

Instructor's Materials for
The Psychology of Marriage: An Evolutionary and Cross-Cultural View
Weisfeld, Weisfeld, and Dillon (2017)



Introduction

Marriage is indeed mysterious, and it is wise for each one of us to learn as much as we can learn about the workings of long-term partnerships such as marriage. Much useful information is to be found in this volume, *The Psychology of Marriage: An Evolutionary and Cross-Cultural View*, for the individual reader, the researcher, and the student in the classroom.

This online guide is designed for instructors teaching in English, in a variety of higher education settings around the globe. In all likelihood, a traditional lecture format with small-group activities would work best; some online assignments might work well, in a hybrid class design, but a completely online class would be difficult with this material. Although the sample syllabus is set up to match the American semester system of 16 weeks, it can easily be modified to meet shorter schedules, by selecting desired learning objectives (shown in **bold print** for each

week) and fitting them into a shorter timeframe. Possible classroom settings and considerations include the following:

- This course should work well for the university instructor who is teaching a higher-level course (for juniors and seniors), in an area such as counseling, cross-cultural psychology, evolutionary psychology, family studies, gender studies, and related disciplines.
- It should work well for the university instructor who is teaching a graduate level didactic course in any of the above areas, or who is teaching a research seminar in which shared research instruments may be discussed and utilized in real world settings.
- Also, it should work well for the university instructor who is teaching a course that includes upper-level undergraduates and graduate students in a cross-listed class. Separate learning objectives and appropriate assignments are included for students at both levels, as seen below in the sample syllabus and other teaching aids.
- In general, students will likely benefit from reading about family dynamics that are less familiar to them. That means that, in a setting within the United States, Canada or Great Britain, students may benefit from spending more time reading about marriage in less familiar cultures, such as Turkey, China, Russia and Brazil. In these settings students will also benefit from an expanded focus on families where parents represent minority groups such as Mexican-American, African-American, or same-sex couples. It also means that, in settings beyond North America and Great Britain, students may benefit from learning more about whichever cultural and/or minority groups are less familiar to them.
- All student groups described above will benefit from exposure to principles of Evolutionary Psychology, as they are applied here to mate selection and retention, and the dynamics of family life. Thus, the universal findings that are described in the chapters about humor, conflict, infidelity, spirituality, and physical attractiveness will be of great interest to all students.



Sample syllabus, for use with undergraduate and/or graduate students.

(Feel free to use this language and/or modify as needed, for instructional purposes. We strongly suggest using separate learning objectives and assignments for graduate and undergraduate students, particularly when both levels join the class in a cross-listed course offering. That said, most learning objectives are common to both levels, and learning outcomes which are *unique to graduate students* are presented *in italics* below.)

PSYCHOLOGY 4000/6000: MARRIAGE AND LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIPS: AN
EVOLUTIONARY AND CROSS-CULTURAL VIEW

Institution, Term

Section, Time, Location

Instructor, Office, Phone, Email address, Office hours, Contact policies

Prerequisites: All students should have had an Introductory Psychology course. Undergraduate students should be upper-level (juniors or seniors). *Graduate students should have completed at least one course in Basic Statistics, Business Statistics, or Research Methods in the Social Sciences.*

Course Objectives:

This course aims to expose students to the science of marriage research, with special attention to addressing diversity in marriage and long-term partnerships. With that in mind, there is particular attention paid to gender similarities and differences, cultural similarities and differences, and issues of interest to minority couples, such as same-sex couples. The basic approach is from Evolutionary Psychology, examining phenomena from a functional viewpoint, taking into account principles of sexual selection as originally formulated by Charles Darwin and elaborated on by modern theorists, who clearly recognize the importance of cultural inputs into human behavior.

The course relies on a 2017 text, *The Psychology of Marriage: An Evolutionary and Cross-Cultural View* (Lexington Books), which presents actual data from a coordinated study of over 4,000 couples from around the world. Through the book, students will be exposed to methodological and ethical issues involved in conducting cross-cultural research on marriage. Students will read about real findings about real adults in long-term partnerships. Sources of conflict and clinical applications will be discussed.

Course objectives, or learning outcomes, are described below. Each outcome in normal font style (for example, 1.) applies to both undergraduate and graduate students. *Each outcome in italics (for example, 1.G.) applies to graduate students.*

1. Gaining an understanding of basic principles of Evolutionary Psychology, as they shed light on sexual and relational behavior in romantic partnerships in humans. *1.G. Demonstrating an ability to compare and contrast Evolutionary Theory with other approaches, such as Sexual Bargaining Theory.*
2. Developing familiarity with the process of designing a survey instrument and why it is important to establish validity and reliability. This includes developing an understanding

of the principles of gender invariance and cultural invariance, and why they are important. *2.G. Developing a rudimentary understanding of Actor-Partner Interaction Models and what they can tell us about couples' interactions.*

3. Developing an appreciation for the ethical concerns that arise when a researcher works in a new cultural setting. *3.G. Being able to generate solutions when asked about ethical dilemmas.*
4. Becoming familiar with issues surrounding gender similarities and differences in heterosexual couples, and becoming familiar with the orderly patterns of sex differences suggested by the research described in the book.
5. Becoming familiar with issues surrounding cultural similarities and differences in heterosexual couples (including minority couples in the USA), and becoming familiar with cultural differences described in the book.
6. Becoming familiar with issues important to same-sex couples, and becoming familiar with their similarity to and difference from heterosexual couples, as suggested by the research reported in the book.
7. Developing a recognition of how these different dynamics intersect as they have an impact on people's long-term partnerships.
8. Applying these understandings to some basic issues of concern in clinical settings. *8.G. Demonstrating an ability to combine these understandings with other approaches to working with couples in a clinical setting.*
9. Demonstrating an understanding of how the MARQ is utilized to explore the dynamics of long-term partnerships. *9.G. Demonstrating an ability to design a new research project utilizing the survey instrument (the MARQ) described in the book, along with at least one additional survey instrument (such as an attachment scale, or a personality measure) or one additional research method (such as observation, or hormonal assays).*

Required Text:

The Psychology of Marriage: An Evolutionary and Cross-Cultural View. Editors: Weisfeld, C.C., Weisfeld, G.E., & Dillon, L.M. (2017) Lexington Books. (POM)

In addition, a small course pack of readings may be provided.

Requirements:

Because of the conceptually high level of discussion required in this class, students are encouraged to attend every class and take careful notes. Assigned reading must be done in preparation for class discussion. Please turn in assignments on the due dates specified, so that you can obtain timely feedback. Points will be taken off for late assignments, unless you make

arrangements well in advance of the due date. As always, please make every effort to arrive on time and stay for the whole class, and please turn off phones and other electronic devices, so as not to distract your classmates or instructor.

Required assignments include the following:

- 1) Six short essays, based on topics covered, due dates To Be Announced. In some cases, graduate and undergraduate students will have different questions to write on, for the subject of an essay.
- 2) A mid-term exam.
- 3) Participation in six class discussions, in small groups, with the instructor assigning students to each group.
- 4) A final paper, the subject of which is research on long-term partnerships, with different instructions for grad and undergrad students.

Grading:

A student's final grade will be calculated based on these percentages:
Essays = 25%; Exam = 25%; Class discussions = 20%; Research paper = 30%.

Calendar for Reading Assignments, with **Course Objective numbers** under the Date:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>POM Chapters</u>
Week 1 (1., 1.G.)	Evolutionary principles	1
Week 2 (2., 2.G.)	Methods of research on couples	2, 3 <i>Grad students: 2-4</i>
Week 3 (5.)	Cultural findings, part I Essay 1 is due	5, 6, 9
Week 4 (5.)	Cultural findings, part II	7, 8

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>POM Chapters</u>
Week 5 (3., 3.G.)	Ethics in Cross-Cultural Research Essay 2 is due	19
Week 5 (6., 7.)	Cultural findings, part III: U.S.A.	10, 13
Week 6 (5.)	Cultural findings, part IV: more U.S.A. Essay 3 is due	11, 12
Week 7 (1., 1.G., 7.)	Mid-term exam	
Week 8 (1., 1.G.)	Integrating culture and evolved patterns Essay 4 is due	14
Week 9 (4., 5.)	Religiosity	15
Week 10 (4., 5.)	Humor Essay 5 is due	16

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>POM Chapters</u>
Week 11 (4., 5.)	Infidelity	17
Week 12 (7., 8., 8.G.)	More Sources of Conflict Essay 6 is due	18
Week 13 (8., 8.G.)	Clinical Issues	19
Week 14 (1., 1.G., 7.)	A Model of Marriage Term paper is due <i>Grad students: Research proposal is due</i>	21
Week 15 (7., 9., 9.G.)	Social Policy and Discussion Undergrads: Paper is due	21
Week 16 (7., 9., 9.G.)	Discussion <i>Grad students: Presentations of research proposals</i>	

Additional Information from University, College, Registrar, etc.



Description and Samples of Assignments

Sample Short Essay Questions (to be answered with a 2-to-3-page essay which uses APA documentation for author citations, and references at the end). Learning objectives are indicated in bold print for each question.

Objective 1. Sexual selection is based upon the Darwinian concepts of male-male competition and female choice. Using those concepts, explain why polygyny is so much more common than polyandry, around the world.

***Objective 1.G.** Sexual selection is based upon the Darwinian concepts of male-male competition and female choice. Using those concepts, explain why polygyny is so much more common than polyandry, around the world. How is this difference in the occurrence of these marriage patterns influenced by culture? Be sure to address the role of status hierarchies and the accumulation of wealth, as they affect the power of each gender.*

Objective 2. Explain why the authors believed that a new instrument was needed, to measure marital satisfaction. Describe at least one of the challenges they faced in designing a new instrument, and discuss how that challenge was or was not met.

***Objective 2.G.** The MARQ is designed so that the couple (any couple) may be studied as a dyad. Why was it that establishing gender invariance was an essential part of the process of developing the MARQ? And, secondly, what can be learned by applying the Actor-Partner Interaction Model to MARQ data?*

Objective 6. In POM, Chapters 2, 10 and 13 all include some discussion of same-sex couples. From this reading, identify two things you learned about gay and lesbian long-term partnerships that you did not know previously.

***Objective 6.G.** In chapter 2 from POM, there is a figure near the end of the chapter, Figure 2.1. The preceding three-and-one-half pages provide background for this research, from the doctoral dissertation of Ellen Keyt. In your own words, describe what you see in the figure, and what it implies for long-term partnerships involving heterosexuals, gays and lesbians. Then comment on the use of the MARQ with same-sex couples, based on the psychometric information provided in the background information there.*



Sample Exam Questions

Multiple choice: select the best answer for each question and mark the letter of that answer on your answer sheet.

1. Three of the following four statements are basic assumptions of the theory of evolution by natural selection. Which one is NOT a basic assumption?

- a. Reproduction usually provides for some variation in offspring.
- b. The environment exerts pressures that favor some offspring over others.
- c. Some offspring will die out, while others live to reproduce and pass on their genes.
- d. Offspring will adjust their genes to fit the environment.

2. Both natural selection and sexual selection were detailed in books written by

- a. Lamarck
- b. Darwin
- c. Freud
- d. Copernicus

3. The process of sexual selection involves the following mechanisms:

- a. male-male competition and female choice
- b. male-female competition and natural choice
- c. female-female competition and male choice

4. Physical and behavioral differences between the sexes are caused by

- a. genes (heredity)
- b. influences from the environment
- c. both a and b

5. Marriage between one man and many women is called

- a. polygyny
- b. polyandry
- c. monogamy
- d. open marriage

6. Which type of marriage is very rare, and where it is seen it involves siblings who share one spouse?

- a. polygyny
- b. polyandry
- c. monogamy
- d. open marriage

7. If a man has been deceived into providing for children who are not his own children (he only THINKS they are his), we say this man has been

- a. dimorphed
- b. de-potentiated
- c. cuckolded
- d. DNA-disabled

8. Researchers have found an important bonding function for the hormone known as

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| a. testosterone | c. estrogen |
| b. oxytocin | d. adrenaline |

True or False: Mark A if the statement is true; mark B if it is false.

9. Almost all cultures allow for divorce under some circumstances.

10. In human marriage, male and female interests do not always coincide.

Key terms and definitions (may be used for exams, for matching questions, or for true-false questions). Feel free to circulate this list to students for studying:

Actor-Partner Interdependence Model – a dyadic design model which estimates the influence of variables within one person on that person (actor effects), and the influence of variables within that one person on another dyad member (partner effects). This method allows the researcher to draw conclusions about interdependence itself. See **dyadic analysis**.

Arranged marriage – a marriage in which the partners exercised less control over partner choice than their own parents did. The balance of control may change over generations, as a culture becomes more egalitarian, with the younger generation exercising more control. This balance may change over a series of marriages, too, as in the case where hunter-gatherers probably had their first marriage arranged, but subsequent marriages were **free-choice marriages**.

Amorousness – see **attachment**.

Asymmetry – A lack of perfect balance between the left and right sides of the face or body.

Symmetry, which is perfect or near-perfect similarity between the left and right sides, indicates a sound genotype which has been resistant to environmental insults during development.

Attachment – a bond of affection between two individuals. Psychological research on humans suggests that one's attachment style is established in infancy, although it may be modified by life experience. In adulthood, this tendency to attach is often called **amorousness**.

Balanced Integration and Differentiation (BID) Model – a perspective which proposes that agency and autonomous action must co-exist with being embedded in social relationships. Thus, according to the BID Model, optimal psychological functioning requires satisfying one's needs for both individuation and relatedness.

Bride price – in a traditional society, the property which a potential husband offers to the father of his potential bride.

Caballerismo - a pattern of beliefs and behaviors rooted in hyper-masculinity, characterized by hard work, responsibility, and protection of the family, to differentiate it from **machismo**, which is more of a negative stereotype. The term is Spanish, and the pattern is usually described in discussions of Latino cultures. See **machismo** and **marianismo**.

Cohabitation – a long-term partnership arrangement, usually under the same roof, without the benefit of a legal marriage arrangement.

Collectivism - a pattern within a culture, whereby the good of the society or group as a whole is valued over the good of the individual. See **individualism**.

Conjugal rights – the rights to unlimited sexual access to one’s partner, typically associated with male rights in a society in which women’s sexuality is restricted by belief, custom and/or law.

Cortisol – a glucocorticoid stress hormone which is produced in the adrenal cortex.

Culture of honor- describes cultures in which individuals, especially men, are expected to strongly resent perceived personal mistreatment.

Division of labor – a society’s expectations about which sex will typically perform which tasks that need to be done, such as felling of trees, or hunting, or childcare. The concept is also useful in the context of a single marriage or long-term partnership.

Dominance – a fairly stable ability to control resources or control other individuals in a social group. The concept is useful in describing human and non-human social organization.

Dower - in a traditional society, the property or wealth which a potential husband brings to his potential bride.

Dowry - in a traditional society, the property which the bride’s father gives to the young couple, to raise his daughter’s marriage value.

Dyadic analysis – a constellation of approaches and techniques designed to account for interdependence within groups of two. In this type of analysis, a matched pair (such as a husband and wife) form the unit of analysis, rather than having each individual person form the unit of analysis.

Effect size – a measure of the magnitude of a statistically significant difference. This is a way to characterize a difference as a meaningful difference, rather than, for example, a difference due to a large sample size.

Egalitarianism – A value or belief system that assumes equality among people who are different in gender, or religion, or ethnic background, or ability level, or other characteristic.

Extended family – A person’s relatives by blood or marriage, beyond the nuclear family of parents and their children. In the extended family, found in almost all tribal cultures, the three generations often reside in the same dwelling or family compound.

Extraversion – one of the Big Five personality characteristics, demonstrated by being an outgoing person who enjoys socializing with many people.

Free choice marriage – a marriage in which the partners exercised more control over partner choice than their own parents did. Sometimes called a **love match**. Once the balance of control

changes over generations, with the younger generation exercising more control, and away from **arranged marriage**, it is extremely rare for the control to revert to parents.

Gay – This term may be used as an adjective, or as a noun, to describe male homosexuals (individuals who are romantically and/or sexually attracted to the same sex). Examples: “John is a gay colleague of mine.” And “Gays are permitted to get married legally in our country.”

Gender roles – a society’s expectations about how males and females should appear and behave. See **sex roles**.

Genital mutilation – a fairly rare practice in which the external genitalia of prepubertal girls are cut or partially removed or otherwise modified, to limit their enjoyment of sexual behavior in adulthood. It is seen as an attempt to control female sexuality, and illegal in most countries.

Homogamy – the pattern in which two members of a pair bond resemble each other, in appearance, age, behaviors, or other characteristics. Also called positive assortative mating.

Incest – sexual relations with a close relative. Most cultures define close to mean someone closer than a first cousin; although some cultures will have cultural rules restricting sexual relations among cousins.

Individualism – a pattern within a culture, whereby the good of the individual is valued over the good of the society or group as a whole. See **collectivism**.

Infidelity – within the context of a long-term partnership, a failure to keep sexual activity within the confines of the partnership, such as having a mistress or an extramarital affair.

Invariance Testing – a process of testing whether or not a measure (such as a survey questionnaire) is defined comparably across individuals, couples, and groups. The process usually involves Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

Introversion – one of the Big Five personality characteristics, demonstrated by being a private person who enjoys solitude and quiet.

John Henryism – the impulse, among African-American people, to try harder than everyone else, to prove their worth to others, and, perhaps, to themselves.

Lesbian - This term may be used as an adjective, or as a noun, to describe female homosexuals (individuals who are romantically and/or sexually attracted to the same sex). Examples: “Ellen is a lesbian who is a friend of mine.” And “Lesbians are permitted to get married legally.”

Life History Theory – an evolutionary theory (a second-level theory or mini-theory) which seeks to explain differences in patterns of maturation and behavior in different organisms, based on their particular environmental constraints and demands, through the course of natural selection.

Love match – see **Free-choice marriage**.

Love Scale – a scale from the Marriage and Relationship Questionnaire (MARQ) which measures the emotional attachment between partners, in heterosexual and same-sex relationships.

Machismo – a pattern of beliefs and behaviors rooted in hyper-masculinity, characterized by high levels of sexual jealousy, aggressiveness, and emotional toughness. The term is Spanish, and the pattern is usually described in discussions of Latino cultures. See **marianismo** and **cabellerismo**.

Marianismo – the complementary side of **machismo**, in which a female partner bears the negative behaviors associated with machismo, with patience, and purity and dignity (as the Virgin Mary is believed to have behaved, in Catholic teaching).

Monogamy – a marriage arrangement in which there are only two partners, who typically agree to exclusive sexual activity with each other, and who care for their children together. See **polygamy**.

Neuroticism - one of the Big Five personality characteristics, demonstrated by being a person who worries about small matters over which one might have little control.

Operational sex ratio – see **sex ratio**.

Oxytocin – hormone produced in the hypothalamus that is involved in giving birth, lactation (particularly milk let-down), orgasm, and social bonding.

Pair Bonding – a term used to describe the observed long-term cooperation seen in a variety of species, including humans. Pair bonding often involves sexual activity and cooperative parental care. See **attachment**.

Partnership Scale - a scale from the Marriage and Relationship Questionnaire (MARQ), which measures the quality of companionship between partners, in heterosexual and same-sex relationships.

Polyandry – a rare marriage arrangement, in which one woman is married to more than one man. In polyandry, the men are most often brothers who share a wife, in an **arranged marriage**.

Polygamy – a class of marriage arrangements, including arrangements where one individual may marry several of the opposite sex. See **polyandry**, and **polygyny**.

Polygyny – a marriage arrangement in which one man may marry more than one woman.

Psychoticism - one of the Big Five personality characteristics, demonstrated by being a person who in some ways is split from reality.

Sex Ratio – the ratio of males to females in a given population, usually measured at conception, birth, and the typical time of marriage. The latter is often called the **operational sex ratio**, and it may exclude males who are not likely to marry, such as those who are unemployed or in prison.

Sex Roles – see **gender roles**.

Sexual Dimorphism – patterns of differences between males and females, in humans and non-humans. The differences may be seen in brain, physiology, anatomical characteristics, and behavioral tendencies. Note that some species (rarely) show a pattern of reverse dimorphism.

Sexual Imprinting – the tendency to seek a mate who resembles one's own parent, usually of the opposite sex.

Sexual Selection – Darwin's theory describing the process whereby male-male competition and female choice have resulted in particular characteristics and behavioral tendencies to be selected for over time, in males and females.

Symmetry – see **asymmetry**.

Taboo – a cultural belief that some belief or practice is absolutely forbidden.

Testosterone – sex hormone, produced mainly in the testes, one of several in the class of androgens. Although testosterone is produced in both males and females, males produce much

higher levels and typically show the masculinizing effects of testosterone, such as effects on the brain and the Wolffian duct system, before birth.

Vasopressin – a hormone produced in the hypothalamus, which influences fluid retention and blood pressure. In some mammals, it is also associated with protective behavior, especially in males.



Sample Questions for Small Group Discussion. (It is probably most beneficial to combine undergrad and graduate students in each group; all may benefit from this mixing of age and maturity levels. The instructor is advised to assign 5-8 students to each small group and tell the students that they will come together in that same group for all small group discussions for the entire duration of the term. After students discuss the question of the week or month for 15 to 20 minutes, coming together may be beneficial, with each group reporting out some of the best insights that came out of their discussion.)

1. Examine Figure 2.1 on page 35 in your text. Have one person in the group describe what the table is about. Which MARQ Scale is it based on? When was this research done, and where? Go around your small group, with each person summarizing what these results mean, in his or her own words. Then discuss whether or not you are surprised by these results, and why that is the case. Are there implications for social policy?
2. In Chapter 7, there is considerable discussion about children and the happiness that they bring to a home. Do the bodies of family literature in the U.S.A. and China seem to be contradictory, in terms of the impact that children have on their parents? Can you explain this contradiction in terms of cultural values? In terms of religious beliefs? In terms of social policy? Or, after you have discussed these questions, does your group believe that all of these factors may play a role?



Final Research Paper (undergrads) and Research Proposal (grad students).

- 1) Research paper for undergraduate students. This is a summary of a published research paper, with some synthesis of other findings required. Read one published paper (a journal article) reporting on research using the MARQ. Summarize the article and its main findings. Elaborate on whether or not the findings are consistent with previously published research; if yes, describe additional information provided by this paper; if no, explain why the findings may be out-of-step with previous findings. Is this important? Explain why.
- 2) Research paper (proposal) for graduate students. This is a modest research proposal which can be written according to the following outline. **Literature review:** Identify a question of interest to you in the context of long-term partnerships, based on what you have read and discussed (e.g., Do people with a secure attachment style obtain higher scores on the MARQ Love Scale?). Formulate at least 3 hypotheses drawn from this basic question, one of which speaks to sex differences or cultural differences (e.g., Love Scale scores will correlate positively with scores on an attachment scale; Men will have higher correlations than women will; etc.). Summarize the relevant literature, from POM and at least 6 additional sources that lead the reader to these hypotheses. **Methods:** Describe the population(s) of interest and explain how ethical concerns will be addressed (see Chapter 19 in POM). Describe which MARQ scales (and other MARQ questions) will be utilized; include at least one additional measure (either a survey instrument or a behavioral observation or hormone assay). Describe the psychometric properties of your instruments (see POM Chapters 2-4). Describe the statistical tests to be used to test your hypotheses, and stipulate what level of significance will be required to support your hypotheses. Build a table, showing the hypotheses and how they will be tested. Include an estimated budget, if subjects are to be compensated. Note: This can be your dream project, so the sky is the limit!



Teaching Tips and Media Resources

Films: *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, *The Birdcage*, *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, *A Man and a Woman*, *Double Happiness*, *Mississippi Masala*, *Bridge to the Sun*, *Chinese Box*, *Tuya's Marriage*, *A Marriage of Convenience*.

Documentaries: *The Human Sexes* (Desmond Morris), *Meet the Patels* (PBS).

Additional Information

For information about using the MARQ in American or British English versions, or other questions, contact Carol or Glenn Weisfeld at their university email addresses, or contact Lisa M. Dillon. For information about using any other translation, contact the relevant researcher directly: for the Turkish MARQ, Olcay Imamoglu; for the Russian MARQ, Marina Butovskaya; for the Chinese MARQ, Jiawen Wang; for the Portuguese MARQ, Keila Rebello.