

## ***Blog Proposal***

**Your choice of topic for your blog will determine what you write about for the rest of the term; that is, your blog posts, social media posts, and video will all be on the topic you choose and write about in your proposal.**

Write a proposal for a non-commercial blog on a topic that is of cultural or social significance and that gives the opportunity for you to analyze and reflect in the blog posts you'll be writing later in the term. Your blog posts will be public, so you need to propose a topic that you're comfortable writing about in public.

**Your job in your proposal is to convince us that:**

- Your topic is engaging and interesting. (What is your blog's title? What is your topic? Why is it interesting?)
- You know your expected audience. (Who do you expect will read your blog posts? What is your audience's profile? Draw on what you've learned about audience profiles in earlier modules. I am looking for more than "Anyone who likes chocolate" for a blog about cooking with chocolate, for instance.)
- Your topic or perspective or approach has an aspect, quality, or twist that is unique or original. (What are you doing that's different from what everyone else is doing?)
- Your topic is sustainable over time. (What examples of future posts can you give us to show its sustainability? What is the scope of your topic?)
- Your proposed topic is culturally or socially significant. (Why does it matter? Why should we care?)
- You have cited all sources in-text and have included a References or Works Cited list at the end. Your list must contain publication info, not just a URL.

**Unacceptable topics:**

- Topics that are discriminatory or that contravene university guidelines.
- Blogs that blur the line between commercial and non-commercial, such as beauty blogs that **consist** of showing the use of products, or review/how-to blogs that focus on commercial products, restaurant reviews, etc.
- Blogs about mental or physical health issues that aren't based on medical or scientific research. You may certainly draw on your own experiences, but to ensure that you are spreading **ACCURATE** information, you must base any suggested strategies or treatments on research drawn from reliable, acknowledged medical journals, not other people's blogs.
- Travel blogs that don't contain elements of analysis. (That is, don't propose merely to show us places you've travelled to. Your blog must contain analysis, thought and reflection.)
- Blogs about your daily life. Your blog must have a focus other than yourself. There's a major difference between mining or exploring personal experience for ideas that extend beyond yourself and merely recording your daily life.
- **If in doubt about your topic, email Andrea at [acmckenzen@yorku.ca](mailto:acmckenzen@yorku.ca) and ask her.**

**If you believe that publically posting blog entries will put you or your family at risk, email Andrea immediately to make other arrangements for completing this work.**

**Maximum length:** 3 double-spaced pages in 12-point Times New Roman (or a similar font) with 1 inch margins, plus a References section. The maximum length does not include the References section.

**References section:** Use MLA, Chicago, or APA style guidelines. Information about them is available online. At a minimum, you must include the author/corporation name, title of specific blog entry or page, title of blog or page, and URL for online entries. For offline entries, see the specific style guidelines. You will lose marks if you merely include the URL without other identifying information.

**Identifying Yourself:** Place your preferred name, student ID number, the course number and title, and the date at the top of the first page. Your proposal title should be centred on the first page. Create a running header with your last name in it, and number your pages.

**Upload your file in .docx, .doc, or .pdf format so that I can open and comment on it.**

## ***Blog Posts***

Create a WordPress blog account on the topic you proposed earlier this term, and post two blog entries during the scheduled modules.

For the assignment, enter the URL of your WordPress blog. I will check your WordPress account for these two weeks and grade your entries. Please make sure you are posting the URL that readers would use, not the URL that leads to your editing account.

Each entry should:

- Be titled engagingly
- Contain an idea that you develop in an interesting way
- Contain thought and reflection and analysis
- Be written in a style appropriate for the subject and the expected audience
- Be illustrated with a relevant, captioned photograph or illustration. If you did not take the photo (or create the illustration) yourself, you must credit the photographer or creator and the site where you found it
- Include a link and a reference to another blog or article that's related to your topic. The link should be part of your blog post text, and you should name the author and/or title of the blog or article. Link via words in the text instead of dropping in a URL.
- Include credits or acknowledgements of any sources you used for research or ideas **IN YOUR TEXT**
- Include a Further Reading or References list that includes full information about any articles, blogs, or other sources you drew information or ideas from. You will lose marks for just posting the URLs without the publication information
- Be posted to WordPress on or before the due date unless you have Andrea's approval for not publishing. (See Note 1 below.)

### **NOTES:**

**1.** Because your work will be published, you need to choose a topic that you're comfortable sharing with the public. **If you have a valid reason for not wanting to publish online, then please contact Andrea as soon as possible to explain your rationale.** You can email her at [acmckenz@yorku.ca](mailto:acmckenz@yorku.ca) to make arrangements for you to do the work without making it public.

**2. Your entries must meet York University's non-discrimination policies and guidelines for student behaviour.**

**3. Your work must be new and previously unpublished.**

Feb. 8, 2021

## **App-rehensive Dating**

Let's talk fetishes. No, not mine, but the ones imposed on me as a bi Asian woman. We're talking about expectations of submission, constant hounding about my ethnicity, lewd w/lw comments, and how these experiences become magnified in the online dating world. I will be navigating through the experiences of minorities, specifically those of a bi Asian woman, on online dating apps to explore the problems we face and consider potential solutions as a designer.

My blog caters to those sharing the same identifiers and experiences as me, whether they're Asian, bi, queer, or all of the above. It's meant to initiate conversations about the difficulties of dating apps and how looking for a partner can become a nauseating experience in ways people don't even realize. Let's look at it this way; do you have to deal with yet another threesome proposal on the daily? Probably not. And why's that? Don't get me wrong, I'm not here to kinkshame, but when did this become a distinctly bi thing? Who decided this? I can guarantee you that it wasn't us. Although my target audience focuses on certain demographics, it can also help shed light for readers that are unaware of these issues or app developers looking to improve. I want to emphasize that although this blog is grounded in personal experience, it is made tangible through shared communal experiences.

Writing about online dating app experience is nothing new, some apps even encourage it (Tinder, 2020), but most blog posts typically focus on one or two overlapping demographics

like dating as an Asian woman (Yeung, 2020) or dating as a bi man (Zane). And although there is writing about dating as a bi Asian man (Chan, 2020), there aren't any catering to the specific experiences of bi Asian women. My goal is to target the overlap of being objectified, depersonalized, and reduced to a stereotype for different identifiers and how this overlap can create a demoralizing dating experience.

Online dating apps are both a blessing and a curse; they're accessible, full of interesting people, and fairly easy to use. As a designer, I can't solve systemic issues on my own but I do have the ability to offer advice on how to improve experiences through reimagining the design and interactions of online spaces. It's no surprise that leading dating apps focus on visual profiles and don't typically show a lot of information. This overtly increases the chances of people being repeatedly reduced to how they look, their race, or their sexuality. Hinge and Bumble for example are both dating apps that have question and answer prompts embedded in their profile creation process that encourage conversations outside of age, gender, or physical appearance. User insight from collective group experiences can help inform the dating app experience, allowing us to work towards creating an online dating space that's more sustainable not only for myself, but for so many others as well.

Regardless of how we progress or the state of identity politics; race, gender, or sexuality will always influence the dating experience. I plan to talk about the shared frustrations with straight baiting and having non-queer women clogging up the deck, how adding the bisexual label to your profile drastically changes your match results, and how being called innocent and wholesome is not the compliment people think it is. Most importantly, I want to highlight how this all works in tandem with one another and the role of intersectionality because I cannot

separate who I am into neat little boxes that I can pick and choose from when the time is right.

Maybe these apps will improve, or people gain a new profound sense of respect; but as the dating scene constantly changes, new experiences will emerge for me to discuss. Whether it's from my personal experience or the words of others, online dating interactions remain a heated topic of discussion and this blog will continue to appeal to those sharing the same niche struggles.

Minority experiences should not be ignored. At the end of the day, the fetishization, objectification, and stereotyping that's present can't be solved by fixing the apps. These frustrations aren't limited to online dating and they're simply a magnification of cultural and social issues that already exist and continue to be enforced. By sharing overshadowed narratives, we can begin to identify the root of these behaviours and create open discussion on how to make both the online dating experience (and the rest of the world) a more pleasant place for more people.

### Reference List

- Marty Chan\*. (2019, January 16). As a bisexual Asian, I got rejection from both sides. Retrieved from <https://www.sbs.com.au/topics/pride/agenda/article/2019/01/16/bisexual-asian-i-got-rejection-both-sides>
- Tinder. (2020). Tinder blog. Retrieved from <https://blog.gotinder.com/>
- Yeung, T. (2020, February 12). What it's like to date from the perspective of an Asian woman. Retrieved from <https://teriakitalks.com/dating-from-the-perspective-of-an-asian-woman/>
- Zane, Z. (2019, May 17). Putting “bisexual” on my dating profile changed everything. Retrieved from <https://swipelife.tinder.com/post/bisexual-dating>

## **How Dating Apps' Progressive Facades Exclude Queer Women of Colour**

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One of the biggest problems with online dating apps is the lack of accommodation for different audiences, because let's face it, these apps aren't made with us in mind. Sometimes we'll see improvements here and there, but these apps ultimately fail to implement proper research into the production process.

As a bisexual Asian woman who has been on different dating apps, I've really only come to one conclusion: it's a lose-lose situation. You'd think that setting your preferences to show everyone (quick reminder that despite the app's limited settings, bisexuality in no way excludes trans and nonbinary individuals even though some people like to push that narrative) would give you more options and better opportunities at finding desirable matches. Instead, it's the exact opposite.

Here's who we get the pleasure of meeting:

### **1. Couples looking for a third.**

- These profiles are always set to "woman," baiting sapphic women to join their threesome without even showing the man in question, said best by [u/Random\\_silly\\_name on Reddit < http://\(https://www.reddit.com/r/Tinder/comments/lg9ynj/nobody\\_want\\_to\\_get\\_with\\_you\\_stop/gmqaa0b/?utm\\_source=share&utm\\_medium=web2x&context=3>](https://www.reddit.com/r/Tinder/comments/lg9ynj/nobody_want_to_get_with_you_stop/gmqaa0b/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=web2x&context=3) .

girls with boyfriends on here you are both so ugly and I'm reporting you for spam

Not interested in you and your stinky boyfriend 🤔

Some bios I've encountered on Tinder that speak to the queer experience of wanting to match with women, but only seeing couples on the feed (names not mentioned for privacy reasons).

### **2. Straight women whose profiles say straight and bios say they're looking for a man.**

- Literally why the hell are you here on my feed ([Kaimin, Middlemist < http://www.montanakaimin.com/opinion/if-youre-not-gay-get-off-our-tinder/article\\_1e84ea16-3537-11e9-bba6-870b171dce24.html>](http://www.montanakaimin.com/opinion/if-youre-not-gay-get-off-our-tinder/article_1e84ea16-3537-11e9-bba6-870b171dce24.html) ).

### **3. Straight men with yellow fever ([Cai < https://swipelife.tinder.com/post/asian-fetish>](https://swipelife.tinder.com/post/asian-fetish) ).**

- Stop forcing innocence and compliancy down my throat and then getting mad at me for not fitting into your fantasized version of who I should be.



you're super cute haha what ethnicities are you if you don't mind me asking? 🙄👉👈

Lots of times, the very first thing someone will message me is some rendition of asking for my ethnicity.

Who do I owe the pleasure to of meeting the most innocent girl on tinder 🙄



Is there something wrong with being called innocent? That's literally how you look



Awkward chubby asian nerd lmao



With acne scars 🤔 merry Christmas



Here we have someone trying to immediately force innocence (and implying they want to take away that innocence, hence the devil emoji, but we'll get into that on another post) and then getting upset, rude, and reverting to insults when I'm not wooed by their words and things don't go their way.

This kind of online space can become disheartening because you're either shown women who are not interested in you, or men who make you feel like there's no room for you to exist outside of being a stereotype or commodity. Additionally, queer dating apps, which are already few in number, are mostly geared towards gay men and often sideline trans people and people of colour (O'Hara < <https://www.them.us/story/personals-queer-dating-app> > ). Last year, a friend told me to download the lesbian dating app Her < <https://weareher.com/> > , an app that's highly rated among users as a great place to meet other queer women in the dating scene. It was a harmless suggestion but I'm not only into women. The sad truth is, existing online dating apps do not currently have space for bi and pan women of colour.

Moving forward, we have to begin designing products that allow for our use without feeling instantly demoralized. In a 2019 update, **Tinder allowed users to add sexuality identifiers to their profile** < <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c6FL4fg5tQo> > and although it was a step in the right direction, it oversimplifies many issues.

We can compare the experience of app design to notions of representation in the media and how inclusivity at face value is not enough. Oftentimes, on-screen diversity is not reflected in the behind the scenes writing and production of movies and tv shows; take the live action Mulan for example, a Chinese story shot with a fully Asian cast but with white producers, directors, and screenwriters. The film was bombarded with criticism (Yam < <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/mulan-film-gets-backlash-lack-asian-talent-behind-camera-n1157801> > ) because it tried to narrate a story dependant on cultural experiences without proper informants during the production process. This can be compared to how apps will push for inclusive and welcoming narratives by increasing the diversity of its visual branding/marketing without actually considering the struggles minorities face in these online spaces or designing to combat them. Until diverse voices are integrated as part of the production process, we're just going to keep seeing the same cycle of straight dating apps promoting itself as progressive with empty promises and limited functionality.

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O'Hara, M. E. (2018, May 30). This new queer dating app is about more than what you look like. Retrieved from <https://www.them.us/story/personals-queer-dating-app> < <https://www.them.us/story/personals-queer-dating-app>>

Random\_silly\_name. [Random\_silly\_name]. (2021, February 9). *Haha... 99% of the time, they seem to have a lot of pictures of the woman and just expect their "third" to take the man unseen.* [Online forum comment]. Reddit. [https://www.reddit.com/r/Tinder/comments/lg9ynj/nobody\\_want\\_to\\_get\\_with\\_you\\_stop/gmqaa0b?utm\\_source=share&utm\\_medium=web2x&context=3](https://www.reddit.com/r/Tinder/comments/lg9ynj/nobody_want_to_get_with_you_stop/gmqaa0b?utm_source=share&utm_medium=web2x&context=3) < [https://www.reddit.com/r/Tinder/comments/lg9ynj/nobody\\_want\\_to\\_get\\_with\\_you\\_stop/gmqaa0b?utm\\_source=share&utm\\_medium=web2x&context=3](https://www.reddit.com/r/Tinder/comments/lg9ynj/nobody_want_to_get_with_you_stop/gmqaa0b?utm_source=share&utm_medium=web2x&context=3)>

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Yam, K. (2020, March 13). 'Mulan' film gets backlash for lack of Asian talent behind camera. Retrieved from <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/mulan-film-gets-backlash-lack-asian-talent-behind-camera-n1157801> < <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/mulan-film-gets-backlash-lack-asian-talent-behind-camera-n1157801>>

## **Assholes and Assumptions**

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Many of the difficulties minorities experience on dating apps can be linked to existing stereotypes and assumptions. In order to understand what this means, we have to first look into the origins of how these stereotypes came to be and the contexts they existed in.

One of the most notorious assumptions about bisexuality is the idea that we're more likely, if not will certainly, cheat. These beliefs most likely derive from our current understanding of sexuality and gender and how it's recognized in a heteronormative society. In an experimental study (**Lobel, Zivony < <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-014-0263-9> >**), it was shown that people perceive bisexual men as more confused, untrustworthy, and unable to maintain long-term relationships compared to gay or straight men. Since the bisexual imagery challenges both hetero and monogamous norms, we're seen as more likely to embrace having multiple partners at the same time. **Gustavson < <https://doi.org/10.1080/15299710903316653> >** argues that this assumption is rooted in the heterosexual understanding of intimacy and desire through gender which intrinsically equates bisexual attraction to polyamory due to our attraction to more than one gender.

Bi relationships and identities are often treated as a transition stage between homosexuality and heterosexuality (**Shaw < <https://researchrepository.wvu.edu/etd/4085> >**), insinuating that our attraction is temporary by default (as if all identities and attraction aren't fluid in nature), creating a false narrative that's defined by confusion and uncertainty.

On the other hand, assumptions of Asian women being docile, soft-spoken, and innocent can be disguised as positive associations that hide what actually are; dangerous, objectifying, and racist. **Wu and Pham < <https://new.dailybruin.com/2020/05/22/the-quad-exploring-the-past-present-and-future-of-yellow-fever-from-global-to-local> >** speak to Kyeyoung Park, Min Zhou, and Thu-huong Nguyễn-võ, professors in Asian American studies and Asian culture (as well as anthropology, sociology, and languages, respectively), to get a better understanding on the history of yellow fever and how it still plays a role in the perception of Asian women today.

According to the professors, European men applied existing gender norms onto the "new lands" they were "discovering" during 15<sup>th</sup> century colonization as an attempt to understand these foreign spaces. During this time, the Asian continent became heavily feminized, and since femininity was associated with notions of submissiveness, being soft-spoken, and conformity, it labelled Asian men as effeminate and Asian women as hyper-feminine and available (since Asian men weren't "real men"). Even during immigration to the west, Asian men (who made up the majority of immigrants) were presumed to be more feminine and asexual while Asian women were brought over and forced into sex work. The belief that Asian women have attractive qualities because they're Asian implies that being Asian is the only reason they're attracted to us, ultimately grouping individuals into interchangeable beings (**Nguyen < <https://www.sbs.com.au/topics/voices/relationships/article/2018/07/18/your-thing-asian-girls-not-compliment> >**).

**"Yellow fever is also a reductionist move which sees Asian girls based on their race and not their personality, which is inherently racist." – Min Zhao**

First round is on me if

**you can guess my  
background lol**

I'm convinced that

**no one can guess my  
ethnicities 🤔🤔**

**I bet you can't**

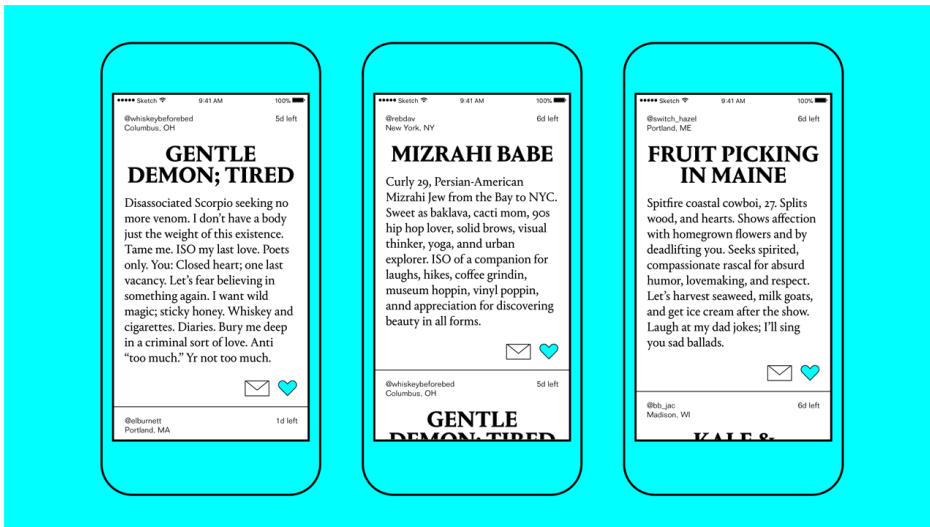
**guess my ethnicity**

For some reason, race and ethnicity are often used as conversation starters or points of appeal; as shown above, people like to center their profiles around ideas of exoticism (just what do you gain from learning someone's ethnicity at face value...?).

So the question is, how do these stereotypes coexist with one another, specifically in the context of dating apps? It's almost ironic that bisexuality is seen as scandalous and being Asian seen as virtuous because they seemingly contradict with one another. I've even noticed that adding the bi label to my Tinder profile actively decreased the number of male matches I got and increased the number of matches with women. It's as if being bi (or what people think bi people are like) ultimately takes away from my appeal to straight men as a compliant Asian woman. Or they're just homophobic (probably best we don't end up matching anyways).

The more complicated question would be how do we remove stereotypes from the dating space without endangering minorities with ignorant matches? Personals **now turned Lex <**

<https://thisislex.app/> ) for example, was a queer dating app based on personal text-based ads that show profiles in short written blurbs rather than photos (**O'Hara < <https://www.them.us/story/personals-queer-dating-app> >** ). It was a quick way to inject personality, sense of humour, how you describe yourself, and what you're looking for in a short concise way that actively removes visual attraction from the matching process.



The Personals app used text-based profiles instead of photos. (Photo from **them < <https://www.them.us/story/personals-queer-dating-app> >** )

**Download the app**

**For iOS**      **For Android**

**About**

**Lex is the text-centered social app that connects queer lovers and friends.**

**Lex is short for lexicon. Text first, selfies second.**

**Lex adheres to a zero tolerance policy towards creeps: no transphobia, no racism, no fatphobia, no ableism. No hate speech of any kind. We reserve the right to delete posts for any reason. A healthy, loving community is our top priority.**

**Herstory of Lex**

**Lex (formerly known as PERSONALS) was inspired by the personal ads in *On Our Backs*, a women-run erotica magazine of the '80s and '90s. The personals were written by lesbians and detailed their desires and romantic requirements.**

Lex's policies explicitly state that they don't tolerate any sort of discrimination on their platform, emphasizing on building a healthy online community space.

(Photo from **Lex App < <https://thisislex.app/> >** )

My only worry with a text-based format is that people will become discriminatory or rude after finding out someone's race, gender, or sexuality if it's not included in a profile. Trans people have even spoken out about the backlash they receive when their matches find out they're trans through conversation rather than explicitly stated in their profile ([Pizzo < https://onezero.medium.com/we-asked-tinder-grindr-and-okcupid-how-they-support-trans-users-heres-what-they-said-840864cc3da7 >](https://onezero.medium.com/we-asked-tinder-grindr-and-okcupid-how-they-support-trans-users-heres-what-they-said-840864cc3da7) ). I think vying away from photo and race-centered narratives can incite less discriminatory comments at the get-go; but at the end of the day, the only way the virtual dating space will become less obnoxious is when we combat these stereotypes in all contexts and work towards building communities and environments that are more compassionate and accepting.

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