

PSYCHOLOGY 349

Psychology 349 Intimate Couples

Spring 2019

Thursday 4:30 – 7:15 PM

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Course Description:

This course is designed to teach skills that will improve your ability to communicate, resolve conflict, deepen commitment, and increase spirituality within the context of marriage. These skills have proven through research to reduce the risk of divorce, and more importantly, increase the intimacy that leads to a lifelong joyful marriage union. Through lecture, video, and class discussion this class is designed to provide experiential learning for relational success. Papers, projects, and group presentations will be used for assessment purposes.

Course Purpose and Objective:

Is it really possible to marry someone and grow in your love and commitment over a lifetime? Current statistics indicate that many couples start off on this journey with this desire, but somewhere along the way get lost, discouraged, and often stop the car and get out. This class is designed to help you and your mate make the long journey well. Simply put, I am designing this class to help **you and your mate build a lasting and intimate marriage.**

There are no guarantees that taking this class will keep you from divorce. But it may provide a map for your journey that helps you and your mate get to your destination and enjoy the ride.

Course Learning Objectives:

1. Summarize knowledge regarding what communication factors and behaviors predict divorce or enhance relational satisfaction.
2. Apply knowledge of attachment theory to a couple's own relationship with their spouse/fiancé.
3. Create a comprehensive marriage questionnaire and interview two "model couples" synthesizing their newly learned psychological theories with the real world experience of these couples.
4. Produce an environment of confidentiality where people feel free to share and learn from other couples.

Course Design:

This course is designed to use both didactic and experiential formats. Roughly the first half of the weekly time is set aside for teaching about marriage skills. The second half of the time is set aside for exercises, coaching, and free discussion.

The course is restricted to married and engaged couples. The main reason for this is that I assume that you and your partner have already committed your lives to one another. **We will not discuss factors in choosing a mate or the suitability of you and your mate. The entire focus of the course is to help you and your mate grow closer in your relationship with one another.** As such, if you or your partner are unsure whether you want to stay together, I recommend that you seek couples therapy to address the specifics of your relationship. **This course is not designed for couples in deep distress, or a last-ditch attempt to hold couples together.** Instead, it is designed to help committed couples grow in their commitment to one another, utilizing techniques proven by research.

Confidentiality:

It is essential that all members enter into a verbal contract of confidentiality. This means that no one discusses anything that is spoken about in the group outside the group. The professor will also abide by this principle except in cases where consultation is needed or where he is required to report by law (e.g., child, elder, dependent adult, spouse abuse, or risk to hurt self or someone else). You may share your experience of group (what you are learning about relationships and yourself) with others outside group but never disclose the names or experiences of other members. Discussing group issues with your mate is encouraged without divulging names or other personal information. I encourage you and your mate to discuss what you are willing to share with the group. To benefit most, **there may be times when you two share difficult topics, but the goal should never be to needlessly embarrass your mate.**

Assignments:

- **Married Couple Interview:**
 - Each couple will interview two happily married couples. Scan ahead in the required books to create list of questions that relate to the material we are studying. Write your interview in a **joint 4-6 page paper**, and be prepared to share your findings with the group.
- **Mid-Semester Reflection Paper:**
 - After finishing the first book A Lasting Promise, each member of the couple will turn in a **separate 2-3 page paper** containing their reflections about the material, what ground rules you will set up as a couple, and how you see using the tools in

your marriage. I recommend that each person maintain a personal journal to record your reflections and personal applications across the course.

- **Hosting:**
 - Each couple will sign up for sessions where they are the “hosts” of the class that day. This entails setting up the room, playing fun background music (hopefully something positive and love related), arranging a light snack (does not have to be expensive), and creating the discussion questions for that day.
 - The discussion starter can come from our readings that week or an article about relationships you have come across. Come up with three discussion questions about the topic and write them on the board at the beginning of class.
- **Joint Declaration Project:**
 - On the last day of class, each person will turn in a **separate marriage declaration project**. This project will include:
 - a summary of what you learned about relationships from your family and past, both good and bad (let the AAI questions influence you but don’t feel you have to answer each one)
 - what is your “demon dance” with your partner
 - what do you and your partner need most at these times
 - what techniques you might use in difficult situations
 - finally a letter of commitment written to your partner

Please make two copies of this assignment because I plan to keep the copy that is turned in to me.

Grading:

The semester grade will be based on 1) your attendance, 2) completing the four assignments, 3) participation in the exercises. The actions of both partners will impact the grade of both. In other words, if only one person is receiving a grade, the actions of both affect that grade. If two people are receiving a grade, both partners will receive the same grade. Does that mean that if one person wants to sabotage the grade of the other and refuses to do any work, that both partners would receive a poor grade? Yes. This is marriage. Get used to it. ☺

Because so much of this course is participatory, missing any sessions is greatly discouraged. If more than two sessions are missed, the couple’s grade will be lowered by one grade.

Office Hours:

Most of your issues will be handled within class. I encourage you to bring difficulties you are experiencing with one another to the group to be addressed and helped there.

Required Reading:

A Lasting Promise: A Christian Guide to Fighting For Your Marriage. 2014. Stanley, Trathen, McCain, Bryan. Jossey-Bates. (One book for the couple).

The PREP Couple's Notes. 2010. Stanley, Markman, Blumberg. (One set for the couple, buy in class).

Created for Connection: Seven Conversations for a Lifetime of Love. 2016. Dr. Susan Johnson and Kenneth Sanderfer. Little, Brown, and Company. (One copy for the couple).

FINAL EXAMINATION POLICY

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination **on its scheduled day**. The final examination schedule is posted on the [Class Schedules](#) site. No requests for early examinations or alternative days will be approved.

PLNU COPYRIGHT POLICY

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

PLNU ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the university Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

PLNU ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

If you have a diagnosed disability, please contact PLNU's Disability Resource Center (DRC) to demonstrate need and to register for accommodation by phone at 619-849-2486 or by e-mail at DRC@pointloma.edu. See [Disability Resource Center](#) for additional information.

PLNU ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY

Regular and punctual attendance at all classes is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent from more than 10 percent of class meetings, the faculty member can file a written report which may result in de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation. See [Academic Policies](#) in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog.

Here are the tentative dates for your reading and other assignments.

Thursday 1/10/19	Introduction: Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts (SYMBIS) Chpt 1: Have You Faced the Myths of Marriage with Honesty?
1/17	A Lasting Promise (ALP) Read Chpt 1& 3: Foundations and Oneness, Prayer
1/24	ALP Read Chpt 2 & 5 : Communication. Filters and Criticism
1/31	ALP Read Chpt 4 &6: Solving Problems and Ground Rules.
2/7	ALP Read Chpt 8 &9: Expectations and Hidden Issues.
2/14	Class Project
2/21	ALP Read Chpt 14 & 15: Commitment and Forgiveness. Amy Grant. Marriage Interviews Due Esther Perel: Where Should We Begin ep 1 How Live and Not Kill Spouse The Number 1 Key to Incredible Sex I and II
2/28	ALP Read Chpt 11, 12, 13, 16: Friendship, Sex,

	and Spirituality The Number 1 Key to Incredible Sex I and II
3/7	Spring Break
3/14	CFC: Love and Attachment : Pg 17-70 Movie: War Room ARE Questions Mid Semester Paper Due
3/21	CFC: Pg 71-108 Conversation 1: Recognize the Demon Dialogues
3/28	CFC: pg 109-132 Conversation 2: Finding the Raw Spots Money Habitudes CFC: pg 133-154 Conversation 3: Revisit a Rocky Moment
4/4	CFC: pg 154-180 Conversation 4: Hold Me Tight
4/11	CFC: 181-199: Conversation 5: Forgiving Injuries CFC: 200-218 Conversation 6: Tender Touch and Sex
4/18	CFC: 219-245 Conversation 7: Keeping Your Love Alive Read 249-291 The Power of Hold Me Tight Final Declaration Project Due
4/25	No Class: Conference Day

- **Adult Attachment Interview Questions:**
- (answering these questions reflectively and honestly have been shown to promote positive adult relationships regardless of your past relationships.)
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- What was your childhood like?
- What was your relationship like with each parent - and were there other people with whom you were close as a child?
- Whom were you closest to and why?
- Give several words that describe early relationship with each parent – give a few memories that illustrate each of these words.
- What was it like when you were separated, upset, threatened, or fearful?
- Did you experience loss as a child- and if so, what was that like for you and your family?
- How did your relationships change over time?
- Why do you think your caregivers behaved as they did?
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- When you think about all these questions how do you think your earliest experiences have impacted your development as an adult?
- How do you think these experiences might impact your parenting?
- What do you wish for your children in the future?
- Finally when your child is 25 what do you hope he or she will say are the most important things he or she learned from you?