



# Psychology UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

## Identity and Relationships in the Digital Age

PSY420 Summer 2022

**Instructor:**

Melissa Pavetich, PhD

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**Office Hours:** By appointment (Zoom)

Seminar: Monday & Wednesday 1-3pm

**Prerequisite:** [PSY202H1](#)/[ECO220Y1](#)/[SOC252H1](#)/[STA221H1](#)/[PSY202H5](#)/[STA221H5](#)/[PSYC08H3](#)/[STAB27H3](#)/[STAC32H3](#), and [PSY220H1](#)/[PSY220H5](#)/[PSYB10H3](#)/[SOC213H1](#)

**Exclusion:** [PSY420H5](#)/[PSYD12H3](#)/[PSYD15H3](#)/[PSYD16H3](#)

**Distribution Requirements:** Science

**Breadth Requirements:** Thought, Belief and Behaviour (2)

**Mode of Delivery:** In Class

### COURSE DESCRIPTION, GOALS, PREREQUISITE

Selfies and snaps. Swiping and Zoom-ing. Technology now plays a massive role in our social lives, from identity formation and expression to relationship initiation and maintenance. In this course, we will examine questions such as: “how does social media influence self-esteem?”, “when do dating apps facilitate vs. undermine romance?”, and “what are the pros and cons of being in perpetual connection with loved ones?”. Through weekly readings and discussions, we will review the latest findings and draw connections with classic issues and theory.

By the end of the course, my hope is you will have improved in the following areas:

- 1) Knowledge about the concepts, considerations, and challenges unique to social psychology research in this subfield of social psychology.
- 2) Critical thinking in evaluating ideas, writing, and research decisions.

- 3) Oral and written communication in an academic environment.
- 4) Providing and receiving constructive feedback from peers.
- 5) Professional development in working collaboratively with others.

## REQUIRED READINGS

There is no textbook for this course. Instead, we will be reading a selection of peer-reviewed journal articles. Weekly readings are listed at the end of this document.

## ASSESSMENT

**Discussion Questions (30%; 3% each):** Before classes for which we have a class discussion, you will submit one discussion question based on the reading(s) for that week on Quercus the night before class by 11pm. Discussion questions will be graded out of 2 (see Quercus for grading rubric). Thought-provoking questions may be discussed in class

**Discussion Participation (20%; 2% each):** After classes for which we have a class discussion (see schedule on page 4), I will assign everyone a participation grade out of 2 (see Quercus for grading rubric). Note, if you are absent from class you will not receive a participation mark, there are no exceptions to this or make-ups for marks lost.

Ideas for participation:

- Were you confused about any aspect of a reading (e.g., the justification of the research question, the study methodology, the analytical techniques)?
- Do you take issue with any assumptions/conclusions arrived at in one of the readings? - Do you have ideas for a follow-up research question for one of the readings?
- Do you have ideas for practical applications of a study finding from one of the readings?
- Have you recently read/listened to anything that relates to today's topic?

### **Midterm Check-in Presentation (20% of final grade)**

Halfway through the term, you will present a brief overview of the topic of your choice for your presentation in which you will have the opportunity to:

- Get feedback on your term paper topic (and keywords for your literature search)
- Ask any questions for clarification

Presentations should aim to be MAX 5 minutes. This is a very brief presentation. You are welcome to create 1-2 slides if you feel it will help you organize your presentation in a concise

manner, however slides are not necessary. If you will be using slides please email your presentation to [m.pavetich@utoronto.ca](mailto:m.pavetich@utoronto.ca) in Powerpoint format by 11pm July 24<sup>th</sup> so that Dr. Pavetich can have the presentations loaded to a single presentation to save time opening individual presentations on the day of class.

**Poster Submission (30%):** You will submit an academic poster that outlines the topic you have chosen and a summary of the research proposal, summarizing key theories, important points about what is known about your topic so far, and your ideas for future directions for research. Your presentation will be graded out of 100 (see Quercus for grading rubric and formatting details).

This is your chance to practice preparing a professional level APA style poster and therefore your assignment should use a professional APA poster template that I have provided on Quercus and have discussed in our seminar. You are expected to use the papers we discuss as a guide or starting point for ideas for your research and poster, however additional research will be required to complete the assignment.

The format of this poster should be one slide (see APA poster template). See poster example and rubric for detailed instructions.

**Missed Classes & Late Submissions:** Late discussion questions will not be accepted, and any missed discussion will result in a participation grade of zero for that week. For all other submissions/assessments, extension requests must be made via email ([m.pavetich@utoronto.ca](mailto:m.pavetich@utoronto.ca)), WITHIN 48 HOURS of the original deadline, and be accompanied by either an accessibility services letter OR a screenshot of your declaration of absence on ACORN. Written work submitted late will be penalized 5% per 24hrs (or part thereof) after the due date and time (including weekends). If an extension has been granted, late penalties begin to accrue in the same way after the extended due date. Presentations given late (either in class or submitted as a recording) will be penalized 10% per week (or part thereof) after the week in which the presentation was scheduled to be given.

**Grades & Grade Disputes:** I take student evaluation very seriously and am guided by the goal of providing assignments, that help students further their understanding of course material while also building their analytic research skills, and assessments that fairly evaluate a student's grasp of the material covered in lecture and the assigned readings. As per University guidelines, students have two weeks from the date they receive their grade to file a dispute. Please review the Arts and Science grading policy to understand what the grade you receive on an assignment or test means (<http://writing.utoronto.ca/advice/general/grading-policy>).

If you have concerns about the grade you received please contact Dr. Pavetich to arrange a virtual meeting where your work can be discussed in more detail.

Each student's final grade will be round to the nearest whole percentage using standard rounding practices. For instance, a final grade of 79.5% will rounded to 80% and a final grade

of 79.4% will be rounded to 79%. **Requests for a final grade to be changed in order to reach a higher GPA category will be ignored.**

## GETTING HELP

**QUESTIONS ABOUT COURSE CONTENT:** During the term it is also likely that you'll need to get clarification on a topic covered in lecture or the readings or something about the course itself (e.g., questions about your poster presentation). When dealing with these types of issues emailing Dr. Pavetich **SHOULD BE A LAST RESORT.**

Below are the steps you should take **BEFORE** emailing Dr. Pavetich or your TA

1. **Read the Syllabus:** Answers to questions like “when is the poster presentation due?” are found in the syllabus. *Emails that contain questions of this nature will be ignored.*
2. **Go to the Source Material:** In lecture Dr. Pavetich will cover a variety of different papers and studies. Lecture slides will always provide the reference for the material being discussed. If you didn't quite understand a specific study Dr. Pavetich discussed use the reference, look up the article, and read it for yourself. See if you can answer your own question using the primary text.
3. **Discussion Boards:** On Quercus there will be a discussion board for general FAQ's as well as discussion boards for each lecture. All questions should be posted to the relevant discussion board. Dr. Pavetich will be monitoring these boards closely and will answer questions that have been posted ***Please allow up to two business days for responses to discussion board questions and note that the discussion boards will not be monitored during weekends or holidays. Emails with content questions that have not been posted to the discussion board will be ignored.***
4. **Email:** If you've completed all of these steps and you still require clarification then email Dr. Pavetich to arrange a virtual meeting via Zoom. In your email, please include 3 or 4 specific time slots when you're able to connect with Dr. Pavetich. ***Please note email messages must come from a “utoronto” account and must have PSY420 in the subject line or else they will be ignored.***

**PERSONAL MATTERS:** Over the course of the semester, you may encounter a personal matter that impacts your participation in the course and requires you to get in touch with Dr. Pavetich. If this is the case, please don't hesitate to send Dr. Pavetich an email. ***Please allow up to 48-hours for a response to your message and note the Dr. Pavetich does not read or respond to emails during the weekend.***

## ACADEMIC RESOURCES

**Accessibility Needs:** Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have an ongoing disability issue or accommodation need, you should register with Accessibility Services (AS; [accessibility.utoronto.ca](http://accessibility.utoronto.ca)) at the beginning of the semester. Without registration, you will not be able to verify your situation with your instructors, and

instructors will not be advised about your accommodation needs. AS will then assess your situation, develop an accommodation plan with you, and support you in requesting accommodation for your course work. Remember that the process of accommodation is private: AS will not share details of your condition with any instructor, and your instructors will not reveal that you are registered with AS.

**Academic Integrity:** All students, faculty and staff are expected to follow the University's guidelines and policies on academic integrity. For students, this means following the standards of academic honesty when writing assignments, collaborating with fellow students, and writing tests and exams. Ensure that the work you submit for grading represents your own honest efforts. Plagiarism (i.e., representing someone else's work as your own or submitting work that you have previously submitted for marks in another class or program) is a serious offence that can result in sanctions. To learn more about how to cite and use source material appropriately and for other writing support, see the U of T writing support website at [www.writing.utoronto.ca/](http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/). Consult the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters for a complete outline of the University's policy and expectations. For more information, see <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai> and <http://academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/>

**Mental Health:** Everyone feels stressed or overwhelmed now and then – it's a normal part of university life. If, however, you feel that the amount of stress or anxiety you have is preventing you from succeeding and/or enjoying your university experience, I encourage you to talk to someone about it. To find the right resource for you, visit UofT's mental health wayfinder, Navi: <https://prod.virtualagent.utoronto.ca/>. If you are experiencing more acute distress, please visit: <http://safety.utoronto.ca/>.

Counselling and Psychological Services (<http://www.caps.utoronto.ca/main.htm>)

## REFERENCE LETTER REQUESTS

Please note that I **DO NOT** provide reference letters for students applying to graduate school programs. This is because simply participating in my course does not provide me with enough information to be able to accurately assess your potential suitability for graduate level studies. I apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

## COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE

DATE	TOPIC	READING/ASSIGNMENTS
July 4 (Week 1)	<b>Seminar 1:</b> Introduction and Key Theories	(Jordan & Zanna, 1999); (Davis, 2016)
July 6 (Week 1)	<b>Seminar 2:</b> Identity – Identity formation	(Granic, Morita, & Scholten, 2020)
July 11 (Week 2)	<b>Seminar 3:</b> Identity – Can you see the real me? True self on the internet	Bargh, McKenna, & Fitzsimmons, 2002
July 13 (Week 2)	<b>Seminar 4:</b> Identity – Social connection and loneliness during the pandemic.	Boursier et al. 2020
July 18 (Week 3)	<b>Seminar 5:</b> Identity – Generational differences in social media use	Barker, 2012
July 20 (Week 3)	<b>Seminar 6:</b> Identity – Cultural differences	Kim, Sohn, & Choi, 2011
July 25 (Week 4)	<b>Seminar 7:</b> Project pre-presentations	
July 27 (Week 4)	<b>Seminar 8:</b> Relationships – Digital vs face to face contact and prejudice	Stathi, Hall, & Pavetich, 2021 (under review)
Aug 1 (Week 5)	<b>CIVIC HOLIDAY – NO CLASS</b>	
Aug 3 (Week 5)	<b>Seminar 9:</b> Relationships – Fabric of relationships, fidelity and social media	Timmermans, Caluwe, & Alexopolous, 2018
Aug 8 (Week 6)	<b>Seminar 10:</b> Relationships – OFAQ: Are we all addicted?	Satchell et al., 2019
Aug 10 (Week 6)	<b>Seminar 11:</b> Relationships – self-esteem quality vs quantity of posts	Roberts & David, 2022
Aug 15 (Week 7)	<b>Seminar 12:</b> Relationships – Collective action #socialchange	Quan-Hasse, 2021