

PREVIOUS COURSE OUTLINE

University of Western Ontario
Department of Gender, Sexualities and Women's Studies
Winter 2024

GSWS2710G Marriage: Feminist and Queer Perspectives

We are located on the traditional land of Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lenape and Attawanaron peoples and we complicate the meaning of this location in our course.

Instructor:	Dr. Kate Korycki
Email:	kate.korycki@uwo.ca
Class Meeting and Location:	Wednesday 10:30-1:30 @ TC 201
Zoom Office hours:	After class & Thursday 10-11am on zoom (link on OWL)
Class Website:	https://owl.uwo.ca/portal
Prerequisites:	None; all are welcome!

Course Description and Learning Objectives:

Marriage is a powerful, old and seemingly universal institution. It is connected with “legitimate/illegitimate” sex and children, but also love, intimacy, community and care. It is concerned with circulation of wealth, gender roles, social hierarchies, cultural codes and national scripts. In our current neoliberal times, marriage and a bio-family are set up as the only legitimate community an individual has. This course interrogates all these ideas and connections. It examines what makes marriage an institution; it looks to its history and connection to culture, religion, and state; it scrutinizes how marriage continues as a site of gender reproduction and how it is concerned with race and class. It explores the role of media and marriage's as well as wedding industrial complex; finally, it explores recent and profound challenges to marriage, including queer cooptation and challenges to heterosexual ideal.

In terms of content, the students will (1) gain familiarity with the foundational concepts of social studies, like structure, institution and agency, and also culture, gender, race and class; and (2) explore how marriage is structured by broader political, economic and social forces and how it is implicated in the reproduction of gender and sexuality. In terms of skills, the students will practice (3) exploring ideas by reading, thinking, writing, listening and sharing; (4) researching and answering analytically significant questions; (5) writing with integrity, clarity and precision; (6) exercising time- and grade-management.

Readings:

Students will find all readings in the Course Reading tab on OWL – the particulars will be listed in the weekly schedule below. Students will read large portions of Maggie Nelson, *The Argonauts*, OR bell hooks, *On Love*, which they may borrow or purchase.

Assignments and Expectations:

In this course, curiosity about the material and struggling to understand, transforming the ways in which we see the world, analyzing and grappling with complexity are encouraged, nurtured and rewarded. This means that getting things right is less important than thinking deeply about them! Further, the students are expected to have read and thought about the assigned readings; they are expected to write about them weekly during class; and they are expected to talk/clarify their understandings in our weekly class.

Note: It is NOT possible to pass/do well in this course without reading, thinking, writing and/or talking in each class! Also, the classes build on one another, so, if a student misses a class, it is important that s/he/they reads the assigned material and asks a colleague to share notes from the class meeting (it is not appropriate to ask the professor for this).

Assignments include weekly **in-class attendance, writing & talking** based on readings (maximum 30 points), a **2500-word research paper** submitted for review in **three stages** (maximum 10, 20 and 30 points each), and an open book **quiz**, for those wanting to rise their grades (maximum 10 points).

Deadlines: all in-class work is done during class time; **IF** you miss a class, you may submit a detailed but brief (no longer than 400 words) summary of **all** the weekly readings by Friday following the missed class. Paper version 1 is due on **February 7** (up to 500 words), paper version 2 is due on **March 7** (1,200 words), paper version 3 (2,500 words) is due on **March 28**. The quiz will take place in the final class on **April 2**. Detailed guidance and requirements on written assignments will be posed on OWL by the end of second week of the course and discussed in class.

The writing assignments are **due** on or before 11:55pm on the dates specified above. They can be submitted earlier, and will be accepted until 11:55pm of the Sunday following the due date. The built-in accommodation there to help deal with emergencies and health related delays. There will be no penalty for submitting the work between the due date and end of grace period, but there will be no further extensions either.

To build research, writing and time management skills, the students are required to begin working on each version of the paper, **7 days prior to due date**. No extension request will be considered for emergencies falling on the due date as this is covered by the grace period. If a student has medically documented emergency falling in the 7 days preparation period, they may

seek consideration, via Academic Advising. Please note, it is always the professor who approves the consideration and version 3 of the paper is designated as requiring medical certificate.

Course Structure and Policies:

Weekly class meeting happen on Wednesday between 1:30-4:30.

In most classes, we will discuss important learning issues: ‘what is a university,’ ‘what is a thesis,’ ‘what is academic integrity,’ ‘what is causality,’ ‘how do we uncover meaning,’ ‘how to formulate a ‘why’ question,’ ‘how to write precisely.’ In each class, we will address what you find unclear in the readings. Come ready with questions.

In each class, we will test your comprehension of the readings, and we will practice writing. Low-stakes writing may happen more than once in a class. The point is to give you time to prepare your answers before you share them with the group and also to sharpen your thinking and understanding, and to practice writing with clarity. Each class will also involve small-group and/or whole class conversations. You are welcome to bring notes of the readings to class and quiz.

In each class, there will be a short lecture, clarifying the readings, and/or a movie.

Our weekly classes are not recorded & posted to OWL. Furthermore, no materials generated in this class may be recorded or copied without permission, or posted to commercial sites. They may be used, with attribution, in students’ learning and writing. Weekly PowerPoint will be posted on OWL on Monday following the class – this is to allow all those to miss the class to submit their writing.

Computer/Phone Use is prohibited. Computer may be used by 2 students who are good at taking notes and who are willing to send the notes to me weekly to be posted on OWL for all to use. Use of a phone in a classroom outside of breaks **WILL** result in lowering of participation points. No computers or phones are permitted during the quiz (unless the student writes in the Accessibility office).

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) (automatic translation tools, grammar checkers, ChatGPT...) is prohibited. If AI use is suspected, the professor will ask for research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and other materials used in preparing assignments. The professor will also ask the student to trace and explain the full argument orally. An inability to produce requested materials and answer questions to professor’s satisfaction, may result in a failed assignment.

Discussion Etiquette: In assessing class participation, I look at a) the quantity, and b) the quality of remarks, as well as c) *listening and respect* for the views of others, and d) a spirit of discovery. Our class conversations are explorations, not a competition.

Absenteeism: You do not need to advise me of absences or seek my approval, but note that if you miss more than **two classes**, I will ask that you *speak* with me to decide the path forward.

This is in agreement with GSWS policy in which more than two absences put you at risk of having to retake the course. Please note, that two allowed absences are NOT in addition to sickness and emergencies you may encounter – the allowed absences are there to accommodate illness and emergency! Please note, I do take attendance.

Contesting a Grade: If you have questions concerning points received on one of your Research Essays, you are welcome to visit me during office hours. If, after our conversation, you wish to contest received points, you should submit a one-page single-spaced, typed request, within two weeks of the returned assignment. The request has to outline the reason why you think you deserve higher points (“needing” a higher grade is NEVER an acceptable reason for grade appeal - as per departmental policy!). Specific reference should be made to the instructions and guidelines for that assignment. The request should include the graded assignment. Students should note that points could go up or down as a result of an appeal. Requests for appeals outside of the two-week window will not be considered.

There are no appeals on the small in-class and make-up writing or quiz.

Communication with the Professor: I strongly encourage and invite talking to each other and me - as opposed to writing. Thus, all students can bring their questions to class or office hours. Email is the most discouraged form of communicating and I take 48 hours (outside of weekend) to respond. Also, there are many emails to which I don't respond individually – either your question is brilliant, in which case I'll answer it via a class announcement, or in class; or the answer is in the syllabus, or on OWL, which you are strongly encouraged to read and visit often.

All grade related questions have to be asked in person, not email. If you send an email about a grade, I will assume you are sending me a heads-up about coming to discuss it in office hours.

Weekly Topics & Readings (will be shortened)

Week 1: Introduction to class and each other

- In-class: Philippa Gregory, *Episode 8. Normal Women... are married, divorced and single:* <https://shows.acast.com/normal-women/episodes/8-normal-womenare-married-divorced-and-single>

Week 2: Marriage as Universal Institution (or wealth and clans)

- Stephanie Coontz, “Chapter 2: The Many Meanings of Marriage,” **AND** “Chapter 3: The Invention of Marriage,” from *Marriage, a History: From Obedience to Intimacy or How Love Conquered Marriage*

Week 3: Marriage & Religion (or gender and choice, or female agency)

- Lynn Hunt, “Introduction.” *Women in Eighteen Century Europe*.
- Jia Talentino, “We are not going back to the time before Roe. We are going somewhere much worse.” *The New Yorker*, June 24, 2022.
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2022/07/04/we-are-not-going-back-to-the-time-before-roe-we-are-going-somewhere-worse>
- Katha Polit, 2023. “The Women of American Heathland.” *The Nation*, August 31.
<https://www.thenation.com/article/society/rural-decline-women-monica-potts/>
- In-class, *Patient Griselda, Impatient Griselda*, Theatre of War Production at Toronto International Festival of Authors (2023):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jv2oM8z1uH0&ab_channel=TheaterofWarProductions

Week 4: Marriage & Modern Invention of Gender 1 (love in lieu of rights)

- Stephanie Coontz, “Chapter 9: From Yoke Mates to Soul Mates,” *Marriage, a History*.
- Sylvia Federici. 2020. “Lecture Two: ‘Body Politics in the Feminist Revolt.’” *Beyond the Periphery of the Skin: Rethinking, Remaking, and Reclaiming the Body in the Contemporary Capitalism*.
- Alexandra Murray, “Marriage – The Peculiar Institution: An Exploration of Marriage and The Women’s Rights Movement in the 19th Century.” **(SKIM)**

Week 5: Marriage & Modern Invention of Gender 2 (*habitus*)

- Alix Kates Shulman, “A Marriage Agreement (1970),” **AND** “A Marriage Disagreement, or Marriage by other Means (1998),” **AND** “Communication between the Sexes: Breaking the Truce (1983).” *A marriage Agreement*.
- Pat Mainari. 1970. The Politics of Housework.”
<https://www.niu.edu/~rfeurer/labor/Politics%20of%20Housework.pdf>
- Sylvia Federici. 2020. “Lecture Two: ‘Body Politics in the Feminist Revolt.’” *Beyond the Periphery of the Skin: Rethinking, Remaking, and Reclaiming the Body in the Contemporary Capitalism*.

Week 6: Marriage & Love

- Maggie Nelson, *The Argonauts* **pages 1-31**
- bell hooks, *All About Love: New Visions*; **pages xxvii-16; 33-49**
- Leslie Jamieson, 2024. “The birth of my daughter, the death of my marriage.” *The New Yorker*, January 15: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2024/01/22/the-birth-of-my-daughter-the-death-of-my-marriage>
- In-class: *Loving*, dir. Jeff Nickols (2017)

Week 7: Marriage & Race

- Angela Davis. Chapters **1, 2, AND 3** from *Women Race and Class*

- Alexandra Murray, “Marriage, the Peculiar Institution” (review from week 4)

Week 8: Marriage & Modern Invention of Gender 3 (& Economics)

- Kristen Ghodsee: “Capitalism Between the Sheets,” AND “To each according to her needs,” in *Why women have better sex under socialism*
- Gus Wezerek and Kristen Ghodsee, “Women Unpaid Labor is worth \$10,900,000,000.” *The New York Time*, March 5, 2020:
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/03/04/opinion/women-unpaid-labor.html>
- In-class: *Who’s Counting, Marilyn Warring on Sex , Lies and Global Economics*, dir. Terre Nash, 1995, National Film Board, https://www.nfb.ca/film/whos_counting/

Week 9: Marriage & Wedding (& economics = Wedding Industrial Complex & Disney)

- Chrys Ingraham, Chapters 1 AND 2 of *White Wedding: Romancing Heterosexuality Popular Culture*
- Carrie L. Cokely, “Someday My Prince Will Come: Disney and Heterosexual Imaginary and Animated Film.”

Week 10: Marriage & Desire (& sexuality)

- Schachter, “The Other Same-Sex Marriage Debate.”
- Review Ingram, chapter 1 from week 10.
- Philippa Gregory, Episode 3. Normal Women... Love Other Women.
<https://shows.acast.com/normal-women/episodes/3-normal-womenlove-women>
- Film, *The State of Marriage*, dir. Jeff Kaufmann, 2015.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6eEOJ9h8TjE&ab_channel=FREEMOVIES

Week 11: Queering Marriage AND/OR The End of Marriage (polygamy, polyamory, abstinence, divorce)

- Stephanie Coontz, “The World Historical Transformation of Marriage,” *Journal of Marriage and Family*
- Andrew Solomon, “How Polyamorists and Polygamists are Challenging Family Norms.” *The New Yorker*, March 15, 2021: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2021/03/22/how-polyamorists-and-polygamists-are-challenging-family-norms>
- Jenifer Wilson, “How did Polyamory Become so Popular?” *The New Yorker*, December 25, 2023: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2024/01/01/american-poly-christopher-gleason-book-review-more-a-memoir-of-open-marriage-molly-roden-winter>

Week 12: Quiz

Western University & Arts and Humanities' General Policies & Supports

- Our work in this course is guided by the [University's Scholastic Discipline](#) document and all offences are taken seriously.
- 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 (Turnitin). 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](#).
- Students are strongly encouraged to keep rough and draft work and hard copies of their essays even after the marked assignments have been returned.
- Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education, which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or other testing. Students with disabilities are encouraged to read the [policy](#) and register with [Accessible Education](#) at the earliest opportunity.
- Academic Advising and Consideration - as opposed to Accessible Education - offers support whenever students face issues affecting their studies, including guidance on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters. Academic Advising should be sought at student's home faculty (the contacts for all faculties is found [here](#)). Requests for consideration on specific assignments should be submitted to the [Office of the Registrar](#). As per Senate [policy](#) all consideration requests must be filed within 48 hours of the assignment. NOTE, is the professor who approves the accommodation, NOT the Advisor, but you need to contact Advising to submit documentation.
- Counsellors at the [Learning Development and Success Centre](#) are ready to help students improve their learning skills. They offer presentations on 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.
- 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.
- Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to [Mental Health@Western](#) to obtain help.

- If students need assistance with OWL Brightspace, they can seek support [here](#). Alternatively, they can contact the [Western Technology Services Helpdesk](#) online or by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800 for technical support. Current versions of all popular browsers (e.g., Safari, Chrome, Edge, Firefox) are supported with OWL Brightspace; what is most important is that you update your browser frequently to ensure it is current. All JavaScript and cookies should be enabled.
- Faculty of Arts and Humanities mandates the following statement on 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 [this](#) website. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.”

Please note: under the new Gender-based and Sexual Violence [policy](#) instructors are required to refer any and all incidents of sexual violence disclosed in class. The student will then be contacted by the GBSV Survivor Support Case Manager and can receive and decline assistance of that office.

- Additional student-run support services are offered by the [University Student Centre](#).