

Western University
Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies
GSWS 2248 #ME TOO: The Politics of Rape Culture and Feminist Rage
Course Outline Winter 2026

Course Time: Thursdays 1:30-4:30 pm

Prerequisites: GSWS 1020E, or 1.0 course from GSWS 1021F/G, GSWS 1022F/G, GSWS 1024F/G, or GSWS 1030F/G.

Instructor: Dr. Lauren Auger

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Office Hours: TBD

GSWS Department Phone Number: 519-661-3759

Land Statement

Western University is situated on the traditional land of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lenape and Attawandaron peoples who have longstanding relationships to the region of southwestern Ontario and the City of London. In close proximity to Western, there are 3 local First Nations communities: the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee Delaware Nation. In the region of southwestern Ontario, there are 9 First Nations and a growing Indigenous urban population. Western recognizes the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America) to the development of Canada

Department Course Description

This course traces the development of the #MeToo movement through a variety of mediums, including music, public speeches, social media, scholarship, and popular culture. The course explores the #MeToo movement through interdisciplinary feminist perspectives and by considering how such issues unfold in the workplace, schools, and online.

Detailed Course Description

This course will illustrate that rape culture has a significant impact on people's lives. We will begin by developing a theoretical foundation in our first unit- Sexual Violence, The Law, and Consent. The course will define consent and underline that consent needs to be ongoing in sexual encounters. Students will learn how sexual assault is treated in the Canadian justice system considering high profile cases including the Rehtaeh Parsons case and the Hockey Canada case. The course will develop a definition for rape culture in our second unit- What is Rape Culture? This course will illustrate that historical ideas about purity, gender, and sex continue to impact

modern rape culture. Students will analyze media including fairytales, young adult romance series, and music to gain an understanding that rape culture permeates popular culture and influences people's understandings regarding consent, sex, sexual violence, and gender. The course will recognize the impact of rape culture on post-secondary campus life. We will recognize that campuses are not necessarily safe spaces for everyone. The course will also unpack how rape culture also pervades online sexual cultures with high rates of unsolicited sexual images, prevalence of revenge pornography, and accessibility of potentially sexually violent pornography online. Our third unit- Me Too- Feminist Voices and Counter Cultures will unpack how folk speak out and challenge rape culture through countercultures, political movements, and social supports. The course will underline the importance of hearing and supporting survivors of sexual violence and harassment. We will trace the #Me Too Movement in the academy, in the workplace, in sports, and in military and police forces. Finally, the course will account for current efforts to challenge rape culture, support survivors, and advocate for sexual assault to be taken seriously by those in positions of authority.

Course Objectives

1. to understand the workings of the 2010s # Me Too Movement;
2. to understand how rape is dealt with in Canadian law;
3. to define consent as something that is required throughout sexual encounters;
4. to understand how people's intersubjective identities may impact their relationship to and experiences with rape culture;
5. to unpack how modern rape culture is impacted by history, art, and religion;
6. to learn about how rape culture exists in popular culture and online spaces;
7. to develop an understanding of the #Me Too Movement in the academy, in workplaces, in sports, and in militaries and police forces;
8. to gain an understanding of #Me Too movement and the need for further advocacy for survivors of sexual violence;
9. to develop students' critical thinkings skills in course assessments and in discussion making connections between themes and content;
10. to enhance students' written and oral communication skills specifically their ability to clearly articulate, communicate, support, and organize arguments;

11. to develop students' written communication skills particularly focusing on organizing essays, developing a clear writing style, and accurate use of grammar;
12. to help students become more comfortable articulating thoughtful analysis, summary, reflections, and observations to their peers.

Evaluation Breakdown

Participation	10%
Participation Journals (2x10%)	20%
Critical Memoir Response	30%
Exam	40%

Assignment Description

Participation (15% of Final Grade)

This class involves student engagement in the learning process through active contributions to class discussions. It is crucial to note that mere attendance is insufficient to warrant a good participation grade. Students will be evaluated based on the quality and regularity of their contributions to class discussions.

Participation Journal (20% of final grade 10% for first submission 10% for second submission)

Students will submit two participation journal assignments during the term. Students will choose two weeks from each half of the class and write individual participation journal entries for those weeks (2 weeks per submission 4 weeks in-total over 2 participation journal assignments). Each journal entry should be at least 1 page Times New Roman font, size 12, and double spaced. Therefore, each Participation Journal assignment should be at least 2 pages in total length (double spaced). Each journal entry should discuss the key themes from that week, the readings, and/or key topics that were discussed in-class. You should begin your journal entry with an argument about that week's content. Please include MLA in-text citations and have a Works Cited page. Participation journals for the first half of the course will be submitted to the OWL Brightspace folder during the submission period of **Thursday, February 12- Sunday February 15 11:55 pm**. Participation journals from the second half of the course will be submitted to the OWL Brightspace folder during the submission period of **Thursday, April 2- Sunday, April 5, 11:55 pm**. Students will be evaluated based on the quality of their participation discussion, the level of analysis in the journal entries, and their ability to connect the week's content to multiple weeks of content and/or key course themes

Critical Memoir Response (30% of Final Grade) 6-7 pages, Times New Roman-Font, size 12, double spaced, MLA citation style) **Due: Thursday, March 12-Sunday March 15, 2025 at 11:55pm**. Please write a critical response to Chanel Miller's memoir: *Know My Name*. You may choose to write a response to the entire book or a portion book such as: chapters 1-3, chapters 3-6, chapters 7-9, chapter 10 through the remainder of the book. Your thesis statement should answer the following questions: How does this memoir challenge rape culture? Why is the memoir important? Please draw on three readings from our course to help support your analysis.

Final Exam (40% of final grade)

Students will complete an in-person examination during the April exam period. The exam will consist of short answer questions as well as an essay response

Course Delivery Mode

This course is an in-person course. Weekly readings will be posted online.

Course Materials

Required Text:

Miller, Chanel. *Know My Name : A Memoir*. Viking, an imprint of Penguin Random House, 2019.

Available from Amazon: \$25.50 Paperback, \$14.99 Kindle Edition, \$29.14 Audiobook, \$30.00 Hardcover

All **other** course material will be posted to OWL: <https://westernu.brightspace.com/>

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (<https://westernu.brightspace.com/>) regularly for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class.

If students need assistance with the course OWL site, they can seek support on the [OWL Brightspace Help](#) page. Alternatively, they can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk. They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800

Course Schedule and Weekly Reading

Unit 1: Sexual Violence, The Law, and Consent

Week 1: What is Me Too? Feminists Mobilize against Sexual Violence

Thursday, January 8

Week 2: Consent and Canadian Law**Thursday, January 15****Unit 2: What is rape culture?****Week 3: Rape Culture and Rape Myths, in History, Religion, and Art****Thursday, January 22****Week 4: Rape Culture and Popular Culture****Thursday, January 29****Week 5: Rape Culture on Campus****Thursday, February 5****Week 6: Rape Culture in Online Cultures****Thursday, February 12****Unit 3: Me Too- Feminist Voices and Counter Cultures****Week 7: Feminist Counter Cultures****Thursday, February 26****Week 8: Sharing Experiences****Thursday, March 5****Unit 4: Me Too Social Movements**

Week 9: Me Too and the Academy**Thursday, March 12****Week 10: Me Too in Employment****Thursday, March 19****Week 11: Me Too and Sports****Thursday, March 26****Week 12: Me Too in Militaries and Policing****Thursday, April 2****Week 13: Responses to Me Too and the Legacy of Me Too****Thursday, April 9****Learning Environments and Email Policies**

Participants enrolled in this class are expected to complete the required course readings, attend all class sessions, respectfully contribute to classroom activities and discussions, and complete course assessments. Students must use their Western (@uwo.ca) email addresses when contacting their instructor. I will try to reply to emails within twenty-four hours during the work week. Please do not expect an immediate response. Put the course code in the subject line of the email. Be as specific as possible with your questions. Specific questions receive specific answers. I may not respond to emails on weekends or during the evenings. If your question is more appropriately handled in-person, please feel free to make an appointment during my office hours or see me after class.

Technical Requirements

This course requires you to have a reliable high-speed internet connection and a computer that meets the technical requirements for writing online timed assessments.

Electronic Devices

No aids are permitted for the final exam. Electronic devices of any kind including calculators, cell phones and smart watches) are not permitted. Electronics such as computers and smartphones are permitted in-lecture. However, please be respectful and refrain from using your

electronics for outside activity during class. Please have your telephones set to silent. Our learning environments (including online) will be respectful spaces.

Statement on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

In this course, the use of AI (automatic translation tools, grammar checkers, ChatGPT...) is prohibited. If AI use is suspected, the instructor will ask for research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and other materials used in preparing assignments. Students are expected to retain these materials until after final grades have been entered. In the unlikely event of concerns being raised about the authenticity of any assignment, students may be asked to produce these materials; an inability to do so may weigh heavily against them.

General information about missed coursework

Students must familiarize themselves with the *University Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs* posted on the Academic Calendar:

<https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/academicconsiderationSep24.pdf>

This policy does not apply to requests for academic consideration submitted for attempted or completed work, whether online or in person. The policy also does not apply to students experiencing longer-term impacts on their academic responsibilities. These students should consult: [Accessible Education](#).

For procedures on how to submit Academic Consideration requests, please see the information posted on the Office of the Registrar's webpage:

<https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academicconsiderations/>

All requests for Academic Consideration must be made within 48 hours **after the assessment date or submission deadline**.

All academic consideration requests must include supporting documentation; however, recognizing that formal documentation may not be available in some extenuating circumstances, the policy allows students to make one Academic Consideration request without supporting documentation in this course. However, the following assessments are excluded from this, and therefore always require formal supporting documentation:

- **Final Exam**

Academic Consideration

Flexible submission deadline statement (Participation Journals and Critical Book Response assignment)

Please note that because the submission deadline for these assessments already includes flexibility in the form of a submission period, the instructor reserves the right to deny academic consideration for assignments which are submitted following the end of the period of flexibility.

*Note that supporting documentation is **always** required for academic consideration requests for **examinations scheduled by the office of the registrar (e.g. December and April exams)** and for practical laboratory and performance tests typically scheduled during the last week of the term.

When a student receives academic considerations or academic accommodations which overlap with the built-in flexibility of the assessment, the longest period of accommodation will determine the deadline. The built-in flexibility of the assessment should not be taken to extend any considerations or accommodations.

Evaluation Scheme for Missed Assessments

When a student misses the **Final Exam** and their Academic Consideration has been granted, they will be allowed to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam). See the Academic Calendar ([Special Examinations](#)), especially for those who miss multiple final exams within one examination period.

Late Penalty

Students are expected to submit each of the assignments by the deadline listed. Should extenuating circumstances arise, students do not need to request Academic Consideration and they are permitted to submit their assignment (**during the flexible assignment deadline**) without a late penalty. Should students submit their assessment beyond the **flexible assignment deadline**, a **late penalty of 2% per day will be applied**

Participation Journal 1 submissions will not be accepted even with academic consideration following: Monday, March 2, 2026

Participation Journal 2 submissions will not be accepted even with academic consideration following: Thursday, April 9, 2026

Critical Memoir Response submissions will not be accepted even with academic consideration following April 2, 2026

Additional Statements

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, here:

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/scholasticdisciplineundergrad.pdf>.

Statement on the use of plagiarism-checking 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 The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays

Students should review the [policy for Accommodation for Religious Holidays](#) . Where a student will be unable to write examinations and term tests due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should inform their instructors as soon as possible but **not later than two weeks** prior to writing the examination/term test. In the case of conflict with a midterm test, students should inform their instructor as soon as possible but not later than one week prior to the midterm.

Academic Accommodation and Accessible Education

Academic Accommodation is “a means of adjusting the academic activities associated with a course or program of student in order to permit students with disabilities to participate in those activities at the University and to fulfill the essential requirements of a course or program.”

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodationdisabilities.pdf>. Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with **Accessible Education** at the earliest opportunity. “Accessible Education plays a central role in Western's efforts to ensure that its academic programs are accessible for all students”

<http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessibleeducation/index.html>

Special Examinations

A Special Examination is any examination other than the regular examination, and it may be offered only with the permission of the Dean of the Faculty in which the student is registered, in consultation with the instructor and Department Chair. Permission to write a Special Examination may be given on the basis of compassionate or medical grounds with appropriate supporting documents. To provide an opportunity for students to recover from the circumstances resulting in a Special Examination, the University has implemented Special Examinations dates. These dates as well as other important information about examinations and academic standing can be found [here](#).

Support Services

Academic Advising

Your Home Faculty's Academic Advising Office will support or refer whenever you have an issue that is affecting your studies, including information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters.

Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you are struggling and unsure where to go for help. Contact info for all Faculties is here: <https://registrar.uwo.ca/facultyacademiccounselling.html>

Mental Health Support

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

Gender-based and sexual violence

Western University [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

<https://www.uwo.ca/health/studentsupport/survivorsupport/get-help.html>. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Learning Development and Success

Counsellors at the Learning Development and Success Centre <https://learning.uwo.ca> are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

USC

Additional student-run support services are offered by the USC, <https://westernusc.ca/services/>.

Grading Criteria

A+ (90 to 100)

One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level

A (80 and up)

Superior work which is clearly above average

- Challenging and specific thesis that is clearly developed
- Correct and interesting sentence structure
- Sophisticated writing style
- Appropriate documentation
- Quotations well integrated into the text, with proper documentation

- Evidence of originality or independence of thought
- Provision of strong analysis
- Complexity, and subtlety in approach to subject
- Well-organized with a logical development of the argument

B (70 to 79)

Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory

- Clear development of a specific thesis, with proper paragraphs
- Correct sentence structure
- Adequate documentation
- Allowance for some (minor) problems such as:
 - o errors in factual content or interpretation
 - o some minor errors in terminology or general writing skills
 - o occasional lapses in clarity, including vagueness, incompleteness, flaws in structure
- Provision of some analysis

Note: A grade in the range of 75-79 indicates an essay that borders on an A but has some significant flaw that prevents giving out the higher grade.

C (60 to 69)

Competent work, meeting requirements

- Generally correct but tends to provide more description than analysis
- Tends to be too general or superficial in the handling of material
- Weaknesses in argument including a descriptive thesis, a mechanical approach, lack of adequate evidence, documentation, or support
- Problems with grammar or matters of style
- Simplicity of thought, structure, or expression

D (50 to 59)

Fair work, minimally acceptable

- Does not provide an argument or a line of thought
- Major difficulties with logical structure, and expression of ideas
- Topic has not been thought through

- Errors of grammar and diction interfere with understanding
- Over-generalization with inadequate support, evidence, or documentation

F (49 and down)

Fail

- Assignment submitted does not apply to course
- Basic requirements of the assignment are not met

Plagiarism with intent to deceive (to be handled by the department)