

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
LONDON CANADA
Department of Psychology
2024-2025

Psychology 9734/4790F Section 001
Romantic Relationships

1. 1.0 CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

In the seminar, we will discuss the process of establishing new romantic relationships from singlehood through the early stages of new relationship experiences (e.g., the first few months of new relationships). Existing theory and research on singlehood, partner preferences, attraction, flirting, early dating, as well as the experiences of newly initiated romantic relationships will be discussed.

2.0 COURSE INFORMATION

Instructor: Lorne Campbell

Office: SSC 6328

Office Hours for Graduate Students: by appointment

Office Hours for Undergraduate Students: Information posted by TAs on the Owl/Brightspace site.

Email: lcampb23@uwo.ca

Teaching Assistants (for undergraduate students):

- Abbigail Kinnear (akinnear@uwo.ca)
- Kristi Baerg MacDonald (kmacd252@uwo.ca)

Time and Location of the weekly Class:

Lecture/class: Wednesdays from 1:30-4:30pm

3.0 TEXTBOOK

There is not textbook for this class. I have assigned readings for each week/topic that are available online.

4.0 COURSE OBJECTIVES & LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning Outcome	Learning Activity	Assessment
<i>Depth and Breadth of Knowledge</i> Describe, identify and explain the evolutionary, personal, interpersonal, and developmental factors that influence thoughts, feelings and behaviors of partners in romantic relationships	Lecture; Class discussions; Textbook/Readings	Weekly participation and assignments
<i>Application of Knowledge</i> Articulate the above concepts	Lecture; Class discussions;	Weekly participation and

when critically evaluating research and building persuasive arguments in this area	Textbook/Readings	assignments
<i>Application of Methodologies</i> Explain how personal, situational, and relationship factors apply to the thoughts, feelings and behaviors of partners in romantic relationships	Lecture; Class discussions; Textbook/Readings	Weekly participation and assignments
<i>Communication Skills</i> Communicate ideas clearly and concisely, in language accessible to intelligent non-experts (oral and written formats)	Lecture; Class discussions; Textbook/Readings, paper	Weekly participation and assignments, written work
<i>Awareness of Limits of Knowledge</i> Describe and explain the limits of research conclusions in the context of methodological practices within the field	Lecture; Class discussions; Textbook/Readings	Weekly participation and assignments, written work
<i>Autonomy and Professional Capacity</i> Develop the ability to critique others' writing politely and professionally	Lecture; Class discussions	Weekly participation and assignments, written work

5.0 EVALUATION

The evaluation and testing formats for this course were created to assess the learning objectives as listed in section 4.0 and are considered necessary for meeting these learning objectives.

Because this is an essay course, as per Senate Regulations, you must pass the essay component to pass the course. That is, the average mark for your written assignments must be at least 50%.

This course is exempt from the Senate requirement that students receive assessment of their work accounting for at least 15% of their final grade at least three full days before the date of the deadline for withdrawal from a course without academic penalty.

The expectation for course grades within the Psychology Department is that they will be distributed around the following averages:

- 70% 1000-level to 2099-level courses
- 72% 2100-2999-level courses
- 75% 3000-level courses
- 80% 4000-level courses

In the event that course grades are significantly higher or lower than these averages, instructors may be required to make adjustments to course grades. Such adjustment might include the normalization of one or more course components and/or the re-weighting of various course components.

Policy on Grade Rounding

Please note that although course grades within the Psychology Department are rounded to the nearest whole number, no further grade rounding will be done. No additional assignments will be offered to enhance a final grade; nor will requests to change a grade because it is needed for a future program be considered.

6.0 ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION SCHEDULE

There are no exams for this course. Both graduate and undergraduate students are asked to complete weekly assignments. Graduate students are asked to submit one (1) paper at the end of the course. Undergraduate students are asked to submit two (2) in depth reviews prior to the end of the course. More details for these papers/written assignments will be shared via Owl/Brightspace.

7.0 CLASS SCHEDULE

Week of September 9

Lecture 1 Organizational lecture/Introduction

Readings: No readings

Week of September 16

Lecture 2 Singlehood

Readings:

- Girme et al. (2023). Coping or thriving? Reviewing intrapersonal, interpersonal, and societal factors associated with well-being in singlehood from a within-group perspective. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 18, 1097-1120. DOI: 10.1177/17456916221136119
- Spielman et al. (2015). Longing for ex-partners out of fear of being single. *Journal of Personality*, 84. DOI: 10.1111/jopy.12222

Week of September 23

Lecture 3 Why might humans desire to form long-term romantic relationships?

Readings:

- Fletcher et al. (2015). Pair-bonding, romantic love, and evolution: The curious case of *Homo Sapiens*. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 10, 20-36. DOI: 10.1177/1745691614561683
- Ebert & Hamilton (1996). Sex against virulence: The coevolution of parasitic diseases. *Trends in Ecology & Evolution*, 11, 79-82. DOI: 10.1016/0169-5347(96)81047-0

Week of September 30

Lecture 3 Mate Preferences 1: Classic Social Psychology

Readings:

- Byrne et al. (1970). Continuity between the experimental study of attraction and real-life computer dating. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 16, 157-165.
- Rosenbaum (1986). The repulsion hypothesis: On the nondevelopment of relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51, 1156-1166.

Week of October 7

Lecture 4 Mate Preferences 2: Then Evolutionary Psychology Took Over

Readings:

- Buss & Schmitt (2019). Mate preferences and their behavioral manifestations. *Annual Review of Psychology*. DOI: 10.1146/annurev-psych-010418-103408.
- Fletcher et al. (1999). Ideals in intimate relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 76, 72-89.

Week of October 14

Lecture 5 Relationship Initiation 1

Readings:

- Sprecher et al. (2015). Relationship initiation and development. In M. Mikulincer and P.R. Shaver (Eds.), *APA Handbook of Personality and Social Psychology* (chapter 8).
- Clark et al. (1999). Strategic behaviors in romantic relationship initiation. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 25, 709-722.

Week of October 21

No Class—Fall reading week

Week of October 28

Lecture 6 Relationship Initiation 2

Readings:

- Vorauer et al. (2003). Invisible overtures: Fears of rejection and the signal amplification bias. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84, 793-812.
- Weber et al. (2010). Flirting competence: An experimental study on appropriate and effective opening lines. *Communication Research Reports*, 27, 184-191. DOI: 10.1080/08824091003738149
- Apostolou & Christoforou (2020). The art of flirting: What are the traits that make it effective? *Personality and Individual Differences*. DOI: 10.1016/j.paid.2020.109866

Week of November 4

Lecture 7 What are the links between preferences and actual mate choice?

Readings:

- Gerlach et al. (2019). Predictive validity and adjustment of ideal partner preferences across the transition into romantic relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 116, 313-330.
- Eastwick et al. (2014). The predictive validity of ideal partner preferences: A review and meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 140, 623-665.
- Campbell & Stanton (2014). The predictive validity of ideal partner preferences in relationship formation: What we know, what we don't know, and why it matters. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 8, 485-494.

Week of November 11

Lecture 8 Looking back: Grab bag

Readings:

- Haselton & Buss (2000). Error management theory: A new perspective on biases in cross-sex mind reading. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 78, 81-91.
- Waynforth (2007). Mate choice copying in humans. *Human Nature*, 18, 264-271. DOI: 10.1007/s12110-007-9004-2

Week of November 18

Lecture 9 Stages of Relationship Development 1

Readings:

- Murstein (1970). Stimulus, value, role: A theory of marital choice. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 32, 465-481.
- **Social Penetration**

Week of November 25

Lecture 10 Stages of Relationship Development 2

Readings:

- Aron et al. (2005). Reward, motivation, and emotion systems associated with early-stage intense romantic love. *Journal of Neurophysiology*, 94, 327-337. DOI: 10.1152/jn.00838.2004
- Lavner et al. (2010). Patterns of change in marital satisfaction over the newlywed years. *Journal*

of Marriage and Family, 72, 1171-1187. DOI: 10.1111/j.1741-3737.2010.00757.s

Week of December 2

Lecture 11 Currently Free Space

Readings: To be determined

8 Academic Integrity

Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:
https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.

Possible penalties for a scholastic offence include failure of the assignment/exam, failure of the course, suspension from the University, and expulsion from the University.

Plagiarism Detection 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 Western and Turnitin.com.

Use of AI

The use of generative AI tools such as ChatGPT to produce written work is not permitted unless permission is granted by the instructor for specific circumstances. Any work submitted must be the work of the student in its entirety unless otherwise disclosed. When used, AI tools should be used ethically and responsibly, and students must cite or credit the tools used in line with the expectation to use AI as a tool to learn, not to produce content.

Multiple Choice Exams

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams will be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

Exam Proctoring Software

Tests and examinations for online courses may be conducted using a remote proctoring service. More information about this remote proctoring service, including technical requirements, is available on Western's Remote

Proctoring website at: <https://remoteproctoring.uwo.ca>.

Personal Response Systems ("Clickers")

In classes that involve the use of a personal response system, data collected will only be used in a manner consistent to that described in this outline. It is the instructor's responsibility to make every effort to ensure that data remain confidential. However, students should be aware that as with all forms of electronic communication, privacy is not guaranteed.

9 Academic Accommodations and Accessible Education

View Western's policy on academic accommodations for student with disabilities at this [link](#).

Accessible Education provides supports and services to students with disabilities at Western.

If you think you may qualify for ongoing accommodation that will be recognized in all your courses, visit [Accessible Education](#) for more information. Email: aw@uwo.ca Phone: 519 661-2147

10 Absence & Academic Consideration

View Western's policy on academic consideration for medical illnesses this [link](#)

Find your academic counsellor here: https://www.registrar.uwo.ca/faculty_academic_counselling.html

Students must see the Academic Counsellor and submit all required documentation in order to be approved for certain academic considerations. Students **must communicate with their instructors no later than 24 hours** after the end of the period covered SMC, or immediately upon their return following a documented absence.

Medical Absences

Submit a Student Medical Certificate (SMC) signed by a licensed medical or mental health practitioner to Academic Counselling in your Faculty of registration to be eligible for Academic Consideration.

Nonmedical Absences

Submit appropriate documentation (e.g., obituary, police report, accident report, court order, etc.) to Academic Counselling in your Faculty of registration to be eligible for academic consideration. Students are encouraged to contact their Academic Counselling unit to clarify what documentation is appropriate.

Religious Consideration

Students seeking accommodation for religious purposes are advised to contact Academic Counselling at least three weeks prior to the religious event and as soon as possible after the start of the term.

11 Other Information

- Office of the Registrar: <https://registrar.uwo.ca>
- Student Development Services: www.sdc.uwo.ca
- Psychology Undergraduate Program: <https://www.psychology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/index.html>

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

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you.

If you wish to appeal a grade, please read the policy documentation at: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/appealsundergrad.pdf. Please first contact the course instructor. If your issue is not resolved, you may make your appeal in writing to the Undergraduate Chair in Psychology (psyugrd@uwo.ca).

Copyright Statement

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12 Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that Western University is located on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton. Nations, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. This land continues to be home to diverse Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) whom we recognize as contemporary stewards of the land and vital contributors of our society.