

Workshop 1 - The Nature of Love
THURSDAY, October 11 – 9am-12noon
FRIDAY, October 12 – 9am-12noon

Instructor

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Description

We will discuss the concept of love – distinguishing it from liking and reviewing classic and contemporary theories relevant to it. The instructor will sketch a new – emerging – theory, inviting discussion and constructive critical commentary. The new theory contends that love involves both cognitive (valuing) and affective (wanting, caring) components, with cognitive components relating to observer assessments of a target person's (1) personal utility, and (2) moral character. The theory argues that affects (feelings) associated with personal utility assessments are egoistic and evoked by opportunities to acquire or regain the target person. By contrast, affects associated with moral character are altruistic and evoked by opportunities to promote the target person's welfare. Arguments pertaining to affect derive from Brehm's theory of emotion intensity. They assume that affect functions to promote behavior and that the intensity of specific affective states (e.g., desire) varies with the difficulty of goal attainment.

Grades

Grades will be based on general participation and the score earned on a single-item essay exam administered at the end of the workshop. Students are encouraged to review assigned publications and arrive being prepared to discuss themes.

Background Reading

1. Batson, C. D. (2011). *Altruism in humans*. New York: Oxford University Press. (Chapter 1)
2. Brehm, J. W. (1999). The intensity of emotion. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 3, 2-22. DOI: 10.1207/s15327957pspr0301_1.
3. Brehm, J. W., Wright, R. A., Solomon, S., Silka, L., & Greenberg, J. (1983). Perceived difficulty, energization, and the magnitude of goal valence. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 19, 21-48.
4. Brehm, J. W., & Self, E. (1989). The intensity of motivation. In M. R. Rozenweig and L. W. Porter (Eds.), *Annual Review of Psychology* (pp. 109-131). Palo Alto: Annual Reviews, Inc.
5. Buss, D. M., & Schmitt, D. P. (1993). Sexual strategies theory: An evolutionary perspective on human mating. *Psychological Review*, 100, 204-232.
6. Miron, A. M., Knepfel, D., & Parkinson, S. K. (2009). The surprising effect of partner flaws and qualities on romantic affect. *Motivation and Emotion*, 33, 261-276.
7. Sternberg, R. J. (1986). Liking versus loving: A comparative evaluation of theories. *Psychological Bulletin*, 102, 331-345.
8. Toi, M., & Batson, C. D. (1982). More evidence that empathy is a source of altruistic motivation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 43, 281-292.
9. Wright, R. A. (2016). Motivation theory essentials: Understanding motives and their conversion into effortful goal pursuit. *Motivation and Emotion*, 40, 16-21. DOI 10.1007/s11031-015-9536-4
10. Wright, R. A., Toi, M., & Brehm, J. W. (1984). Difficulty and interpersonal attraction. *Motivation and Emotion*, 4, 327-341.