

Department of Sexuality, Marriage, & Family Studies (SMF)

SMF 307: Conflict in Close Relationships (W23)

Mondays & Wednesdays 1-2:20 p.m. SJ2 2002

Instructor: Dr. Denise Whitehead (she/her) (please address me by my first name)

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Email: denise.whitehead@uwaterloo.ca (best way to contact me)

Meeting times: Immediately after class for 15 minutes for quick questions.

Other times may be arranged by emailing Denise. Please suggest 2 or 3 times that might work

for you when asking for an appointment.

WELCOME to SMF 307!! I am delighted that you are taking this class. I am generally available immediately after class to answer any quick questions you may have. You are also welcome to make an appointment to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet with me. You can chat about the course, careers goals, or life in general. I enjoy the opportunity to get to know students through one-on-one conversations.

Email is generally answered the same day – Monday to Friday during business hours – and at other times when I am able. If you haven't heard from me within 24 hours during the business week, please resend your email in case I didn't receive or it got lost among the long list of emails I receive. Please use your UWaterloo email address when reaching out.

Please contact me/come to see me if you are having medical/psychological issues that are compromising your ability to complete the course successfully. Generally, tackling these issues earlier, rather than later in the course, allows for more options.

I frequently use the **Announcements** widget on the LEARN Course Home page during the term to communicate new or changing information regarding due dates, instructor absence, etc., as needed. You are expected to read the announcements on a regular basis. (To ensure you are viewing the complete list of announcements, you may need to click Show All Announcements.)

Course ID: 008569

Calendar Course Description

SMF 307 LEC 0.50

Conflict in Close Relationships

Families and close relationships are among the most important and valued human experiences, but they can also be the source of much conflict and pain. This course will examine the role that conflict plays in close relationships, with a focus on topics such as emotions, power, third-party interventions, breakdown of relationships, conflict styles, and conflict resolution.

Prereg: One of SMF 101, PSYCH 253/253R; Level at least 2A

Course Overview

This course will explore the nature of conflict in close relationships (e.g., couples/intimate partners, parent-child, siblings, co-workers, friends, etc.). We will learn to better understand what generates our own reactions, as well as the reactions of others, to conflict. One of the key goals in this course is to improve student research, information literacy, and writing in the social sciences. This course primarily relies on Learning Journals to access your learning and help you learn to write better.

Classes will be comprised of lecture, class discussions, class activities, and group work in order to engage with various psychological, sociological, and family system theories of conflict in close relationships. We will engage in thinking critically about academic literature, but we will also engage in thinking critically about our own lives.

Are you ready to take this course?

As the title states – this is a course on conflict in close relationships – parents, siblings, friends, intimate partners, work colleagues, and many others. In my many years of teaching this course I have noticed that ALL students end up processing this course through their own life and experiences with interpersonal conflict. Additionally, the list above is not exhaustive – we will learn that oftentimes we may not be a direct party to a particular conflict, but we may be caught in the collateral damage of interpersonal conflict – such as being a child who has experienced parental separation/divorce, roommates who can't get along, friend groups that are scapegoating a member but not you, etc. Please give consideration to whether you are emotionally ready and able to learn this material and engage in the reflections and Learning Journal assessments. MOST students find this course serves both an important academic purpose and helps them gain new insights and skills for understanding and managing conflict. Other students may be overwhelmed by the content and its impact on their mental health. If this might be you, you are advised to withdraw from the course and/or consider postponing enrollment to a different semester. This course is taught every winter in SMF.

You are ill. What do you do next?

The Faculty of Arts has implemented new procedures starting January 1, 2023 for students needing accommodations for medical reasons. Students will now be required to access the central portal <u>Accommodations and Illness page</u> for a variety of medical issues – such as self-declarations of illness, pandemic declarations, or to upload your completed Verification of Illness Form (VIF).

You can <u>self-declare</u> an absence on Quest for pandemic-related reasons or short-term reasons. A short-term absence, is for any reason, that is a maximum length of 48 hours. (see link for more details). Here are the highlights:

- The declaration of a short-term absence is available to all undergraduate students taking courses at the University of Waterloo.
- Only one short-term absence can be self-declared per academic term.
- All of your instructors will be notified by email of your absence, as indicated in Quest.
- You are excused from all assessments due during the absence window.
- You are required to reach out to your instructors within the first 24 hours to discuss possible accommodations for missed due dates.

For other medical issues (particularly if longer than 48 hours) you can obtain a <u>Verification of Illness Form</u> (VIF) for other conditions and follow the instructions for submission of a VIF and/or supporting documentation. The VIFS will be reviewed in the Arts Undergraduate Office (AUO) for appropriate dates and signatures before being accepted.

Once you have self-declared or submitted an VIF ALL of your professors will be notified by the AUO and the length of your incapacitation.

Students are asked NOT to send VIFs or other medical documentation directly to their professors. Submitting only to the AUO allows students some privacy. Accommodations will then be negotiated with the Arts Undergraduate Office who will assist in providing direction to the professor on needed student accommodations. Many professors already are used to this system with the Access Ability office.

Mask Wearing for In Person Learning: You are encouraged to wear a mask. Protocols as outlined by the University of Waterloo will be followed and are subject to change throughout the semester.

Mental Health Support: All of us need a support system. We encourage you to seek out mental health supports when they are needed. Please reach out to <u>Campus Wellness and Counselling Services</u>.

Required Readings

NOTE: This syllabus presents a preliminary list of the readings. I may change things as we progress through the course and want to explore new themes and territory.

In addition to the outline below, I try to keep things posted and up-to-date in the weekly content sections of LEARN. LEARN will always be the most relevant and current.

Any reading from a journal generally requires that you access it through the UW Library system.

Course Reserves: Course Reserves can be accessed using the **Library Resources** widget on the **Course Home** page.

Book to purchase: The Dance of Anger by Harriet Lerner (2014 edition that encompasses a new foreword by the author, but an older copy can also be used).

Please note, the *Dance of Anger* is written from a cis-gender heteronormative perspective primarily focused on women and anger. That said, the advice and stories goes well beyond that limited dichotomy and highlights anger and conflict in close relationships and how that develops, plays out, and can be perpetuated in family systems. You are encouraged to engage with this book by understanding that it has these limitations while also exploring how the messages and stories can support your own understanding of conflict in close relationships.

Amazon: https://www.amazon.ca/Dance-Anger-Changing-Patterns-Relationships/dp/807281P8M3/ref=sr 1 1?keywords=dance+of+anger&qid=1639429855&s=a udible&sr=1-1

Chapters Indigo: https://www.chapters.indigo.ca/en-ca/books/the-dance-of-anger-a/9780062319043-

item.html?ikwid=dance+of+anger&ikwsec=Home&ikwidx=0#algoliaQueryId=552a1467f34812f8 54c543affe8e7304

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

After the completion of the course, successful students will be able to:

- 1. Articulate and explain various theories of conflict
- 2. Describe and analyze relationship theories and their relevance to understanding conflict
- 3. Articulate the dynamics associated with conflict in the context of various close relationships
- 4. Be able to discuss your own conflict resolution strategies with reference to course material
- 5. Be able to discuss various strategies for resolving conflict and their strengths and weaknesses
- 6. Hone your research, information literacy, and academic writing skills

- 7. Develop and employ critical thinking skills
- 8. Develop and implement effective skills for discussion and active listening

Course Assessments & Evaluation

Assessment	Value	Due Date	
Participation	5%	Each class	
Learning Journals (60% total)	LJ#1: 1% + Professor feedback LJ#2 (10%) LJ#3 (10%) LJ#4 (10%) LJ#5 (10%) LJ#6 (10%) LJ#7 (peer review process) (4% + 5% = 9%)	Per dates as outlined below	
Advice Response & Presentation (in class, groups)	5%	Written: Due by end of class Monday March 27th in Dropbox	
Learning Journal Summative (final assessment)	30%	Sunday April 16th by 11:59 p.m. in Dropbox	
Total	100%		

Participation (5%)

This course involves a high degree of engagement in the classroom. A successful course of this nature requires active participation of ALL students. This course presupposes a strong interest and a willingness to engage in, and with, the material. The **ideal "active participant"** is a student who regularly contributes to the discussions, or tries to contribute by raising their hand often when questions are asked. This student shares interesting and/or thought provoking ideas that are relevant to the topic and to the readings.

Consistent with the course goals, class participation will be demonstrated by discussion and active engagement with the activities. Your class participation <u>may not be passive</u>; there must be reciprocity in the classroom where you both listen and <u>share/contribute</u> (most students who don't do well on their participation grade have often not contributed much to the discussions). Therefore, each student must contribute to all discussions, including full class and small group, and fully participate in all activities and assignments.

Respect: Given the sensitive nature of this course, and the intimate nature of topics surrounding conflict and relationships, it is imperative that every member of the class treat each other with respect. This includes not speaking when others are speaking, being attentive, using inclusive language, and respecting each other's life experiences. Because the course will likely involve sharing personal experience with intimate topics, **no recording devices (cameras, videos, audio recorders) are to be used without permission from the instructor.** This means no photos, video, or audio should be taken during class time.

Your participation grade will be assessed by the instructor based on her perceptions about your preparedness of having done the readings, attention, quality of your contributions, sensitivity and compassion in listening to others, and your attitude and level of engagement in the course. Inattention and/or non-course related computer, phone use during class will significantly lower your participation grade.

See Appendix A for a Participation Grade Rubric.

WRITING ASSESSMENTS: Learning Journals

Kindly note: In this course ALL written work is graded with the expectations associated with a senior 300-level course.

Learning Journals Assessments (60%) & Learning Journal Summative (30%) Total: 90% of final grade

See separate document discussing these assessments and the requirements.

Available on LEARN

Week/Date	Topics	READINGS	Assessments /
			Action Items
Week 1 Mon Jan 9	Introduction to the Course	Read Course Syllabus (posted in LEARN) Read Learning Journal Assignment Instructions (posted in LEARN) Read the section on APA Referencing Materials in LEARN. Become familiar with the expectations and resources	Please purchase: Lerner: Dance with Anger
Wed Jan 11	Activity: Writer's Workshop	Intro to Basic APA, Paraphrasing & Quoting, What is a thesis? Wilmot & Hocker (2011). Chapter 1: The nature of conflict (see pdf on LEARN and Course Reserves for copy of this chapter) Lerner: Dance of Anger: Preface + Chapter 1 (The Challenge of Anger)	Learning Journal #1 (practice) (Feedback; 1%) Based on content from Week 1 Due: Sunday January 15th by 11:59 pm in DropBox (1/2 page + references)
Week 2 Mon Jan 16/ Wed Jan 18	What is conflict? The ways in which our family of origin shapes our perspectives on conflict	Dance of Anger: Chapter 2 (Old moves, new moves, and countermoves) Shearman. S.M. & Dumlao, R. (2008). A cross-cultural comparison of family communication	

		patterns and conflict between young adults and parents. <i>Journal of Family Communication, 8,</i> 186-211. Curran, T. & Arroyo, A. (2018). Emulating parental levels of taking conflict personally: Associations with behavioural and mental health outcomes in adult children. <i>Journal of Family Communication, 18(3),</i> 171-184.	
Week 3 Mon Jan 23/ Wed Jan 25	Conflict Styles Class Activity: Assess your Conflict Style	Baptist, Thompson, Norton, Hardy, & Link (2012). The effects of the intergenerational transmission of family emotional processes on conflict styles: The moderating role of attachment. The American Journal of Family Therapy, 40: 56-73. (locate online via UW library) Blake, L. (2017). Parents and children who are estranged in adulthood: A review and discussion of the literature. Journal of Family Theory & Review, 9, 521-536.(Locate online via UW library) Dance with Anger (Ch 3): Circular Dances in Couples: When Getting Angry is Getting Nowhere Dance of Anger (Chapter 8): Thinking in threes: Stepping out of family triangles Carey, B (2004). Oh, fine, you're right. I'm passive-aggressive. NYT. https://www.nytimes.com/2004/11/16/healt h/psychology/oh-fine-youre-right-im-passive-aggressive.html	Learning Journal #2 (10%): (based on content from Weeks 2 & 3). Due: Sunday January 29th by 11:59 pm in DropBox
Week 4 Mon Jan 30/	Intergenerational Conflict	Hudson, N. (2015). When family narratives conflict: An autoethnography of my mother's	Learning Journal #3

Wed Feb 1	Class Activity: The Emotional Family Genogram	secrets. Journal of Family Communication, 15(2), 113-129. Dance with Anger (Ch. 4) Anger at our impossible mothers: The story of Maggie Dance with Anger (Ch. 6): Up and down generations: Katy and her aging father Khazan, O. (2013). Why families fight during holidays. The Atlantic. https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2013/12/why-families-fight-during-holidays/282584/ Gottlieb, L. (2022 December 19). Dear Therapist: How do I hold boundaries with my sister at Christmas. The Atlantic. https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2022/12/family-sibling-set-boundaries-holidays/672487/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=dear-therapist&utm_content=20221219&utm_ter_m=Dear%20Therapist Construct a multi-generational genogram (please bring ruler, pencil eraser and fine tip markers/pencil crayons)	(10%): (based on content from Week 4). Due: Sunday February 5th by 11:59 pm in DropBox
Week 5 Mon Feb 6/ Wed Feb 8	Interests and Goals in Conflict Power: The Structure of Conflict	Dance of Anger (Chapter 5): Using Anger as a Guide Dance of Anger (Chapter 7): Who's responsible for what: The trickiest anger question Coleman, P. T. (2014). Power and conflict. In P.T. Coleman, M. Deutsch, & E.C. Marcus (Eds.). The handbook of conflict resolution: Theory and practice (pp. 137-167). See pdf of chapter in LEARN Week 3 (forthcoming).	Learning Journal #4 (10%): (based on content from Week 5). Due: Sunday February 12th by 11:59 pm in DropBox

		Coleman, P.T. (2017)A ten point strategy for responding to sexual harassment. Online from Psychology today: https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/the-five-percent/201710/10-point-strategy-responding-sexual-harassment	
Week 6 Mon Feb 13/ Wed Feb 15	Emotions in Conflict & Analyzing Your Conflicts	Baier, A. How to lose friends. In G. Foster (Ed.) <i>Desire, Love, & Identity</i> (pp. 345-354). Don Mills: Oxford University Press. (see LEARN) Emotions are Contagious (Bill Eddy) (January 20, 2022) https://www.highconflictinstitute.com/hci-articles/emotionsarecontagious?inf contact key=7da15afe90263d5948efc2ee75ddb279 Bill Eddy: Calming upset people with an EAR. https://www.highconflictinstitute.com/hci-articles/calming-upset-people-fast-with-ear Grover, S. (2017). How avoiding conflict escalates conflict in relationships. https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/when-kids-call-the-shots/201709/how-avoiding-conflict-escalates-conflict-in-relationships	No Learning Journal Due this week.

FEBRUARY 28-26	READING WEEK	NO CLASSES DURING READING WEEK Emails will not be answered from 17 th to 27th	No tests or assignments may be scheduled during Reading Week

Week 7 Mon Feb 27/ Wed Mar 1	Understanding High Conflict People Class Activity: The "BIFF"	Listen to Podcast: Bill Eddy and Megan Hunter. The 5 types of people who can ruin your life. From the podcast: It's All Your Fault, part of the High Conflict Institute; https://www.highconflictinstitute.com/podc ast-episodes/the-5-types-of-people-who-can- ruin-your-life What is a BIFF? When should you consider a BIFF? Why? How to write an effective BIFF. **Before this class, please read the one page summary on the "BIFF" (see LEARN)	LJ #5 (10%) DUE (based on content from Weeks 6 & 7) Due Sunday March 5 th by 11:59 pm in Dropbox)
Week 8 Mon Mar 6/ Wed Mar 8	Interpersonal Negotiation Class Activity: Let's put your negotiation skills into action!	Wood Brooks, A. (2015, December). Emotion and the Art of Negotiation: How to Use Your Feelings to Your Advantage. From Harvard Business Review, pp. 57-64. (Copy available on LEARN) How to stand up for yourself. NYT. https://www.nytimes.com/guides/year-of-living-better/how-to-stand-up-for-yourself	No Learning Journal this week.
Week 9 Mon Mar 13/ Wed Mar 15	Mediation, Restorative Justice, and Conflict Resolution – the element of vulnerability	Morris, M. & Halford, W.K. (2014). Family mediation: A guide for family therapists. Australian and New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy, 35, 479-492. (Locate via UW library)	LJ #6 (10%) based on Weeks 8 & 9 Due Sunday March 19th by 11:59

	Activity: View and discuss: The Elmira Case (Restorative Justice)	Dance with Anger (Ch 9): Tasks for the Daring and Courageous Dance with Anger Epilogue: Beyond Self-Help Gottman, J. & Gottman, J. (2017). The natural principles of love. <i>Journal of Family Theory & Review, 9</i> , 7-26. (Locate via UW library)	p.m. in DropBox
Week 10 Mon Mar 20/ Wed Mar 22	Forgiveness and Reconciliation	Marshall, J. (2014): The politics of apology and forgiveness. <i>Pastoral Psychology, 63</i> , 489-501. (Locate via UW library) Brooks, A.C. (2021). Fake forgiveness is toxic for relationships. The Atlantic. https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2021/08/partial-forgiveness-happiness-conflict/619803/	LJ#7 (9%)(for Peer Feedback 4% and evaluation of feedback 5%) based on Week 10 content Due Sunday March 26th by 11: 59 p.m. in Dropbox. This LJ will be evaluated through feedback from 3 peers. LJ must be submitted as a file with NO identifying information (no name in file name or on title page or elsewhere).

Week 11 Mon Mar 27/ Wed Mar 29	Advice Column Prep Class in groups of 2 Advice Column Discussions: Putting this course into action	This class will be an IN PERSON writing session for you and your assigned partner. If you are going to be absent on this day please email by 9 a.m. to let me know so an alternate arrangement can be made for you to complete the assignment. Column and instructions will be provided in class. Share advice with the class. Comments and discussion.	**LJ for Peer Review Process will be distributed at the beginning of this class. Advice response Due in DropBox at end of class. Put BOTH names on the top of the page and have each student upload into DropBox.
			LJ Peer Feedback Due in class Monday April 3rd in using the evaluation rubric.

Week 12 Mon April 3 Wed April 5 (last class)	Course Wrap Up (last in person class day) No class: Writing Day for LJ Summative	Write your Learning Journal Summative. Your final assessment for this course! No class meeting is schedule for this day (Wednesday). Learning Journal Summative (30%): Due by Sunday April 16 th by 11:59 p.m. in Dropbox	Peer feedback due in class today!
Final Cumulative Assessment: The Learning Journal Summative	DUE: Sunday April 16 th by 11:59 p.m. in Dropbox	Please attend the SMF Research Symposium on Wednesday April 12 th . More details on LEARN when available. This year's theme: From Singular to Plural: Developments and Intersections in the Study of Sexualities, Relationships, and Families	Pre exam Study Days: April 11 & 12 Final Exams: April 13-28

Denise's Late Work Policy

- 1. Assignments are due on the dates and times indicated in the course outline. A late penalty of 5% per day will be immediately deducted from the assessed grade if a student misses the due date and time. An additional 5% will be deducted each day (including weekends) until the assignment is submitted. Any late assignments will only receive a grade and no feedback. After 3 days late an assignment will no longer be accepted and will be given a grade of Zero, unless alternative arrangements have been made, with supporting documentation (if requested).
- 2. Extensions will only be made under unforeseeable and extraordinary circumstances. Evidence of such circumstances must be provided to the instructor in the form of supporting documentation from an appropriate source (e.g. Verification of Illness Form, doctor's certificate, which must suggest both the unforeseeable nature of the circumstances and the severity see illness policy at page 3), copy of obituary, police report, etc. Students must contact the instructor within 24 hours of the due date to make alternative arrangements

including the provision of documentation. If no contact is made, a mark of "zero" will be given on the assignment.

3. Elective arrangements (e.g., travel plans) are not considered acceptable grounds for late work, granting an extension, requesting alternative examination times, or excusing poor performance.

Important information

Student Assistance for Technical Issues with LEARN	Include your full name, WatIAM user ID, student number, and course name and number. Technical support is available during regular business hours, Monday to Friday, 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM (Eastern Time). LEARN Help Student Documentation
Student Resources	 Student Resources Academic advice Student success WatCards Library services and more

University Policies for Students to Know About

Academic integrity: 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 the Office of Academic Integrity for more information.]

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy

<u>70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4</u>. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department's administrative assistant 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 his/her actions. [Check the <u>Office of Academic Integrity</u> 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 undergraduate associate dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to <u>Policy 71</u>, <u>Student Discipline</u>. For typical penalties, check <u>Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties</u>.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under <u>Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances</u> (other than a petition) or <u>Policy 71, Student Discipline</u> may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to <u>Policy 72, Student Appeals</u>.

Note for students with disabilities: AccessAbility Services, located in Needles Hall, Room 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 AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.

Appendix A: Participation Grading Criteria

- 10 Excellent attention, high degree of classroom engagement, high degree of critical and insightful contributions, frequent contributions in (most) every class, and clear indication that course readings completed before each class.
- 9 Excellent attention, high degree of classroom engagement, some critical, insightful contributions, frequent contributions, but not always every class, clear indication that course readings completed before each class.
- 8 Excellent/Very good attention, very good degree of classroom engagement, frequent contributions often anecdotal with some effort to be critical, clear indication that course readings completed before each class.
- 7 Very good attention, very good degree of classroom engagement, and occasional contributions, but more anecdotal, clear indication that most course readings completed before each class.
- 6 Good attention, moderate to good classroom engagement, possibly some media use, and occasional contributions, clear indication that most course readings completed before each class.
- 5 Good attention (possibly related to sporadic attendance), moderate classroom engagement (possibly related to media use), but virtually no contributions, moderate indication that course readings completed before each class.
- 4 Some attention/attendance, and/or high media use, occasional contributions, moderate indication that course readings completed before each class.
- 3 Poor attention/attendance, and/or high media use, sporadic contributions, very little indication that course readings completed before each class.
- 2 Poor attention/attendance, and/or high media use, little to no contributions, very little indication that course readings completed before each class.
- 1 Little to no attention/low attendance, and/or high media use, little to no contributions, little to no indication that course readings completed before each class.
- 0 No or minimal attendance therefore not available for participation, little to no indication that course readings completed before each class.