

HDFS 766: ATTACHMENT THEORY AND RELATIONSHIPS

Spring Semester 2008

Wednesdays, 11:45-2:15; Rm 101 in HDFS Building

Professor: Julie Poehlmann, Ph.D.

Office hours: Wed 9-11

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Course description:

How do we know how to love? This course examines this question using attachment theory and research (and critiques of this approach) focusing on relationships formed in infancy and across the lifespan. Topics covered include the historical context of attachment theory and research; evolutionary approaches to understanding human behaviors and relationships; parent, child, and interactional contributions to attachment; measurement issues; applications to high risk populations such as maltreated children; cultural issues; and application to adult personality and intimacy.

(3 credits)

Attachment theory has become incredibly influential in the study of social emotional development and relationships across the life span. Some see it as a "grand theory" of human relationships, although its creator John Bowlby initially saw his aims as more modest, whereas others have criticized this approach. In this course we begin by discussing the events and ideas that inspired Bowlby to grope for a theory which provided a more plausible explanation for the formation of the child's tie to the mother than psychoanalytic theory. We will then explore the ideas that Bowlby borrowed from evolutionary biology/ethology, control theory, developmental psychology (such as it was then), and research on cognition, memory and emotion in order to anchor the theory in the findings of his time. The formulation of attachment theory went hand in hand with studies inspired by it, so that the work of attachment researchers both corroborated and extended Bowlby's writings (this is particularly true of the work of Mary Ainsworth and her students). Although we will read some of the classic empirical articles on attachment alongside Bowlby's theoretical work, we will spend most of the course focusing on recent developments in attachment theory and research. In current work there is more emphasis on representation, attachments beyond infancy, intergenerational issues, cross-cultural issues, affective neuroscience approaches, measurement issues, and clinical applications. We will also review critiques of attachment theory and research.

Learning goals:

This course is designed to help students meet the following goals:

1. to understand the foundations of attachment theory and how it originated
2. to understand how attachment theory has guided empirical research focusing on relationships and how research findings have influenced the evolution of the theory
3. to apply your understanding of attachment theory and research to an individual child or adult
4. to apply the principles of attachment theory and research to a piece of literature
5. to apply attachment theory and research to a specific scholarly topic of your choice
6. to engage in critical thinking about attachment theory, research, and its applications

Summary of Course Requirements:

Attendance

- Class attendance is required. If you need to miss part or all of a particular class, please let me know. I will give you additional work to make up for your absence. I reserve the right to decrease final grades on the basis of inadequate attendance.

Participation

- You are expected to participate in each class discussion in a meaningful way, in a way that is informed by the readings. Although I understand that there are individual differences in shyness and facility with spoken language, I still expect participation on a regular basis. This is one of the main ways that I have of gauging whether you understand the material and what interests you.
- 20% of final grade

Class Presentation

- You are required to make a presentation during one of the 3 final days of class, including leading class discussion on that topic; sign-up will be on the first day of class. The topic can be your choice (although all topics need to be approved by the professor), as long as the topic is related to attachment (or a critique of attachment) and we have not covered the identical material in class. If it is an extension of something we have discussed in class already, make an effort to integrate with our previous discussion.
 - Topics should be approved by March 12
 - Your presentation should be approximately 25 minutes and you should lead a discussion for about 15 minutes
 - You should assign 1 reading that you make available to the class at least 1 week in advance (digital copy preferred)
 - You should include visuals (e.g., powerpoint) and incorporate the readings that you assigned
 - Prepare a handout with references (use APA-5th for citations)
 - 20% of final grade

Written Assignments:

Written Questions

- For weeks 2-12, you will need to submit one question for each REQUIRED reading, designed to stimulate discussion (not just minor clarifications or something that is answered in the reading). Questions need to be typed and reflect your understanding of the assigned reading material for that day. However, please do not type up your answers.
- 10 (of 11) weeks will be graded; that is, if you miss 1 week during the semester, that is okay.
- 10% of final grade

Literature Analysis Paper

- Read ONE of the following short stories or chapters
 - ✦ “Love Medicine” from Louise Erdrich’s (1984) *Love Medicine*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.
 - ✦ “The Shawl” from Louise Erdrich’s (2005) *The Painted Drum*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.
 - ✦ “A Temporary Matter” from Jhumpa Lahiri’s (1999) *Interpreter of Maladies*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co.
 - ✦ “Thailand” from Haruki Murakami’s (2002) *After the Quake* (translated by Jay Rubin). New York: Vintage Books.
 - ✦ “After Rain” from Trevor William’s (1996) *After Rain*. New York: Viking Press.

- Analyze the story or chapter of your choice from an attachment perspective; your analysis should focus on the relationships and/or character development and its association with attachment theory and/or research; you could also relate to the cultural context of relationships
- Write a summary of the key points of your analysis, linking with at least 3 attachment references (one must be Bowlby)
- 2-3 pages, typed single spaced (not including references); list references on a separate page using APA-5th
- due April 2
- 20% of final grade

Final Paper:

- Critically review the evidence for one subtopic in attachment theory using the recent empirical literature; focus on a small enough area within attachment so that it is a manageable project within the space of your paper; feel free to meet with me to help decide on a topic
- Make sure that your paper tells a story; provide evidence for each point that you make; you must critique the methods of the research that you present (point out specific strengths and weaknesses in the design, sampling, measurement, analysis, interpretation, etc)
 - sample topics: maltreated children show D attachments; children's attachment security changes when they are exposed to negative events or negative changes in parenting; Watch/Wait/Wonder is an effective treatment for attachment problems; mothers with insecure childhood attachments have children with insecure attachments
- 8-10 pages, typed double spaced; include references using APA-5th edition
- Can be the same topic as your presentation
- Due dates:
 - Topic due March 12
 - Outline and reference list due April 9
 - (if you'd like feedback on a rough draft, you would need to have it to me by April 23)
 - Final paper due May 12
- 30% of final grade

Grading Scale:

A = 93-100%
 AB = 89-92%
 B = 83-88%
 BC = 78-82%
 C = 70-77%
 D = 60-69%
 F = 0-59%

Required Readings:

- Volume 1 of John Bowlby's trilogy *Attachment and Loss: Vol 1 Attachment, 2nd Edition* (1982). New York: Basic Books. (for purchase at University Bookstore and on reserve at Steenbock)
- Grossmann, K., Grossmann, K., & Waters, E. (Eds.) (2005). *Attachment from infancy to adulthood: The major longitudinal studies*. NY: Guilford. (for purchase at University Bookstore and on reserve at Steenbock)
- Articles. This is a selection of classic papers, controversies/critiques, and current empirical articles focusing on attachment. Digital copies of all of these can be found under the "content" section of Learn@UW.

Other Issues:

Volunteer Opportunities

One way to learn more about the development of young children is to volunteer in a program for young children. If interested, you can obtain information at Volunteer Services Office - Morgridge Center for Public Service in the Red Gym (262-2432). In addition, volunteer placements may be obtained at Volunteer Placement Day in the Great Hall of the Memorial Union. See the web for details.

Writing Center

I encourage students to make use of the services of the Writing Center (6171 Helen C. White Hall) to enhance their success in this course. The Writing Center offers free classes on various topics. They will also schedule individual appointments to assist students in written assignments. For information, call 263-1992.

Special Needs

I wish to fully include individuals with disabilities in this course. Please let me know if you need any special accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or assessments in this course to enable you to fully participate. I will maintain confidentiality of the information you share with me.

COURSE OUTLINE:

Wed, Jan 23:

- Introduction to class
- The historical context of attachment theory

Wed, Jan 30:

- Bowlby: influences from Darwin & Freud
- Instinctive behavior

Wed, Feb 6:

- Bowlby: Attachment behavior
- Ontogeny of attachment

Wed, Feb 13:

- Bowlby: Old controversies
- Ainsworth: Individual differences in attachment security and precursors

Wed, Feb 20:

- Measurement of attachment in infants
- Infant contributions to attachment

Wed, Feb 27: Guest: Inge Bretherton, Ph.D.

- Attachment at the representational level

Required Readings:

class handouts

Bretherton, I. (1992). The origins of attachment theory: John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth. *Developmental Psychology, 28*, 759-775.

Bowlby, J. (1944). Forty-four juvenile thieves: Their character and home life II. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 25*, 19-53.

pp. 3-65 of Bowlby's (1982) *Attachment*

Chapter 1 of *The Major Longitudinal Studies* (Ethology and Attachment Theory)

Harlow, H. F. (1958). The nature of love. *American Psychologist, 13*, 573-685.

pp. 104-123 and pp. 175-263 of Bowlby's (1982) *Attachment*
excerpt from Ainsworth's (1969) *Infancy in Uganda*

pp. 264-378 of Bowlby's (1982) *Attachment*

Ainsworth, M. S., & Bowlby, J. (1991). An ethological approach to personality development. *American Psychologist, 46*(4), 333-341.

Sroufe, L. A., & Waters, E. (1977). Attachment as an organizational construct. *Child Development, 48*, 1184-1199.

De Wolff, M.S., & van IJzendoorn, M.H. (1997). Sensitivity and attachment: A meta-analysis on parental antecedents of infant attachment. *Child Development, 68*, 571-591.

excerpt from Ainsworth et al. (1978) *Patterns of Attachment*.

Fraley, R. C., & Spieker, S. J. (2003). Are infant attachment patterns continuously or categorically distributed? A taxometric assessment of Strange Situation behavior. *Developmental Psychology, 39*, 387-404. (and 4 brief responses)

Chapter 8 *The Major Longitudinal Studies* (attachment, temperament, maternal style)

Van IJzendoorn, M. H., et al. (2004). Assessing attachment security with the attachment q-sort: meta-analytic evidence for the validity of the observer AQS. *Child Development, 75*, 1188-1213.

Chapter 2 of *The Major Longitudinal Studies* (Internal working models)

Preprint of Bretherton chapter from 2nd edition of *Handbook of Attachment*

Bretherton, I., & Page, T. F. (2004). Shared or conflicting working models?

Relationships in post-divorce families seen through the eyes of mothers and their preschool children. *Development and Psychopathology, 16*, 551-575.

Wed, March 5:

- Stability of attachment in childhood
- Effects of early separation and disruption

Wed, March 12:

- Culture and attachment
- *Topic for final paper and presentation due*

Wed, March 19

No class, spring break

**Wed, March 26: Guest:
Lauren Papp, Ph.D.**

- Romantic attachments

Wed, April 2:

- Adolescent and adult attachment
- *Literature analysis paper due*

Wed, April 9:

- Attachment and childcare
- *Outline and references for final paper due*

Bowlby, J. (1973). *Attachment and Loss: Volume 2: Separation: Anxiety and Anger*. NY: Basic Books. Pp. 201-257.

Bowlby, J. (1973). *Attachment and Loss: Volume 3: Loss: Sadness and Depression*. NY: Basic Books. Pp. 44-74.

Chapter 3 *The Major Longitudinal Studies* (The Minnesota study)

Moss, E., Cyr, C., Bureau, J. F., Tarabulsky, G. M., & Dubois-Cumtois, K. (2005). Stability of attachment during the preschool period. *Developmental Psychology, 41*, 773-783.

Zeanah, C. H., Smyke, A. T., Koga, S. F., & Carlson, E. (2005). Attachment in institutionalized and community children in Romania. *Child Development, 76*, 1015-1028.

Chapter 5 *The Major Longitudinal Studies* (the Bielefeld and Regensburg studies)

LeVine, R. A., & Norman, K. (2001). The infant's acquisition of culture: Early attachment reexamined in anthropological perspective. In C. C. Moore, H. F. Moore (Eds.) *The psychology of cultural experience* (pp. 83-104). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Takahashi, K. (1986). Examining the Strange Situation procedure in Japanese mothers and 12-month-old infants. *Developmental Psychology, 22*, 265-270.

Rothbaum, F., et al. (2000). Attachment and culture: Security in the United States and Japan. *American Psychologist, 55*, 1093-1104.

Hazan C., & Shaver, P. (1987). Romantic love conceptualized as an attachment process. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 52*, 511-524.

Roisman, G. I., Collins, W. A., & Sroufe, L. A. (2005). Predictors of young adults' representations of and behavior in their current romantic relationship: Prospective tests of the prototype hypothesis. *Attachment & Human Development, 7*, 105-121.

Simpson, J. A. et al (2007). Working models of attachment and reactions to different forms of caregiving from romantic partners. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 93*, 466-477.

Ainsworth, M. S. (1989). Attachments beyond infancy. *American Psychologist, 44*, 709-716.

Chapter 9 *The Major Longitudinal Studies* (Stony Brook Adult relationship project)

Mayselless, O., & Scharf, M. (2007). Adolescents' attachment representations and their capacity for intimacy in close relationships. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 17*, 23-50.

Roisman, G. I. et al. (2007). The Adult Attachment Interview and self-reports of attachment style: An empirical rapprochement. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 92*, 678-697.

Roisman, G. I. (2007). The psychophysiology of adult attachment relationships: Autonomic reactivity in marital and premarital interactions. *Developmental Psychology, 43*, 39-53.

Roisman, G. I., Padrón, E., Sroufe, L. A. (2002). Earned-secure attachment status in retrospect and prospect. *Child Development, 73*, 1204-1219.

Excerpts from Adult Attachment Interview

Chapter 4 *The Major Longitudinal Studies* (NICHD study of early childcare)

NICHD Early Child Care Research Network (1997). The effects of infant child care on infant-mother attachment security: Results of the NICHD study of early child care. *Child Development, 68*, 860-879.

Sagi, A., Koren-Karie, N., Gini, M., Ziv, Y., & Joels, T. (2002). Shedding further light on the effects of various types and quality of child care on infant-mother attachment relationships: The Haifa study of early child care. *Child Development, 73*, 1166-1186.

Wed, April 16:

- Attachment interventions

- Bowlby, J. (1988). Attachment, communication, and the therapeutic process. *A secure base*. NY: Basic Books (pp. 137-157).
- Bowlby, J. (1988). Developmental psychiatry comes of age. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 145(1), 1-10.
- Toth, S. L., Maughan, A., Manly, J. T., Spagnola, M., & Cicchetti, D. (2002). The relative efficacy of two interventions in altering maltreated preschool children's representational models: Implications for attachment theory. *Development and Psychopathology*, 14, 877-908.
- van den Boom, D. C. (1994). The influence of temperament and mothering on attachment and exploration: An experimental manipulation of sensitive responsiveness among lower class mothers with irritable infants. *Child Development*, 65, 1457-1477.

Wed, April 23:

- Presentations
- *If you'd like feedback on a rough draft of your final paper, hand in draft by today*

3 readings to be assigned

Wed, April 30:

- Presentations

4 readings to be assigned

Wed, May 7:

- Presentations
- Wrap-up and course evals

3 readings to be assigned

Final project due May 12
(instead of final exam)