



ST. JEROME'S UNIVERSITY

St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo
Department of Sexuality, Marriage, and Family Studies (SMF)

SMF 211

Dynamics of Dating

Winter 2019

Wednesdays, 6:30pm-9:20pm, Room: SJ2 1002

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Toni Serafini

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Office Hours: Wednesdays, 2:30pm-3:30pm (or by appointment)

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Correspondence with Instructor:

It is best to contact me via email or to come see me in person during office hours. When emailing, please include your first and last name and the course code in the subject line. Please use a salutation and closing to open and close all emails. Email responses: If you do not hear back from me within 48 hours (excluding weekends), please resend your message. This is NOT an indication that I am ignoring you; more likely, this suggests that I did not receive your email (note: use of hotmail accounts sometimes results in messages flagged as spam. It is best to use your UW email address).

Teaching Assistant (TA): Information about the TA for this course will be provided on LEARN

Course Description

(From the UW Undergraduate Calendar):

This course examines the dynamics of intimate relationships in the context of the modern, Western construct of dating. Topics explored may include long-distance relationships, polyamorous relationships, online dating, hook-up culture, shifting romantic and family formation dynamics, modern communications and technology, and the role of pop culture in dating trends.

Course Goals and/or Learning Outcomes

One of the central goals for this course is to create a learning environment wherein you may develop your skills in critical thinking, academic writing, oral communication, and self-directed learning. In an effort to meet the needs of a diverse group of learners, the assessment components of this course are diverse in nature (from in-class tests to written assignments, oral presentations, and class activities). My personal goal as an instructor will be to facilitate a supportive class environment, to guide you to unpack course material in both critical and applied ways, and to encourage you to learn by communicating with each other directly through discussion and debate.

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. Recognize and understand contemporary issues related to dating and relationships
2. Be aware of and critically analyze your own personal values, beliefs, and assumptions regarding intimacy (broadly defined), gender roles, and sexual matters
3. Understand and appreciate the diversity and complexity of human relational and sexual experiences, lifestyles, and value systems, including those different from your own
4. Utilize critical thinking skills in the process of analyzing and challenging “truths” and “myths” about human intimate relationships as they appear in media and the social world
5. Identify the role of theory and scientific inquiry in the study of diverse human relational connections
6. Experience increased comfort with communicating about relationships, intimacy, and sexuality

Required Text and Other Readings

- BOOK: Ansari, A. & Klinenberg, E. (2015). Modern romance. New York: Penguin
- SCHOLARLY ARTICLES: All assigned articles are available from Course Reserves
 - **Students can access course reserves in one of 3 ways:**
 - a. Link on the UW homepage: Course Reserves <https://www.reserves.uwaterloo.ca/ares/>
 - b. Link within LEARN
 - c. Student Portal: <https://uwaterloo.ca/student-portal/>

Readings Available on LEARN

Throughout the course, information about any additional readings will be posted on the course management site, Desire2Learn (D2L or LEARN) and Course Reserves will be updated as the term progresses.

Please sign up for Course Reserves email alerts that will notify you when new items are added.

Course Requirements and Assessment

Assessment	Date of Evaluation (if known)	Weighting
In-class Test #1	February 27, 2019	25%
In-class Test #2	April 3, 2019	20%
Myth-busting/Critical Media Project	Ongoing; see course schedule	20%
Myth-busting Integrative Critical Analysis	Logs: ongoing; Paper: April 5, 2019	15%
Critical Self-Reflection Paper	March 27, 2019	15%
Class Activities	Ongoing	5%
Total		100%

Note: Assignment outlines and rubrics will be posted on LEARN

In-class Tests (45% total)

Testing will consist of two in-class tests conducted during class time (Test 1 worth 25%, Test 2 worth 20%). The tests are not cumulative and there is no final exam. The tests will cover the material leading up to the test date (this includes any assigned readings; film material; lecture material; and content generated in class via activities, discussions, and presentations). The format of the tests may include a combination of multiple-choice, true/false, and/or fill-in-the-blank questions.

Test will only be rescheduled under very limited conditions; it is your responsibility to read and abide by the following:

1. You **must** notify me prior to the test if you are unable to write at the scheduled time due to medical or religious circumstances (or at minimum the day of the test). **Students who fail to do so will receive a grade of ZERO on the test.**
2. You must provide appropriate documentation (see UWaterloo Policy Regarding Illness and Missed Tests - a VOI form must be submitted) in order to have a test rescheduled.
3. Rescheduling is at the discretion of the course instructor. Verification of Illness Form (VOI) dates will weigh heavily in this decision (i.e., do not expect to write a make-up test one week after your VOI form has expired). Tests will typically be scheduled within 2 days of the date on the form.

Myth-Busting/Critical Media Project (20% total)

Consistent with several of the course goals, you will participate in a “Myth-Busting” group project. Your group may choose either a predominantly oral presentation (with class discussion) or a written project.

SCOPE OF THE ASSIGNMENT:

Choose any recent news/media report having to do with any aspect of dating culture and critically analyze whether the news report accurately represents the research cited (if applicable) or the available research. You will engage in a “Myth-Busting” process – critically analyzing “social news” to uncover the “true story” about the claims made in the report. The focus should be on critically analyzing the claims by critiquing them and any evidence presented to support them in the report:

- How has academic research been used to support the claims?
- Has this research been mis-represented or distorted in some way? If so, how?
- Are the claims supported by non-academic “proof”? If so, what are the gaps here and what does empirical evidence *actually* suggest?

Students will work together in teams of three or four (3-4) to choose a topic and associated social media/news report and engage in a critical analysis of the claims made in the report by drawing upon existing academic research.

THE RESEARCH QUESTION THAT INFORMS THE PROJECT:

Is/are the claim(s) made about dating relationships in the chosen social news story fact or fiction ... and why?

FORMAT -- PRESENTATION OR PAPER:

Each group will have the option of presenting their findings via an in-class presentation OR a written report. Details will be provided in class and posted on LEARN. In summary, presentations will include a 10-minute synthesis of your research (i.e., what are the social media news story claims and are they supported by academic research?), followed by a short class discussion/Q&A. Written reports will cover the same content as the oral presentations (approx. 5 pages) and will be submitted to the instructor. Each group will post a link to the news/media report and a one-page summary of their findings on LEARN prior to their presentation (or paper) date for classmates to access.

A detailed assignment guide will be posted on LEARN and discussed in class several times throughout the term. It is your responsibility to attend class and to ask questions of clarification. The assignment expectations will be provided verbally and in writing; the onus is on you to seek clarification when/where needed (e.g., in class or during office hours).

Myth-Busting Integrative Critical Analysis (15% total)

This assignment consists of two parts:

1. Submission of ongoing feedback/critical reflection logs based on Myth Busting presentation content
2. Submission of a 3 page integrative critical analysis of presentation material based on the reflections you shared in your ongoing feedback/critical reflection logs

SCOPE OF THE ASSIGNMENT:

The Myth-Busting Integrative Critical Analysis will be a short, critical analysis paper focused on the material presented in student Myth-Busting presentations and the material in your ongoing critical reflection logs. You will each have until the end of the day Friday following presentation days to submit a short critical reflection log based on the presentations you watched and participated in during that week's class. Depending on the number of presentations, these logs will be less than 1-page in length and are intended to capture your critical reflections and impressions about the content presented and any questions that arose for you as you watched the presentation. This is a tracking log assignment that will be helpful for you when you transition to writing the Integrative Critical Analysis due at the end of the term.

FORMAT:

This is an individual assignment, not a group assignment. Each student will submit (to a DropBox in LEARN) a short reflection log each week that presentations are scheduled and use these logs to write their final Integrative Critical Analysis of the student presentation content at the end of the term.

ASSESSMENT:

Submission of Critical Reflection Logs to the LEARN Dropbox will be tracked but not graded.

The final Integrative Critical Analysis will be evaluated based on content, depth of critical analysis, and writing.

Note: You are responsible for attending the in-class presentations and taking notes. Students will be granted one 'pass' should they be unable to attend one of the presentation days and submit the associated log.

Ongoing absence requires the submission of a VOI form and a meeting with the instructor.

A detailed assignment guide (and associated rubric) will be posted on LEARN and discussed in class several times throughout the term. It is your responsibility to attend class and to ask questions of clarification. The assignment expectations will be provided verbally and in writing; the onus is on you to seek clarification when/where needed (e.g., in class, during office hours).

Critical Self-Reflection Paper (15%)

You will engage in several reflective activities throughout the term during class time (largely under the "class activities" category below). Each in-class activity will be introduced and framed by the instructor in class and will help prepare you for writing the Critical Self-Reflection Paper later in the term.

The Critical Self-Reflection Paper (~3-4 pages) requires you to think about your own personal ideas, assumptions, biases, and experiences about a topic related to dating and relationships across the life cycle. It will be a directed reflection in that you will be asked to respond to a question (or series of questions). No additional research is necessary; however, references to class readings and discussions will be expected.

Additional details and an associated rubric will be presented in class and posted on LEARN. Again, it is your responsibility to ensure that you understand the expectations for the successful completion of this assignment.

Class Activities (5%)

Many classes will include learning activities coupled with small and large group discussions; several of these will involve an online component, so please bring your devices (smart phones, laptops, tablets) to class. Participation in these in-class and online activities is expected. It goes without saying that class attendance is essential in order for you to actively participate and fully engage in the course.

The idea of speaking in front of a group, even a group of one's own peers, often induces some anxiety for many of us, but oral communication is a valuable and necessary skill in the world of work and relationships. It is my hope that in this class we will actively facilitate a supportive, respectful, and safe(er) classroom environment where people may feel comfortable enough to take risks and share their thoughts, ideas, and wonderings in both small and large group discussions. Please do not hesitate to speak to me in person about ways that I may support you in this endeavour.

Course Outline / Class Schedule

NOTE: The Course Schedule allows for multiple slots for Myth-Busting presentations. Depending on the number of groups that choose the presentation option, some of these may not be filled.

If that is the case, the time will be spent on other course content including things such as: in-class activities, discussions, or group work.

Readings will be added as the course unfolds. It is highly recommended that you sign up for Course Reserves email alerts. These will notify you when new items are added.

Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due
1	January 9	Introductions: - The Course and Instructor - Framing the Course: concepts, terms, language, and intersectional analysis - Class Activity	Ansari & Klinenberg (2015). Modern Romance We will refer to parts of this book throughout the term, so begin reading right away. *Note, this book is written by Aziz Ansari, an American actor and stand-up comedian, with Dr. Eric Klinenberg, a sociologist, researcher, and academic. It is described as "... an example of sociological knowledge presented in a publicly accessible form..." (Botiková, 2015, p. 111). * Be aware, the book contains some profane/foul language and humour within its pages.
2	January 16	The Dating Landscape: Then and Now Set up Groups for Myth-Busting Project	Modern Romance Ch. 1 Additional readings can be found on course reserves
3	January 23	Digital Connections and Communication	Modern Romance Ch. 2 Additional readings can be found on course reserves
4	January 30	Online Dating	Modern Romance Ch. 3 Additional readings can be found on course reserves
5	February 6	Guest Speaker: Adam Davies	Guest Speaker: Readings can be found on course

Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due
		Title: "Queering App-appropriate Behaviours: An Introduction to Gay Male Social Networking Applications" Myth-Busting Presentations	reserves Myth-Busting: Link to news/media article and summary of analysis will be posted to LEARN
6	February 13	Myth-Busting Presentations Lecture: History of Valentine's Day, Theories of Love Test Overview	Myth-Busting: Link to news/media article and summary of analysis will be posted to LEARN Readings can be found on course reserves
February 18-22 READING WEEK: No Classes			
7	February 27	Test #1: 6:30pm Class: 8:15pm Possible Myth-Busting Presentations, if time is needed/requested	Test #1 CONTENT: Class content and readings from Week 1 to Week 6, inclusive. Class: Myth-Busting Presentations OR Class Activity (Myth-Busting: Link to news/media article and summary of analysis will be posted to LEARN)
8	March 6	Myth-Busting Presentations Hook-up Culture More on Digital Communication (Emoji use)	Myth-Busting: Link to news/media article and summary of analysis will be posted to LEARN Modern Romance Ch. 4 Additional Readings can be found on course reserves
9	March 13	Guest Speaker: Dr. Jessica Wood Topic: "Consensual Non-Monogamies: Assumptions, Research and Ethical Considerations" Myth-Busting Presentations	Guest Speaker: Readings can be found on course reserves Myth-Busting: Link to news/media article and summary of analysis will be posted to LEARN
10	March 20	Myth-Busting Presentations Long Distance Relationships Cross-cultural Considerations	Myth-Busting: Link to news/media article and summary of analysis will be posted to LEARN Modern Romance Ch. 5 Additional Readings can be found on course reserves
11	March 27	Myth-Busting Presentations	Myth-Busting: Link to news/media article and summary

Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due
		From Dating to breaking up and/or "Settling Down"	of analysis will be posted to LEARN Modern Romance Ch. 6, 7 Additional readings can be found on course reserves
12	April 3	Part A: Ending the course Part B: Test #2	TEST CONTENT: Class content and readings from Week 8 to Week 11, inclusive.
Friday, April 5, 2019, Myth-Busting Integrative Summary Due			

Late Work

All assignments are due on the date noted in the syllabus. Any assignment submitted after the due date/time will be subject to a 10% penalty per day, including weekends.

A Note on Plagiarism

Plagiarism is one form of academic misconduct. A student guilty of plagiarism, the use of another person's thoughts and writings as their own, may experience disciplinary action in the form of academic penalties. In order to avoid plagiarism, a student must adhere to the following procedures:

1. Every statement of fact not generally known, and every opinion which is not arrived at independently, requires a reference to the literature being used.
2. All direct quotations (i.e., text taken directly from the source) must be in quotation marks, or if a certain length (e.g., 40 words or more) must be indented and single-spaced.
3. Every quotation requires a reference, including page number.
4. In summarizing another person's words, a student would need to use different words and change the sentence structure of the original statements. Such paraphrases must also, of course, be referenced (but no page numbers).

Electronic Device Policy

In the spirit of creating a classroom environment conducive to listening and learning, I ask that students restrict their laptop use during lectures to note-taking or to engaging in online activities integrated into the course and to silence their smartphones. In a shared learning environment, surfing (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Tinder, etc.), texting, tweeting, and other such endeavours are distracting to other students. Your respectful consideration of others is very much appreciated.

Attendance Policy

Simple attendance will not be directly evaluated or monitored; however, academic success and achievement of the course goals are facilitated by strong attendance. Note that active participation in class activities and discussions will be assessed and attendance is, of course, a requisite for active participation.

Important Information

Academic Integrity: To maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo and its Affiliated and Federated Institutions of Waterloo (AFIW) are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. See the [UWaterloo Academic Integrity](#) webpage [for more information](#).

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their actions. 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 professor, 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 offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [University of Waterloo Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

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](#).

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: The [AccessAbility Services](#) office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), 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 the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.