

Sociology 339U
MARRIAGE & INTIMACY
Spring 2023

JaDee Carathers, PhD (*she/her*)

TR 10-11:50
Lincoln Hall 339

Email: jadee@pdx.edu
Office hours: Wed/Fri (Zoom)
12:45-1:45

This course offers an introduction to sociological and social psychological perspectives on intimate relationships, marriage, and diverse family forms. We will examine the effects of historical and current social contexts and the role of gender, race, and class in shaping personal choices and experiences, with emphasis on sociological theory and research.

BASIC NEEDS

It can be challenging to do your best in class if you have trouble meeting basic needs like safe shelter, sleep, and nutrition. Resource centers across campus are here to provide assistance, referrals, and support. Please contact anyone on this list for assistance: [Basic Needs Hub](#), [Portland State Food Pantry](#), [C.A.R.E. Team](#), [Student Health and Counseling](#).

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

1. hooks, bell. 2000. *All About Love: New Visions*. Harper.
2. All other course materials are available for free online or through the PSU library

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Participation (20 points): We will regularly have in-class assignments consisting of small-group discussion or individual writing assignments. If you miss class (or you arrive late to class or leave early) and miss an assignment, you will receive no credit. This is a learning mechanism aligned with attendance, thus in-class assignments *cannot* be made-up. The lowest two assignment grades will be dropped. ***DO NOT ATTEND CLASS IF YOU ARE SYMPTOMATIC.**
2. *Writing Responses* (50 points): You will complete five writing assignments (about 800 words each) reflecting on what you have learned by making connections from the readings to class lectures and additional materials presented, such as video links. Each attempt is worth up to 10 points towards your grade. You may choose to make your writing assignments more personal and reflective or you can critique the readings in an academic style; see *detailed instructions below*. Assignments are due via Canvas on designated days by 11:59pm.

3. *Exams* (30 points): There will be two exams, each worth 15 points towards the course grade. Tests will include the material covered in readings and material presented in class lecture. Exams are not cumulative. If you miss a test, you will need to inform the instructor and schedule a makeup within one week.

COURSE OUTLINE

Please understand that this is a *tentative schedule* that will change to meet the needs of the class. All changes will be posted on Canvas.

Note: You are required to complete the readings before class on the day they are due.

Understanding Gender & Sexualities

Week 1:

4 April

- Carefully read the syllabus and navigate Canvas for content

6 April

- Ainsworth, Claire. 2015. "Sex Redefined" *Nature* 518: 288–291 [LINK](#)
- Rupp, Leila J. 2001 "Toward a Global History of Same-Sex Sexuality," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 10: 287-302. [pdf]

Sexual & Romantic Relationships

Week 2:

11 April

- Quarmby, Katherine. 2015. "Disabled and Fighting for a Sex Life" *The Atlantic* [pdf]
- Ziyad, Hari. 2016. "3 Reasons Dating, Attraction, and Desire Are Always Political." *Everyday Feminism* [LINK](#)

13 April

- Coontz, Stephanie. 2004. "The World Historical Transformation of Marriage." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66(4): 974-979. [pdf]
- Essig, Laurie and Lynn Owens. 2009. "What if Marriage Is Bad for Us?" *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 10(9):9. [pdf]

16 April: **writing response 1 due**

Week 3: Non-normative experiences

18 April

- Pappas, Stephanie. 2012. "New Sexual Revolution: Polyamory May Be Good for You" *Scientific American* [LINK](#)
- Khazan, Olga. 2014. "Multiple Lovers, Without Jealousy" *The Atlantic* [pdf]

20 April

- Silva, Tony J., and Rachel Bridges Whaley. 2018. "Bud-sex, dude-sex, and heteroflexible men: The relationship between straight identification and social attitudes in a nationally representative sample of men with same-sex attractions or sexual practices." *Sociological Perspectives* 61(3): 426-443. [pdf]
- "The Global Divide on Homosexuality Persists." 2020. Pew Research Center. [LINK](#)

Week 4: Dating & cohabitation

25 April

- Lamont, Ellen. 2021. "The persistence of gendered dating." *Sociology Compass* 15(11). [pdf]
- "College grads in U.S. tend to partner with each other – especially if their parents also graduated from college." 2022. Pew Research Center. [LINK](#)

27 April

- "Key findings on marriage and cohabitation in the U.S." 2019. Pew Research Center. [LINK](#)
- Buggs, Shantel Gabrieal. 2017. "Does (mixed-) race matter? The role of race in interracial sex, dating, and marriage." *Sociology Compass* 11(11). [pdf]

30 April: **writing response 2 due**

Week 5: Digital intimacies

2 May

- Conner, Christopher T. 2023. "How sexual racism and other discriminatory behaviors are rationalized in online dating apps." *Deviant Behavior* 44(1): 126-142.

4 May

- Aggeler, Madeleine. 2022. "'Phantom Touch' and the (Real) Pleasures of Virtual Dating." *New York Times* [pdf]
- "Key findings about online dating in the U.S." 2023. Pew Research Center. [LINK](#)

7 May: Midterm exam due

Families & Parenting

Week 6:

9 May

- Blackstone, Amy and Mahala Dyer Stewart. 2012. "Choosing to be Childfree: Research on the Decision Not to Parent" *Sociology Compass* 6(9): 718–727.
- "Growing share of childless adults in U.S. don't expect to ever have children." 2021. Pew Research Center. [LINK](#)

11 May

- hooks, bell. 2010. "Understanding Patriarchy." Louisville Anarchist Federation.

- “Young adults in U.S. are much more likely than 50 years ago to be living in a multigenerational household.” 2022. Pew Research Center. [LINK](#)

14 May: **writing response 3 due**

All About Love

Week 7:

16 May

- hooks text; preface + introduction + chapter 1

18 May

- hooks text; chapters 2-4

Week 8:

23 May

- hooks text; chapters 5-7

25 May

- hooks text; chapters 8-10

28 May: **writing response 4 due**

Queering Intimacy

Week 9:

30 May

- catch up! (reading tbd)

1 June

- Phillip L. Hammack, David M. Frost & Sam D. Hughes. 2019. “Queer Intimacies: A New Paradigm for the Study of Relationship Diversity.” *Journal of Sex Research*, 56:4-5, 556-592.

Week 10: Love praxis

6 June

- Cruz, Eliel. 2015. “9 of the biggest lies Christianity tells us about sex and marriage.” *Everyday Feminism* [LINK](#)
- Hatch, Jenavieve. 2017. “Straight Women are Having Fewer Orgasms than Everyone Else.” *Huffpost* [LINK](#)
- Discussion—contextualizing the “purity” discourse

8 June –final class meeting!

- Mitchell, Roger Haydon. 2018. “What are the Politics of Love?” *Global Discourse* 8(4):592-609. [pdf]
- hooks, bell. 2006. “Love as the practice of freedom.” *Outlaw Culture. Resisting Representations*, pp.289-298. [pdf]

9 June: **writing response 5 due**

Final Exam

13 June 10:15-12:05

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING RESPONSES

Task: Complete a short writing assignment reflecting on what you have learned from class discussion and readings. You may choose to make your writing assignments more personal and reflective or you can critique the readings in an academic style. Do *not* simply summarize the readings or material covered in lecture slides.

Sources: For writing assignments, you may draw on course readings or outside sources in addition to the reading selections for the week; however, drawing on outside sources is strongly discouraged. You should only incorporate additional sources if it enhances your analysis. You must include a references section at the end of the reading response *only if* you use sources other than the course readings.

Reminder of the plagiarism policy: If you use a direct quote (i.e. someone else's words), you must include it in quotation marks and cite the source, including author(s) name(s), the date of publication, and the page number. If you summarize or paraphrase an idea from another person, you must cite the source, including author(s) name(s) and the date of publication. Failure to cite your sources, whether intentional or not, is plagiarism. Instances of plagiarism will result in failing the assignment and will be reported.

Components of the assignment

You may choose to make your writing assignment more personal by reflecting on how what you this week learned relates to you and your life. Alternately, you can write more academic writing assignments, writing a critical analysis of the week's readings and other material presented in class.

Reflective essay: If you choose to write a more personal and reflective essay, describe your personal response to the readings, material presented in class discussion this week. The purpose of the reflection is to consider how you engaged with the ideas presented, not just summarize the ideas.

Some questions to consider discussing:

- Did you learn something new that surprised you? Did you reevaluate your views on an issue based on the arguments and evidence presented this week?
- Did you disagree with any of the arguments presented this week (if so, provide an argument and evidence to support your view)?
- Were there related issues you wished we had covered this week (if so, describe what would you have wanted to discuss)?
- Was there anything you would have liked to say in class discussion but didn't?

Critical analysis: If you choose to write an academic critique one or more of the week's readings, discuss the theoretical, methodological, and empirical strengths and weaknesses of the text. The purpose of the critique is to provide an original and critical

response rather than a summary of the text. Note that your personal feelings, responses, or experiences are not appropriate for an academic analysis.

Some questions to consider discussing:

- What are the strengths and, more importantly, what are the weaknesses of the article (but be sure you are not simply summarizing points from the text)?
- For empirical articles, how does the research design shape the findings?
- What questions does the research raise that might be addressed by future studies?

Additional guidelines for either type of writing assignment

- You do not need to discuss all the readings and material presented in class. Just choose one or two readings or main ideas to focus on.
- Assignments should provide in-depth discussion and fully explain all ideas. It is best to choose just a few points to make rather than make superficial comments on many topics.
- If you are discussing one or more of the course readings, be sure to include the author(s) name and the year of publication once in the text. You do not need a references section unless you use outside sources.
- Use examples and quotes to support your points (for these short assignments, limit your use of quotes and use only short quotes).
- Assignments should show clear and concise writing and appropriate proofreading.

POLICIES

Required course materials: Required course materials are provided on Canvas. If you cannot access the readings through the links provided, navigate to the readings from the library homepage or from a google scholar internet search.

**Note on course content:* Readings and discussions for this course may cover controversial topics related to bodies, sexual practices, pornography, sex work, abusive relationships, sexual assault, gender minority (e.g. transgender and non-binary) and sexual minority (e.g. gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer) identities and experiences, and other topics related to gender and sexualities that some students may be uncomfortable reading and discussing. If you have concerns about the course content generally or any specific topics we may cover, please see the instructor at the start of the term. *I do NOT consent to recording lecture content via photo, video, or audio unless explicit arrangements are made prior to the class meeting.

Canvas: We will use Canvas extensively in this course. It is your responsibility to be able to access Canvas.

- *Course content:* All course material will be posted to Canvas.
- *Assignments:* Students will submit all written assignments via the assignments feature of Canvas. Guidelines for the writing assignments are included in the syllabus.

- *Exams:* Students will complete a midterm and final exam on Canvas.
- *Grades:* See grades for all assignments with the grades feature.
- *Privacy:* The Instructor does not consent to the recording or dissemination of any part of the class material.

Email: The instructor regularly communicates with the class via PSU email so be sure that you are receiving my emails. It is your responsibility to check your email daily Monday through Friday and respond in a timely manner. In emails to the instructor, please put the title of the course in the subject line and sign your emails using your first and last name. Use the email address on the first page of the syllabus. The instructor will generally respond to email within 24 hours. Emails sent after 5:00pm on Friday will generally be answered by 5:00pm on Monday.

Academic Honesty: You are expected to demonstrate complete academic honesty. All work for the course must be completed independently. Please refer to the Student Conduct Code for more detailed information on PSU policies. Cheating or plagiarism will result in failing the assignment and will be reported.

Plagiarism: If you use a direct quote (i.e. someone else's words), you must include it in quotation marks and cite the source, including author(s) name(s), the date of publication, and the page number. If you summarize or paraphrase an idea from another person, you must cite the source, including author(s) name(s) and the date of publication. Failure to cite your sources, whether intentional or not, is plagiarism. Instances of plagiarism will result in failing the assignment and will be reported.

Late assignments: Late assignments will be penalized at 10% per day late and late assignments will not be accepted after seven days (final papers will not be accepted after Friday of finals week at 5pm).

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities who may require accommodations are encouraged to contact the PSU Disabilities Resource Center (DRC) and the instructor at the beginning of the term to arrange accommodations. The DRC is located in 435 Smith and can be contacted at 725-4150 or by email at drc@pdx.edu. Visit their website at <http://www.pdx.edu/drc>.

Title IX reporting: As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment for my students and for the campus as a whole. As a member of the university community, I have the responsibility to report any instances of sexual harassment, sexual violence and/or other forms of prohibited discrimination. If you would rather share information about sexual harassment, sexual violence or discrimination to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can find a list of those individuals at <http://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault/get-help> or you may call a confidential IPV Advocate at 503-725-5672. For more information about Title IX please complete the required student module Creating a Safe Campus in your Canvas.