THE PSYCHOLOGY OF INTERPERSONAL FORGIVENESS

Instructor: Jessica Rourke  
Office hours: M 10am-11am & TH 1pm-2pm

Class location: Cornett B143  
Office location: Cornett A213

Class time: M, TH 8:30am - 9:50am  
E-mail: jrourke@uvic.ca

TA: Shelby Logan  
Office location: B308  
E-mail: shelbylogan@uvic.ca

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 perpetrators, self-forgiveness, and applications of forgiveness (interventions). 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 in addition to teaching at UVic, I teach at Camosun, on-line at Thompson Rivers University, and I work at 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 (most through the library). You will see the set of readings assigned to be completed prior to class each week in the class schedule below.
Course Website
On CourseSpaces 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). CourseSpaces is where you will submit your assignments.

Course Policies
Contacting Me: Please come to my office hours, or contact me at: jrourke@uvic.ca
- Do not contact me through CourseSpaces
- Please include “Psyc 191” 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 I will let you know
- You do not have to make an appointment to see me during my office hours, however, priority will be given to those students who have booked an appointment

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>90 – 100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>85 – 89</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>80 – 84</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>77 – 79</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>73 – 76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>70 – 72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>65 – 69</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>60 – 64</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>50 – 59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0 – 49</td>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Incomplete</td>
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Extensions: Should you need an extension, please feel free to come and speak to me about it **BEFORE** the due date. Extensions will not be granted on, or following, 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 (e.g., Deferred Status Due to Illness, Accident or Family Affliction) please see the information beginning on page 7 of this course outline.

University Policies: Please familiarize yourself with the university’s standards of academic integrity (e.g., plagiarism and cheating). Information about these regulations can be found beginning on page 8 of this course outline. *Please take a moment to review the policy! For instance, did you know that distribution of course materials (e.g., lecture notes) without the professor’s permission is a breach of academic integrity?*

**Important:** This is a class in which we discuss sensitive topics. I will do my best to forewarn you of upcoming topics which may be sensitive. Please make sure to take care of yourself and check in with me if you need to. Students might discuss sensitive, personal matters – you are expected to maintain confidentiality.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATES</th>
<th>LECTURE TOPICS</th>
<th>READINGS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JAN 04</td>
<td>NO CLASS <em>(but you do have a task!)</em></td>
<td>TASK: Your first assignment (it’s a short one and is your opinion, no research required!) is due JAN 07th via CourseSpaces</td>
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<tr>
<td>JAN 08, 11</td>
<td>Introduction to the course; Definition Issues: What is forgiveness? What is it not?</td>
<td>White, P. (2002). What should we teach children about forgiveness? <em>Journal of Philosophy of Education, 36</em>(1), 57-67. <em>(NOTE: doesn't show up in PsycInfo…you need to search the journal title on library homepage, then find the correct issue)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAN 29, FEB 01</td>
<td>Catch up + Test Review; TEST #1</td>
<td>The test will be on Feb 01 and will cover material from JAN 08th - 29th and will consist of short answer questions. There are no readings for this week.</td>
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<tr>
<td>FEB 12, 15</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
<td>Reading week – NO READINGS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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| FEB 19, 22 | **Unforgiveable Acts**        | YouTube video (1min 45sec long): The Deadly Consequences of Unforgiveness: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHB6q3x1nc4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHB6q3x1nc4)  
| MAR 01     |                               |                                                                      |
| MAR 05, 08 | **Applications: Restorative  Justice; Catch up + Test Review** | Barrile, L. G. (2015) I forgive you, but you must die: Murder victim family members, the death penalty, and restorative justice. *Victims & Offenders, 10*(3), 239-269. doi: 10.1080/15564886.2014.925022 |
| MAR 12, 15 | **TEST #2 Perpetrator**       | The test will be on Mar 12 and will cover material from FEB 05th – MAR 08th and will consist of short answer questions. There are no readings for this week. |
| APR 02, 05 | **Catch up + Test Review TEST #3** | The test will cover material from MAR 15th – 29th and will consist of short answer questions. There is no reading for this week. **Writing each of the 3 tests is a mandatory completion requirement to pass this course (if you do not, you will be assigned a grade of “N”)** |
## Course Evaluation and Due Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Brief Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assignment 1: Initial Perspective, due January 07 (6pm, via CourseSpaces)</strong></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>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).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Test #1 February 01</strong></td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>The test will consist of short answer questions. You will be required to think critically about the topics we’ve discussed January 08 – 29.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Assignment #2: Forgiveness Project Reflection, due February 26 (6pm, via CourseSpaces)</strong></td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>Write 3 – 4 pages telling me your thoughts on one of the Forgiveness Project stories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Test 2: March 12</strong></td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>The test will consist of short answer questions. You will be required to think critically about the topics we’ve discussed February 05 – March 08.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Assignment 3: Forgiveness definition paper March 22 (6pm, via CourseSpaces)</strong></td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>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?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Reflection</strong></td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Submit a question/thought/opinion that stems from one of the weekly readings. Word or pdf document please.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Test 3: April 05</strong></td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>The test will consist of short answer questions. You will be required to think critically about the topics we’ve discussed March 15 – April 04.</td>
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Assignment Details

Writing each of the 3 tests is a mandatory completion requirement to pass this course (if you do not, you will be assigned a grade of “N”). If you do not submit/complete an assignment, you will be given a grade of zero and that zero will be used in the calculation of your final course grade.

A table outlining each assignment, its worth, and its due date can be found above, on page 5. To reward students handing 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.

Please submit assignments to CourseSpaces in either Word or PDF format.

*More detailed criteria for each assignment is posted in the “Assignments” folder on CourseSpaces.*

**Personal Reflection – MAX 2 pages, double-spaced (due dates vary)**

Please submit (via CourseSpaces) one personal reflection. If you submit more than one, only the first one that you submit will be graded. Your submission must be received by 6pm the Sunday before we meet to discuss the reading for the first time. For example, if you were to submit on the reading for “Hypothesized health benefits of forgiveness” your submission would be due by 6pm on Sunday January 21st. Your reflection must be submitted no later than March 25th.

For your personal reflection, you are asked to submit ONE question/thought/opinion that comes to mind when doing the reading. Elaborate on how you arrived at this question/thought/opinion. I may randomly choose some of the questions/thoughts to present to the class to promote discussion of the readings.

**Assignment 1: Initial Perspective: What is Forgiveness? (January 07, 6pm, CourseSpaces)**

Although we have no class this week, please submit a 1 - 2 page personal reflection 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? KEEP A COPY OF THIS ASSIGNMENT…YOU’LL NEED IT FOR ASSIGNMENT 3.

**Assignment 2: Forgiveness Project Reflection (February 26, 6pm, CourseSpaces)**

This is a 3 – 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 two concepts we’ve discussed in class)?
Assignment 3: Forgiveness Definition Paper (March 22, 6pm, CourseSpaces)
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 (they do not count toward your 5 page max). On our CourseSpaces website, in the “Assignments” folder, there is an APA document outlining any APA information you might need to complete this paper.

*Please note: Although an unlikely event, I reserve the right to modify this course outline. Any changes will be announced to you in advance (both in class and posted on CourseSpaces).

IMPORTANT UVIC COURSE POLICY INFORMATION

Prerequisites
Students who remain in courses for which they do not have the prerequisites do so at their own risk. Students who complete courses without prerequisites ARE NOT exempt from having to complete the prerequisite course(s) if such courses are required for the degree program.

Program Requirements
For more information see pages 305-308 of the UVic Calendar January 2018.

Registration Status
Students are responsible for verifying their registration status. Registration status may be verified using My Page, View Schedule. Course adds and drops will not be processed after the deadlines set out in the current UVic Calendar.

Commitment to Inclusivity and Diversity
The University of Victoria is committed to promoting, providing, and protecting a positive and supportive and safe learning and working environment for all its members.

In the Event of Illness, Accident or Family Affliction (See also UVic Calendar, January 2018, p. 46-47)
- What to do if you miss the final exam scheduled during the formal exam period
  - Apply at Records Services for a “Request for Academic Concession,” normally within 10 working days of the date of the exam. Records Services will forward the form to the instructor. If the concession is granted, the instructor will determine how to deal with the situation (for example, a deferred exam). Where a concession is not applied for or where such application is denied, an N grade will be entered on the student’s academic record.
o OR, you can download the *Request for Academic Concession form* here: http://www.uvic.ca/registrar/assets/docs/record-forms/rac.pdf

- What to do if you miss an exam other than one scheduled during the formal exam period
  o Do not apply at Records Services for a “Request for Academic Concession.” Instead, submit documentation of the illness, accident or family affliction directly to your course instructor (or designated teaching assistant).

- What to do if you require additional time to complete course requirements
  o Apply at Records Services for a “Request for Academic Concession,” normally within 10 working days of the end of the course. Records Services will forward the form to the instructor. If the concession is granted, the instructor will determine how to deal with the situation (for example, a deferred exam). Where a concession is not applied for or where such application is denied, an N grade will be entered on the student’s academic record.
  o OR, you can download the *Request for Academic Concession form* here: http://www.uvic.ca/registrar/assets/docs/record-forms/rac.pdf

**Policy on Academic Integrity including Plagiarism and Cheating** (p. 42-45, UVic Calendar January 2018)
The Department of Psychology fully endorses and intends to enforce rigorously the Senate Policy on Academic integrity http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2018-01/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html#

It is of utmost importance that students who do their work honestly be protected from those who do not. Because this policy is in place to ensure that students carry out and benefit from the learning activities assigned in each course, it is expected that students will cooperate in its implementation.

The offences defined by the policy can be summarized briefly as follows:

1. **Plagiarism.** You must make sure that the work you submit is your work and not someone else’s. There are proper procedures for citing the works of others. The student is responsible for being aware of and using these procedures.

2. **Unauthorized Use of an Editor.** The use of an editor is prohibited unless the instructor grants explicit written authorization.

3. **Multiple Submission.** Only under exceptional circumstances may a work submitted to fulfill an academic requirement be used to satisfy another similar requirement. The student is responsible for clarifying this with the instructor(s) involved.

4. **Falsifying Materials Subject to Academic Evaluation.** This includes falsification of data, use of commercially prepared essays, using information from the Internet without proper citation, citing sources from which material is not actually obtained, etc.
5. **Cheating on Assignments, Tests, and Examinations.** You may not copy the work of others in or out of class; you may not give your work to others for the purpose of copying; you may not use unauthorized material or equipment during examinations or tests; and you may not impersonate or allow yourself to be impersonated by another at an examination. The Department of Psychology has a policy of not making old examinations available for study purposes. Therefore, use of old exams without the express written permission of the instructor constitutes cheating by the user, and abetting of cheating by the person who provided the exam.

6. **Being an Accessory to Offences.** This means that helping another student to cheat (for instance, by showing or communicating to them answers to an assignment, or by allowing them to view answers on an exam) is an academic offence.

Instructors are expected to make every effort to prevent cheating and plagiarism. This may include:
- the assignment of seating for examinations,
- asking students to move during examinations,
- requests to see student identification cards,
- and other measures as appropriate.

Instructors also have available to them a variety of tools and procedures to check for Internet and electronic media-based cheating. In instances of suspected or actual plagiarism or cheating, instructors, following prescribed procedures, are authorized to take steps consistent with the degree of the offence. **These measures will range from a zero on the test or assignment or a failing grade for the course, probation within a program to temporary or even permanent suspension from the University.**

Rights of Appeal are described in the Policy on Academic Integrity in the University calendar (on p. 43-44 in January 2018).

**The definitive source** for information on Academic Integrity is the University Calendar [http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2018-01/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html#](http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2018-01/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html#) (p. 42-45 in January 2018)

**Other useful resources on Plagiarism and Cheating include:**
1. The Study Solutions Office: [https://www.uvic.ca/services/counselling/success/study/index.php](https://www.uvic.ca/services/counselling/success/study/index.php)
2. The Ombudsperson’s office: [http://www.uvss.uvic.ca/ombudsperson/pubsguides/plagiarism.pdf](http://www.uvss.uvic.ca/ombudsperson/pubsguides/plagiarism.pdf)