

## **Psy350: The Psychology of Human Relationships – Lecture Notes**

### **Week 1 - Introduction**

- Why do relationships matter?
  - We form relationships because of fundamental human needs, such as the needs to belong
- Other human needs
  - Needs for friendship and intimacy
- Needs for nurturance
  - Caring for others, being cared for
- Health and happiness
  - Relationships are fundamental to human health and happiness – loneliness can kill
- Types of relationships
  - Humans have relationships with kin, friends, mates, colleagues, enemies
  - Also relationships with animals
- The scientific study of relationships
  - Enormous growth since 1980's
  - Two, specialist journals: Journal of social and personal relationships, and personal relationships
  - Many other journals devoted to, or including, relationship research
  - Interdisciplinary enterprise
- A science of relationships?
  - Different approaches depending on discipline, e.g. anthropology, sociology, communication studies, developmental psychology
  - Social psychologists take a broad view
    - Look at levels of explanation – take an integrative, not exclusive, approach
- Evolution – deep level theory
  - Evolutionary approaches provide a backdrop to relationship issues – they constitute a deep-level explanation for why humans in general are motivated to do what they do
  - They help us to understand deep-seated and universal motives and emotions
  - Humans are social animals – they have to successfully manage relationships with others to survive
  - Need to find and keep mated, produce and parent offspring, compete for resources, maintain friendships, manage conflicts, and negotiate shifting power and status dynamics
  - Evolved psychological mechanisms help us achieve these tasks – powerful needs and desires (e.g. need to belong)
- Emotions as motivators
  - Romantic love – signals reward – motivates mating and pair bonding
  - Jealousy – signals threat – motivates mate guarding