: Enhancing and Protecting Your Sex Life, pp. 270-293.
- April 26 Partner selection, dating, cohabiting, breaking-up.**
1. Hamburg
 - a. Chap. 1: What Makes Marriages Happy? pp. 15-23.
 - b. Chap. 8: Feeling the Compatibility, pp. 111-115.
 - c. Chap. 9: The Practical Dimension, pp. 117-157
 - d. Chap. 10: The Sexual Dimension, pp. 159-177.
 - e. Chap. 11: The Wavelength Dimension, pp. 179-201.

2. Stanley, S.M., Rhoades, G.K. & Markman, H.J. (2006). Sliding versus deciding: Inertia and the premarital cohabitation effect. *Family Relations*, 55, 499-509.

May 3

Conflict Part I: The art of fighting fair in marriage.

1. Christensen & Jacobson
 - a. Chap. 1: Three Sides to Every Story, pp. 1-14.
 - b. Part I: The Anatomy of an Argument, pp. 17-119.
2. Markman et al.:
 - a. Chapter 2: Destructive Patterns: Signs of Danger Ahead, pp. 37-63,
 - b. Chapter 3: Changing Roles, Changing Rules: Men and Women in Conflict, pp. 64-86,
 - c. Chapter 5: Talking Safely Without Fighting: The Speaker-Listener Technique, pp. 106-133.
3. Real, T. (2007). *The New Rules of Marriage, op. cit.* Chap. 6: Get what you want: Empowering yourself, empowering your partner, pp. 163-201.

May 10

Conflict Part II: Problem solving and acceptance.

1. Christensen & Jacobson
Part II: From Argument to Acceptance, pp. 123-190,
2. Markman et al:
Chap. 15: Forgiveness: Restoring Hope, pp. 343-371.

May 17

**Unanticipated challenges of marriage:
Addiction, infidelity, & violence**

1. Christensen & Jacobson: Chap. 16: “Don’t Do That to Me!”: Violence, Verbal Abuse, and Infidelity, pp. 273-296.
2. Brown, E. (1991). Chapter 1: An affair is a family issue. pp. 13-48, in *Patterns of infidelity and their treatment*. New York: Bruner-Mazel.
3. Oppenheimer, Mark (2011). Married, with infidelities. New York Times Sunday Magazine, 7/3/11, 22-27,46.

OPTIONAL

4. Blow, A.J. & Hartnett, K. (2005). Infidelity in committed relationships II: A substantive review. *J. Marital and Family Therapy*, 31, 217-233.
5. Leonard, K. & Quigley, B. (1999). Drinking and marital aggression in newlyweds: An event-based analysis of drinking and the occurrence of husband marital aggression. *Journal of Studies of Alcohol*, 60, 537-545.

May 24

Cultural Compatibility and Relationship Satisfaction

1. Kurdek, L. (2004). Are gay and lesbian cohabiting couples really different from heterosexual married couples? *Journal of Marriage and Family Therapy*, 66, 880-900.
2. Bepko, C. & Johnson, T. (2000). Gay and lesbian couples in therapy: Perspectives for the contemporary therapist. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 26(4), 409-420.
3. Curtis, K. T., & Ellison, C. G. (2002). Religious heterogamy and marital conflict. *Journal of Family Relations*, 23(4), 551-576.
4. Fu, X., Tora, J., & Kendall, H. (2001). Marital happiness and inter-racial marriage. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 32(1), 47-60.

May 31

**Ordinary challenges of early marriage:
Establishing rules, roles and routines;
Incorporating children;
Managing “I-ness” vs. “we-ness.”**

1. Wallerstein & Blakeslee,
 - a. Chap. 4: The First Task: Separating from Family of Origin, pp. 51-59,
 - b. Chap. 6: The Third Task: Becoming Parents, pp. 70-82.
2. Parker-Pope, T. (2010). For better: The science of a good marriage.
 - a. Chapter 8, The science of parenting
 - b. Chapter 9, The chore wars
 - c. Chapter 10, For richer or poorer

THE FOUR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

- ◆ There are three *graded* written assignments: two interview reports and a term paper.
- ◆ The “Self-Inquiry Journal” is pass/fail and confidential, and should be turned in on the last day of class.
- ◆ Due dates for each assignment are listed and are spaced to help you pace your work and to allow us time to give your papers careful reading. Extensions on these assignments will be granted only for circumstances outside the student’s control. **Late papers will be penalized 5 points (5%) for each day they are late.**
- ◆ The first couple interview will be done with your partner on a volunteer, “mentor couple.” We will assign the couple to you in the second week of class.
- ◆ The second couple interview will be with your own parents. We will give your parents a heads up on this interview by writing them an explanatory letter.
- ◆ Guidelines and suggestions for conducting and writing-up the parental and mentor couple interviews are posted separately on our Blackboard site.
- ◆ In past years, the quality of student writing has varied tremendously. Since an important part of a college education is learning to express ideas clearly, and since we wish to encourage efforts in this direction, some of your grade will depend on

writing proficiency. To assist you in your writing, we have included a set of “Writing Tips” on Blackboard. These describe the requirements of APA style that you will use in your papers, together with some suggestions about how to avoid some common grammatical errors. Students at all levels of writing skill may also want to make use of Northwestern’s writing resources at: <http://www.writing.northwestern.edu/links.html>

- ◆ Students in this course are expected to comply with the policies found in the booklet, "Academic Integrity at Northwestern University: A Basic guide". **All term papers must be sent to your breakout group leader as e-mail attachments and will be tested electronically on NU’s “SafeAssignment” system for plagiarized content.** You should also give your breakout group leader a hard copy of your term paper. The three other written assignments can be sent by e-mail or hand delivered in hardcopy. For details regarding academic integrity at Northwestern, visit: <http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/>.

1. MENTOR COUPLE INTERVIEW: Due April 26

- ◆ **Follow the separate directions posted on Blackboard for conducting the interview and writing it up.** You will find suggested questions and tips to help you obtain the data you will need to complete your written report.
- ◆ To count as having done this assignment, students must be present at the interview. It is not acceptable, **no matter what the circumstances**, for one student to do the interview and provide his or her partner with the interview data. Should one student miss an interview, for whatever reason, it is his or her responsibility to contact the faculty member in charge of mentor couple assignments and work out an alternative arrangement.
- ◆ Your report should be about 10 pages long and certainly no more than 12 pages (typed, double-spaced, 12 point font). Papers longer than 12 pages will not be accepted.
- ◆ Grading criteria are listed at the end of the separate instructions.

2. PARENT INTERVIEW: Due May 10

- ◆ As with the Mentor Couple Interview, **read the separate recommendations for conducting the interviews and writing them up that are provided on Blackboard.**
- ◆ If you were raised by a single parent or, for some other reason, have questions about whom you should interview for this assignment, consult your breakout group leader.
- ◆ If before or after the assignment you are especially anxious or upset, consult your breakout group leader.
- ◆ Your report should be about 10 pages long and no more than 12 pages (typed, double-spaced, 12 point font). Papers longer than 12 pages will not be accepted.
- ◆ Grading criteria are listed at the end of the separate instructions.

3. RESEARCH TERM PAPER.

**Due dates: Proposal, no later than May 17;
Completed paper, May 31.**

- ◆ You have two choices for this assignment:
 1. Research and discuss a topic about marriage that holds a particular interest for you, say as a potential challenge to your own marital happiness.
 2. Discuss and analyze a topic about marriage that is exemplified in a fictional or real marriage from film, biography, or fiction. Your paper **should have a focus** of special interest, as you would in a more usual term paper, and not just be about this particular marriage. Your in-depth discussion of this marriage and your topic must include references to concepts we have studied, and appropriate references from class readings.
- ◆ Examples of possible couples to analyze and of topics to research are provided on Blackboard. You can also get ideas for topics by scanning the “M101 Supplemental Reading List” available on Blackboard.
- ◆ Before you get into things too deeply, **submit a “Research Term Paper Proposal” to your section leader.** This proposal should be about half a page long and include your basic plan, central concern, and at least four references. Be sure to have your section leader sign off on the proposal before proceeding.
- ◆ For either type of term paper, research your topic looking both for empirical studies and clinical/theoretical sources that address your topic (option #1) or your couple illustrative of a particular topic (option #2). You may also include illustrative material from film, literature or your own life if it helps illustrate the topic and your interests.
- ◆ **Whichever choice you make, in addition to your conclusions/analysis, be sure to discuss the personal relevance of the issues you choose to focus on, and any pragmatic steps you would take to manage this issue if it surfaces in your future.**
- ◆ The following professional journals, with reprints and abstracts available online, are especially useful for finding research articles in the field of marriage and marital issues: *Family Process*, *Family Relations*, *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, *Journal of Family Psychology*, and *Journal of Marriage and Family*.
- ◆ Northwestern’s library system is particularly helpful in locating relevant articles and provides access to such useful databases as jstor, MedLine, and Sociology Abstracts.
- ◆ You may also find helpful articles in the Blackboard file: **M101 Supplemental Readings.**
- ◆ The websites www.psychinfo.com and www.apa.org/psycarticles/ are also resources for locating articles.
- ◆ Please approach your section leader if you would like further guidance in conducting your literature search.
- ◆ Do NOT put much weight in your paper on articles from nonprofessional, ordinary news media or websites.
- ◆ For maximum credit, you should include **minimum of 6 references.** In addition, **at least 4 references must be from outside sources** (not class-based), and **at least 2 must be empirical** (research studies, rather than only the opinions of the author.) In most cases, you should not rely heavily on internet articles or newspaper accounts.
- ◆ These **references and their footnotes in your text should conform to APA format requirements** (www.apastyle.org). For a quick summary of how to do this, consult the “Writing Tips” available on Blackboard.

- ◆ Your paper should be about 10 pages long and certainly no more than 12 pages (typed, double-spaced, 12 point font). Papers longer than 12 pages will not be accepted.
- ◆ Submit your paper **both via email and hard copy** to your breakout group leader. Because of plagiarism in the past, students should know that papers will be checked electronically by Northwestern’s “Safe Assignment” system.
- ◆ Grades for the term paper will be based on the following criteria:
 - Convincing argument: 25%
 - Overall insightfulness and psychological depth: 20%
 - Appropriate use of relevant secondary sources: 30%
 - Quality of proposed practical steps to manage issue in your own life: 15%
(Do not forget a section on this topic!)
 - Writing quality: 10%

4. SELF-INQUIRY JOURNAL.

Due date (via e-mail to your section leader): May 31

All students in the course are required to keep a journal for recording responses to self-inquiry questions relevant to each week’s topic. The journal questions and additional instructions are available on Blackboard. Students will submit these journals to their small group leader at the conclusion of the course. The journals will be scanned for completeness, but not read, and will be assessed on that basis. The journal must be typed.

The Two Outside Class Exercises

These are fun and ungraded. They are designed to give you experiences relevant to intimate relationships/marriage. They are described in detail in your Self-Inquiry Journal, at the **times when you should do them—just before the class when you will discuss them in your small groups**. After you’ve done them, write your experiences briefly (one or two paragraphs max) in your journal.

Exercise #1: Interview a friend.

Exercise #2: Compatibility Exercise.