

St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo
Department of Psychology
PSYCH 455: Honours Seminar in Social Psychology – Psychology of Men
Th 2:30 P.M.- 5:20 P.M., SJ1 3020
Winter 2023

Instructor and TA Information

Instructor: Christopher T. Burris, Ph.D.

Office Location/Hours: SJU Sweeney Hall 2031; by appointment (in-person preferred)

Email: cburris@uwaterloo.ca

Updates: check “announcements” on LEARN frequently for course-related info and news

Teaching Assistant: Connery Knox

Email: connery.knox@uwaterloo.ca

[Connery's primary responsibilities will be to assist me with content development and with tracking of individual contributions during our scheduled class meetings]

IMPORTANT! Because discussion is an essential component for a 4th-year seminar, your firm commitment to attending and participating in all class sessions to the best of your ability is expected. If you cannot make this commitment in good faith, I encourage you to seek out a different course that is a better fit for you.

Course Description

This seminar is intended as an interactive, research-based exploration of the interplay of physical, cognitive-emotional, and social-relational facets of men's lived experiences, mindful of how diversity and challenges shape these experiences.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

See the course description above! I suspect that many of us carry around conscious and unconscious stereotypes of the “(ALL) *men are...*” variety. Such simple, one-size-fits-all characterizations are often inaccurate and also fail to address the question of why and how men's experiences fit (or don't fit) certain patterns. So... I would like for us to think through these issues more carefully – as informed by research whenever possible.

To maximize our ability to learn from each other – and to encourage each of you to “become an expert” on a particular topic – I will be working with each of you early on to articulate a specific “burning question” about men that you will seek to answer by the end of this course (more details below).

How to get the most out of this course: This is an honours seminar, one of the most advanced types of undergraduate psychology courses you can take. With that in mind, each of the following is essential for you to (put the most into it and) get the most out of this course:

1) *independent thought & tolerance for ambiguity*: My hope is that you can think critically about information and ideas encountered, and that you'll (eventually) feel okay if the questions I ask outnumber the answers I offer. I'm simply trying to nudge you toward your own discoveries.

2) *verbal & written communication skills*: Clearly communicating your insights and discoveries in spoken and written word is indispensable. Hopefully we can all work together and support each other as we figure out our own best strategies for doing that.

3) *investment*: For this seminar to be successful, we all need to be engaged in the process. That means giving serious attention to assigned readings in order to prepare comments, questions, and the like. It also means being committed to showing up, making consistent contributions, and allowing others that same opportunity.

4) *self-awareness, sensitivity, & respect*: Finally – and of particular importance – we must all do our best to conduct ourselves with self-awareness, sensitivity, and respect. We have all been shaped by stories and personal experiences:

Some of us identify as “men.” Others don't.

Some men have perpetrated horrific nastiness against women and others (including men).

Some men and boys have been victimized by other men or boys, or by others (including women).

Some men have distinguished themselves with astounding acts of courage and self-sacrifice or modest, everyday acts of consistency and devotion.

Thus, depending on what it calls to mind, the word “men” can evoke indifference, uneasiness and revulsion, compassion and admiration, or some mix of these.

At our worst, strong emotions can move us to clench up, stop listening, defend ourselves, or attack others. At our best, strong emotions can tell us something about *ourselves* – and being open to learning about ourselves can often help us listen to others better.

With these things in mind, my sincere hope is that we all to strive to be our best in this seminar as we try to make sense out of the good and the bad of men's experiences.

Course Schedule

Our schedule appears on the next page. Citation information for all readings assigned by me will be posted as an announcement on the seminar's LEARN page. All such readings will be accessible via the UW Library. (You will need to make sure that you've signed on to your library account.)

Date	Reading by Author(s)	Tasks/Notes
Jan 12	Orientation; Instructor-led Discussion 1	<i>complete online "quiz" by Wed., Jan 11, 5pm</i>
Jan 19	Instructor-led Discussion 2	
Jan 26	Instructor-led Discussion 3	<i>participation marking begins Gp A* Progress Report #1 due</i>
Feb 02	Student-led Discussions 1	3 x 40 mins; Gp B* PR #1 due
Feb 09	Student-led Discussions 2	3 x 40 mins; Gp C* PR #1 due
Feb 16	Student-led Discussions 3	3 x 40 mins; Gp A PR #2 due
Feb 23	Winter Reading Week - no class	
Mar 02	Student-led Discussions 4	3 x 40 mins; Gp B PR #2 due
Mar 09	Student-led Discussions 5	3 (+1) x 40 mins; Gp C PR #2 due
Mar 16	Student-led Discussions 6	3 (+1) x 40 mins
Mar 23	"Burning Question" Summaries 1	6 x 20 mins; Group A
Mar 30	"Burning Question" Summaries 2	6 (+1) x 20 mins; Group B
Apr 06	"Burning Question" Summaries 3	6 (+1) x 20 mins; Group C <i>ALL: Papers due Tues, Apr 11, noon</i>

**Note: Students will be randomly assigned to Group A, B, or C by the end of the first week.*

Course Requirements and Assessment

The marking structure for this seminar is set up to encourage in-depth, individual exploration of a specific issue related to the psychology of men and sharing what you find, as well as engaging in thoughtful discussions about other relevant literatures related to the psychology of men. With those goals in mind, the breakdown is as follows:

Participation (20%). This is a seminar, so that means that we should all expect each other to show up ready to talk with one another about whatever the week's topics/readings may be. It's important that participation marks be as objective as possible, so here's a rough guide for the metric you can expect (2% x 10 weeks = 20%):

- 0.0 -- absent (unexcused)
- 0.5 -- present, but essentially silent
- 1.0 -- comments often reflect lack of care or preparation and don't advance the discussion
- 1.5 -- comments are sometimes thoughtful, constructive, and help advance the discussion
- 2.0 -- comments are usually thoughtful, constructive, and help advance the discussion

In order for us all to get a bit more comfortable with each other and with the class format, *participation marking will start in week 3.* If your absence is excused (documented), you can earn that week's participation marks by emailing me your contributions relevant to that week's topic/assigned readings by the next day. There are lots of ways to participate meaningfully: Criticisms, connections, observations, and thoughtful questions are all potentially valuable. As you work through readings assigned for the week, it's wise to make notes as you read – not like you'd take if you were studying for a test, but rather: "This reminds me of..." "Could this be

related to...?" "What if the study did this...?" "Did anybody else not get this...?", etc. Go beyond "I liked/disliked this" or "This was interesting." That doesn't tell us much: Asking yourself "Why do I feel/think this?" could be helpful.

Please be aware that disrespectful communication – personal attacks, unjustified criticism of another's ideas, or monopolizing discussion time – will be penalized. Those on the shy side may have to make an extra effort to speak; those on the more verbally assertive side may have to make a special effort to be concise and to listen. Let's work together to create a learning environment in which all are willing to engage!

Student-led Discussion (20%). Starting Feb 02 and extending to Mar 16, each of you will be asked to lead a 40-minute discussion about a topic of your choice related to the psychology of men. Here's how the timeline should go:

- 1) By no later than the Friday before your discussion slot, please email me a brief (one paragraph) summary of your intended topic, along with one (or two, if relatively short) *academic* (ideally, research-based) books/chapters you plan to have the rest of us read.
- 2) Assuming your submission is on-track, I'll post your name, topic, and readings on LEARN within 24 hours so everyone else can prepare for the following Thursday's class.
- 3) In the meantime, you should prepare to take the lead for 40 minutes of class time on your assigned Thursday. This can include a brief summary of the reading(s), why you chose that particular topic, pop culture connections, links to other literature that you're aware of, questions to be posed to your fellow students, etc. Keep in mind that 40 minutes can go quickly and that the point is to get us thinking and talking: Focus on *substance*.

The "Burning Question" (BQ)

Starting Week 1, you will be asked to pose and develop one BQ relevant to the psychology of men – what question relating to men would you MOST like to try to answer from a psychological perspective? You'll need to find the "sweet spot" between a question that is too broad or vague or value-laden to address within the context of this seminar and one that is too concrete and specific that it is already clearly "answered" in a very small literature. I and your fellow students will work with you to find this "sweet spot"; in the event that more than one student has an initially similar question, I will work with both of you to ensure that you are ultimately addressing non-redundant aspects. *The end goal is to become an expert in the area that your question addresses.*

Your BQ will provide the context for the remainder of the evaluative tasks in this seminar:

Progress Reports (5% + 5% = 10%): You will be asked to submit two (5% each) progress/integration reports throughout the term. The idea is to ensure that you are pacing yourself and finding points of connection between the course and your specific interests, as articulated in your BQ as it takes shape. Each report is expected to be a *minimum of two double-spaced pages* of text and should focus on how you are refining your question and sketching out tentative answers in light of assigned readings, class discussion, and your own research and reflection. The style can be informal/conversational because you're describing your process, but

of course include citations/references when appropriate, as this helps me understand what you're reading and thinking about. I'll give you feedback on each progress report with the goal of helping you focus on an interesting, manageable BQ.

In-class Summary (10%): From Mar 23 to Apr 06 each of you will have a 20-minute slot to summarize your BQ and your up-to-that-point answer(s) for it. Listeners are expected to provide each presenter with constructive verbal and/or written feedback, suggestions, and questions dealing with the **content** of the presentation (not that they said "um" too much or that you didn't like how they accessorized) – ideally, this will help each presenter in the preparation of their final paper (described next).

Final BQ Paper (40%): Finally, you will submit (by email, as an attached word-processing document, due as in schedule above) your BQ paper, which is essentially a more detailed exposition of what you covered in your summary just above. The min/max range is 15-20 double-spaced pages, not including APA-style references. Late papers will be subject to 10% per day deductions unless acceptable documentation for exception is provided. Earlier submissions are welcomed.

Extra Credit: Up to 4% extra credit is available via SONA research participation. I will post any information that the Research Experiences Group sends me to assist you. As an active researcher myself, I would ask that you ***PLEASE TAKE ANY RESEARCH PARTICIPATION SERIOUSLY***. Careless completion of a study's materials is a waste of everyone's time and undercuts the research process.

Accommodations for Illness and Extenuating Circumstances

Please refer to (<https://uwaterloo.ca/arts/undergraduate/student-support/accommodations-illness-or-extenuating-circumstances>) for up-to-date guidance for dealing with short-term absences, pandemic-related absences, and other absences (accompanied by an uploaded Verification of Illness form).

Please note that you are expected to make use of available accommodations in good faith, and that any false claim is an academic offense subject to discipline under Policy 71.

Of course, emergencies and other unexpected things happen – but unless it is *impossible****, please notify me well in advance if you anticipate missing a class in which you have a scheduled assessment (i.e., in which you are leading a discussion or presenting your BQ summary). We have a very tight schedule, and so it is much easier to swap your slot with another student in advance rather than have an empty slot earlier and an extra one later.***

Should a covid resurgence force suspension of in-person classes, we'll transition to online.

Other Important Information

Intellectual Property: I very much want this class to be a good experience for you, and I am putting a lot of time, thought, and effort into that. You (or someone who cares about you a lot)

paid so you could benefit from the firsthand experience that this class provides. To be clear, I'm sharing my work with YOU – so it's not fair to me to sell or give away my lectures, slides, etc. to other people. That's "unauthorized distribution of intellectual property," and *it's not okay*. I hope that makes sense.

In the spirit of respecting your fellow seminar students, I would also ask that you PLEASE DO NOT RECORD any of our class sessions.

Academic Integrity: Please have some respect for yourself, your fellow students, and your instructor and do not misrepresent others' work as your own. This means citing and quoting sources appropriately, especially in your written work. Be careful, okay?

In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read the St. Jerome's University Policy on [Student Petitions and Grievances](#). When in doubt, please be certain to contact the St. Jerome's Advising Specialist, Student Affairs Office, who will provide further assistance.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for their actions. Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on [Student Discipline](#). For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to University of Waterloo [Policy 71, Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties, check the [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to the St. Jerome's University Policy on [Student Appeals](#).

Note for students with disabilities: [AccessAbility Services](#), located in Needles Hall (Room 1401) at the University of Waterloo, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.

I hope that this course offers you something valuable – Good luck with it!