

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

SUMMER RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES FOR UNDERGRADUATE students

FOR APPLICATION YEAR: 2026

PROJECT TITLE: Romantic Relationships and Mental Health Among South Asian Communities

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Project Description

Romantic relationships among South Asian youth in the diaspora are deeply influenced by rich cultural traditions, strong family values, and evolving expectations during adolescence and emerging adulthood. Given the significant familial involvement in mate selection within the South Asian diaspora (Manohar, 2008), it is not uncommon for young adults and their parental figures to be in conflict over individual wishes and family expectations. The present study aims to bridge this critical gap by proposing a mixed-methods investigation of this experience among first- and second-generation South Asians. We will employ a convergent parallel mixed-methods design. First- and second-generation South Asians between the ages of 18 and 35 will be invited to complete self-report measures (Phase I) on depression, anxiety, and somatic distress, racial and ethnic identity affiliation, inclusion of others in self, and relationship quality. Participants will have the option to sign up for an in-depth qualitative interview (Phase II), which will further explore domains of relational strain, identity conflict, and interpersonal disclosure. A pilot study will be conducted to assess the face validity of the selected measures and instruments, ensuring their cultural and contextual relevance for South Asians. Quantitative data will be analyzed using SPSS Version 30, and qualitative data will be analyzed on Dedoose. The results will assist mental health professionals in aiding South Asian individuals and couples dealing with romantic secrecy, relationship distress, and conflict of identity. Additionally, findings will facilitate stigma reduction efforts as well as the development of culturally-informed mental health tools and resources for this population.