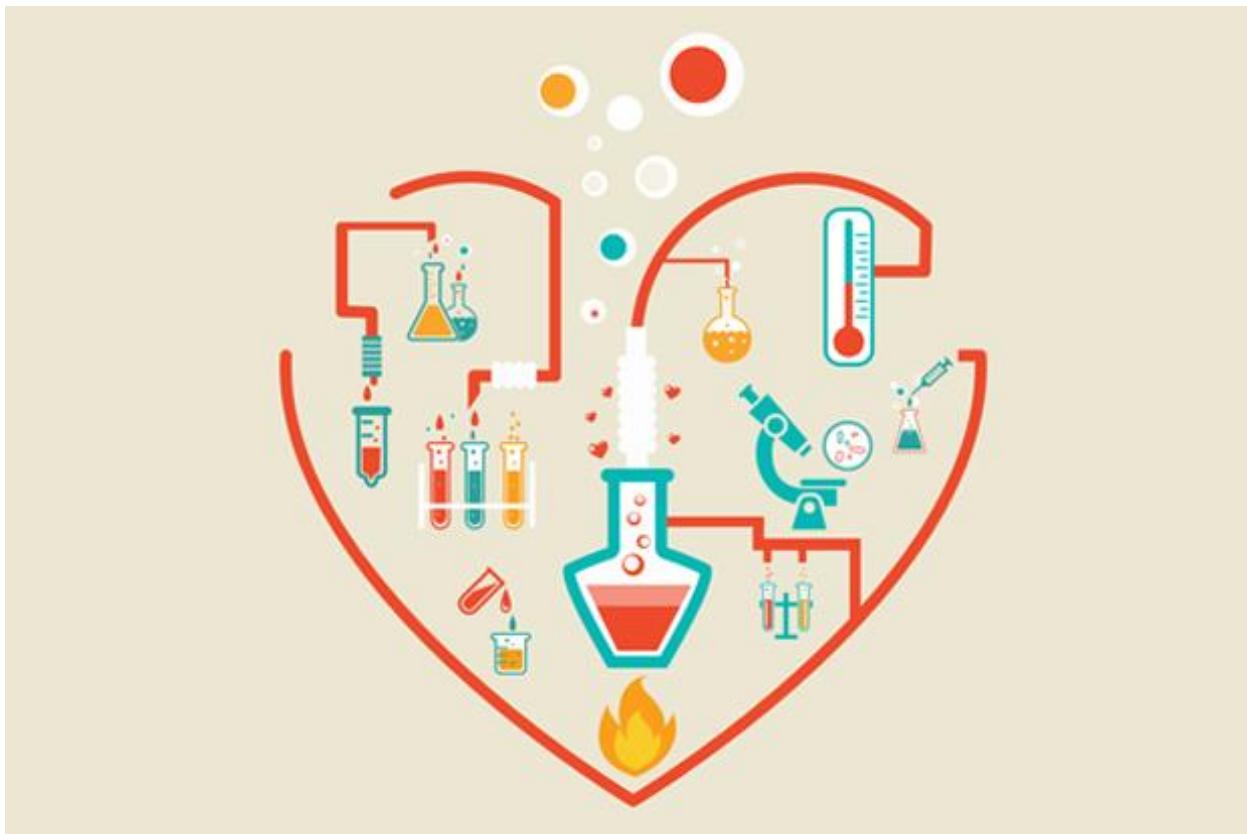# UF Honors Signature Seminar

IDH 3931: Dating Decoded: Research-Based Perspectives on Modern Romance

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Jessica-Jean Stonecipher
CLASS MEETING DAYS/TIMES: W 3-3:50 in Little 0117
COURSE CREDIT: 1 Credit (UF Honors)
SECTION: Ston
EMAIL: stonecipher@ufl.edu* Please message me through Canvas for quicker replies.
OFFICE HOURS: Monday 2-4pm (in-person) and by appointment (Zoom)
OFFICE LOCATION: Turlington 2215K

Course Description, Overview, and Purpose

Dating Decoded is a one-credit Honors seminar that develops students' ability to critically evaluate contemporary research on dating, attraction, and romantic relationships. In an

era saturated with popular relationship advice, algorithmic matchmaking, and viral claims about intimacy, the course emphasizes scholarly inquiry over anecdote by training students to ask how knowledge about relationships is produced, tested, and communicated.

Drawing on interdisciplinary research from psychology, sociology, neuroscience, and cultural studies, students analyze how technology, culture, biology, and inequality shape modern romantic life. Weekly meetings center on close reading of peer-reviewed scholarship, guided discussion, and brief analytical writing designed to strengthen research interpretation, synthesis, and evidence-based argumentation.

A small-group research project introduces students to collaborative inquiry by having teams examine a focused topic in relationship science through multiple scholarly sources and present their findings to the class. This project reinforces Honors learning goals related to critical thinking, interdisciplinary analysis, and clear communication.

Designed for Honors students at all academic levels, *Dating Decoded* supports early engagement with academic research while offering advanced students opportunities to refine analytical and writing skills essential for upper-division coursework, research, and professional pathways.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Read and interpret scholars' methods, data, and theoretical claims related to contemporary relationship dynamics.
- Compare and debate how technology, culture, and biology shape romantic experience.
- Create and critique research plans to study aspects of romantic love.
- Communicate a coherent written argument that demonstrates both mastery of the literature and thoughtful personal insight.

Course Format & Expectations

This seminar is discussion-driven and highly interactive. Students are expected to complete all readings prior to class, participate actively in conversation, and engage respectfully with differing viewpoints. Short in-class writing and collaborative activities are designed to support idea development rather than add workload.

The course intentionally avoids coding or data-analysis projects. Intellectual rigor is maintained through close reading, analytical discussion, and concise scholarly writing.

Schedule

Week	Topic	Readings	In-Class Activity	HW Due
1 (1/ 14)	**Introduction to Course & Romantic Love Research**	N/A	How do we study love? How else do we learn about love?	Submit RQs for Class by 1/20
2 (1/21)	**Algorithms & Choice**	Wade (Intro p.13-25). & Your Choice Article 1.) Emotional Dynamics or 2.) Dating Apps	Discussion and debate of a current research paper on dating-app matching systems	
3 (1/28)	**Swiping Culture**	Wade (Ch. 1: p.27-49)	Discussion: What do we know? How do we know it? What do we want to know? Reflective writing on choice overload and its impact on satisfaction	
4 (2/4)	**Biopsychology & Love**	Wade (Ch. 2: p.50-70) & Your Choice Article 1.) Romantic Love and Behavioral Activation System or 2.) Romantic Love and Reduced Cortisol Production	Reading Discussion & Research Question Development	Submit RQs for Class by 2/10
5 (2/11)	**Biosocial Impacts of Romantic Love**	Wade (Ch. 3: p.71-91) & Bring Research of Choice	Pair & Share research ideas & Interests	
6 (2/18)	**College Culture Courtship**	Wade (Ch. 4: p.92-112) & Reading from Group A (TBD)	Create Research Teams & Intro to Research Project	

		Group A Presentation		
7 (2/25)	**Ethics & Privacy in Dating & Research**	Wade (Ch. 5: p.113-133)	Small Group discussion and analysis of consent, surveillance, and data ethics in dating research/practice	Submit Research Plan by 3/1 & Complete Review by 3/3
8 (3/4)	**Cross-Cultural Courtship**	Wade (Ch. 6: p.134-157) Reading from Group B (TBD) Group B Presentation	Peer Review of Research Plans	Submit Final Research Plan 3/8
9 (3/11)	**Intersectionality**	Wade (Ch. 7: p.158-179)	Role-play activity in college dating experience	
10 (3/18)	**Spring Break**			
11 (3/25)	**Digital Well-Being & Mental Health**	Wade (Ch. 8: p.180-201) Group C Reading (TBD) & Presentation	Collaborative brainstorming of interventions to reduce loneliness/improve dating culture	
12 (4/1)	**Research & Prevention: Dating Violence**	Wade (Ch. 9: p.202-223)	UF: A Case Study, interactive exercise using campus data and cultural analysis	
13 (4/8)	**Dating After College**	Wade (Ch. 10: p.224-240 & Conclusion p.241-248) Group D Reading (TBD) & Presentation	Reflective Writing exercise: How does culture change happen?	Small Group Meeting with Professor S (Outside of class) & Submit Final DQs
14 (4/15)	**Final Presentations**	Introduction to Final Presentations &		

		Small Group Discussion		
15 (4/22)	**Final Presentations**	N/A		Submit Final Presentation & Journal

Assignments & Assessment

Research Journal (20%): A weekly journal students keep on research topics, readings, and developing research questions, and reflections.

Research Plan (20%): Students work in small groups to propose a new study on romantic love based on their own research interests. Must apply methods, concepts, and ethical consideration as discussed in class.

Final Presentation (20%): Research groups present findings to class (public-facing dissemination) along with future research questions.

Reflection Paper (20%): A 2-page synthesis of course themes, integrating scholarly insights with personal learning and reflection. Due at the end of the term.

Participation (20%): Active and consistent contribution to discussion, peer activities, and in-class writing exercises. Participation is evaluated on preparation, engagement, and respectful dialogue rather than frequency alone. Students should complete each week's readings to earn full participation points.

Required Text:

1.) American Hookup: The New Culture of Sex on Campus by Lisa Wade.

Per UF policy, using Canvas is required in this class.

- The UWP adheres to the UF Student Computing Requirements.

- If offered, synchronous online classes will require access to Zoom using a UF Gatorlink account.

Materials and Supplies Fees: there are no material or supply fees in this class.

Grading

Grading for this course will be rigorous. Do not rely on the instructor for copy-editing, even on drafts. To receive a passing grade, each paper must reach the minimum assigned word count. Please note that assignment word counts represent minimums necessary to achieve assignment goals, not mandatory values. This course follows UF grades and grading policies.

The University Writing Program uses the UF recommended grading scale.

A	100 %	to 94.0%
A-	< 94.0 %	to 90.0%
B+	< 90.0 %	to 87.0%
B	< 87.0 %	to 84.0%
B-	< 84.0 %	to 80.0%
C+	< 80.0 %	to 77.0%
C	< 77.0 %	to 74.0%
C-	< 74.0 %	to 70.0%
D+	< 70.0 %	to 67.0%
D	< 67.0 %	to 64.0%
D-	< 64.0 %	to 60.0%
E	< 60.0 %	to 0.0%

It is this class's policy NOT to round grades up or down. An 89.9 is a B+.

Conferences and Writing Studio

Students are encouraged to use the instructor's office hours if there are questions about progress in the course, work underway, or any other course-related concerns. If there is a conflict with the posted office hours, please contact the instructor to schedule a better time. Having conferences on assignments is often the best way to improve the quality of final drafts. The *Writing Studio* also offers one-on-one assistance on writing projects and is available to students of all levels.

Course Policies and Procedures

Please see all UF's Academic and Course Policies *here*.

Attendance

Attendance is required. Students can have one unexcused absence per semester without impact to their participation grade.

Absences that are considered excused by university standards will not impact students' participation grade, but students should discuss absences related to university-sponsored events with the instructor **prior** to the date that will be missed.

UWP requirements for class attendance, make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this class are consistent with university policies that can be found at https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx.

- For absences due to quarantine or illness, your instructor may require a signed doctor's note.
- For extended absences due to illness or other circumstances, students should consult with U Matter We Care: http://umatter.ufl.edu, umatter@ufl.edu, 352-294-2273 (CARE), Dean of Students: https://dso.ufl.edu/, 202 Peabody Hall, (352) 392-1261

Please note: If students are absent, it is their responsibility to make themselves aware of all due dates. If absent due to a scheduled event, students are still responsible for turning assignments in on time.

Campus classes: Students are expected to attend face-to-face classes in person. Instructors may grant permission to attend class via Zoom in certain circumstances. Attending class via Zoom is by **instructor permission only** and instructors have no obligation to grant such requests. If attending class via Zoom, there are a few guidelines to follow.
- Avoid distractions during class time. Close unnecessary apps and put phone away. Attend from an area with no distractions.
- Make sure that whatever is visible (attire, the background) is reasonable for class.
- Zoom requirements: During class, be visible to the instructor and be able to communicate with the instructor by audio or writing in the chat box.

In-Class Work

Active participation is a crucial part of success in this class. Students will be expected to work in small groups and participate in group discussions, writing workshops, peer reviews, and other in-class activities. Be prepared for unannounced quizzes or activities on the readings or classroom discussion. In general, students are expected to contribute constructively to each class session.

Due Dates and Make-up Policy

Papers and drafts are due at the beginning of class or online at the assigned deadline. Failure of technology is not an excuse. Late papers will not be accepted except in cases of documented absences. If illness or injury prevents a student from turning in a paper on time, the student should consult with the instructor to turn in the work as soon as is feasible given the situation.

Readings

Reading assignments typically appear in the syllabus on the date on which they are due. Students should have completed these readings before coming to class that day.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

All papers will be submitted as **MS Word (.doc, .docx) documents** to Canvas. PDFs will be accepted **only** when document design or graphics is critical, such as for a resume or infographic. Final drafts should be polished and presented in a professional manner. Because professional communication varies in document design, all papers will have specific formatting guidelines to follow. Please read these carefully and ask questions early to avoid losing points.

Academic Honesty

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. *See the UF Conduct Code website for more information.* If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the Student Honor Code. The Honor Code prohibits and defines plagiarism as follows:

> **Plagiarism.** A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:
> 1. **Quoting oral or written materials** including but not limited to those found on the internet, whether published or unpublished, **without proper attribution**.
> 2. **Submitting a document or assignment** which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment **not authored by the student**.

Each student's work will be tested for originality against a wide variety of databases by anti-plagiarism sites to which the University subscribes, and negative reports from such sites may constitute proof of plagiarism. Some (but not all!) examples of plagiarism are copying-and-pasting anything from the Internet without proper quotation, citation, or attributive tags, and using work you have previously submitted without permission from the instructor.

Cheating is defined as using or attempting to use "unauthorized materials or resources in any academic activity for academic advantage or benefit". *Cheating includes use of "entities" to complete work*. "Entity" is defined in the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code (https://policy.ufl.edu/regulation/4-040/) in Section 2, "Definitions" as "This includes but is not limited to generative artificial intelligence, large language models, content generation bots, or other non-human intelligence or digital tools."

Several items in "Cheating" refer to the use of Entities.

> 1. Using any materials or resources prepared by another person or **Entity** without the other person or Entity's express Consent or without proper attribution to the other person or Entity.
> 2. Using any materials or resources, through any medium, which the Faculty has not given express permission to use and that may confer an academic benefit to a Student.
> 5. Collaborating with another person or **Entity**, through any medium, on any academic activity, when Faculty has expressly prohibited collaboration.
> 6. Commissioning or seeking to commission another person or **Entity**, with or without compensation, to produce or complete academic work or to impersonate a student in any academic activity.

Instructors may choose if students can use an Entity for class assignments and if so, under what conditions. If you are not sure about the instructor's policy regarding the use of Entities for completing assignments, please ask *before submitting an assignment*.

If you commit academic dishonesty, the instructor will submit the incident to the Dean of Students Office as an Honor Code violation.