

# Studies in Forgiveness EDPSYCH 4186/5186 Syllabus

## MEET YOUR INSTRUCTOR

**Dr. Suzanne Freedman, Professor, Department of Educational Psychology & Foundations**

I'd like to share with you a bit about my background and interests. I have been teaching in the Educational Psychology and Foundations Department at UNI since 1994. Originally from New York, I came to the Midwest to do my graduate work. I received my Master's and Ph.D. in Human Development at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

I teach the following courses on campus: Dynamics of Human Development, Psychology of Interpersonal Forgiveness and Development of the Middle School Child. I also currently teach the Development of the Middle School Child, Psychology and Education of Forgiveness, and Educational Research as on-line guided courses. I truly enjoy teaching the forgiveness class as an on-line course as it is so interesting to hear others' thoughts and perspectives on forgiveness and the role it has in helping one cope with deep injuries.

In addition to teaching, I conduct research on the process of forgiveness. I have been studying the topic of forgiveness for 25 years and my doctoral dissertation was based on a forgiveness intervention program with incest survivors. I received an award for my dissertation from the American Psychological Association. I am most interested in how the process of forgiveness affects individuals who have been deeply hurt. In addition to my work with incest survivors, I have studied at-risk adolescents, junior high school students who experienced a hurt related to their parental divorce, Holocaust survivors, and elementary school students. I have presented my work on forgiveness at many national and international conferences and I have published numerous articles and chapters on the topic.

I am married and have three children—one son who is 15 years old and two daughters, one who is 12 and one who is seven. In my free time, I enjoy being with my family and friends, running, biking, traveling, reading and watching movies. I look forward to learning more about you and your views on forgiveness.

—Dr. Freedman

### Contact Information:

The best way to contact me is through my email or call me at my office. If I am unavailable, please leave your name, phone number, and a detailed message. I will return your call as soon as possible. E-mail is the most immediate way to contact me as I might not be checking voicemails everyday. You can also use the Message tool to e-mail me but I don't check that every day.

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## COURSE OVERVIEW

Welcome to Studies in Psychology of Interpersonal Forgiveness!

This course is being conducted online, using eLearning, the Blackboard Learning Management System supported by the University of Northern Iowa. An ideal distance learning environment is one in which the instructor and students actively interact and learn from each other.

According to Belle Cowden, an instructor who has taught online classes before, "It is really easy to get behind in an online class because there is no specific meeting time. So, you might want to set individual course goals or make up a schedule for yourself in terms of when you plan to turn in assignments. Please contact me anytime with questions, comments or concerns. And lastly, read through this introduction several times before beginning your work, so you know exactly what to do.

This course will follow a sequence of four units that build upon one another. Specifically, we begin by addressing the question, “**How do we define forgiveness?**” in **Lessons 1 - 3**. This examination will include discussions on what forgiveness is and is not, as well as exploring forgiveness from a philosophical perspective and examining the connection between forgiveness and justice. Students will be asked to share their own personal definition of forgiveness and background in learning about forgiveness, before reading what the experts have to say about forgiveness.

In the next unit (**Lessons 4 - 7**) we will explore the “**Psychological Development of Forgiveness**” including the development of various models of interpersonal forgiveness, the measurement of forgiveness, and real-life applications of forgiveness. Within this second unit, we will examine in detail Enright’s 20-unit process model of forgiveness, explore different ways to measure forgiveness and one’s willingness to forgive, as well as read about and view real-life examples of forgiveness.

The third unit focuses on “**Innovations in Therapy and Counseling and Forgiveness Interventions and Education,**” (**Lessons 8 - 9**) which will include an examination of various forgiveness interventions and information regarding how forgiveness can be used in therapy as well as analysis of criticisms and skeptical views of forgiveness therapy and education.

Finally, the issues of “**Family and Children and Forgiveness Education**” is addressed in the fourth unit (**Lesson 10**). We will focus on how to help children and adolescents forgive and read studies conducted with forgiveness and children in both Ireland and Korea. Students will complete interviews with two people and write up their responses in an interview reflection and analysis. This interview analysis will allow students to obtain a snapshot of how laypeople in the general population forgive, and to make a comparison to what we have read about forgiveness.

Overall, this course is designed to provide students with an opportunity to explore the topic of interpersonal forgiveness from a psychological perspective, a topic that is gaining more attention in both society and in academia. This course will also give students the opportunity to further develop their critical thinking and writing skills.

I hope you find this course interesting, challenging and informative. You will have a variety of ways to illustrate your understanding of forgiveness from a psychological perspective and your mastery of certain academic skills. Please contact me at [freedman@uni.edu](mailto:freedman@uni.edu) or 319-273-2483 if you have any questions, concerns or need clarification on a certain topic or assignment. I look forward to reading all of your coursework.

## **Course Objectives**

**Course Learning Objective #1:** The student will gain a greater understanding of the definition of forgiveness and what it means to forgive from a psychological perspective as well as how forgiving is viewed by philosophers. Students will also better understand how forgiveness relates to justice and how forgiveness is applied in the justice system. Students will illustrate and share their new insights in on-line posts about what forgiveness is and is not as well as in written reflections on how their initial definition of forgiveness compares to their new understanding.

**Course Learning Objective #2:** Students will gain an in-depth understanding of Enright’s 20-unit process model. Students will realize the role that working through anger has in the forgiveness model and be able to explain why it is such an important step in the model. Students will be able to describe how an individual works through the four phase, 20-unit model, and/or apply the model to their own forgiveness journey. Students will understand the goal of each of the four phases and the importance of each unit in the model.

**Course Learning Objective #3:** Students will increase their knowledge and understanding of issues related to measuring forgiveness by completing Enright’s Forgiveness Inventory, scoring it, and examining other measures of forgiveness.

**Course Learning Objective #4:** Students will improve their critical thinking skills by critiquing and analyzing the readings through written commentaries and the interview

analysis.

**Course Learning Objective #5:** Students will improve their writing skills by completing frequent writing assignments and applying the feedback they receive to new writing assignments.

**Course Learning Objective #6:** Students will apply their knowledge of Enright's forgiveness model in developing their own intervention program for an appropriate population who could benefit from a forgiveness intervention.

**Course Learning Objective #7:** Students will demonstrate their knowledge of forgiveness and critical thinking skills by writing a response to an article that is critical of forgiveness.

**Course Learning Objective #8:** Students will explore and critically analyze how a small sample of the general population defines and understands forgiveness, as well as their experiences forgiving and being forgiven, and reasons given for forgiving. They will illustrate their knowledge and understanding of forgiveness by comparing their interviewees' responses to what they have read about the psychology of forgiveness in an interview analysis.

### **Required Texts**

You will need to obtain the following textbook for this course. All other readings will be available online or through Rod Library Course Reserves.

Enright, R. D. (2001). *Forgiveness is a choice: A step-by-step process for resolving anger and restoring hope*. Washington DC: APA Books.

Smedes, L. (1996). *The art of forgiving: When you need to forgive and don't know how*. New York: NY: Ballantine Books.

## **COURSE ORGANIZATION**

This course will be delivered over the World Wide Web, utilizing web pages and a learning management system (**eLearning**). The course consists of 9 written assignments, 8 Commentaries, and an Interview analysis assignment.

Type all assignments using a word processing program and save as a file. If you are using a word processing program other than Microsoft Word, then please save the file as Rich Text Format.

Submit your assignments by clicking on the **Assignment Submission** link in the **Course Content** menu on the left and uploading your assignment. **Need help?** See the [eLearning Tutorials](#) for instructions on how to submit an assignment.

### **Instructional Methods/Activities/Assessments**

This course consists of the following activities and assessments to assist you in achieving the course and instructional unit objectives. You will have the opportunity to reflect and work on various combinations of written assignments and readings throughout the course to illustrate your mastery of the material.

### **Introductory Assignments (10 points):**

Prior to beginning the course, please complete the Practice Assignment and send me an Introductory message. You also need to print out and complete the Enright Forgiveness Inventory.

### **Written Assignments (Nine at 10 points each):**

The written assignments are related to the chapter and article readings and external

resources, such as videos. Upon completion or near completion of the assigned readings and activities, you are to submit an assignment reflecting your thoughts on the readings. Specifically, you should include **one question** you have about **any one** of the readings for that lesson **along with an explanation** of why you are asking that specific question. I also want you to answer one of the following questions for one of the assigned readings (does not have to be the same reading you asked a question about):

1. **How did this chapter/article add to your existing knowledge on this topic? Or**
2. **How did this chapter/article change your previously held thoughts on this topic?**

Please be specific with either question you choose to address. Your assignment will be graded for quality, NOT quantity; writing; and ability to apply new knowledge in your responses. Thus, your responses should be a reflection of what you learned from the readings as well as your opinions and perspectives related to past experiences. **Total Points = 90**

All assignments should demonstrate thoughtful reflection about the readings by including new insights, referencing the readings (using author's or authors' last name and year of publication), making connections between readings and your own views, and explaining your thoughts and perspectives.

### **Commentaries (Eight at 25 points each)**

Your response should be about two-three pages and reflect your thoughts and opinions on the readings as well as prior knowledge and experience. As appropriate, try to integrate your thoughts on several of the readings in a meaningful response. Each response will be worth 25 points for a total of 200 points. There is no correct answer to the commentaries. Responses will be evaluated on thoughtfulness, reference to the readings, the use of statements to support your ideas and remarks (need to show as well as tell), whether the response is consistent with the question and topic and writing. Commentaries are listed below and are included in each unit description and assignments. **Total points = 200**

### **Interview Analysis - 50 points**

In this class you will be reading a lot of research and theory about interpersonal forgiveness. Some of the theory and research is based on actual people's experiences, and some is not. I would like you to interview two people to explore the layperson's understanding of forgiveness. Included in the course content is a sample interview protocol and you can choose which questions to ask based on your interviewees and what they tell you. Questions will focus on definition and understanding of forgiveness, experience of forgiving and being forgiven. It would be great if you could get at least one person who has actually struggled with forgiveness, whether or not they have forgiven. It would also be interesting to get individuals of different ages, genders, and/or ethnicities. You can interview individuals in high school and older. Through these interviews, you are going to try and understand how real people actually forgive, what that looks like, how that compares to what you have read about forgiveness, as well as the reasons people give for forgiving or not forgiving. You will turn in a report of your interviews and an analysis of the responses you received. The interview analysis is worth **50 points**.

## **GRADING**

Introductory Assignments	10 points
Written Assignments (9 x 10 points each)	90 points
Commentaries (8 x 25 points each)	200 points
Interview Analysis	50 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>350 points</b>

## Grading for Written assignments:

The written assignments are related to the chapter and article readings and external resources, such as videos. Upon completion or near completion of the assigned readings and activities, you are to submit a response reflecting your thoughts on the readings. Specifically, your response should include **one question** you have about any one of the readings for that lesson **along with an explanation** of why you are asking that specific question. I also want you to answer one of the following questions for one of the assigned readings (does not have to be the same reading you asked a question about):

1. **How did this chapter/article add to your existing knowledge on this topic?**

**OR**

2. **How did this chapter/article change your previously held thoughts on this topic?**

Please be specific with either question you choose to address.

Your response will be graded for quality, NOT quantity; writing; and ability to apply new knowledge in your responses. Thus, your responses should be a reflection of what you learned from the readings as well as your opinions and perspectives related to past experiences. **Total Points = 90**

All responses should demonstrate thoughtful reflection about the readings by including new insights, referencing the readings (using author's or authors' last name and year of publication), making connections between readings and your experiences, and explaining your **thoughts and perspectives**.

**10 points – Excellent:** Question(s) asked is thoughtful and reflective. Question and explanation for question illustrates a detailed understanding of the concepts in the readings, and explanation is thorough. Response to new knowledge gained or how knowledge has been changed is thoughtful, clear and thorough. Student makes connections to other readings as appropriate.

**9 points – Very Good:** Question(s) asked is thoughtful and reflective. Question and explanation for question illustrates a fairly good understanding of the concepts in the readings and explanation is complete. Response to new knowledge gained or how knowledge has been changed is thoughtful, clear and complete. Student makes some connections to other readings as appropriate.

**8 points – Average:** Question(s) asked demonstrates a basic understanding of the concepts in the readings. Explanation could be more thorough and complete. Response to new knowledge gained or how knowledge has been changed is satisfactory, but thoughtful response is lacking. Not many connections to the readings are made. Writing is satisfactory, but there are some errors.

**7 points – Below Average:** Question(s) asked does not demonstrate a basic understanding of the concepts in the readings and few connections to the readings are made. Response to new knowledge gained or how knowledge has been changed is incomplete and lacking in reflection. Writing needs improvement.

**6 points – Unacceptable:** Student does not demonstrate a basic understanding of the concepts in the readings and few, if any connections to the readings are made. Writing is unacceptable and includes many errors. No thoughtful explanation is given for new knowledge gained or how knowledge was changed.

## Commentaries (Eight at 25 points each):

Your response should be about two-three pages and reflect your thoughts and opinions on the readings as well as prior knowledge and experience. As appropriate, try to integrate your thoughts on several of the readings in a meaningful response. Each response will be worth 25 points for a total of 200 points. There is no correct answer to the commentaries. Responses will be evaluated on thoughtfulness, reference to the readings, the use of statements to support your ideas and remarks (need to show as well as tell), whether the response is consistent with the question and topic and writing. Commentaries are listed below and are included in each unit description and assignments.

**Total points = 200**

**Grading Guidelines for Commentaries:**

**23-25 Points – Excellent:** Demonstrates a detailed understanding of concepts in the readings, clear connections to the readings, well-written, addresses all questions/components of commentary, uses specific examples to support statements, and provides an overall thoughtful analysis of the topic.

**21-22 Points – Very Good:** Demonstrates a detailed understanding of the concepts in the readings, some connections to the readings, well-written, addresses most questions/components of commentary, uses some specific examples to support statements, and provides a relatively thoughtful analysis of the topic.

**20-21 Points – Average:** Demonstrates a basic understanding of the concepts in the readings, offers basic connections to the readings, writing is satisfactory, addresses several questions/components of commentary but needs more examples to support statements, and response could be more thoughtful.

**17-19 Points – Sub Average:** Does not demonstrate a basic understanding of the concepts in the readings, few connections to the readings made, writing needs improvement, does not address various questions/components of commentary and very few examples are given, and thoughtful analysis of the topic is lacking.

**16 Points or less – Unacceptable:** Does not demonstrate a basic understanding of the concepts in the readings, few if any connections to the readings are made, writing is unacceptable, does not address multiple questions/components, no examples are given, and little to no thoughtful analysis of the topic is given.

**Technology Requirements:**

Technology required for this course includes Internet access/connection (high speed, not dial up), e-mail access, and access to a word processing program such as Microsoft Word.

**Technical Support:**

If you experience any technical problem do not contact the instructor. Please contact the Office of Continuing and Distance Education at 319-273-7740. Support hours are available Monday – Thursday 8 AM – 9 PM and Friday 8 AM – 5 PM.