

**Psychology 351  
Peer Relationships  
Spring 2013**

**MWF 9:00-9:50  
LBC 317**

Instructor: Rachael Reavis

Email: [reavira@earlham.edu](mailto:reavira@earlham.edu)

Office: LBC 305

Office Hours: drop-in & by appointment (not available on Tuesdays)

**Textbook:**

Rubin, K., Bukowski, W., & Laursen, B. (Eds.) (2009). *Handbook of peer interactions, relationships, and groups*. New York: The Guilford Press.

The 6<sup>th</sup> Edition of the APA manual is recommended, but not required.

Course documents and additional readings (listed on schedule) can be found on Moodle.

**Course Description & Objectives:**

*Without friends no one would choose to live, though he had all other goods.*  
Aristotle

*Forgive your enemies, but never forget their names.*  
John F. Kennedy

**Class Format:**

Learning is fundamentally an active, collaborative process, and you will learn more by articulating your thoughts, questions, reactions, agreements, and objections to the readings, and by working through discussions with fellow classmates than you will by listening to me talk uninterrupted. Therefore, this class will be highly interactive. I will lecture to help you to understand topics in our textbook and to provide additional information. However, much of class time will be spent discussing the readings and the questions that they raise for you and your classmates. Thus, you will need to be fully prepared to engage in discussion every class day. You will also need to contribute to a class atmosphere in which all class members thoughtfully listen and respond to each other. Class discussion may sometimes touch on topics that are personally sensitive for some individuals; we will all need to be careful to maintain sensitivity to each other and to be considerate of each other's privacy both in and out of class. Finally, you will be making a few formal presentations throughout the semester so that you have an opportunity to share your thoughts about our research articles and get feedback on your presentation skills.

**Relevant Earlham General Education Goals:**

The following general education goals are especially relevant for this course:

1. Gain skills in close and critical reading, thoughtful reflection, ready discussion, and cogent writing.
2. Increased adeptness in thoughtfully considering texts of all sorts, whether singly or in comparison with one another.
3. Gaining an understanding of the scientific process through experience.
4. Practice and discipline in group learning.
5. The ability to gather information from print and electronic sources and critical capacity to evaluate the data gathered and the ideas encountered.

**Psychology Department Goals:**

The following psychology department goals (based on the APA guidelines) are especially relevant for this course:

1. Knowledge Base of Psychology
2. Research Methods in Psychology
3. Critical Thinking Skills
4. Application of Psychology
5. Values in Psychology
6. Information and Technological Literacy
7. Communication Skills

**Specific Course Goals:**

By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

- 1) Discuss the importance of peer relationships and the changes in peer relationships and processes across childhood.
- 2) Discuss individual differences in peer relationships. Why do some children struggle, whereas others excel in their peer relationships?
- 3) Discuss important ways in which peer relationships influence and are influenced by children's emotional, cognitive, and social development.
- 4) Discuss specific peer relationship issues, including
  - Bullying/victimization
  - Peer rejection/acceptance
  - Popularity
  - Friendships
  - Romantic Relationships
  - Aggression/conflict
  - Intervention/prevention
- 5) Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of various research strategies and be able to apply them to specific research questions.

**Evaluation:**

- 1) **Discussion Leading.** Public speaking and the ability to effectively lead a coherent discussion are skills that will be valuable regardless of your career path. Student-led discussions also contribute to an active learning environment. Each week, two students will be responsible for leading discussion about the assigned readings, and each student will be responsible for leading discussion **three times** during the semester. Typically, I will lecture on Mondays and lead the class through a careful review of the methods and results sections on Wednesday. Discussion leaders will be responsible for leading discussion on Friday. **Discussion leaders should meet prior to class to determine how to organize the discussion.** To facilitate discussion, all students will be responsible for posting questions to Moodle by midnight on Wednesday about the reading for the week (see below). All students should read through these questions, and the **discussion leaders should draw from these questions to help structure discussion.** Discussion leaders should **use a variety of methods**, such as staging debates, using small group discussion, and designing studies to address unanswered questions raised by the article. Each discussion leader is also required to **locate an additional empirical article** published in a peer-reviewed journal within the last five years (**no publication dates before 2007**) that is directly relevant to the topic. Discussion leaders should communicate, because they are required to choose unique articles. Discussion leaders should **type up a 1-page summary of the supplementary article.** The summary should be broken into sections or use an outline format so that the class can quickly understand and read it. Discussion leaders will provide a **2-4 sentence reminder** of the topic and main result of the assigned article. They will have **no more than 3 minutes each** to provide a *very brief* synopsis of the supplementary articles. Discussion leaders will **be expected to incorporate the additional knowledge** gained from supplementary articles into to discussion. Leaders may want to (but are not required to) wait until discussion questions have been posted to see if questions raised might be answered in another article. If you choose to wait, you will only have one day to thoroughly read and summarize your supplementary article, so keep that in mind. **Discussion leading will account for 10% of your grade.**
  
- 2) **Class Involvement.** Class involvement, including participation, attendance, assignment completion, and posting of discussion questions **will account for 5% of your grade.**
  - **Participation/Assignments.** Every student is expected to attend each meeting of all classes for which he or she is registered. Students are responsible for getting class notes and handouts if they are late or absent from class. Any material from assigned readings, class lectures, presentations, and discussions may be included on exams for this course. Occasionally, additional assignments may be assigned.
  
  - **Discussion Questions.** To encourage participation and help discussion leaders, each person will need to post **two discussion questions about the empirical article** on the Moodle forum by 11:59 pm on Wednesday. These questions should show that you have read the article (and chapter) and thought critically about them, and should encourage discussion from your classmates. Yes/no questions or questions that are answered in the chapter or article are not acceptable. Instead, these should focus on applications and extensions of the results, relations to previous readings, alternative methodologies, etc. One of your questions may be a thoughtful response to or elaboration of another student's question. Students do not need to post discussion questions on days that they are leading discussion.

- 3) **Research reports/critiques.** Two times during the semester when you are not leading discussion, you will write a **critical analysis** of the assigned article. Before class, you will study your article and write an analysis of the article (4-6 pages, double-spaced) including its purpose, methods and analyses used, results, and conclusions. ***Most importantly*** it should include your assessment of the paper, including its contributions and limitations, and alternative interpretations. I recommend that you consult the grading rubric before beginning your assignment. Write concisely and use your space wisely. It is highly unlikely that you will be able to write an adequate paper in fewer than 4 pages. Your critique paper will be due on Moodle **by class time** on the day that it will be discussed (typically on Fridays). You may want to bring a copy of your paper (on your computer if you wish) to refer to during discussion. **Your critique papers will account for 15% of your grade.**
- 4) **Media/Pop Culture Paper.** You will write a short, five-page paper discussing peer relationships as portrayed in the media and popular culture. You will be required to watch at least one movie where peer relationships is a central theme (*Stand By Me, Mean Girls*, etc.) I'll give you a short list of possibilities. (You can watch a movie not on the list – just run it by me first.) You will also find a news media article (cnn.com, nytimes.com, etc.) that addresses a theme found in your movie. For example, if you choose *Mean Girls*, you might find a news article about popularity or relational/social aggression. In your paper, you will compare and contrast the fictional portrayal, news media portrayal, and research on the subject. You should have at least three research references. One may be the chapter reading relevant to your topic, one may be the assigned empirical reading (or a supplemental reading you did), and the other should be a new article that you look up and read. Your paper should be in APA style, and include a title page, 50-word abstract, body of your paper (formatted like an introduction) and references. **Your paper will account for 10% of your grade.**
- 5) **Research Project.** You will conduct a research project and prepare a poster presentation based on your research project. You will be asked to work in groups of 2-3 students to develop a hypothesis and design an experiment to conduct with college students. Most of the research we read will be correlational, but many of the questions can also be addressed experimentally. For this project, you will develop a study that has at least one independent variable (IV) with two levels. The IV you manipulate can be within subjects or between subjects. You may have no more than one between subjects variable (this includes gender) with no more than three levels (preferably two). **Kate Blinn** ([blinnka@earlham.edu](mailto:blinnka@earlham.edu), 765-983-1408) **is our library liaison.** She is an excellent resource and is there to assist you throughout your project. Your grade for the research project will come from several components. **In total, your research project will account for 25% of your grade.**
- Outline of literature review with clear, well-reasoned/supported hypotheses. (5% of grade)
  - IRB application/Design of study (5% of grade)
  - Poster presentation
    - i. Quality, readability, accuracy of poster (5% of grade)
    - ii. Quality of presentation (5% of grade)
  - Results section (*each* group member will hand in their own, *independently written* results section; you should *NOT* read anyone else's; APA style; 5% of grade)
  - Turning assignments in on time and timely collection of data. (Failure to do so will negatively affect grade)
  - Self/group-assessment – each student will write an assessment discussing who was responsible for what work, the quality of the work from each individual, and how well each person worked as a team. Each student will then state whether every team member deserves the same grade, or whether some members (including self) deserve a higher or lower grade than others. The self-assessments will be taken into consideration when assigning grades.

- 6) **Midterm/Final Exams.** You will have a take-home midterm and final, both of which will have short answer and essay questions. The midterm will account for 15% of your final grade and the final exam will account for 20% of your final grade.

**APA Style.** All papers should follow APA style, including a reference section. We will not be going over APA style in class, but you are responsible for knowing it. If you do not own an APA manual, then you are expected to use the one in the library.

**Late Policy.** Discussion questions posted on Thursdays will be given half-credit. No credit will be received after that. If you do not turn in your reports or papers on time, you will lose a letter grade for the first 24 hours that it is late, and another letter grade for each part of 12 hours thereafter. Thus, the best grade that can be received on a paper turned in 2 hours late is a B, a C for a paper turned in 25 hours late, and a D for a paper turned in 37 hours late. You will have ample time to complete your written assignments. If you choose to wait until the last minute you run the risk that your computer dies, you catch the flu, or you have a death in your extended family. ***These will not be excuses for late assignments and you will be penalized, so do not procrastinate.*** Most assignments will be uploaded on Moodle, and the times and dates are listed on the syllabus. (Some are due by class time, others due by 11:59 pm.) ***Failure to attach files or attaching corrupted files is not an excuse for late work.*** I strongly recommend that you log out of Moodle, log back in, download, and open the file you attached to ensure that it opens properly. You are responsible for backing up your work.

### **Grading:**

Your final grade will be calculated according to the following formula.

10%	Discussion Leading
5%	Assignments, Participation, Discussion Questions
15%	Research Reports
10%	Media Project
25%	Research Project
15%	Midterm
20%	Final Exam

A: 93%+; A-: 90%-92.9%; B+: 87%-89.9%; B: 83%-86.9%; B-: 80%-82.9%; C+: 77%-79.9%; C: 73%-76.9%; C-: 70%-72.9%; D: 65%-69.9%; F: < 65%

**Please note that I do not round grades.**

**Office hour:** I do not have set office hours, but will be in my office most times I am not in class. You are welcome to drop in or set up an appointment. If we cannot find a time that works soon enough, we can communicate over email, use the IM function in Zimbra, or talk via Skype. I am not available on Tuesdays.

**Email Etiquette:**

You are encouraged to contact me via e-mail with any questions that you may have, but I ask that you comply to the following ‘house rules’: **Check the syllabus and Moodle *first*** to see if your question can be answered. If you ask a question that has already been answered, you will receive a reply telling you to find the answer yourself.

Please use appropriate etiquette when you e-mail and I will do the same in return. We have a professional relationship, and our emails should reflect that. That means proper capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. We are not tweeting or chatting. For the first email in an exchange, you should use a greeting, clearly state who you are and what you need, and end with an appropriate signature. If we get into a back and forth, you don’t need greetings each time. If you fail to adhere to these guidelines, you will receive a reply that instructs you to consult these guidelines and to re-send your e-mail.

Proper e-mail etiquette is *extremely* important in that (a) it enables me to be more efficient in helping you because I won’t lose time trying to figure out what you are asking; (b) it is a vital skill to have in the ‘real world’. Professional relationships necessitate professional e-mail correspondence. Thanks in advance for your cooperation!

**Academic Honesty:**

All students are expected to conduct themselves with honesty and integrity in this course. The honor code is both a privilege and a responsibility, and you are expected to take it seriously. Suspected infractions, such as plagiarism or fabrication of reports will be treated seriously and will be reported. ***Professional misconduct as a researcher will result in an F for the course.*** Furthermore, if you are aware of a violation of academic integrity, it is your responsibility to take action.

**Students with Disabilities:**

Please speak with me as soon as possible and let me know what accommodations Academic Support Services has suggested for you. Accommodation arrangements must be made in the first 2 weeks of the semester. Please see <http://www.earlham.edu/policies/learning-disabilities.html> for details

### Schedule of Topics & Assignments

Please note that this schedule is tentative. Readings are due in class on the day they are listed.

Week	Day	Topic & Reading
1	1/16	<b>Topic:</b> Syllabus, Introduction
	1/18	<b>Topic:</b> Background & Developmental Trends <b>Reading:</b> Handbook, Ch. 1, Ch. 3 <b>Library Day</b> <b>Submit one question from each chapter on Moodle.</b> Questions should demonstrate thoughtful reading and should not be simple questions with yes/no answers.
2	1/21	<b>Topic:</b> Importance of Peer Relationships <b>Reading:</b> Handbook, Ch. 30
	1/23	<b>Topic:</b> Importance of Peer Relationships <b>Reading:</b> Gustafsson, Janlert, Theorell, Westerlund, & Hammarström, 2012
	1/25	<b>Topic:</b> Importance of Peer Relationships <b>IRB certificates due to Rachael's door by end of day.</b> (Not required if previously completed, but please send email indicating that you did it before.)
3	1/28	<b>Topic:</b> Assessing Peer Relationships <b>Reading:</b> Handbook, Ch. 5 <b>Research Project Topics due in class.</b>
	1/30	<b>Topic:</b> Assessing Peer Relationships <b>Reading:</b> Mares, Braun, & Hernandez, 2012
	2/1	<b>Topic:</b> Assessing Peer Relationships <b>Potential research groups assigned in class.</b>
4	2/4	<b>Topic:</b> Defining Social Competence <b>Reading:</b> Handbook, Ch. 9 <b>"Final" topics/research groups due in class.</b>
	2/6	<b>Topic:</b> Defining Social Competence <b>Reading:</b> Suway, Degnan, Sussman, & Fox, 2012
	2/8	<b>Topic:</b> Defining Social Competence
5	2/11	<b>Topic:</b> Influences on Peer Relationships <b>Reading:</b> Handbook, Ch. 28
	2/13	<b>Topic:</b> Influences on Peer Relationships <b>Reading:</b> Leerkes, Blankson, & O'Brien, 2009
	2/15	<b>Topic:</b> Influences on Peer Relationships <b>Summary of three empirical articles for research project due via Moodle by 11:59pm</b>
6	2/18	<b>Topic:</b> Sex Differences in Peer Relationships <b>Reading:</b> Handbook, Ch. 21
	2/20	<b>Topic:</b> Cross-Cultural Issues in Peer Relationships <b>Reading:</b> Handbook, Ch. 24
	2/22	<b>No Class, Early Semester Break</b>

7	2/25	<b>Topic:</b> Friendship <b>Reading:</b> Handbook, Ch. 12, Ch. 31 <b>Basic method due in class.</b> <i>IV (and levels), DV</i>
	2/27	<b>Topic:</b> Friendships <b>Reading:</b> Paquette MacEvoy & Asher, 2012
	3/1	<b>Topic:</b> Friendships <b>Midterm handed out in class.</b> <b>Literature review outline &amp; hypotheses/basic method (IV, DV, measurement) due via Moodle by 11:59 pm.</b> (Coordinate with group members about who will submit.)
8	3/4	<b>Topic:</b> Acceptance, Rejection, & Popularity <b>Reading:</b> Handbook, Ch. 13 <b>Discuss IRB application in class.</b>
	3/6	<b>Topic:</b> Acceptance, Rejection, & Popularity <b>Reading:</b> Litwack, Aikins, & Cillessen, 2012
	3/8	<b>Topic:</b> Acceptance, Rejection, & Popularity <b>IRB applications due via Moodle by 11:59 pm.</b> (Coordinate with group members about who will submit.)
9	3/11	<b>Topic:</b> Bullying/Victimization <b>Reading:</b> Handbook, Ch. 18
	3/13	<b>Topic:</b> Bullying/Victimization <b>Reading:</b> Gradinger, Strohmeier, Schiller, Stefanekc, & Spiel, 2012
	3/15	<b>Topic:</b> Bullying/Victimization <b>Midterm due via Moodle by 11:59 pm.</b>
10	3/18, 3/20, 3/22	<i>No Class, Spring Break</i>
11	3/25	<b>Topic:</b> Exclusion <b>Reading:</b> Handbook, Ch. 14
	3/27	<b>Topic:</b> Exclusion <b>Reading:</b> Masten, Telzer, Fuligni, Lieberman, & Eisenberger, 2012
	3/29	<b>Topic:</b> Exclusion
12	4/1	<b>Topic:</b> Aggression <b>Reading:</b> Handbook, Ch. 16 <b>Data collection should begin this week (pending IRB approval)</b>
	4/3	<b>Topic:</b> Aggression <b>Reading:</b> Shoulberg, Sijtsema, & Murray-Close, 2011
	4/5	<b>Topic:</b> Aggression <b>Hand in title of movie(s) you will watch for media paper by class time.</b>

13	4/8	<b>Application Week – Movies</b> Watch your peer-related movie by class time and be prepared to discuss it.
	4/10	<b>Application Week – Other Popular Media</b> Read your related news article by class time and be prepared to discuss it.
	4/12	<b>Application Week – Implications for Research</b> Be prepared to discuss whether/how future research should address themes raised by fictional and media accounts of peer issues. <i>Media Paper due on Moodle by 11:59 pm on 4/14.</i>
14	4/15	<b>Topic:</b> Romantic Relationships <b>Reading:</b> Handbook, Ch. 19 <i>Discuss analyses in class. Groups should schedule meeting time with Rachael to complete analyses by 4/19. Students are encouraged to attempt analyses on their own.</i>
	4/17	<b>Topic:</b> Romantic Relationships <b>Reading:</b> Thomas, 2012
	4/19	<b>Topic:</b> Romantic Relationships <i>Poster draft due via Moodle on 4/20 by 11:59 pm.</i>
15	4/22	<b>Topic:</b> Intervention <b>Reading:</b> Handbook Ch. 32, Ch. 33 <i>Final Exam handed out in class.</i>
	4/24	<b>Topic:</b> Intervention <b>Reading:</b> Stauffer, Heath, Coyne, & Ferrin, 2012
	4/26	<b>Topic:</b> Intervention <i>Poster due to printer.</i>
16	4/29	<i>Student Poster Presentations</i>
	5/1	<i>Student Poster Presentations</i>
	5/3	<i>Student Poster Presentations</i> <i>Individual results section and self/group assessments due via Moodle on 5/5 by 11:59 pm.</i> <i>Upload posters to Moodle following presentation.</i>
	5/9	<i>Final Exam due via Moodle by 10 am.</i>