

**St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo**  
**Department of Psychology**  
**PSYCH 455: Honours Seminar in Social Psychology – Psychology of Men**  
**Th 2:30 P.M.- 5:20 P.M., SJ1 3020 (room tentative)**  
**Winter 2022**

**Instructor and TA Information**

Instructor: Christopher T. Burris, Ph.D.

Office Location/Hours: SJU Sweeney Hall 2031; by appointment (**online only for now**)

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Updates: check “announcements” on LEARN frequently for course-related info and news

Teaching Assistant: Sahara Kular

Email: [sikular@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:sikular@uwaterloo.ca)

[Sahara's primary responsibilities will be to assist me with content development and with tracking of individual contributions during our scheduled class meetings]

**IMPORTANT! Because discussion is an essential component for a 4<sup>th</sup>-year seminar, your firm commitment to attending and participating in all class sessions to the best of your ability is expected. [UPDATE: Based on UW/SJU guidance as of 04 Jan 2022, we will be holding class via Zoom until at least 27 Jan 2022.]** If you cannot make this commitment in good faith, I encourage you to seek out a different course that is a better fit for you.

**Course Description**

This seminar is intended as an interactive, research-based exploration of the interplay of physical, cognitive-emotional, and social-relational facets of men's lived experiences, mindful of how diversity and challenges shape these experiences.

**Course Goals and Learning Outcomes**

See the course description above! I suspect that many of us carry around conscious and unconscious stereotypes of the “*Men be like...*” variety. Such simple, one-size-fits-all characterizations are often inaccurate and also fail to address the question of why and how men's experiences fit (or don't fit) certain patterns. So... I would like for us to think through these issues more carefully – as informed by research whenever possible.

To maximize our ability to learn from each other – and to encourage each of you to “become an expert” on a particular topic – I will be working with each of you early on to articulate a specific “burning question” about men that you will seek to answer by the end of this course (more details below).

***How to get the most out of this course:*** This is an honours seminar, one of the most advanced types of psychology courses you can take at the undergraduate level. With that in mind, all of the following are essential for you to (put the most into it and) get the most out of it:

1) *independent thought & tolerance for ambiguity*: My hope is that you can think critically about information and ideas encountered, and that you'll (eventually) feel okay if the questions I ask outnumber the answers I offer. I'm simply trying to nudge you toward your own discoveries.

2) *verbal & written communication skills*: Clearly communicating your insights and discoveries in spoken and written word is indispensable. Hopefully we can all work together and support each other as we figure out our own best strategies for doing that.

3) *investment*: For this seminar to be successful, we all need to be engaged in the process. That means giving serious attention to assigned readings in order to prepare comments, questions, and the like. It also means being especially committed to showing up, making consistent contributions, and allowing others that same opportunity.

4) *self-awareness, sensitivity, & respect*: Finally – and of particular importance – we must all do our best to conduct ourselves with self-awareness, sensitivity, and respect. We have all been shaped by stories and personal experiences:

Some of us identify as “men.” Others don't.

Some men have perpetrated horrific nastiness against women and other men.

Some men and boys have been victimized by other men or boys, or by women.

Some men have distinguished themselves with astounding acts of courage and self-sacrifice or modest, everyday acts of consistency and devotion.

Thus, depending on what it calls to mind, the word “men” can evoke indifference, uneasiness and revulsion, compassion and admiration, or some mix of these.

At our worst, strong emotions can move us to clench up, stop listening, defend ourselves, or attack others. At our best, strong emotions can tell us something about *ourselves* – and being open to learning about ourselves can often help us listen to others better.

With these things in mind, my sincere hope is that we all to strive to be our best in this seminar as we try to make sense out of the good and the bad of men's experiences.

## **Course Schedule**

Our schedule appears on the next page. Citation information for all readings assigned by me will be posted as an announcement on the seminar's LEARN page. All such readings will be accessible via the UW Library. (You will need to make sure that you've signed on to your library account.)

Date	Reading by Author(s)	Tasks/Notes
Jan 06	Orientation; Instructor-led Discussion 1	<i>complete online "quiz" by 10am Jan 06</i>
Jan 13	Instructor-led Discussion 2	
Jan 20	Instructor-led Discussion 3	<i>participation marking begins</i> Gp A* Progress Report #1 due
Jan 27	Student-led Discussions 1	3 x 40 mins; Gp B* PR #1 due
Feb 03	Student-led Discussions 2	3 x 40 mins; Gp C* PR #1 due
Feb 10	Student-led Discussions 3	3 x 40 mins; Gp A PR #2 due
Feb 17	Student-led Discussions 4	3 x 40 mins; Gp B PR #2 due
Feb 24	<b>Winter Reading Week - no class</b>	
Mar 03	Student-led Discussions 5	3 (+1) x 40 mins; Gp C PR #2 due
Mar 10	Student-led Discussions 6	3 (+1) x 40 mins
Mar 17	"Burning Question" Summaries 1	6 x 20 mins; Group A
Mar 24	"Burning Question" Summaries 2	6 (+1) x 20 mins; Group B
Mar 31	"Burning Question" Summaries 3	6 (+1) x 20 mins; Group C <i>ALL: Papers due Mon, Apr 04, at noon</i>

*\*Note: Students will be randomly assigned to Group A, B, or C by the end of the first week.*

## Course Requirements and Assessment

*The marking structure for this seminar is set up to encourage in-depth, individual exploration of a specific issue related to the psychology of men and sharing what you find, as well as engaging in thoughtful discussions about other relevant literatures related to the psychology of men. With those goals in mind, the breakdown is as follows:*

**Participation (20%).** This is a seminar, so that means that we should all expect each other to show up ready to talk with one another about whatever the week's topics/readings may be. It's important that participation marks be as objective as possible, so here's a rough guide for the metric you can expect (2% x 10 weeks = 20%):

- 0.0 -- absent (unexcused)
- 0.5 -- present, but essentially silent
- 1.0 -- comments often reflect lack of care or preparation and do not advance the discussion
- 1.5 -- comments are sometimes thoughtful, constructive, and help advance the discussion
- 2.0 -- comments are usually thoughtful, constructive, and help advance the discussion

In order for us all to get a bit more comfortable with each other and with the class format, *participation marking will start in week 3*. A few additional tips: Only legitimate, documented absences -- illness, family emergency, or religious observance -- will be excused without penalty. In the case of excused absences (*only*), you may earn that week's participation marks by emailing me your contributions relevant to that week's topic/assigned readings. There are lots of ways to participate meaningfully: Criticisms, connections, observations, and thoughtful questions are all potentially wonderful contributions. In order to function consistently at this level, you will need to complete the assigned readings in advance. That means making notes to yourself as you read – not the kind of notes you'd take if you were studying for a test, rather: "This reminds me of..." "Could this be related to...?" "What if the study did this...?" "Did anybody else not get this...?", etc. Try to go beyond simple "like/dislike" – *why* do you feel that way?

Please be aware that disrespectful communication – personal attacks, unjustified criticism of another's ideas, or monopolizing discussion time – will be penalized. Those on the shy side may have to make an extra effort to speak; those on the more verbally assertive side may have to make a special effort to be concise and to listen. Let's work together to create a learning environment in which all are willing to engage!

**Student-led Discussion (20%).** Starting Jan 27<sup>th</sup> and extending to Mar 10<sup>th</sup> each of you will have the opportunity to lead a 40-minute discussion about a topic of your choice related to the psychology of men. Here's how the timeline should go:

- 1) By no later than the Friday before your discussion slot, please email me a brief (one paragraph) summary of your intended topic, along with one (or two, if relatively short) *academic* (ideally, research-based) books/chapters you plan to have the rest of us read.
- 2) Assuming your submission is on-track, I'll post your name, topic, and readings on LEARN within 24 hours so everyone else can prepare for the following Thursday's class.
- 3) In the meantime, you should prepare to take the lead for 40 minutes of class time on your assigned Thursday. This can include a brief summary of the reading(s), why you chose that particular topic, pop culture connections, questions to be posed to your fellow students, etc. Keep in mind that 40 minutes can go quickly and that the point is to get us thinking and talking: Focus on *substance*.

### The "Burning Question"

Starting Week 1, you will be asked to pose and develop one "burning question" relevant to the psychology of men – what question relating to men would you MOST like to try to answer from a psychological perspective? You'll need to find the "sweet spot" between a question that is too broad or vague to address within the context of this seminar and one that is too concrete and specific that it is already clearly "answered" in a very small literature. I and your fellow students will work with you to find this "sweet spot"; in the event that more than one student has an initially similar question, I will work with both of you to ensure that you are ultimately addressing non-redundant aspects. The end goal is to become an expert in the area that your question addresses.

Your "burning question" will provide the context for the remainder of the evaluative tasks in this seminar:

**Progress/Integration Reports (5% + 5% = 10%):** You will be asked to submit two (5% each) progress/integration reports throughout the term. The idea is to ensure that you are pacing yourself and finding points of connection between the course and your specific interests, as articulated in your "burning question" as it takes shape. Each report is expected to be a *minimum of two double-spaced pages* of text and should focus on how you are refining your question and sketching out tentative answers in light of assigned readings, class discussion, and your own research and reflection.

**In-class Summary (10%):** From Mar 17 to Mar 31 each of you will have a 20-minute slot to summarize your "burning question" and its answer(s) – that is, what you've learned. Listeners are expected to provide each presenter with constructive verbal and/or written feedback, suggestions, and questions dealing with the **content** of the presentation (not that they said "um" too much or that you didn't like how they accessorized) -- ideally, this will help each presenter in the preparation of his or her final paper (described next).

**Final Paper (40%):** Finally, you will be asked to email me a paper (see due date in schedule above) that is, essentially, a more detailed exposition of your burning question and its answer along the lines of what has been described above for the presentation. The paper should be in the range of 15-20 double-spaced pages, not including APA-style references. Late papers will be subject to 10% per day deductions unless acceptable documentation of emergency or illness is provided. Earlier submissions are welcomed.

**Extra Credit:** Up to 4% extra credit is available via SONA research participation. I will post any information that the Research Experiences Group sends me to assist you. As an active researcher myself, I would ask that you **PLEASE TAKE ANY RESEARCH PARTICIPATION SERIOUSLY**. Careless completion of a study's materials is a waste of everyone's time and undercuts the research process.

**UW Policy regarding Illness and Missed Tests (or Deadlines):** UW Examination Regulations ([www.registrar.uwaterloo.ca/exams/ExamRegs.pdf](http://www.registrar.uwaterloo.ca/exams/ExamRegs.pdf)) state that: 1) A medical certificate presented in support of an official petition for relief from normal academic requirements must provide all of the information requested on the "University of Waterloo Verification of Illness" form or it will not be accepted. This form can be obtained from Health Services or at [www.healthservices.uwaterloo.ca/Health\\_Services/verification.html](http://www.healthservices.uwaterloo.ca/Health_Services/verification.html). 2) If a student has a test/examination deferred due to acceptable medical evidence, he/she normally will write the test/examination at a

mutually convenient time, to be determined by the course instructor. 3) The University acknowledges that, due to the pluralistic nature of the University community, some students may on religious grounds require alternative times to write tests and examinations. 4) Elective arrangements (such as travel plans) are not considered acceptable grounds for granting an alternative examination time.

***Please note that documentation is expected for granting deadline extensions or alternative arrangements. Unless it is impossible, please inform me PRIOR to a scheduled assessment if you need to make alternative arrangements, as that makes life a lot easier and more predictable for your fellow students and myself.***

## **Other Important Information**

**Intellectual Property:** I very much want this class to be a good experience for you, and I am putting a lot of time, thought, and effort into that. You (or someone who cares about you a lot) paid so you could benefit from the firsthand experience that this class provides. To be clear, I'm sharing my work with YOU – so it's not fair to me to sell or give away my lectures, slides, etc. to other people. That's "unauthorized distribution of intellectual property," and *it's not okay*. I hope that makes sense.

In the spirit of respecting your fellow seminar students, I would also ask that you PLEASE DO NOT RECORD any of our class sessions.

**Academic Integrity:** Please have some respect for yourself, your fellow students, and your instructor and do not misrepresent others' work as your own. This means citing and quoting sources appropriately, especially in your written work. Be careful, okay?

"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 [www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/](http://www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/) for more information.]"

**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, [www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/upload\\_file/PLCY\\_AOM\\_Student-Petitions-and-Grievances\\_20151211-SJUSCapproved.pdf](http://www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/upload_file/PLCY_AOM_Student-Petitions-and-Grievances_20151211-SJUSCapproved.pdf). When in doubt, please be certain to contact the St. Jerome's Advising Specialist, Student Affairs Office, 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 their actions. [Check [www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/](http://www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/) 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 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, [www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY\\_AOM\\_Student-Discipline\\_20131122-SJUSCapproved.pdf](http://www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Discipline_20131122-SJUSCapproved.pdf). For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to University of Waterloo Policy 71, Student Discipline, [www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm). For typical penalties, check the Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties, [www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm).

**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, [www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY\\_AOM\\_Student-Appeals\\_20131122-SJUSCapproved.pdf](http://www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Appeals_20131122-SJUSCapproved.pdf).

**Note for students with disabilities:** AccessAbility Services, located in Needles Hall (Room 1401) at the University of Waterloo, 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, [www.uwaterloo.ca/accessability-services/](http://www.uwaterloo.ca/accessability-services/).