

Western University
Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies
2160B Intimate Relations, Sex, Gender, and Love
Course Outline Winter 2025

Instructor: Dr. Lauren Auger

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Prerequisites: No Prerequisites

Course Time: Refer to your timetable

Room: Refer to your timetable

Office Hours: TBD

Land Statement

Western University is situated on the traditional land of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lenape and Attawandaron peoples who have longstanding relationships to the region of southwestern Ontario and the City of London. In close proximity to Western, there are 3 local First Nations communities: the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee Delaware Nation. In the region of southwestern Ontario, there are 9 First Nations and a growing Indigenous urban population. Western recognizes the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America) to the development of Canada.”

Department Course Description

Intimate Relations focuses on how expectations of intimacy and relationships rely on particular understandings of love, sex, sexuality and bodies to shape how we experience ourselves as gendered and sexual beings. The course considers how intimacy (sexual, maternal, familial, affectionate) is understood in relation to history, philosophy, health, society and popular culture.

Detailed Course Description

Intimate relations are fundamental to how we understand ourselves. This course will explore intimate relations in history, culture, society, and personal experiences. We will examine how historical and cultural understandings of gender and sexuality impact people's lived experiences as well as their subjectivities. Intimate Relations; Sex, Gender, and Love will challenge you to unpack the ways in which dominant understandings regarding sex, gender, and love impact your own intimate relations and experiences.

Key Course Questions:

- What is intimacy?
- How do dominant discourses regarding gender, sexualities, and love impact people's intimate relations?
- How do dominant discourses regarding love impact people's expectations for love in their own lives?
- How do dominant discourses regarding gender, sexualities, and love impact people's sense of self?
- How do discriminatory discourses regarding race, sexualities, disability, and gender impact people's lived experiences and identities?
- How have dominant discourses regarding gender, sexualities, and love changed over time?
- How can experiences be resistant to dominant perspectives and ways of being?

Course Objectives

1. Students will develop their understanding of intimate relations through an interdisciplinary approach.
2. Students will learn that there are many kinds of intimate relations including sexual, familial, parental, and affectionate.
3. In course assessments, students will demonstrate their ability to make connections between, and critically engage with, interdisciplinary scholarship on intimate relations, gender, sexualities, and love.
4. Students will learn through participating in this course that dominant discourses regarding gender, sex, and love impact people's lived experiences, sexualities, and subjectivities.
5. Students will grow to understand that despite the power of dominant discourses, experiences and subjectivities can be resilient to dominant perspectives and ways of being.
6. Through this course, students will learn that dominant discourses can be harmful to people, communities, and understandings of self.
7. Students are encouraged to connect course content with their personal experiences.
8. Through course work, students will develop their critical thinking abilities making connections between multiple themes, discourses, and experiences.
9. The course will help develop students' written communication skills particularly focusing on organizing essays and arguments, developing a clear writing style, and writing mechanics.

Evaluation Breakdown

Mid-Term Exam	40%
Self-Reflection Response	20%
Final Exam	40%

Assignment Description

Mid-Term Exam (2 hours) (40% of final grade) Monday, February 10- 4:30-6:30. The exam will cover weeks 1-5.

Self-Reflection Paper (20% of final grade) (2.5 pages double spaced not including Works Cited Page, MLA citation method, Times New Roman font size 12) Submission Period in the Owl Brightspace submission folder: Monday, March 10- Thursday, March 13 11:59pm

Write a reflection paper on a topic from the course that resonated with you. Your thesis will be why you think that this topic is significant. You need to draw on two readings from this course to help you support this argument. To help support your argument, you must also draw on one piece of additional course content, for instance a guest lecture, video, or popular resource presented in the course.

Final Exam (2 hours) (40% of the final grade) The exam will cover week 1 as well as weeks 7-12. It will be scheduled during the exam period.

Course Readings

All course readings are available on our course website.

Course Policies

Learning Environments and Email Policies

Participants enrolled in this class are expected to complete the required course readings, attend all class sessions, respectfully contribute to classroom activities and discussions, and complete course assignments on time. Students must use their Western (@uwo.ca) email addresses when contacting their instructor. I will try to reply to emails within twenty-four hours during the work week. Please do not expect an immediate response. Put the course code in the subject line of the email. Be as specific as possible with your questions. Specific questions receive specific answers. I may not respond to emails on weekends or during the evenings. However, I will check my email every twenty-four hours during the work week. If your question is more appropriately

handled in-person, please feel free to make an appointment during my office hours or see me after class.

Technological Requirements

Electronics such as computers and smartphones are permitted in-lecture. However, please be respectful and refrain from using your electronics for outside activity during class. Please have your telephones set to silent. No aids are permitted for this exam. Electronic devices of any kind (including calculators, cell phones and smart watches) are not permitted. Our learning environments (including online) will be respectful spaces.

Statement on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

In this course, the use of AI (automatic translation tools, grammar checkers, ChatGPT...) is prohibited. If AI use is suspected, the instructor will ask for research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and other materials used in preparing assignments. Students are expected to retain these materials until after final grades have been entered. In the unlikely event of concerns being raised about the authenticity of any assignment, students may be asked to produce these materials; an inability to do so may weigh heavily against them.

Academic Consideration

Formal Documentation Designation Statement

Please note that this assessment is central to the learning objectives for this course. Accordingly, students seeking academic consideration for this assessment will be required to provide formal supporting documentation. Students who are granted academic consideration for this assessment will be provided with the following opportunity to make up this work: Make-up exam

Flexible submission deadline statement (Reflection Paper)

Please note that because the submission deadline for the assessment already includes flexibility in the form of a submission period, the instructor reserves the right to deny academic consideration for assignments which are submitted following the end of the period of flexibility.

*Note that supporting documentation is **always** required for academic consideration requests for examinations scheduled by the office of the registrar (e.g. December and April exams) and for practical laboratory and performance tests typically scheduled during the last week of the term.

When a student receives academic considerations or academic accommodations which overlap with the built-in flexibility of the assessment, the longest period of accommodation will determine the deadline. The built-in flexibility of the assessment should not be taken to extend any considerations or accommodations.

General information about missed coursework

Students must familiarize themselves with the *University Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs* posted on the Academic Calendar:

<https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/academicconsiderationSep24.pdf>

This policy does not apply to requests for academic consideration submitted for **attempted or completed work**, whether online or in person. The policy also does not apply to students experiencing longer-term impacts on their academic responsibilities. These students should consult: [Accessible Education](#).

For procedures on how to submit Academic Consideration requests, please see the information posted on the Office of the Registrar's webpage:

<https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academicconsiderations/>

All requests for Academic Consideration must be made within 48 hours after the assessment date or submission deadline.

All academic consideration requests must include supporting documentation; however, recognizing that formal documentation may not be available in some extenuating circumstances, the policy allows students to make one Academic Consideration request **without supporting documentation** in this course. However, the following assessments are excluded from this, and therefore always require formal supporting documentation:

- **Mid-term Exam**

Evaluation Scheme for Missed Assessments

All academic consideration requests must include supporting documentation; however, recognizing that formal documentation may not be available in some extenuating circumstances, the policy allows students to make one Academic Consideration request **without supporting documentation** in this course.

Reflection Paper: Submissions will not be accepted even with academic consideration following: **Thursday, March 27, 2025**

When a student misses the **Final Exam** and their Academic Consideration has been granted, they will be allowed to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam). See the Academic Calendar ([Special Examinations](#)), especially for those who miss multiple final exams within one examination period.

Late Penalty

Students are expected to submit each of the assignments by the deadline listed. Should extenuating circumstances arise, students do not need to request Academic Consideration and they are permitted to submit their assignment (**during the flexible assignment deadline**). Should students submit their assessment beyond **flexible assignment deadline**, a late penalty of **2% per day** will be applied

Additional Statements

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, here:

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/scholasticdisciplineundergrad.pdf>.

Statement on the use of plagiarism-checking software

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays

Students should review the [policy for Accommodation for Religious Holidays](#) . Where a student will be unable to write examinations and term tests due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should inform their instructors as soon as possible but **not later than two weeks** prior to writing the examination/term test. In the case of conflict with a midterm test, students should inform their instructor as soon as possible but not later than one week prior to the midterm.

Academic Accommodation and Accessible Education

Academic Accommodation is “a means of adjusting the academic activities associated with a course or program of student in order to permit students with disabilities to participate in those activities at the University and to fulfill the essential requirements of a course or program.” <https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodationdisabilities.pdf>. Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with **Accessible Education** at the earliest opportunity. “Accessible Education plays a central role in Western's efforts to ensure that its academic programs are accessible for all students”

<http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessibleeducation/index.html>

Special Examinations

A Special Examination is any examination other than the regular examination, and it may be offered only with the permission of the Dean of the Faculty in which the student is registered, in consultation with the instructor and Department Chair. Permission to write a Special Examination may be given on the basis of compassionate or medical grounds with appropriate supporting documents. To provide an opportunity for students to recover from the circumstances resulting in a Special Examination, the University has implemented Special Examinations dates. These dates as well as other important information about examinations and academic standing can be found [here](#).

Support Services

Academic Advising

Your Home Faculty's Academic Advising Office will support or refer whenever you have an issue that is affecting your studies, including information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters. Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you are struggling and unsure where to go for help. Contact info for all Faculties is here: <https://registrar.uwo.ca/facultyacademiccounselling.html>

Mental Health Support

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Gender-based and sexual violence

Western University [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

<https://www.uwo.ca/health/studentsupport/survivorsupport/get-help.html>. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Learning Development and Success

Counsellors at the Learning Development and Success Centre <https://learning.uwo.ca> are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

USC

Additional student-run support services are offered by the USC, <https://westernusc.ca/services/>.

COURSE CONTENT

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week 1: Intimate Relations; Gender, History, and Sexuality- Monday, January 6,

Fox, Bonnie and Meg Luxton. Analyzing the Familiar: Definitions, Approaches and Issues at the Heart of Studying Families. *Family Patterns, Gender Relations 4th Edition*. edited by Bonnie Fox. Oxford University Press, 2014. 2-30.

Blank, Hanne. Chapter One The Love That Could Not Speak Its Name. *Straight: The Surprisingly Short History of Heterosexuality*. Beacon Press, 2012. 1-22.

If you enjoyed this week's readings and discussion, you may be interested in GSWS 1021F: Intro to Sexuality Studies, GSWS 2220E: Feminist Theory and Practice Across the Disciplines, 2212G: Gender and the Future of Work, GSWS 2231F: Black Feminist Thought, GSWS 2240G: Foundation of Feminist Thought, 3173G: Intro to Queer Theory, 3320G, Intro to Gender and Feminist Methodologies, 3324G, Contemporary Topics in Critical Race Studies, and 3326G, Feminist Phenomenology <https://www.uwo.ca/gsws/undergraduate/courses/index.html>

Week 2: Contemporary Sexualities- Monday, January 13,

Mimi Marinucci, *Feminism Is Queer the Intimate Connection Between Queer and Feminist Theory* (New York: Zed Books, 2010) 20-35.

If you enjoyed this week's readings and discussion, you may be interested in GSWS

Week 3: Freud, Purity, and Weddings- Monday, January 20

Ingraham, Chrys. Lifting the Veil. *White Weddings : Romancing Heterosexuality in Popular Culture* . Routledge, 1999, doi:10.4324/9780203011645 1-19.

Kennedy, Melanie. "Spectacular Virgins; Purity Porn and the Making Uncanny of the White Wedding." *The Wedding Spectacle Across Contemporary Media and Culture [electronic Resource] : Something Old, Something New*. edited by Jilly Boyce Kay, Melanie S. Kennedy, and Helen Wood. Routledge, 2019. 155-169.

If you enjoyed this week's readings and discussion, you may be interested in GSWS 2140: Women in Canadian History, GSWS 2160B: Intimate Relations, GSWS Desiring Women, and GSWS 3153G Bad Girls, Dissident Women and Pop Culture <https://www.uwo.ca/gsws/undergraduate/courses/index.html>

Week 4: Legacy of Residential Schools and Indigenous Family Life – Monday, January 27,

The Legacy. Published for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada by McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016. 135-183.

To further learn about this history please see: GSWS 2290F: Indigenous Feminism, and GSWS 2291G: Indigenous Women in the Arts in Canada <https://www.uwo.ca/gsws/undergraduate/courses/index.html>

Week 5: Love and War – Monday, February 3

Jarratt, Melynda. Maritimes and Newfoundland. *War Brides The Stories of Women who Left Everything Behind to Follow the Men they Love*. Tempus Publishing, 2009. 33-63.

Allport, A. (2009). Chapter Three My Faithless English Rose. *Demobbed Coming Home After the Second World War*. Yale University Press. 80-106.

If you enjoyed this week's readings and discussion, you may be interested in GSWS 1023G: Gay Life and Culture in the 21st Century, GSWS 2140: Women in Canadian History, GSWS 2161A & B: Women and Popular Culture, GSWS 2162A The Body, GSWS 2167B: Queer(ing) Popular Culture, GSWS 2168B: Black Popular Culture,

2205G: Making Men: Critical Studies in Masculinity, GSWS 2283FDesiring Women, 2710G: Marriage: Feminist and Queer Perspectives

Week 6: Mid-Term- Monday, February 10 4:30-6:30 in-class

READING WEEK

Week 7: Happily Ever After? Break Ups and Divorce- Monday, February 24

Garlen, Julie C., and Jennifer A. Sandlin. "Happily (n)ever after: The Cruel Optimism of Disney's Romantic Ideal." *Feminist Media Studies*, vol. 17, no. 6, Routledge, 2017, pp. 957–71, doi:10.1080/14680777.2017.1338305.

Walsh, Katie. "'My Two Homes' Children's Picture Books and Non/Normative Imaginaries of Home in Post-Divorce/Separation Families." *Home Cultures*, vol. 14, no. 3, Routledge, 2017, pp. 237–56, doi:10.1080/17406315.2018.1507777.

If you enjoyed this week's readings and discussion, you may be interested in 2164A: Gender and Fashion, Jacob Evoy, 2167B: Queer(ing) Popular Culture, GSWS 2203G: Future Sex: Sex and Science Fiction, GSWS 2273E: Sexual Subjects, 3311G, Feminism Writing Madness, 3340F, and Reading Black Lives, Laurel Shire
<https://www.uwo.ca/gsws/undergraduate/courses/index.html>

Week 8: Pets and Kinships- Monday, March 3,

McKeithen, Will. "Queer Ecologies of Home: Heteronormativity, Speciesism, and the Strange Intimacies of Crazy Cat Ladies." *Gender, Place and Culture : a Journal of Feminist Geography*, vol. 24, no. 1, Routledge, 2017, pp. 122–34, doi:10.1080/0966369X.2016.1276888.

Charles, Nickie. "'Animals Just Love You as You Are': Experiencing Kinship Across the Species Barrier." *Sociology (Oxford)*, vol. 48, no. 4, 2014, pp. 715–30,
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038513515353>.

If you enjoyed this week's readings and discussion, you may be interested in 3326G, Feminist Phenomenology
<https://www.uwo.ca/gsws/undergraduate/courses/index.html>

Week 9: Teaching Safe Intimate Relations? Sex Ed and Contraceptives in History and Contemporary Society- Monday, March 10

Angus McLaren and Arlene Tigar McLaren. "Women's Struggle to Limit Their Fertility: Contraceptive Practices in Canada." in *The Bedroom and the State: The Changing Practices and Politics of Contraception in Canada, 1880-1997*. 2nd ed. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997) 15-31.

Dent, Lauren, and Patricia Maloney. "Evangelical Christian Parents' Attitudes Towards Abstinence-Based Sex Education: 'I Want My Kids to Have Great Sex!'" *Sex Education*, vol. 17, no. 2, Routledge, 2017, pp. 149–64, doi:10.1080/14681811.2016.1256281.

Allen, Louisa. "Beyond the Birds and the Bees: Constituting a Discourse of Erotics in Sexuality Education." *Gender and Education*, vol. 16, no. 2, Taylor and Francis Ltd, 2004, pp. 151–67, doi:10.1080/09540250310001690555.

If you enjoyed this week's readings and discussion, you may be interested in GSWS 2163A: Sex, How To: Sex Education, Its History and Controversies GSWS 2212G: Gender and the Future of Work, 2230F: Intro to the Black/African Diaspora, GSWS 2243F: #MeTOO, The Politics of Rape Culture and Feminist Rage, 2252F: Selling Sex: Sex Work, Agency and the Law, 2412G: Black Geographies, 2263F: Intersections of Race, Class, and Sexuality, and 3324G, Contemporary Topics in Critical Race Studies
<https://www.uwo.ca/gsws/undergraduate/courses/index.html>

Week 10 - Disability and Intimate Relations Monday, March 17

Siebers, Tobin. (2012). "A Sexual Culture for Disabled People." *Sex and Disability*. edited by Robert McRuer and Anna Mollow. Durham, Duke University Press. 37-54.

Erickson, Loree. (2013). "Out of Line: The Sexy Femmegimp Politics of Flaunting It." *The Feminist Porn Book: The Politics of Producing Pleasure*. edited by Tristan Taormino et.al. Feminist Press. 320-328.

McCarthy, Michelle, et al. "'Love Makes Me Feel Good Inside and My Heart Is Fixed': What Adults with Intellectual Disabilities Have to Say About Love and Relationships." *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 2021, doi:10.1111/jar.12893. 1-11

If you enjoyed this week's readings and discussion, you may be interested in GSWS 2244: Women and Health, GSWS 2252F: Selling Sex: Sex Work, Agency and the Law GSWS 2263F: Intersections of Race, Class, and Sexuality, 2270A: Women, Law and Social Change, 2274G: Intro to Transgender Studies, GSWS 2240G Reproductive Justice, and GSWS 3133F, Lesbian Lives and Cultures
<https://www.uwo.ca/gsws/undergraduate/courses/index.html>

Week 11: Online Dating/ Love and Intimacy During the Pandemic- Monday, March 24

Nayar, Burna, and Surabhi Koul. "From Likes to Love: Trust Catalysing the Digital Romantic Journey." *Global Knowledge, Memory and Communication*, vol. 70, no. 1/2, 2020, pp. 173–86, doi:10.1108/GKMC-01-2020-0002.

Collado, Zaldy C., et al. "Touch Me Please—when This Enhanced Community Quarantine Is over: Sexual Intimacies Among Pre-Marital Partners During Pandemic-Induced Lockdown." *Sexual and Relationship Therapy*, 2021, pp. 1–14, doi:10.1080/14681994.2021.1881055.

Arafat, S. M. Yasir, and Sujita Kumar Kar. "Sex During Pandemic: Panic Buying of Sex Toys During COVID-19 Lockdown." *Journal of Psychosexual Health*, vol. 3, no. 2, SAGE Publications, 2021, pp. 175–77, doi:10.1177/26318318211013347.

If you enjoyed this week's readings and discussion, you may be interested in GSWS 2162A: The Body, GSWS 2205G: Making Men: Critical Studies in Masculinity, and GSWS 2244: Women and Health, GSWS 3355E, Feminist Activism, and 3362F, Feminist Perspectives on Gender-Based Violence
<https://www.uwo.ca/gsws/undergraduate/courses/index.html>

Week 12: Love, Family Life, and Belonging-Monday, March 31

hooks, bell. Introduction Grace: Touched by Love. *All about Love: New Visions*, by bell hooks. William Morrow Publishing, 1999, pp. 13-29

Hays, Alexie H., et al. "She Chose Us to Be Your Parents: Exploring the Content and Process of Adoption Entrance Narratives Told in Families Formed through Open Adoption." *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, vol. 33, no. 7, 2016, pp. 917–37,
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407515611494>.

If you enjoyed this week's readings and discussion, you may be interested in GSWS 1022G: Gender, Justice, Change GSWS 1023G: Gay Life and Culture in the 21st Century, 1024F: Intro to Equity, Diversity, and Human Rights, 1030G: Intro to Black Studies, GSWS 2230F: Intro to the Black/African Diaspora, GSWS 2231F: Black Feminist Thought, 2240G: Foundation of Feminist Thought, GSWS 3153G Bad Girls, Dissident Women and Pop Culture <https://www.uwo.ca/gsws/undergraduate/courses/index.html>