

Ottawa University Continuing
Education

Course: EDU 52094 KA
Understanding Teen Relationships and Social Media
Instructor: Tamara Sinkler

Location: On-line

DATES: Fall 2026

Credit hours: 3

Course Description

This course is designed for teachers who would like to have a better understanding of adolescence and their challenges today with digital footprints and social media. This course will cover how complications with relationships and social media can consume teens. We will discuss how we can better understand this to be a supportive teacher and provide students with appropriate social emotional guidance.

Course Objectives

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

- 1) Evaluate and model appropriate relationships, self-respect and balanced online time and interactions.
- 2) Generate effective methods to stay safer online and create methods to communicate this to students.
- 3) Assess appropriate behavior among students at school to help them maintain boundaries and better relationships in person and online. Apply methods of social emotional learning for positive outcomes.
- 4) Evaluate real cyberbullying problems and understand how to take appropriate action.
- 5) Formulate and plan appropriate social emotional learning techniques that can be taught in the classroom to benefit students.

Methods of Instruction:

This course will be conducted on-line and will utilize discussion boards, student postings, reflection papers, reading assignments and portfolio projects. The class will be looking at some of the new, inventive children's literature and discussing it on-line. Students will be expected to engage in all discussions and group activities, and complete and post all assignments by the due dates.

Textbook/Materials

What They Don't Teach Teens by Jonathan Cristall

Content Outline

Week One: Street Safety and Social Emotional Learning in the Classroom

Chapter one and two

Social Emotional Learning power point

Discussion on controversy with parents and Social Emotional Learning

Develop more info on Social Emotional Learning

Week Two: Social Emotional Continued and how Deep Equity Plays a Part

Chapter three and four

Deep Equity power point

Discussion with intros and deep equity. Where do we all come from? What makes us different?

Reaction paper on Deep Equity

Week Three: Sexual Assault, Consent and Harassment

Chapter three and four

Deep Equity power point

Discussion with intros and deep equity. Where do we all come from? What makes us different?

Reaction paper on Deep Equity

Listen to podcast of choice and react

Week Four: Teen Dating Violence and its Effect

Chapter seven and eight

Discussion on alcohol is not consent

Develop a safety plan

Listen to podcast of choice and react

Week Five: Digital Footprints and Staying Safer Online

Chapter nine and ten

Discussion of Digital Footprint quiz

What matters most? How to stay safe online.

Dive deep on one of the topics discussed

Reaction Paper on Topic of Choice

Week Six: Cyberbullying

Chapter 11

Discussion on personal accounts: What would you do? What is the role of the teacher?

Research all areas of discussion

Decide on topic for project

Final Project

Assessment of Learning

Discussion questions	20 per week/ 120 total
Reaction papers	2 = 60 total
Podcast reactions	2 = 60 total
Research: Where do we find more?	2 = 60 total
Final Research	50 total
Final Project	100 total
All assignments = 450 pts.	

Grading Scale

90%-100% = A

80% - 90% = B

70% - 80% = C

60%-70% = D

59% and below = F

Instructor Contact Information:

Instructor:	Tamara Sinkler
Telephone:	913-226-0244
E-mail:	Tsinkler913@gmail.com
Availability:	Please feel free to contact me by phone or email. We can arrange for an extended phone conversation at a mutually convenient time if needed.

Instructor Bio:

Tamara Sinkler has a Master's of Science in Education from The University of Kansas and a Master's of Science in Library Media from Pittsburgh University. Her background is teaching high school English and English and writing at a junior college. She has designed and developed continuing education courses for several universities involving special education, reading in the content area, young adult and children's literature, measuring outcomes and STEM Literacy. She is an instructor online for Ottawa University. She also currently runs the Teacher Education Program at a high school in

Shawnee Mission School District.

Competency Assessment:

You will have several opportunities to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the principles taught in this course. The primary means of evaluating your work will be through practical application of the material. In the event that you have difficulty completing any of the assignments for this course, please contact me immediately. My email address and telephone number are listed on this syllabus. Please remember that instructors do not randomly assign grades. Students earn their grades and everyone has the same opportunity to earn a good grade.

Methods of Instruction:

This course will be conducted on-line and will utilize discussion boards, student postings, reading assignments and many research materials. Students will be expected to participate in all discussions, contribute to group activities and complete all assignments by the due date. **Each week you must submit (post) a response to the weekly discussion topic(s). Then, after reading the postings made by other students, you must reply to a minimum of two of your coursemates. Your responses must be substantive.** Simply stating that you “agree or disagree” is not substantive. You need to add your explanation as to “why” you feel as you do.

Important Policies:

All course-specific policies for this course are spelled out here in this syllabus. However, additional university policies are located in the Policies folder in the Info & Policies section of Blackboard. You are responsible for reading and understanding all of these policies. All of them are important. Failure to understand or abide by them could have negative consequences for your experience in this course.

Editorial Format for Written Papers:

All written assignments are to follow the APA writing style guidelines for grammar, spelling, and punctuation. This online course includes information regarding the APA style under “Writing and Research Resources” in the **Resource Room** on the course menu in Blackboard.

Academic Integrity:

Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated at any level on any assignment. The reality of cyberspace has made academic dishonesty even more tempting for some, but be advised that technology can and will be used to help uncover those engaging in deception. If you ever have a question about the legitimacy of a source or a procedure you are considering using, ask your instructor. As the University Academic Council approved on May 29, 2003, *“The penalty for plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty will be failure in the course in which the academic dishonesty occurred. Students who commit academic dishonesty can be dismissed from the university by the provost/director.”*

Please refer to **Academic Honesty** in the **Info & Policies** section of the online course menu

for important information about Ottawa University's policies regarding plagiarism and cheating, including examples and explanations of these issues.

Academic dishonesty also includes turning in work submitted for a grade in another course. For example, it would be considered academic dishonesty to turn in a paper that you wrote for English 101 as if you had written it for Philosophy 202. In addition, turning in a paper that you constructed by simply cutting and pasting sections from a paper you wrote previously, is also considered academic dishonesty. Although the consequences of plagiarism and/or academic dishonesty may vary, depending on the nature of the violation, the Ottawa University Student Handbook states, "The penalty for plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty will be failure in the course in which the academic dishonesty occurred" (p. 35).

Student Handbook

Please refer to your student handbook for all university regulations. The **Resource Room** on the course menu in Blackboard contains information about where to find the student handbook online for your campus.

Please see Info & Policies in Blackboard for additional university policies

Final Project

Directions: You have now read and reacted to many important issues regarding teens, relationships and social media. You should develop a short unit described as Social Emotional Learning, but you will choose the individual topics that you will focus on. This unit can be for any age level of middle or high school students. You must use and list at least four outside resources. One must be a podcast. This unit must have at least five developed lesson plans/activities in it that ties the unit together.

Requirements:

- Create this document, so that it is ready to use in the classroom. Make sure it has all the directions and necessary requirements.
- Your topic and focus for the unit should be clearly stated with the age level it is intended for. It can be for one grade level or include a few.
- You should have at least five objectives for the whole unit clearly written using higher level thinking descriptive words.
- List what resources you are using and clearly explain what they are and how to access them. You must have at least one podcast that you are using in your unit.

- You must clearly explain what all five activities are and the materials needed for each one.
- You may have more than five, if the unit calls for that. Videos, articles, podcasts, etc. should be included in your unit. You should write the instructions for each activity like you would write them for the student along with the requirements clearly stated.

If my directions are confusing, please ask questions. I want this to be something you can use in the classroom.

Discussion Thread Rubric:

Initial Posting Above standards

This excellent posting reflected that the student read and understood the assigned material, referring specifically to assigned reading or related research. The posting has a clear purpose: to inform, persuade, or raise an interesting question. It may also provoke conversation or offer an opposing view of the devil's advocate. When appropriate, the posting refers to outside sources in supporting its arguments. Post is made early in the assignment period, giving fellow group members plenty of time to reply.

Initial Posting Below Standards

This posting does not reflect that the student did or understood the reading. This posting could have been made without the student doing any reading or research at all. The posting has no apparent purpose other than meeting the assignment requirement. It does not move the conversation forward or offer a reasoned opposing opinion. The posting fails to make appropriate reference to outside materials in supporting any arguments.

There are one or more proofing errors. Post is made at the last minute or late.

Replies Above Standard(Each participant must reply to at least three threads each week)

Replies are substantive and reflect that the student read and thought about the assigned reading and additional sources posted by the person they are replying to. The reply moves the conversation forward or makes a reply to a question asked in response to their own posting. Replies are made over several days rather than crammed into due dates.

Replies Below Standard

Replies lack substance and do not reflect any reading or thought about the reading or additional sources. The reply does not move the conversation forward or answer a question presented.

Postings are made late on the day the assignment is due so that it is difficult for others to respond.

Rubrics Guides listed on the next page.

Rubric for the Final Project and Research Topics:

1 point	3 points	5 points
Minimal	Proficient	Exemplary

Accuracy of the content Demonstrates content (factual) knowledge and understanding of material and activities for the topic discussed.	Barely touches on the correct content.	Addresses some of the appropriate content of the the topic. The participant shows understanding of the presented ideas. Several key concepts or main ideas are identified and addressed.	Addresses the appropriate content. Shows exemplary understanding of the presented ideas. All key concepts or main ideas are identified and addressed. The topics and intent is clear.
--	--	--	--

Knowledge of content Is able to integrate specific knowledge in the activities and final project created.	Minimal Although making an attempt, the participant: (1) poorly synthesizes material, (2) makes inappropriate connections to other topics, (3) does not correctly apply knowledge.	Proficient When appropriate, the participant can: (1) synthesize material, (2) make appropriate connections to other topics, (3) correctly apply knowledge	Exemplary When appropriate, the participant can easily and concisely: (1) synthesize material, (2) make brilliant/unusual connections to other topics, (3) correctly apply knowledge.
Communication Communicates objectives and requirements.	Minimal Ideas wondering and repetitive. Poor or weak ability to express thoughts. Objectives and requirements unclear.	Proficient The assignment is mostly concise and focused. Examples provide some detail. Material is fairly well organized. Objectives and requirements are fairly easy to understand.	Exemplary The assignment is concise and focused. Examples are detailed. Material is well organized. Objectives and requirements very clear.

Rubric for Reaction Papers:

1 point

3 points

5 points

Minimal

Proficient

Exemplary

Intellectual – Knowledge and thoughts	No comments on prior knowledge and interests. Not related to experiences or textual references.	Describes prior knowledge and interests in specific terms; relates topic to text.	· Outlines prior knowledge, impressions and misconceptions. Uses relevant skills, courses knowledge and specifics in text.
Importance/ Significance	Describes some ideas of the importance to the topic	Describes importance to immediate and extended groups.	Describes local and wider importance. Some explanation of why the topic is important to the immediate group.
Clear ideas/ additional information	Identifies additional sources but does not specifically discuss.	Refers to other sources and integrates some into paper.	Consulted other sources and integrates the information in the reaction paper.
Writing	Disorganized thoughts.	Neat and organized thoughts.	Error free with clearly organized thoughts.