



University
of Victoria | British Columbia
Canada

Department of Psychology

PSYC 391 (A01): (SPECIAL TOPICS IN PSYCHOLOGY) THE PSYCHOLOGY OF INTERPERSONAL FORGIVENESS Summer 2016

Instructor: Jessica Rourke
Class location: Cornett B129
Class time: MTWThF 2:30 - 4:20

Office hours: T 4:20 - 5:20
Office location: Cornett A 216
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Course Description

I have designed this course as a general introduction to the topic of interpersonal forgiveness. During this course, we'll explore forgiveness from both victim and offender perspectives. We'll start by defining forgiveness, exploring models of forgiveness and examining the hypothesized benefits of forgiveness. Following this, we'll examine some factors that can affect forgiveness (e.g., personality, culture). We will then explore applications of forgiveness, perpetrators, and self-forgiveness. We'll conclude with a critical examination of the topic.

I want this to be a collaborative learning environment and have tried to structure the course so as to optimize opportunities for you to learn from each other. You are highly encouraged to bring additional readings, knowledge, and insights from personal experiences into the course.

I hope that by the end of this course you will be:

- Familiar with the major models of forgiveness
- Able to articulate an informed opinion about whether forgiveness is always good
- Able to articulate an informed opinion about whether some acts are unforgiveable
- Able to distinguish between forgiveness and pseudo-forgiveness
- Cognizant of the role that forgiveness plays in your own life
- Able to link forgiveness to other aspects of life such as physical and mental health

About Me

I enjoy all aspects of social psychology, however, my main area of research is forgiveness, and I have studied it from both the victim and perpetrator perspectives. I obtained my degrees in Social-Personality Psychology and am currently the executive director of Restorative Justice Victoria.

Course Text

There is no textbook for this course. Instead, you will be reading selected chapters and articles, all of which are available online through the library. You will see the set of readings assigned to be completed *prior to class* each day in the class schedule below.

Course Website

Our course website will be on CourseSpaces. On this site I will post the course syllabus, information about assignments, lecture outlines (not notes!), information necessary for in-class activities, and any relevant announcements (e.g., grades). On this website is where you will submit most of your assignments.

Prerequisites

Psyc 201 and minimum 3rd-year standing. Students who remain in this course without having completed the prerequisites do so at their own risk. Successful completion of this course DOES NOT exempt you from having to complete the prerequisites at a later date if they are required for the degree program.

Course Policies

Contacting Me: Please come to my office hours, or contact me at my UVic account (jrourke@uvic.ca); do not contact me through CourseSpaces. Please include “Psyc 391” in the subject line of your e-mail and make sure you put your name and student number at the end of your message. Please allow 2 business days for a reply. If I have not replied within that time frame, re-send your message and let me know it is the second time you are sending it. Please do not contact me to find out when assignments or exams will be graded. As soon as the grades are ready a notice will be posted on the course website.

Grades: If you are disappointed with a grade, it is your responsibility to arrange to meet with me to review the marking at the time the material is graded, not at the end of the term when the final grade is awarded. ***I will not review a grade/assignment if you come to see me later than 1 week after the grade was first posted.***

In determining your final letter grade in the course, anything .5 and above will be rounded up to the next percentage score; anything .4 and below will be rounded down to the previous percentage score. For example, 74.4% will be rounded to 74%, whereas 74.5% will be rounded to 75%. Letter grades and corresponding percentages are as follows:

A+	90 – 100	B+	77 – 79	C+	65 – 69	F	0 – 49
A	85 – 89	B	73 – 76	C	60 – 64	N	Incomplete
A-	80 – 84	B -	70 – 72	D	50 – 59		

Extensions: Should you need an extension, please feel free to come and speak to me about it BEFORE the due date. If you are having trouble getting started on an assignment, do not hesitate to make use of my office hours. I would love to help you! For information on Academic Concessions such as Deferred Status Due to Illness, Accident or Family Affliction please go to <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2016-01/undergrad/info/regulations/concessions.html>

University policies: Please familiarize yourself with the university’s standards of academic integrity (e.g., plagiarism and cheating). These regulations can be accessed at the following website: <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2016-01/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html>

DATES	LECTURE TOPICS	READINGS
May 09, 10	Introduction to the course; Definition Issues: What is forgiveness? What is it not?	White, P. (2002). What should we teach children about forgiveness? <i>Journal of Philosophy of Education</i> , 36(1), 57-67.
May 11, 12	Determinants of Forgiveness	McCullough, M. E., Rachal, K. C., Sandage, S. J., Worthington Jr., E. L., Brown, S. W., & Hight, T. L. (1998). Interpersonal forgiving in close relationships: II. Theoretical elaboration and measurement. <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i> , 75(6), 1586-1603.
May 13	Hypothesized Health Benefits of Forgiveness	The E-book is available on-line, it's chapter 7. You don't need to read the whole chapter, only p. 91-100: Cheadle, A. C. D., & Toussaint, L. L. (2015). Forgiveness and health in healthy populations. In L. L. Toussaint, E. L. Worthington Jr., and D. R. Williams (Eds.). <i>Forgiveness and Health: Scientific Evidence and Theories Relating Forgiveness to Better Health</i> (p. 91-106). E-book: Springer Science+Business Media.
May 16	TEST #1	The test will cover material from May 09 th - 13 th and will consist of short answer questions.
May 17	Individual Differences	No reading
May 18	Culture and Forgiveness	Filoiali'i, L. A., & Knowles, L. (1983). The Ifoga: The Samoan practice of seeking forgiveness for criminal behaviour. <i>Oceania</i> , 53, 384-389.
May 19, 20	Unforgiveable Acts; Applications: Interventions	Freedman, S. R., & Enright, R. D. (1996). Forgiveness as an intervention goal with incest survivors. <i>Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology</i> , 64(5), 983-992.
May 23 (No class), 24	Applications: Restorative Justice	Barrile, L. G. (2015) I forgive you, but you must die: Murder victim family members, the death penalty, and restorative justice. <i>Victims & Offenders</i> , 10(3), 239-269. doi: 10.1080/15564886.2014.925022
May 25	TEST #2	The test will cover material from May 17 th - 24 th and will consist of short answer questions.
May 26	The Perpetrator	No reading
May 27	Self-forgiveness	Vitz, P. C., & Meade, J. M. (2011). Self-forgiveness in psychology and psychotherapy. <i>Journal of Religion and Health</i> , 50(2), 248-263. doi: 10.1007/s10943-010-9343-x

May 30	Victims and Survivors of Crime Symposium	No reading
May 31	Critique	McNulty, J. K. (2011). The dark side of forgiveness: The tendency to forgive predicts continued psychological and physical aggression in marriage. <i>Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin</i> , 37(6), 770-783. doi: 10.1177/0146167211407077
June 1	TEST #3	The test will cover material from May 26 th - 31 st and will consist of short answer questions.

Course Evaluation and Due Dates

Due Date	Value	Brief Description
Assignment 1: Initial Perspective, due May 10	5%	Write 1 – 2 pages describing your definition of forgiveness. Make sure to include what you believe it is as well as what you believe it is not, and whether you believe there are unforgivable acts (and why/why not).
Test #1 May 16	20%	The test will consist of short answer questions. You will be required to think critically about the topics we've discussed May 09 – 13.
Assignment #2: Forgiveness Project Reflection, due May 20	10%	Write 2 – 4 pages telling me your thoughts on one of the Forgiveness Project stories.
Test 2: May 25	20%	The test will consist of short answer questions. You will be required to think critically about the topics we've discussed May 17 – 24.
Assignment 3: Forgiveness definition paper May 27	15%	Write 3 – 5 pages outlining your definition of forgiveness (what you believe it is as well as what you believe it is not, and whether you believe there are unforgivable acts). Has it changed from the definition you handed in for the first class? Why or why not?
Assignment 4: Victims and Survivors Symposium Personal Reflection, due May 30	10%	Write 1 – 2 pages reflecting on your experience at the Victims and Survivors of Crime Symposium.
Test 3: June 01	20%	The test will consist of short answer questions. You will be required to think critically about the topics we've discussed May 26 – 31.

Assignment Details

In order to reward students who hand in their work on time, each day that an assignment is late (without proper documentation such as a doctor's note) 5% will be deducted from the total mark.

Assignment 1: Initial Perspective: What is Forgiveness? (May 10, 9pm, CourseSpaces)

This is a 1 - 2 page personal reflection paper discussing your definition of forgiveness. In your opinion, what does forgiveness mean? In your response, please include the following: What is forgiveness? What is it not? Are there unforgiveable acts – why or why not?

Assignment 2: Forgiveness Project Reflection (May 20, 9pm, CourseSpaces)

This is a 2 – 4 page reflection paper about one of the stories on the Forgiveness Project website. You are asked to visit the “Stories” section of the Forgiveness Project website:

<http://theforgivenessproject.com/stories/>

Pick one of the stories and give me a brief description of it. Now, reflect on the following:

- Why did you pick this particular story/what drew you to this particular story?
- What are your thoughts on this person forgiving in their circumstance (relate it to at least one concept we've discussed in class)?

Assignment 3: Forgiveness Definition Paper (May 27, Hardcopy, Start of class)

Take a moment to read through your 1st assignment (Initial Perspective). I would like you to write a 3 – 5 page paper describing the definition of forgiveness that you now hold. Is it the same as the definition you held at the start of this course (make reference to your original definition)? Please include within your definition what you think forgiveness is as well as what it is not, and whether you believe there are unforgiveable acts. Why has your definition changed, or why has it stayed the same?

Please make sure that your paper follows APA guidelines and references at least two scholarly journal articles (they can be articles from the class readings). You will need a title page and a reference page. On our CourseSpaces website, in the “Assignments” folder, there is an APA document outlining any APA information you might need to complete this paper.

Assignment 4: Symposium Personal Reflection (May 30; 9pm, CourseSpaces)

On May 30th, rather than attending regular class, you are asked to attend the Victims and Survivors of Crime Symposium taking place at UVic (location TBA). The symposium runs from 12:30 – 5pm. There is a fee to attend but I have managed to get that fee waived for students in my class. You do not have to attend all of it, however, you are expected to attend at least from 2:30 – 4:30 (regular class time). You will be asked to sign in. If you do not attend, you will receive a grade of zero on this assignment.

For this personal reflection assignment, please write a 1 – 2 page reflection on any of the speakers/topics you heard during the symposium (for instance, what did you think/feel? Did you agree, disagree? Did it make you think of another example/topic/story?)

***Please note, although already planned, the occurrence of the symposium is dependent upon government funding, which has yet to be announced. If the funding falls through, the symposium won't take place. In this instance there will be a regular class on this date and I will let you know the “new” topic for your personal reflection assignment.*