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PSYC 649.01: Attachment and Attachment Disorders

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ATTACHMENT & ATTACHMENT DISORDERS
PSYCHOLOGY 649
The University of Montana

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Spring, 2003
MW: 1:40-3:00 p.m.
CPC 119

Human emotional attachments develop early and have a profound influence on subsequent development. To a great extent they define who we are and who and how we love. This course explores theoretical, research, developmental, and psychopathological implications of the attachment bond. It is taught as a seminar with student participation emphasized. Your course grade will be based on a class presentations, a term paper, and an attachment assessment project, all weighted equally:

CLASS PRESENTATIONS consist of students guiding discussion of readings and of a review of a specific area in the attachment literature. The review is a presentation of approximately 1 hour and class discussion, accompanied by an informational summary and references distributed to class members. I have attached a list of questions and issues which you might address. However, you are not limited these.

The TERM PAPER is a paper of approximately 10 to 15 pages in length and includes a reference section. You are expected to read journal articles and/or books and book chapters on the topic you have chosen, to synthesize the material, and to write it in APA style. You should select a topic relevant to attachment or attachment disorders. Before proceeding on your paper, meet with me to discuss your topic.

The ATTACHMENT ASSESSMENT PROJECT is a research activity which you will select from several options in project instructions that will be distributed to you. You will be required to write a brief paper which reports on your project. Each project involves the administration of an attachment assessment technique and allows you to choose an age-range (infant, child, adolescent). We will be discussing these assessment techniques in class.

The textbook for this course is: J. Cassidy & P.R. Shaver (eds.) (2002)., Handbook of Attachment, NY: Guilford. In addition to text chapters, there are some assigned articles, listed in the class schedule, which are on file at the Psychology Department office. You will need to make your own photocopies of these articles. A book which is not assigned, but which is a very readable introduction to this area, is Karen, R. (1998). Becoming Attached. NY: Oxford University Press.

<u>WEEK</u>	<u>TOPICS & READINGS</u>	
Jan 27, 29	Overview of attachment theory	Chpts 1,2,
Feb 3, 5	Overview of attachment theory	Chpts 3,4,5
Feb 10, 12	Biological perspectives on attachment	Chpts 6,7
<p>Siegel, D.J. (2001). Toward an interpersonal neurobiology of the developing mind: Attachment relationships, “mindsight,” and neural integration. <u>Infant Mental Health Journal</u>, <u>22</u>, 67-94.</p>		
Feb 17	WASHINGTON-LINCOLN HOLIDAY	
Feb 19	Biological perspectives on attachment	Chpts 8,9,
Feb 24, 26	Biological perspectives on attachment	Chpts 10,11
Mar 3, 5	Attachment in infancy & childhood	Chpts 2,13,14
Mar 10, 12	Attachment in adolescence & adulthood	Chpts 15,16,17
Mar 17, 19	Attachment in adolescence & adulthood	Chpts 18,19,20
Mar 24, 26	SPRING BREAK	
Mar 31, Apr 2	Clinical applications of attachment theory and research	Chpts 21,22
Apr 7, 9	Clinical applications of attachment theory and research	Chpts 23,24,25

Meyeroff, R., Mertlich, G., & Gross, J. (1999). Comparative effectiveness of holding therapy with aggressive children. Child Psychiatry and Human Development, 29, 303-313.

Hughes, D.A. (2002). The psychological treatment of children with PYSD and attachment disorganization: Dyadic developmental psychotherapy. (unpublished manuscript).

James, B. (1994). Handbook for treatment of attachment-trauma problems in children. NY: Free Press, Chpt 8.

Hanson, R.F. & Spratt, E.G. (2000). Reactive attachment disorder: What we know about the disorder and implications for treatment. Child Maltreatment, 5, 137-145.

Fosha, D. (2001). The dyadic regulation of affect. Psychotherapy in Practice, 57,

225-242.

Marvin, R., Cooper, G., Hoffman, K., & Powell, B. (2002). The circle of security project: Attachment-based intervention with caregiver-pre school child dyads. Attachment and Human Development, 4, 107-124.

Apr 14, 16	Clinical applications of attachment theory and research	Chpts 26,27
Apr 21, 23	Emerging topics and perspectives	Chpts 28,29,30
Apr 28, 30	Emerging topics and perspectives	Chpts 31,32
May 5, 7	Emerging topics and perspectives	Chpts 33,34,35
May 14 (3:20-5:20)	Emerging topics and perspectives	Chpt 36

ATTACHMENT & ATTACHMENT DISORDERS

Psychology 649

Some Class Presentation Topics

1. What are the neurobiological correlates of disorganized attachment?
2. A young couple with no children is planning to adopt a 5-year-old little boy from Romania. They have information that this child has spent much of his life in an orphanage, having been abandoned at 4 months of age by his biological parents. What are the likely characteristics of this child? What should this couple do to prepare for the child and what, if any, services might they need?
3. A single pregnant mother is trying to decide whether or not to return to work after her baby is born. What are the implications of her choice for the attachment and development of her infant? What do you advise that she do?
4. Should parents and/or their infants receive education or intervention with regard to infant and child attachments? Should parents and infants be screened for intervention, just as infants are screened for physical disorders? If so, which parent-infant pairs should be screened and who should be offered interventions? What should the nature of the intervention be? Is there any evidence that intervention works?
5. It has been proposed that insecure attachment styles are not maladaptive and do not require intervention. What is your view? Can insecure attachment styles be attributed to infant temperament or some other factor rather than to early mother-infant interactions?
6. To what extent do early attachments influence later significant relationships? If there is an influence, how does it work?
7. Judith Harris has argued that parental practices have no bearing on subsequent adjustment. Summarize her argument and address the contrary view that parents do affect attachment bonds and subsequent development in children. (You will need to request a specific article by Harris from Dr. Silverman)
8. I have a foster child with Reactive Attachment Disorder. What therapies are available and what do you recommend?
9. There are some adult psychotherapy approaches that emphasize the importance of emotional attachment and apply attachment theory in the therapeutic setting. What are they and how do they work?
10. How important are attachment disturbances in the development of psychopathology? For example, does it really make sense to say that someone with an Antisocial Personality Disorder is a “victim” of poor bonding, or is there more to it?

11. It has been suggested that the focus on the significance of attachment style in early development and the creation of interventions to address parent-child bonding are really an unnecessary luxury of an affluent society. After all, humans have been reproducing successfully for eons. Why the fuss?
12. Jerome Kagan argues that attachment styles are largely the consequence of infant temperament and do not reflect much that is special about the parent-infant relationship. What do you think?
13. Is “the strange situation” too strange and artificial to accurately assess attachment? Are there any alternative assessment procedures that might be better?
14. Does one’s culture affect the patterns of attachment that are most commonly found in the culture? If culture does have this effect, how does it work? If culture does have an effect, are cultures which promote secure attachment “better” than others which do not?
15. How are adult relationships affected by attachment style?
16. What does the research say about attachment style variations among siblings? Can two children from the same family have different attachment styles? If so, how does this happen?
17. Children with attachment problems are sometimes removed from their parents’ custody. What should the criteria be for removing children from, and returning them to, their parents? Should the role of attachment status of parent or child be considered in this process?
18. What is the relationship between early attachment disorders and later personality disorders?