

Course Syllabus
Speech 4957-5957: Special Topics in Speech – Dark Side of Close Relationships
Fall Semester 2008

BASIC COURSE INFORMATION

Instructor Contact Information

- Name: Carrie Oliveira, Ph.D.
- Email: oliveira@etsu.edu
- Phone: 432.439.4167
- Location: 519F Warf-Pickel Hall
- Office Hours:
 - Monday 3:30-4:30, Tuesday 2:30-3:00, Wednesday 11:00-12:30, 3:30-4:30, Friday 11:00-1:00

Course Description and Objectives

The goal of this course is to provide students with an overview of aversive behaviors commonly enacted in between close relational others. By the time students complete the course, they should:

- Have knowledge of the variety of behaviors that are considered aversive in close relationships
- Understand the most common negative consequences that come about as the result of aversive behaviors
- Understand the motivation and strategy behind the performance of aversive behaviors
- Be able to reflect on their own close relationships and better understand the impact of their behaviors on the quality of their intimate interactions

Additionally, this class will require students to complete a research prospectus designed to investigate some aspect of negative relational behavior. Subsequently, students will also leave this class:

- With an improved understanding of social scientific method
- With an improved ability to read and understand social scientific work
- With a research prospectus prepared for submission for IRB approval and subsequent data collection

Class Format

My intention for this class was that it was to be a seminar. That is, students were expected to complete the readings assigned for each day and come prepared to discuss the impact and implication of the readings as well as reflect on the applicability of the readings to their own experiences. Given the unexpectedly large size of the class, however, we'll kind of have to play it by ear. I still intend for the class to have as much of a seminar quality as possible, but I suspect I'll spend more time lecturing than I initially intended. I do plan on having specific discussion questions due each week to help move the conversation in class along a bit. I appreciate your patience as we work out the details of the day-to-day activities together.

Required Reading

There are numerous books written on the subject of "the dark side" of relationships. None of them, however, present what I consider a comprehensive review of issues related to the subject matter we are going to cover in this class. As such, I felt it would have been fiscally irresponsible of me to request that you buy all 10 or so books that I have drawn resources for this class from. Instead, I will be making the relevant excerpts from each of these books and articles available to you as electronic files on D2L. The readings for each week will be posted by the Wednesday of the preceding week. If at any point you are unable to access a posted file, please let me know as soon as possible.

COURSE POLICIES

Contacting Your Professor

My general preference is to communicate with students face to face, as it tends to be efficient and allows for the enhanced clarification of information. This means that you are more than welcome to talk with me before or after class, or during my office hours. If, however, you opt not to speak to me in person, or for whatever reason, prefer to communicate with me via email, please take note of the following regarding my expectations for email:

- Please allow up to 48 hours for me to reply to any email. Generally, I will reply well before 48 hours is up, however, you should not email drafts or questions the night before an assignment or exam. You may or may not receive a reply.
- When emailing, please write in complete sentences, and use correct punctuation and capitalization. Please exhibit a general sense of courtesy, professionalism and graciousness in your emails, particularly when making requests. Finally, please address and sign your emails. In other words, start them with my name and end them with yours.
- I am happy to look at drafts of assignments. I have found that the most efficient and effective way for me to provide feedback on drafts is to first look at a copy of the assignment and then meet with you to go over my feedback. If you would like me to look at one of your drafts, please allow 48 hours for me to look at the draft – either in hard copy or electronically – and then make an appointment with me to come by to discuss the feedback.

One other thing that I would like to note regarding how you address me: It is my preference that you call me by my first name – both in person and in written correspondence. If you are at all uncomfortable with that level of informality, either Dr. Carrie, Dr. O., or Dr. Oliveira will be fine.

Special Accommodations

Any student with a special need for an accommodation in course activities should make arrangements with me.

Policy Regarding Attendance, Tardiness and Late Work

Students at ETSU are expected to attend class (in fact, the school's attendance policy can be read [here](#)). I absolutely agree that you should come to class – you are paying for it. Ultimately, however, the decision to attend class is yours alone. In deciding whether to attend class, it might interest you to know that students who attend class on a regular basis typically perform substantially better than those students who do not. That being said, if you for, whatever reason, elect not to attend class, please know that you are responsible for all material presented in class. Moreover, you are responsible for due dates for assignments and dates for exams.

Should you fail to attend class on a day on which an assignment is due or on which there is an exam, you will forfeit the points associated with that assignment UNLESS:

- You notify me of the absence in advance and agree to submit any work due on that date in advance, **OR**
- The absence was unforeseeable, unpreventable, urgent in nature, necessitated missing class, and for which documentation proving its occurrence can be provided (oversleeping, scheduling conflicts, and other absences of this sort will not be excused). Additionally, you must contact me via phone or email within 24 hours of the absence to notify me of the emergency. You will have 5 school days to make up the assignment. Failure to notify me about the emergency within 24 hours of the absence or a failure to make up the assignment within 5 schools days of the absence will result in a zero on the assignment.

Similarly, if you are tardy on a day on which an assignment is due, an exam is scheduled, or some other in class activity has taken place, and you miss the activity due to tardiness, you will forfeit the points associated with that assignment unless the tardiness meets the conditions specified above. As a general rule, you should avoid being tardy to class. Your peers and I will find it distracting. If you must be tardy for whatever reason, please make as unobtrusive an entrance as possible.

Policy Regarding the Submission of Assignments

There are several criteria which all assignments submitted for credit must meet. Additional requirements for particular assignments will be provided as the semester progresses and will provide criteria to be met *in addition* to those listed here:

- All written work shall be typed in **12-point Times New Roman or Courier font**, have **one-inch margins around the entire page**, be **double-spaced**, be **written using formal scholarly language** and be **devoid of grammatical and typographical errors**.
- Communication scholars write manuscripts so as to comply with the publication standards put forth by the American Psychological Association. Purdue University has some [tips online](#) for how to correctly format in APA style. The APA also has some tips online for how to format [electronic resources](#).
- All work shall be submitted electronically so as to be available for screening through ETSU's plagiarism detection software (see policy regarding academic integrity below). All work must be submitted via the electronic dropbox on the course's D2L site. The dropbox can be found by going to elearn.etsu.edu and clicking on the link for this course. Please note that the dropbox will close at the beginning of class on the date on which an assignment is due, and you will not be able to submit any assignments after this time. If your assignment is not in the dropbox prior to its closing, the assignment is considered late and will be subject to the late work acceptance policy specified above. You will receive a confirmation email from the D2L system when your assignment is successfully submitted to the dropbox. Please note that technical difficulties, inability to access D2L or your email not working are not valid reasons to be late on submitting your assignment to the dropbox. If you are unable to access the dropbox prior to the assignment due date, send the assignment to me via email and bring a hardcopy to class.

Policy Regarding Academic Integrity

ETSU highly values academic integrity. My policy regarding academic integrity will be the same as prescribed by the university. As students, you should be familiar with the academic integrity policy as described by your university. You can read it by clicking [here](#).

It is also important to note that ETSU makes available to its faculty a plagiarism-detection service called Turnitin. Any written work that you submit for credit to this class may be sent to Turnitin so that it can be compared to other submitted texts. Assignments are also compared to material on the internet and in some academic databases such as ProQuest.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Graded Assignments and Grading Scale

Your score for the course will be a function of the total points you earn on each of the following assignments totaling 280 points:

- Weekly Discussion Participation
 - You will be required to submit well-thought out and articulated responses to 2 discussion questions for the readings each week. Additionally, you will be required to submit one question for discussion in class which I will compile and bring to class to guide class conversation. Each week's discussion questions will be worth 20 points.
 - Research Project Blog Postings
 - Your group will be required to set up and maintain a blog for your final research project. At 6 intervals throughout the semester, you will be prompted to post certain content on your blog designed to facilitate your progress toward your final paper in the course. Each successful blog post will earn your group 20 points.
 - Final Research Prospectus
 - Your group will be required to submit, in APA style, a full prospectus including a title page, abstract, literature review, and method section for a testable research hypothesis related to any dark side topic of your choice. The final paper will be presented briefly and informally on the last day of class following the discussion for that day. The successful completion and submission of your paper will earn your group 100 points.
- The following scale will be adopted for calculating your final score in the course.

Grade Earned	%
A	100 - 93.5
A-	93.4 – 89.5
B+	89.4 – 86.5
B	86.4 – 82.5
B-	82.4 – 79.5
C+	79.4 – 76.5
C	76.4 – 72.5
C-	72.4 – 69.5
D+	69.4 – 66.5
D	66.4 – 59.5
F	< = 59.4

Tentative Course Schedule

Please note that this is a *tentative* course schedule for the duration of this course. Any modifications to this schedule will be announced in class.

Week 1	8/26	Reflections on Bad Behavior, Introduction to Social Science Method
Week 2	9/2	Putting Bad Behavior in Perspective: The Importance of Belonging and Affiliation
Week 3	9/9	Lonely, So Lonely: The Pathological Personality and Other Rejectable Personal Attributes
Week 4	9/16	But I Didn't Mean It!: Carelessness vs. Intentional Bad Behavior and a Discussion on the Difference Between Strategy and Manipulation
Week 5	9/23	Minor Offenses: Rudeness, Impropropriety, Complaining and Nagging (Or Slowly Driving Your Partner to Madness)
Week 6	9/30	The Relational Con-Artist: Pickup Artistry, Deception in Attraction and The "Cock-Block"
Week 7	10/7	Sticks and Stones May Break My Bones but Words Will Give Me an Eating Disorder: The Two Faces of Teasing
Week 8	10/14	You Didn't Really Want to Come, Did You?: The Forms and Functions of Social Exclusion And He Loves Me . . . Not: Unrequited Love
Week 9	10/21	Liar, Liar, Pants on Fire: Forms and Functions of Deception
Week 10	10/28	It Ain't Cheating if You're in a Different Time Zone: Infidelity and Jealousy
Week 11	11/4	No Classes: Fall Break
Week 12	11/11	I Just Can't Get Enough: Stalking/Obsessive Relational Intrusion and Other Forms of Inappropriate Attention
Week 13	11/18	It's Not a Fight, It's Just a Loud Conversation: Managing Conflict
Week 14	11/25	The Most Offensive of Them All: Physical, Psychological and Emotional Abuse
Week 15	12/2	When the Fat Lady Sings: Issues Related to Dissolution and Divorce

Assignments marked on the schedule with an asterisk (*) are available on D2L.