

TWO TO TANGO: THE SOCIOLOGY OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

(UGS 303 DD/62460)

Department of Sociology

University of Texas at Austin

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Lecture: MW1-2PM RLP(CLA) 0.118

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This signature course explores important social relationships we form and nurture at different stages of our lives. The topics of this course range from friendship, family, romantic relationship, marriage, and parenting to professional relationships such as collaboration and teamwork. We will explore how these relationships have changed over time and vary across different social contexts. We will also consider what common themes exist across time and culture that might provide insight in building and maintaining beneficial relationships. This course consists of seminar, discussion session, and practicum. Students are required to attend dance lessons at the UT Argentine Tango Club weekly and participate in social dance events once a month, during which you will learn to communicate and collaborate with your dance partners and acquire social skills essential to building successful relationships. The expected weekly effort for this course is between 12 and 15 hours, including 4 hours of seminar, discussion, and dance class.

OBJECTIVES

This signature course aims to help students develop the following skills. Critical Thinking: By reading and discussing materials from sociology, history, psychology, and anthropology, students will gain abilities to view how their relationships are embedded in specific historical and social contexts. Students are also required to apply the concepts they learn to analyze how they form and manage their own relationships. Communication: Healthy relationships are maintained

through successful communication. Students improve their written, oral, and nonverbal communication skills through writing, discussion, and partner dancing. Teamwork: The partner dance component of this class will provide students the opportunity to work with others and learn how to build and manage a successful relationship.

ETHICS STATEMENT

All acts of academic dishonesty constitute academic misconduct. This includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, fabrication of information, misinterpretation, and abetment of all of the above, and would not be tolerated. Students are expected to take responsibility for their own work and provide proper citations wherever applicable (using words or ideas borrowed from others within written assignments). Any student suspected of academic dishonesty will be reported directly to the Dean of Students in accordance with the University of Texas honor code (http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php). This is simply a warning, and I trust it won't be an issue for you.

The instructor also expects students to respect classmates during discussions. Students are requested to make their best effort to not take provocative social issues and classmates' arguments personally. An effort should be made to base arguments on supporting evidences either from textbook/readings, or from other legitimate sources, and avoid anecdotal evidence.

COMMUNICATION

Students are encouraged to visit office hours to discuss course material and/or anything of their interest/concern, at least once this semester. The class deals with difficult concepts and theories, and it may be difficult to adequately address problems and/or provide advice via email. Because of this, students may find office hours visits more useful in this course. If students cannot come to office hours due to their schedule, an appointment other than regular office hours can be made. Beyond the course content, the instructor enjoys getting to know students, so, feel free to come by and talk about lives (generally) as well!

In case anyone prefers email communication, the instructor will do his best to respond to the emails within 48 hours of their receipt, Monday-Friday 9am-5pm. It is not possible to respond to emails the night before due dates. Plan ahead!

SPECIAL NEEDS

Any student with a documented disability (learning, physical, or psychiatric, etc.) needing academic accommodations should see the instructor and provide the appropriate academic forms immediately, and no later than the end of the second week of classes. Contact the University's Services for Students with Disabilities (<http://ddce.utexas.edu/disability/>) to get the help you need.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

ITS provides fast and reliable technical support (<http://www.utexas.edu/its/helpdesk/>); (and the instructor does not!) An extensive list of the tech support options can be found in the footer of the course website and ITS website.

WHAT I EXPECT OF YOU

- ✓ Come to class regularly, **ON TIME**. Coming to class late distracts both the instructor and classmates. (See the attendance policy for details)
- ✓ Check your email inbox and the Canvas page regularly and respond to emails in a timely manner.
- ✓ Do the readings before class. Be prepared to discuss them thoughtfully in class. You may be randomly called upon at any time during a discussion day to reflect on the readings.
- ✓ Turn in the assignments on time.
- ✓ **Turn off & put away** all cell phones, MP3 players, and any other digital devices during class. The laptop can **only** be used for narrowly defined learning purposes.
- ✓ If student(s) are having trouble in the class, or do not understand something, please do not hesitate to talk to the instructor about it during office hours.
- ✓ Good writing and analytical skills are important in this class. Visiting the Undergraduate Writing Center (<http://uwc.utexas.edu/>) is highly encouraged.
- ✓ Feel free to share your notes with other students in the class but do not share or sell your notes outside of the class without permission.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students will be granted two missed classes, EXCEPT FOR the exam and assignment days. The two freebies can be used for any kind of excuses. Absences with legitimate documents will not count for the two freebies. If you miss more than two classes, each additional class will cost **two (2) points** on the final grade.

LEGITIMATE EXCUSES

Examples of legitimate excuses include a death in the family, court appearances, travel under University auspices, religious observance, and illness. Students must inform the instructor at least a week in advance, if there is an anticipated legitimate excuse that will cause them to miss a class or an exam. For all excuses, legitimate documents will be required. For example, in the case of illness, verification by a healthcare professional is required and in the case of a death in the family, any kind of documents such as obituary with the family name on it is required.

GRADING POLICY AND SCALES

A non-competitive grading scale would be used. In other words, the grade received will not depend on how well others perform in class. A maximum of 110 points can be earned in the course.

The final grade will be based on the mastery of each of the required tasks in the class. The grading scale for the final course grade is as follows: 110-94=A; 90-93=A-; 87-89=B+; 83-86=B; 80-82-B-; 77-79=C+; 73-76=C; 70-72=C-; 67-69=D+; 63-66=D; 60-62=D-; 59 & below=F.

I do not give incompletes and will not change the final grade for whatever reason. You have plenty of opportunities to do well in this class. Use them. All assignments should be submitted on Canvas.

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION 30 PTS

A high level of participation is expected throughout the semester in seminars, discussion sessions, and tango lessons. You are encouraged to express your thoughts and share your personal experiences when they are relevant to the topics of interest.

In each seminar, either one journal article or several short essays will be discussed. Make sure you finish reading them before class.

Pop quizzes about the readings may be assigned for the class participation grade. Intelligent and thought-provoking questions and comments during lectures would also count.

As addressed above, you have two free absences in the entire semester. However, it is highly recommended that these be used only for emergencies. More than two absences will affect the class attendance grades negatively.

DISCUSSION SESSION 10 PTS

Every Friday the TA will lead a discussion about a movie or some articles. You are expected to watch the movie or read the articles before the discussion. The rules for these discussion sessions are the same to the ones for Monday and Wednesday seminars.

EIGHT (5) SHORT ESSAYS 25 PTS (5 PTS FOR EACH POST)

Throughout the semester, you are expected to write 5 short essays and post them on the Discussions page on Canvas. Each essay needs to be at least 400 words. There are no specific deadlines for these essays. However, 3 of them need to be posted by the end of October and all 5 essays need to be posted by 12/10. 3 of these essays should be about the assigned readings, 1 of these essays should be about the assigned movies, and 1 of these essays should be about what you learn about social relationship when dancing tango. See the section Short Essays Guideline for the specific instruction for each type of essays.

SOCIAL DANCE 10 PTS

Part of your final grade depends on your participation at the UT Tango Club. The grade will not be based on how good you are at dancing tango by the end of the semester but based on 1) whether you attend the tango classes regularly; 2) whether you involve in club activities such as organizing and planning; 3) whether you follow the etiquettes during the social dance events; and 4) whether you participate in the social dance events.

FINAL PAPER 25 PTS

You are required to submit a term paper at the end of the semester. In this paper you will pick a theme covered and analyze one or more personal relationship you have had and situate this relationship in broader social contexts. These could be your relationship with your parents, friends, siblings, or romantic partners. You are expected to apply the concepts discussed in class, describe the difficulties, and consider how these relationships can or could have been improved. The final paper is expected to be at least 1,500 words and should be submitted by noon on **12/17**.

EXTRA CREDIT #1: RESPONSE TO OTHER STUDENT'S ESSAYS 4 PTS

You are encouraged to read and respond to the essays posted by other students. The response should be constructive, sympathetic, and thoughtful. Depends on the quality and quantity of your responses, I will add at most 4 points on your final grade. All responses should be posted by **the last class day (12/10)**.

EXTRA CREDIT #2: MOVIES 6 PTS (2 PT EACH)

Several movies are assigned for discussion. However, you are free to watch additional movies from the list below and write a 600-word review about it. The review should include 1) a summary of the movie, 2) a more in-depth discussion on your favorite parts, and 3) a discussion on how you think about relationship differently because of it. Depending on the quality, you can review at most three movies and earn 1 or 2 points on your final grade for each movie you review. All reviews need to be submitted by **12/10**.

SHORT ESSAYS GUIDELINE

I understand that writing could be challenging for first-year students. Below are some guidelines for each type of short essays. You do not have to follow them if you know what you want to write

about. However, I do expect your essays to be succinct, clear, and thoughtful without much spelling or grammatical error. All essays need to be at least 400 words.

ESSAY ABOUT READINGS

You should specify which journal article you will like to write about at the beginning of your essay. The first paragraph of the essay discusses, in your opinion, the most important insight/concept in the article. The second paragraph explains why this insight/concept speaks to you or is applicable to your personal experiences. The last paragraph discusses how the reading changes your ideas about certain social relationships. If you plan to write about the Context essays, you need to discuss at least 2 essays together.

ESSAY ABOUT MOVIES

Several movies are assigned for discussion. You can pick 1 of them to write about. The first paragraph of the essay describes the most memorable role or part of this movie. The second paragraph explains why this role or scene speaks to you or is applicable to your personal experiences. The last paragraph discusses how the movie changes your ideas about certain social relationships.

ESSAY ABOUT TANGO

The first paragraph describes a challenge you face when dancing/collaborating with another student. The second paragraph discusses how the concepts discussed in the classroom can be used to help you understand this challenge. The last paragraph considers how you could overcome this challenge.

BOOKS & MOVIES

Assigned Books:

- Coontz, Stephanie. 2016. *The Way We Never Were*
- Coontz, Stephanie. 2006. *Marriage: A History*

All movies are at the UT library, either as DVDs or through streaming or both. If you would like to stream the movies through the UT library, make sure your computer is connected to the UT internet. You're also free to rent it on any platform. **The assigned movies should be watched before the discussion.**

Assigned Movies:

- DANCING DREAMS (TANZTRÄUME) (2010)
- BILLY ELLIOT (2000)
- THE INTOUCHABLES (2011)
- THE TANGO LESSON (1997)
- THE HOURS (2002)
- CAPTAIN FANTASTIC (2016)

Additional Movies:

- BOYHOOD (2015)
- HOW TO DANCE IN OHIO (2015)
- OUR LAST TANGO (2016)
- MAD HOT BALLROOM (2005)
- LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE (2006)

COURSE SCHEDULE

W1 Introduction	
8/29	Introduction
8/31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renstrom, J. 2015. "How to Talk to a Professor—Explained by a Professor."
W2 Library/Preparation	
9/3	No Class (Labor Day)
9/5	Attention: We will not meet at 1PM today. Instead the TA will bring you to the UT library and you will learn what resources are available to you.
9/7	No Discussion. Please read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruni, F. 2018. "How to Get the Most Out of College."
W3 Gender	
9/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West, C. and D. H. Zimmerman. 1987. "Doing Gender." Gender & Society 1(2):125-51
9/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schrock D. and M. Schwalbe. 2009. "Men, Masculinity, and Manhood Acts." Annual Review of Sociology 35(1):277-95

9/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion: DANCING DREAMS
W4 Family I	
9/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meadow, T and J. Stacey. 2006. "Families." Context 5(4):55-7 • Coontz, S. 2016. The Way We Never Were. Ch.1
9/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coontz, S. 2016. The Way We Never Were. Ch. 2
9/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moore, M. and Stambolis-Ruhstorfer, M. 2013. "LGBT Sexuality and Families at the Start of the Twenty-First Century." Annual Review of Sociology 39: 491-507.
W5 Family II	
9/24	<p>Attention: We will not meet at 1PM today. Instead we will attend the University Lecture Series "Keep Calm and Grow Your Mind" from 7-8PM at the Bass Concert Hall. Please arrive before 6:50PM; we will take attendance then.</p>
9/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coontz, S. 2016. The Way We Never Were. Ch. 3
9/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coontz, S. 2016. The Way We Never Were. Ch. 5
W6 Family III	
10/1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coontz, S. 2016. The Way We Never Were. Ch. 6
10/3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coontz, S. 2016. The Way We Never Were. Ch. 7
10/5	Discussion: BILLY ELLIOT (2000)
W7 Sibling & Friendship I	
10/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brody, G.H. 1998. "Sibling Relationship Quality: Its Causes and Consequences." Annual Review of Psychology 49(1):1-24
10/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giordano, P. C. 2003 "Relationships in Adolescence." Annual Review of Sociology 29(1):257-81

10/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion: THE INTOUCHABLES
W8 Sibling & Friendship II	
10/15	<p>Reminder: You are expected to post 3 essays by the end of October.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DiMaggio, P. and F. Garip. 2012. "Network Effects and Social Inequality." Annual Review of Sociology. 38(1):93-118
10/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McCabe, Janice. 2016. "Friends with Academic Benefits." Context 15(3):22-29 • Way, N. 2013. "The Hearts of Boys." Context 12(1):14-23 • Rupp, L. J., and V. Taylor. 2010. "Straight Girls Kissing." Context 9(3):28-32 • Budnick, J. 2017 "'Straight Girls Kissing' Beyond Elite Campus." Context 16(1):42-7
10/19	No Discussion
W9 Intimacy & Romantic Relationship	
10/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coontz, S. 2016. The Way We Never Were. Ch. 8
10/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hull, Kathleen E., Ann Meier, and Timothy Orty. 2010. "The Changing Landscape of Love and Marriage." Context 9(2):32-37 • Armstrong, Elizabeth A., Laura Hamilton, and Paula England. 2010. "Is Hooking Up Bad for Young Women?" Context 9(3)22-27 • Wade, Lisa. 2017. "What's So Cultural about Hookup Culture?" Context 16(1):66-8
10/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion: THE TANGO LESSON
W10 Marriage I	
10/29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coontz, Stephanie. 2006. Marriage: A History. Ch.2.
10/31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coontz, Stephanie. 2006. Marriage: A History. Ch. 3.
11/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quian, Zenchao. 2005. "Breaking the Last Taboo: Interracial Marriage in America." Context 4(4):33-37

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loving Across Racial Divides. 2014. "Loving Across Racial Divides." Context 13(2):32-7 • Streib, Jessi. 2015. "Marrying across Class Line." Context 14(2):40-45
W11 Marriage II	
11/5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coontz, Stephanie. 2006. Marriage: A History. Ch. 14.
11/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coontz, Stephanie. 2006. Marriage: A History. Ch. 15.
11/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gerstel, N and N. Sarkisian. 2006. "Marriage: The Good, the Bad, and the Greedy." Context 5(4):16-21 • Taylor, Veta, Leila J. Rupp, and Danuta Walters. 2014 "For Better—and—For Worse." Context 13(2):84-90 • Hunter, Marcus Anthony. 2013. "Race and the Same-Sex Marriage Divide." Context 12(3)74-6.
W12 Marriage III	
11/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coontz, Stephanie. 2006. Marriage: A History. Ch. 16.
11/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coontz, Stephanie. 2006. Marriage: A History. Ch. 17.
11/16	Discussion: THE HOURS
W13 Thanksgiving	
11/19	No Class
11/21	
11/23	
W14 Parenting I	
11/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coontz, S. 2016. The Way We Never Were. Ch. 9
11/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coontz, S. 2016. The Way We Never Were. Ch. 10
11/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schalet, A. 2010. "Sex, Love and Autonomy in the Teenage Sleepover." Context 9(3):16-21 • Elliott, Sinikka and Megan Reid. 2016. "The Superstrong Black Mother." Context 15(1):48-53

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emma Mishel and Mónica L. Caudillo. 2017. "Google searches show more worry over gay men and boys than over gay women and girls."
W15 Parenting II	
12/3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doucet, A. 2004. "'It's Almost Like I Have a Job, But I Don't Get Paid.': Fathers at Home Reconfiguring Work, Care, and Masculinity." <i>Fathering</i> 2:3, 277-303
12/5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keels, Micere. 2014. "Choosing Single Motherhood." <i>Context</i> 13(2):70-72 • Edin, Kathryn and Maria Kefalas. 2005. "Unmarried with Children." <i>Context</i> 4(2):16-22
12/7	Discussion: CAPTAIN FANTASTIC
W16 Conclusion	
12/10	Conclusion