

## PSYD22 (Social Processes)

### Seminar: Relationships in Society

Instructor: Professor David Haley  
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#### Course Meetings

Tuesdays, 6:00 PM–8:00 PM; Course Location: Room BV361

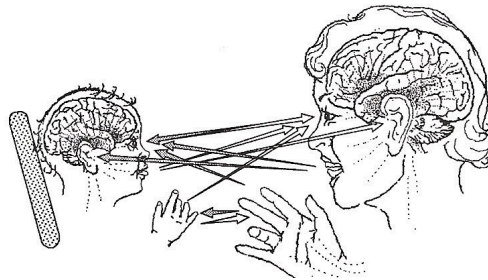
#### Course Description

How do relationships “get under the skin”? How do they influence the development and regulation of subjectivity “from the cradle to the grave”? How can society foster the development and benefits of positive relationships? The aims of this course are to consider how relationships influence the individual development and expression of personal identity, aggression, empathy, theory of mind, and the capacity to think—and also to question how science and society can design, test, and implement relationship-enhancing interventions that promote human development in a culturally diverse population.

The course will review work on infant mental health and the development of intersubjectivity drawn from the literatures of early psychoanalysis, attachment, developmental psychology, philosophy, feminism, and social criticism. In addition, the course will consider illustrative case histories obtained from classical sources such as Euripides’s *Electra*.

Students will have the opportunity to integrate the course materials through the lens of relationship, a focus that ultimately will be used to develop their own model of how relationships impact their lives and how they can change society. Throughout, we will discuss implications of the course material for parenting, education, therapy, and society.

INFANT INTERSUBJECTIVITY



#### Schedule and Readings

**Jan. 6 / Week 1:** *Introduction.* In the first seminar meeting, we will discuss the course goals and content and review the schedule and readings.

**Jan. 13 / Week 2:** *Mutual Regulation, Reparation, and Loneliness.* Building on the concept of the Mutual Regulation Model (MRM), which is a combination of self-regulation (e.g., the infant regulates him- or herself) and other-regulation (e.g., the parent or other serves as an external source of regulation for the infant), Ed Tronick expands on the notion of dyadic states of consciousness and offers a reason for why people seek emotional connection with others.

To examine the impact of relationships in a more extreme condition, we also take up the question of loneliness. In a science news piece published in the the *New Republic*, Judith Shulevitz highlights the emotional and health impact of loneliness on the individual. In contrast, George Monbiot, writing for the *Guardian*, discusses the societal implications of loneliness. We may find that Tronick’s dyadic states of consciousness hypothesis offers one answer to why loneliness can be psychologically devastating.

Tronick, E. Z. (1998). Dyadically Expanded States of Consciousness and the Process of Therapeutic Change. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 19(3), 290–299.

Monbiot, G. (2014). The Age of Loneliness Is Killing Us. In *The Guardian*, Oct 14, 2014.

Shulevitz, J. (2013). The Science of Loneliness: How Isolation Can Kill You. In *The New Republic*, May 13, 2013.

**Jan. 20 / Week 3:** *The Still-Face, Parent Responsiveness, and Infant Stress.* To test the notion of how sensitive parenting predicts infant regulation, we review empirical work on the Still-Face paradigm. In particular, the study by Haley & Stansbury (2003) highlights how disruptions in the parent-infant relationship serve to activate multiple behavioral and physiological stress indices and provides a useful operationalization of regulation. Regulation is defined as recovery during resumption of normal interaction after a brief relationship disruption. Greater parent responsiveness is found to be related to greater infant emotional and physiological regulation.

Haley, D. W. & Stansbury, K. (2003). Infant Stress and Parent Responsiveness: Regulation of Physiology and Behavior During Still-Face and Reunion. *Child Development*, 74, 1534 – 1546.

**Jan. 27 / Week 4:** *Psychological Development in Antiquity.*

Freud’s ideas about trauma and sexual development drew in part from his familiarity with classical literature. In the case of *Electra* we learn about a woman who hates her mother and identifies with her father.

Euripides. *The Electra of Euripides*, translated by Gilbert Murray. The Electronic Classics Series. 2010.

**Feb. 3 / Week 5:** *Reflective Function in the Parent-Infant Relationship.* Relatively soon after Freud embarked on his initial studies of hysteria and formulated theories linking trauma to mental illness, he and other psychoanalytic theorists began to focus on how the mind constructs fantasy and reality, moving away from questions about how real-world events and people influence the individual. The question of how real-world events (e.g., emotional neglect and early relationships) influence the mental health of children began to resurface shortly after WWII, in the 1940s, in the work of several psychologists and psychiatrists. In particular, John Bowlby introduced the notion of



attachment bonds between infant and caregiver. One of the more specific mechanisms proposed by attachment and psychoanalytic theorists is the reflective function, which is discussed by Peter Fonagy in “*Attachment and Reflective Function: Their Role in Self-Organization.*”

Fonagy, P., Target, M. (1997). Attachment and Reflective Function: Their Role in Self-Organization. *Development and Psychopathology*, 9, 679–700

**Feb. 10 / Week 6:** *Psychoanalytic Views of Mutual Recognition.* In her essay “Recognition and Destruction: An Outline of Intersubjectivity,” Jessica Benjamin recasts the boundaries between self and other as overlapping rather than distinct, and views the self and other as co-constructed (i.e., an outcome or process fueled by momentary acts of mutual recognition). This perspective addresses unanswered psychoanalytic and philosophical questions such as how one person can understand the subjective contents of another person.

Benjamin, J. (1995). *Like Subjects, Love Objects: Essays on Recognition and Sexual Differences.* Pp. 27-48. Yale University Press: New Haven and London.

**Feb. 17/ Reading Week:** No class

**Feb. 24/ Week 7:** *Consciousness and Mutual Dependence.* Western views of the mind have evolved over the past five centuries, from Descartes’s isolated and autonomous mind, which has the capacity for self-awareness, to more dynamic models in which the mind is viewed as relational and dependent on the recognition of other minds. The classic account of self-consciousness emerging through contact with another is found in Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit.*

Hegel, G. W. F. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, chapter 4, “Self-consciousness.” Translated by A. V. Miller. Oxford University Press: Oxford (1977).



**March 3 / Week 8:** *In-Class Exam* (90 minutes).

**March 10 / Week 9:** *The Talking Cure.* How do our biological drives and instincts become socialized? What is the mind, and how does it develop? What are the mental structures and psychological mechanisms of the self? What causes mental illness? Sigmund Freud was one of the first to attempt to address these fundamental questions in a scientific manner. Accordingly, we will consider social-emotional development by reading Freud. What experiences, observations, data, and analyses led Freud to formulate his initial theories about hysteria, trauma, and repression? How did he diagnose and treat his patients? In 1910, after he had reached some prominence, Freud was invited to deliver a lecture telling the intriguing story of how he embarked on the development and scientific investigation of a new and radical cure called psychoanalysis, which was a method he used for understanding and treating patients afflicted with what he described as neurotic and hysterical symptoms.

Freud, S. (1910). The Origin and Development of Psychoanalysis. *The American Journal of Psychology*, 21, 181-218.

**March 17 / Week 10:** *Hidden Regulators and Synchrony.* The developmental and biological processes that contribute to attachment behavior in humans are presented by Ruth Feldman in

her paper “Parent-infant Synchrony: Biological Foundations and Developmental Outcomes,” which emphasizes the reciprocal interactions between parents and offspring. Feldman highlights the developmental progression and fine-tuning of the infant’s physiological oscillators (e.g., the timekeepers of physiological rhythms) in the prenatal period and shows that variation in more complex physiological regulation and behavioral synchrony with the parent during the first year of life predicts social outcomes.

Feldman, R. (2007). Parent-infant Synchrony: Biological Foundations and Developmental Outcomes. *Current Directions In Psychological Science*, 16, 340-345.

**March 24 / Week 11:** *Intergenerational Transmission of Executive Function*. To consider how parents’ executive function affects parenting and the development of the child’s executive function, we turn to recent work in developmental psychology by Kimberly Cuevas and colleagues.

Cuevas, K. et al. (2014). What’s mom got to do with it? Contributions of maternal executive function and caregiving to the development of executive function across early childhood. *Developmental Science*, 2, 224–238

**March 31 / Week 12:** *Group Projects*

<u>Evaluation</u>	<u>Date(s)</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Class participation	Weekly	10%
Discussion questions	Weekly	20%
Group presentation	Assigned	20%
In-class exam	March 3	30%
Group project	Assigned	20%

**Class participation:** Class participation is critical. This is an advanced undergraduate seminar in which enthusiastic class participation is important and is graded. Participation includes attendance, punctuality, facilitating discussion, paying careful attention to classmates’ presentations, showing respect for others’ contributions, and offering constructive feedback, critical questions, and comments after each group presentation. To help create a stimulating, safe, equitable discussion environment, each of you should try to strike a balance between listening and speaking.

**Discussion questions.** In order to stimulate critical thinking about the reading material and to help you prepare for the seminar discussion, each of you should bring to class two or three written questions or comments with a maximum total word count of no more than 250. The discussion questions are intended to help you formulate your impressions of the readings. What in the reading made you curious and think? For one of your discussion questions, please discuss some of the ideas you had about the question and a potential answer to your question.

**Group Presentations:** You will form small groups so that each person presents once during the semester. The marks for the group presentation will be assigned independently for the group and individual. Group presentations will be based on the weekly readings and will consist of two primary components. Your group will be required to go beyond summarizing the reading, also providing the class with an expanded perspective on and critical analysis of

the assigned reading. To this end, you may wish to present readings supplemental to those assigned for the week (such as relevant journal articles, book chapters, etc.). Your presentations will be evaluated in terms of each student's 1) clarity of presentation, 2) comprehension and organization, 3) effective use of supplementary readings, if used, and 4) capacity to answer questions from the class. It will be important to coordinate the different speakers in the group so that there is no redundancy and the presentation is coherent as a whole. You will be expected to use slides (e.g., PowerPoint) as part of the presentation. The second component of the presentation involves stimulating and leading an active class discussion of the assigned readings. You can achieve this by asking questions, demonstrating relevant methodologies, etc. Please consult with me in advance of your presentation.

**In-Class Exam:** During the semester we will have a written exam in class. For this exam, you will be asked to choose one to two questions to answer out of several choices. The exam will be based on the readings and group presentations that precede it.

**Group Project:** The goal of the group project is to translate what we know about relationships into ideas that can be used to improve society (parenting, education, therapy, etc.). Accordingly, the group project will consist of identifying a major problem in society and proposing a particular way to address the problem either in a research study, an intervention, or a new public policy. While the scope of this problem-focused project is open, the rationale for the project must include an in-depth discussion of the literature. The group project will be presented in the format of a poster and discussed in class in the last two weeks of the semester.