

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND HEALTH (50:499:458 AND 50:830:460)
SUMMER, 2022: SESSION A1 (5/31-6/23)

COURSE INFORMATION

Time/format: Fully asynchronous (i.e., there are no meetings)

Location: Online via Canvas

INSTRUCTOR

Kristin August, Ph.D.

Email: kristin.august@rutgers.edu

Office hours: Via Zoom or phone by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we will draw upon theory and research in psychology and other fields to understand how social relationships influence health (and vice versa). The focus of the course will be on the structure and function of social relationships, different types of relationships throughout the lifespan, and gender and cultural differences in relationship dynamics. Both physical and mental health outcomes will be examined, and implications for future research, practice, and policy will be considered.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Course activities are designed to assess the following learning objectives. Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Identify key theories, concepts, and methods in the study of social relationships & health.
- Critically analyze ideas and research in the field.
- Effectively communicate ideas related to the study of social relationships and health (orally and in writing).

REQUIRED READINGS

- Newman, M. L., & Roberts, N. A. (2013). *Health and social relationships: The good, the bad, and the complicated*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.
*The text is available for purchase at the bookstore or online; it also is available on reserve at the Robeson Library.
- Additional required readings will be available on the Canvas course web (under each week's module).

GRADING

Grades will be determined as follows:

Exams (exams 1 & 4 @ 15 points each; exam 2 & 3 @ 20 points each)	70 points
Discussion posts (5 @ 4 points)	20 points
Real-world observation paper	<u>10 points</u>
	100 TOTAL POINTS

Letter grades:

- A: 90-100 points
- B+: 85-89 points
- B: 80-84 points
- C+: 75-79 points
- C: 70-74 points
- D: Less than 60-69 points
- F: Less than 60 points

GRADES

You can view your grades using the Grades button in the Canvas course navigation. Please check your grades regularly to make sure that I have received all your assignments. If you have a question about a grade, please email me.

ONLINE FORMAT

This course involves readings, lecture material, videos, and frequent online assessments, including responding to discussion questions and taking exams; you will be doing this work on your own time. This course will use Canvas for all course-related activities (for questions about using Canvas, see: <https://guides.instructure.com/-m/4212>).

If you do not have a computer and reliable internet, as well as an up-to-date browser and Word processing software, please contact me as soon as possible. Some of the documents in this course will be available to you in PDF form. If you do not have Adobe Acrobat Reader software on your computer, you can download it by going to <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>. If you have word processing software other than Microsoft Word (.doc), you will need to save your document as a PDF first before uploading any assignments.

Deadlines are strictly enforced, as students work to achieve learning objectives. **The class follows a rigorous schedule and you should expect to be working at least as many hours as with a traditionally-scheduled class.**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

EXAMS: To assess your mastery of core concepts covered in lecture, assigned readings, and videos, you will take four exams in this course. Study guides are designed to aid in your preparation for the exams and will be posted 48 hours (or more) in advance of the exam deadline. No make-up exams will be given unless arrangements are made prior to an exam deadline **and** proof of the necessary absence is provided (see below). Each exam is non-cumulative; exams 1 & 4 will each cover 3 modules each and be worth 15% each, exams 2 & 3 will cover 4 modules each and be worth 20% each. All exams together will account a total of 70% of your overall grade.

DISCUSSION POSTS: To promote critical thinking about the course material, connect the material to your own experiences, and improve your written communication skills, you will be expected to respond to 5 discussion questions posted on Canvas (6 are assigned, but you can choose whichever 5 to respond to; if you choose to do all 6, your lowest grade will be dropped). You must respond to one of the questions posted. Each response to a discussion question is worth 4 points. Your discussion posts will be due on the dates listed in the schedule (please take note of the “suggested” and “final” deadlines). **Please see more detailed information about this assignment on Canvas (under “modules” -> “course essentials”).** Late posts will lose 1 point per day. All discussion posts will account for 20% of your overall grade.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS (CONTINUED)

REAL-WORLD OBSERVATION PAPER: To increase personal awareness of how social relationships are related to health and to enhance written communication skills, you will complete an assignment that involves describing an instance in which you experienced some event/relationship that has influenced your understanding of how social relationships and health are related. **Please see more detailed information about this assignment on Canvas (under “modules” -> “course essentials”).** This assignment will account for 10% of your overall grade. Given that grades are due shortly after the paper is due, no late papers will be accepted.

COURSE POLICIES

It is my sincere hope that students are successful in this course and learn information that is useful for their academic and career goals as well as their daily lives. If you experience any difficulty in this course, please email me or contact me to schedule a time to talk – **please do not wait until the end of the session to talk with me!** Many of the policies outlined below are evidence-based and are in place to promote student success and provide an enriching and fair educational experience for all of my students.

- **Course web page:** All the materials you will need for each week will be organized by modules on the Canvas course web page (<https://canvas.rutgers.edu>). It is your responsibility to keep informed of any updates made to the syllabus and other assignments.
- **Course communication:**
 - *Announcements:* Announcements will be posted in Canvas on a regular basis. They will appear on your Canvas dashboard when you log in and/or will be sent to you directly from Canvas via your preferred method of contact. Please make sure the “announcements” feature is activated in Canvas (under “course notifications”) and be certain to check them regularly, as they will contain important information about the course.
 - *Email:* You may contact me by email. **Please use your Rutgers email to contact me, as emails from non-Rutgers’ accounts are sometimes filtered as spam.** Please do not submit your assignments via email. If you email me and do not receive a response within 24 hours during the week, I did not receive your email. *As I will always respond to your emails, if I contact you via email, please respond to me!* Please note that I will not respond to emails after 9pm, on weekends, or during holidays.
 - *Virtual office hours:* I am available to meet virtually by phone or video chat. Please email me for an appointment.
- **Class etiquette and code of conduct:** Even though course activities and our interactions are online, all students are still expected to conduct themselves in a manner that does not interfere with the educational experience of other students in the course and adhere to the Student Code of Conduct: <https://deanofstudents.camden.rutgers.edu/student-conduct> (for “netiquette,” also see: <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/index.html>). Please avoid using offensive language in discussion posts. If you engage in any disruptive or disrespectful behaviors, you may lose points from your grade.
- **Missed assignments:** Please make sure “due dates” are activated on Canvas (under “course notifications”). You should also regularly check your “to-do” list on Canvas and follow the course schedule on pp. 5-6 closely to make sure that you turn in assignments when they are due. **It is strongly encouraged that you keep up with each module as noted in the schedule and not wait until the end of the week to complete all assignments for the week.** If you are experiencing an

extenuating circumstance (e.g., severe illness such as COVID-19, death in the family, or other stressful life event) that interferes with your ability to turn assignments in on time, please contact the Dean of Students who can help facilitate accommodations (deanofstudents@camden.rutgers.edu).

- **Academic integrity:** Rutgers University takes academic dishonesty very seriously. You assume responsibility for familiarizing yourself with the Academic Integrity Policy and the possible penalties (including suspension and expulsion) for violating the policy. As per the policy, all suspected violations will be reported to the Office of Community Standards. Academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to): cheating; plagiarism; aiding others in committing a violation or allowing others to use your work; failure to cite sources correctly; fabrication; using another person's ideas or words without attribution; re-using a previous assignment; unauthorized collaboration; and sabotaging another student's work. If in doubt, please consult me. Please review the Academic Integrity Policy at <https://deanofstudents.camden.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity>.
- **Dropping the course/incompletes:** Please consult the academic calendar for dates related to dropping this course with/without a W grade and tuition penalties: <https://summersessions.camden.rutgers.edu/summer-session-2021-calendar/> Incompletes will not be given in this course except under extremely rare circumstances that require documentation and adherence to university policies – and will only be considered if you are missing no more than three assignments. **If you do not think you can keep up with the required coursework, then you should consider dropping this course.**
- **Office of Disability Services (ODS)- Students with Disabilities:** If you are in need of academic support for this course, accommodations can be provided once you share your accommodations indicated in a Letter of Accommodation issued by the Office of Disability Services (ODS). If you have already registered with ODS and have your letter of accommodations, please share this with me early in the course. If you have not registered with ODS and you have or think you have a disability (learning, sensory, physical, chronic health, mental health or attentional), please contact ODS by first visiting their website: <https://success.camden.rutgers.edu/disability-services>. The website will further direct you who to contact and how to contact them depending on the free, confidential services you are in need of. *Please note:* Accommodations will be provided only for students with a Letter of Accommodation from ODS. Accommodation letters only provide information about the accommodation, not about the disability or diagnosis.
- **Additional resources available to you:** Rutgers-Camden has a wide range of resources to help you stay on track both personally and academically. The Raptor Cares Report system (<https://deanofstudents.camden.rutgers.edu/reporting>) connects you to our Dean of Students Office who can assist you with a variety of concerns: medical, financial, mental health, or any life issue which impacts your academic performance. You can share a concern for yourself, a classmate, or a friend. The Office of Military and Veterans Affairs can assist our military and veteran students with benefits, deployment issues, and much more. Please contact Fred Davis (856)225-2791, frdavis@camden.rutgers.edu.

COURSE SCHEDULE**Notes:**

- The schedule of required readings is listed below; assigned videos are listed under each module in Canvas.
- Some readings only require you read certain page numbers.
- Lectures for each module will be posted 72 hours (or more) in advance.
- There are “suggested” and “final” deadlines for each discussion post. You are strongly encouraged to complete the discussion posts by the suggested deadlines. If you turn in a post after the final deadline, you will lose points.

WEEK 1**Module 1: Course/Methods Overview**

Tues, 5/31	Course introduction; methods overview	Tips for reading a scientific article
------------	---------------------------------------	---------------------------------------

Module 2: Overview of social relationships and health

Wed, 6/1	Review of the study of social relationships and health; social hierarchy and health in primates	Pietromonaco & Collins (2017)
----------	---	-------------------------------

Module 3: Social support

Thur, 6/2*	Social support as a stress buffer; invisible support, perceived vs. received support	Uchino & Birmingham (2010) Zee & Bolger (2019) APA reading
------------	--	--

Suggested deadline for completing discussion post #1*****DUE by Sunday, 6/5 at midnight:**

- Discussion posts 1 (final deadline)
- Exam 1 (modules 1-3)

WEEK 2**Module 4: Social control and companionship**

Mon, 6/6	Social control; health-promoting effects of companionship	Craddock et al. (2015) Rook et al. (2010) – middle of p. 125+
----------	---	--

Module 5: Romantic relationships

Tues, 6/7*	Importance of affection; marital status/quality, other types of romantic relationships	Textbook: ch. 3 Umberson & Kroeger (2016)
------------	--	--

Suggested deadline for completing discussion post #2*Module 6: Family and peer relationships**

Wed, 6/8	Parent/child, sibling, & peer relationships	Textbook: ch. 6 & 7 NY Times article
----------	---	---

Module 7: Stressful social relationships

Thur, 6/9*	Negative social exchanges (social conflict), social threat	Textbook: ch. 1 Rook (2014)
------------	--	--------------------------------

Suggested deadline for completing discussion post #3****DUE by Sunday, 6/12 at midnight:**

- Discussion posts 2&3 (final deadline)
- Exam 2 (modules 4-7)

WEEK 3**Module 8: Relationship loss and social isolation**

Mon, 6/13	Widowhood, divorce, & separation; social isolation, loneliness	Textbook: ch. 4 Hawley & Cacioppo (2010) NY Times reading
-----------	--	---

Module 9: Pets & Health

Tues, 6/14*	Impact of pets on health; animal assisted therapies	Herzog (2011) Kamioka et al. (2014)
-------------	---	--

Suggested deadline for completing discussion post #4*Module 10: Social media /parasocial relationships**

Wed, 6/15	Social networking; use of social media for health promotion/in health care	Bekalu et al. (2019) Korda & Itani (2013)
-----------	--	--

Module 11: Couples' chronic disease management/effects of being the "giver"

Thur, 6/16*	Relationship dynamics in managing a chronic disease; providing support; caregiving	Textbook: ch. 2 APA reading Martire & Helgeson (2017)
-------------	--	---

Suggested deadline for completing discussion post #5****DUE by Sunday, 6/19 at midnight:**

- Discussion posts 4&5 (final deadline)
- Exam 3 (modules 8-11)

WEEK 4**Module 12: The role of gender and culture**

Mon, 6/20	Gender and cultural differences in relationship dynamics	Textbook: ch. 8 Taylor (2011) – middle of p. 203-206 Umberson et al. (2014)
-----------	--	---

Module 13: Patient-provider relationship

Tues, 6/21	Value of the patient-provider relationship, trust in providers, communication	Birkhauer et al. (2017) NY Times Magazine article
------------	---	--

Module 14: Implications for practice and policy

Wed, 6/22*	Implications for practice and policy	Textbook: ch. 10 Taylor (2011) – middle of p. 207+ Umberson (2010) – bottom of p. 6+ only
------------	--------------------------------------	---

Suggested deadline for completing discussion post #6****DUE by Thursday, 6/23 at midnight:**

- Discussion post 6 (final deadline)
- Exam 4 (modules 12- 14)
- Observation paper