

Psychology of Marriage (Psyc 301.001) Fall, 2004  
Instructor: Keith E. Davis  
Classroom: Gambrell 250; TIME: TTH 8-9:15am  
Office: Barnwell 545  
Office Hours: TTH 3:30 to 4:30 or by appointment  
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**Required Text:** Olson, D. & DeFrain, J. (2004) *Marriages and families: Intimacy, diversity and strengths* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.) NY: McGraw-Hill.

**Goals of the course:** To develop a mastery of concepts and issues required for an understanding of persons, relationships, and families in the real world. The course will have both a theoretical and a practical emphasis. On the theoretical side, I shall expect you to identify and explain the important concepts and major theories relevant to the course's subject matter. On the practical side, I shall provide you with exercises and opportunities to apply the concepts to your own lives and relationships.

**Course format:** lecture (about 67%) and class exercises, student presentations, and discussions (about 33%).

**Participation.** Reading assigned material prior to class and being prepared to participate in class discussions is expected. Written exercises that will enhance what you get from the course and which count toward the course grade will be assigned.

**Exams** (300 points). Comprehension of lectures and assigned readings will be tested in four exams. The final which is required of all students will be worth 100 points and will have 100 questions, half of which will cover material over the entire course. The other 50 questions will be based on the reading from the last 3 chapters. There will be three hourly exams, and I will count the best 2 of the 3 grades on these exams. These hourly exams will consist of 50 multiple choice questions (worth 2 points each). The option of making up an exam is granted only to students who arrange with the professor in advance of the exam or who have documentation of an extreme emergency. Otherwise, when you miss the exam, you have chosen to drop that exam.

**Written Exercises** (2, each worth 50 points). I will ask you to do a family case study either of your family of origin or your current family (if you are married or in a committed, long-term relationship). The first part of your case study will be due after Exam 1, and it involves describing your family and then analyzing the degree of family cohesiveness, flexibility, and communication patterns. Using the resources in Resource A (pages 522-527), you will produce a report of approximately 5 pages that includes the ratings on pages 525, 526, and & 527. As part of completing this report, you must get another family member—a sibling or a parent—to answer the 20 questions in Box A.1 on page 523. More details on

how to do this paper will be put on BB and discussed in class. The second part of your family case study will be another 5 page paper due after exam 3. In it you are asked to describe how your family handles problems and crises and to analyze family strengths—again using the ratings on pages 525-527. What could you do to enhance family problem-solving? (If for some reason, you can not do a family case study, then an alternative paper topic—approved by Dr. Davis--can be selected by you.)

**Extra Credit:** Students may earn up to 5 points of extra credit toward their total points in the course by participating in approved psychological research.

Attendance will be taken and I will follow the University's attendance policy.

**Grading system.** The grading system is an absolute standard based on the number of points earned out of the required 400 points. The definition of the points required for each grade are as follows: A (90%, 360); B+ (86%,345); B (80%,320); C+ (76%,305); C (70%,280); D (60%,240); & F (239 or less).

**Schedule of Topics & Exams:**

8/19-24 Marriages & Families; Chapter 1  
8/26 Cultural diversity; Chapter 2  
8/31-9/2: Theories & Methods; Chapter 3; Resource B  
9/7-9/9: Communication; Chapter 4  
9/14: Exam 1  
9/16-21: Conflict and its management; Chapter 5  
Due 9/21: Family Case Study: A; Papers more than 1 day late will not be accepted.  
9/23-28: Friendship & Love Relationships; Chapter 9  
9/30-10-5: Sexual Intimacy, Chapter 6; Resource C.  
10/7-12: Dating, Partner selection, & living together: Chapter 10  
10/14: Fall break.  
10/19: Exam 2  
10/21-26: Gender, Status, & Power, Chapter 7  
10/28-11/2: Managing Family finances; Chapter 8  
11/4-9: Weddings and Marriages; Chapter 11  
11/11: Parenthood, Chapter 12  
11/16: Exam 3  
11/18: Midlife & Older Couples, Chapter 13  
Due 11/23: Family Case Study: B; papers received after 11/24 not accepted.  
11/23-30: Stress & Family Problems: Chapter 14  
12/02: Divorce, Single Parents, & Family Problems, chapter 15

**Final Exam: Tuesday, Dec. 7 at 9 AM.**