

Sociology 601.92

Sociology of Identity: Explorations of Self and Community

Instructor

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Calendar description

This seminar explores social theory and empirical research concerning the formation and reproduction of human identities. The fluid and multi-faceted nature of identity is examined through study of the social processes through which we come to understand ourselves as individuals and as members of various communities. Students are given the opportunity to explore conceptual and empirical studies of identity in relation to various issues of interest to sociologists, such as gender, racialization, ethnicity, class consciousness, colonization, professional identity, sexual orientation, nationalism, and affiliation with local or online communities.

Time and location

Class sessions are from 9:00 to 11:50 on Thursday mornings, in room 921, Social Sciences Building.

Components

The course will be organized into three basic parts, each contributing to overall goals of building a sociological understanding of human identities, enhancing scholarly skills, and developing a network of graduate student peers.

In the first part of the course, the instructor will lead group discussion directed toward building a shared vocabulary with which to discuss the sociology of identity, challenging taken-for-granted assumptions regarding identities (both individual and community), and illustrating the construction of claims to knowledge in this field.

In the second part of the course, students will rotate responsibility for leading the discussion of readings chosen by the instructor to exemplify recent scholarship in the sociology of identity in each of the following domains:

- Gender and sexuality
- Social class and consumption
- Ethnicity and race
- Nation and citizenship
- Places and ages

In the third part of the course, students will present their progress on the term-paper assignment. Each presentation will involve the selection of one, short reading to be done by all participants, the presentation of a term-paper work-in-progress, and the facilitation of a discussion of the reading and

presentation. Topics and readings in the third part of the course will be determined based upon the interests of participating students.

Readings

There will be no assigned textbook for this course, nor any materials for purchase at the bookstore. All assigned readings will be accessible online through the e-Resources of the University of Calgary Library. Readings are listed below. **Please note:** depending upon the number of students in the course, and the speed of class discussion, not all “required” readings listed below will necessarily be assigned each week – we will assess the quantity of reading on an ongoing basis, and make adjustments as needed.

Part I (4 weeks)

Introduction: concepts and claims

Objectives:

- Develop working definitions of key terms, so that we may share a vocabulary with which to discuss the sociology of identity.
- Review two examples of empirical work in the sociology of identity – reflecting divergent research methods and conceptualizations of identity.
- Review key debates about the ontological and conceptual foundations of identity, and assess the implications of those debates through their application to significant conflicts.
- Explore the symbolic construction of communities.
- Explore the pedagogical construction of individuals.
- Assess the scholarly construction of claims to knowledge regarding identities.
- Gain insight into the instructor’s process of research and claims-making.
- Develop skills to participate actively in group discussions and debates.
- Build rapport among your graduate student peers.

Week one (January 12, 2012): Introduction

Required readings (for class discussion)

- Snow, David & Leon Anderson (1987) Identity Work Among the Homeless: The Verbal Construction and Avowal of Personal Identities. *American Journal of Sociology*, 92 (6) 1336-1371.
- Gosine, Kevin (2000) Revisiting the Notion of a ‘Recast’ Vertical Mosaic in Canada: Does a Post-Secondary Education Make a Difference? *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 32 (3) 89-104.

Week two (January 19, 2012): Concepts, approaches, and implications

Required readings (for class discussion)

- Brubaker, Rogers & Frederick Cooper (2000) Beyond “Identity”. *Theory and Society*, 29 (1) 1-47.

- Jenkins, Richard (2006) Categorization: Identity, Social Process and Epistemology. *Current Sociology*, 48 (3) 7-25.
- Hintjens, Helen (2001) When identity becomes a knife: Reflecting on the genocide in Rwanda. *Ethnicities*, 1(1) 25-55.
- Jenkins, Richard (2006) When Politics and Social Theory Converge: Group Identification and Group Rights in Northern Ireland. *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 12 (3-4) 389-410.

Other readings (for background information and further references):

- Cerulo, Karen (1997) Identity Construction: New Issues, New Directions. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 23: 385-409.
- Owens, Timothy, Dawn Robinson & Lynn Smith-Lovin (2010) Three Faces of Identity. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 36: 477-499.

Week three (January 26, 2012): Communities, individuals, and power

Required readings (for class discussion):

- Cohen, Anthony (1985) *The Symbolic Construction of Community*. London: Routledge.
- Foucault, Michel (1982) The Subject and Power. *Critical Inquiry*, 8 (4) 777-795.

Other readings (for background information and further references):

- Lamont, Michèle & Virág Molnár (2002) The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28: 167-195.
- Callero, Peter (2003) The Sociology of the Self. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 29:115–133.

Week four (February 2, 2012): Debates / the (re)production of identity through adult education

Note that the first half of this class will be devoted to structured debates among all students in the class. Full guidelines for participation will be provided by the instructor. The number of debates will depend upon the number of students enrolled, but each debate will address a central question in the readings assigned for the first three weeks of class.

Required readings (for discussion in the second half of the class):

- McLean, Scott (1997) Objectifying and Naturalizing Individuality: A Study of Adult Education in the Canadian Arctic. *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 22 (1) 1-29.
- McLean, Scott & Heather Rollwagen (2008) Progress, Public Health, and Power: Foucault and the Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan. *Canadian Review of Sociology*, 45 (3) 225-245.
- McLean, Scott (2011) Education for freedom? Living Room Learning and the Liberal Arts of Government. *Adult Education Quarterly*, (forthcoming).

Part II (6 weeks)

Readings in the sociology of identity

Objectives:

- Build awareness of claims to knowledge in a range of substantive areas relating to the formation and reproduction of identities.
- Read recent sociological work, and build skills in interpreting and assessing the claims to knowledge contained in such work.
- Identify resources for further reading in areas of personal interest.
- Participate actively in group discussions, and lead at least one such discussion.
- Provide feedback to your graduate student peers.
- Identify a topic for the term-paper assignment.
- Practice the integration and synthesis of knowledge through completing a take-home, mid-term examination requiring critical and creative thinking.

Week five (February 9, 2012): Ethnicity and race

Required readings (for class discussion):

- Brubaker, Rogers (2009) Ethnicity, Race, and Nationalism. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 35: 21-42.
- Jiménez, Tomás (2008) Mexican Immigrant Replenishment and the Continuing Significance of Ethnicity and Race. *American Journal of Sociology*, 113 (6) 1527-1567.
- Espiritu, Yen Le (1994) The intersection of race, ethnicity, and class: the multiple identities of second-generation Filipinos. *Identities*, 1 (2-3) 249–273.
- Pager, Devah, Bruce Western & Bart Bonikowski (2009) Discrimination in a Low-Wage Labor Market: A Field Experiment. *American Sociological Review*, 74 (5) 777-799.
- Pyke, Karen & Tran Dang (2003) “FOB” and “Whitewashed”: Identity and Internalized Racism among Second Generation Asian Americans. *Qualitative Sociology*, 26 (2) 147-172.
- Shirley, Carla (2010) "You might be a redneck if..." Boundary Work among Rural, Southern Whites. *Social Forces*, 89 (1) 35-62.

Other readings (for background information and further references):

- Sanders, Jimmy (2002) Ethnic Boundaries and Identity in Plural Societies. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28: 327-357.

Week six (February 16, 2012): Nation and citizenship

Required readings (for class discussion):

- Malesevic, Sinisa (2011) The chimera of national identity. *Nations and Nationalism*, 17 (2) 272-290.

- Skey, Michael (2010) 'A sense of where you belong in the world': national belonging, ontological security and the status of the ethnic majority in England. *Nations and Nationalism*, 16 (4) 715-733.
- Brett, Judith & Anthony Moran (2011) Cosmopolitan nationalism: ordinary people making sense of diversity. *Nations and Nationalism*, 17 (1) 188-206.
- Faas, Daniel (2009) Reconsidering identity: the ethnic and political dimensions of hybridity among majority and Turkish youth in Germany and England. *British Journal of Sociology*, 60 (2) 299-320.
- Comaroff, Jean & John Comaroff (1989) The Colonization of Consciousness in South Africa. *Economy and Society*, 18 (3) 267-296.
- Hirschman, Charles (1986) The Making of Race in Colonial Malaya: Political Economy and Racial Ideology. *Sociological Forum*, 1 (2) 330-361.

Other reading (for background information and further references):

- Bloemraad, Irene, Anna Korteweg & Gokçe Yurdakul (2008) Citizenship and Immigration: Multiculturalism, Assimilation, and Challenges to the Nation-State. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 34: 153-179.

Week Seven (no class on reading week - February 23, 2012)

Week eight (March 1, 2012): Gender and sexuality

Required readings (for class discussion):

- Halrynjo, Sigtona & Selma Lyng (2009) Preferences, constraints or schemas of devotion? Exploring Norwegian mothers' withdrawals from high-commitment careers. *British Journal of Sociology*, 60 (2) 321-343.
- Cairns, Kate, Josée Johnston & Shyon Baumann (2011) Caring About Food: Doing Gender in the Foodie Kitchen. *Gender & Society*, 24 (5) 591-615.
- Denny, Kathleen (2011) Gender in Context, Content, and Approach: Comparing Gender Messages in Girl Scout and Boy Scout Handbooks. *Gender & Society*, 25 (1) 27-47.
- Myers, Kristen & Laura Raymond (2010) Elementary school girls and heteronormativity. *Gender & Society*, 24 (2) 167-188.
- Martin, Karin (2009) Normalizing Heterosexuality: Mothers' Assumptions, Talk, and Strategies with Young Children. *American Sociological Review*, 74 (2) 190-207.
- Green, Adam (2010) Queer Unions: Same-sex Spouses Marrying Tradition and Innovation. *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 35 (3) 399-436.

Other readings (for background information and further references):

- Epstein, Cynthia Fuchs (2007) Great Divides: The Cultural, Cognitive, and Social Bases of the Global Subordination of Women. *American Sociological Review*, 72 (1) 1-22.

- Gamson, Joshua & Dawne Moon (2004) The Sociology of Sexualities: Queer and Beyond. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 30: 47-64.
- Schrock, Douglas & Michael Schwalbe (2009) Men, Masculinity, and Manhood Acts. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 35: 277-295.

Week nine (March 8, 2012): Social class and consumption

Required readings (for class discussion):

- Surridge, Paula (2007) Class belonging: a quantitative exploration of identity and consciousness. *British Journal of Sociology*, 58 (2) 207-226.
- Thiel, Darren (2007) Class in construction: London building workers, dirty work and physical cultures. *British Journal of Sociology*, 58 (2) 227-251.
- Dimaggio, Paul & Michael Useem (1978) Social class and arts consumption: The origins and consequences of class differences in exposure to the arts in America. *Theory and Society*, 5 (2) 141-161.
- Johnston, Josée & Shyon Baumann (2007) Democracy versus Distinction: A Study of Omnivorousness in Gourmet Food Writing. *American Journal of Sociology*, 113 (1) 165-204.
- Rivers-Moore, Megan (2010) But the kids are okay: motherhood, consumption and sex work in neo-liberal Latin America. *British Journal of Sociology*, 61 (4) 716-736.
- Sherman, Rachel (2011) The Production of Distinctions: Class, Gender, and Taste Work in the Lifestyle Management Industry. *Qualitative Sociology*, 34 (1) 201-219.

Other reading (for background information and further references):

- Nesbit, Tom (2005) Social Class and Adult Education. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 106: 5-14.
- Zukin, Sharon & Jennifer Smith Maguire (2004) Consumers and Consumption. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 30: 173-197.

Week ten (March 15, 2012): Places and ages

Required readings (for class discussion):

- Alexander, Claire (2011) Making Bengali Brick Lane: Claiming and Contesting Space in East London. *British Journal of Sociology*, 62 (2) 201-220.
- Harding, David (2009) Violence, Older Peers, and the Socialization of Adolescent Boys in Disadvantaged Neighborhoods. *American Sociological Review*, 74 (3) 445-464.
- Whitehead, Krista (2010) "Hunger Hurts but Starving Works": A Case Study of Gendered Practices in the Online Pro-eating-disorder Community. *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 35 (4) 595-626.
- Rajiva, Mythili (2006) Brown Girls, White Worlds: Adolescence and the Making of Racialized Selves. *Canadian Review of Sociology*, 43 (2) 165-183.

- Brettell, Caroline & Faith Nibbs (2009) Lived Hybridity: Second-Generation Identity Construction Through College Festival. *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 16 (6) 678–699.
- Hodkinson, Paul (2011) Ageing in a spectacular ‘youth culture’: Continuity, change and community amongst older Goths. *British Journal of Sociology*, 62 (2) 262-282.

Other reading (for background information and further references):

- Eder, Donna & Sandi Nenga (2003) Socialization in Adolescence. *Handbook of Social Psychology*, John Delemater (Ed.). New York: Kluwer Academic, pp. 157-182).
- Howard, Judith (2000) Social Psychology of Identities. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26: 367-393.

Week eleven (March 22): take-home examination (class attendance required)

Part III (3 weeks)

Student presentations (term papers and related readings)

Objectives:

- Build in-depth knowledge concerning a question of interest in the sociology of identity.
- Develop skills in the researching and writing of a scholarly essay – in making and providing evidence for claims to knowledge.
- Develop skills in making presentations and facilitating small-group discussion.
- Learn about a range of topics as selected by other students in the seminar.
- Provide / receive feedback to / from other students regarding term paper projects and presentation skills.

Week twelve (March 29, 2012): Student presentations

Week thirteen (April 5, 2012): Student presentations

Week fourteen (April 12, 2012): Student presentations / wrap-up and debriefing

Assignments and grading

Grades in this class will be based on the completion of the following core requirements:

- In-class debate on February 2 (10%)
- Take-home examination due March 27 (30%)
- Participation and facilitation of discussions (20%)
- Term paper (40%)

Performance will be assessed, and grades will be assigned, based on the University of Calgary standards as described in the Faculty of Graduate Studies Calendar.

OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Emergency evacuations:

In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of our classroom, please proceed to the assembly point to be identified on the first day of class.

Deferrals:

If at all possible you must provide *advance* notice to the instructor if you are unable to pass in an assignment or essay on time. All requests for deferral of a course component due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while the student has the physical or emotional problem rather than after recovery. Deferrals will be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. Travel arrangements and misreading of the syllabus are not valid reasons for requesting a deferral. Deferrals will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student.

Please note that requests to defer term work past the end of a term go through the Faculty of Arts Associate Dean (Students), and must be processed by the deadlines that are established in the U of C Calendar. You can find the form you need online:

Deferred Term Work Form:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/defTW.pdf>

You must submit these deferral forms to the Faculty of Arts Associate Dean (Students) through the Student Success Office, 4th Floor, MacEwan Student Centre. Only the Associate Dean approves requests for deferrals which extend beyond the end of a term. Instructors are not involved in such decisions. To make an appointment with the Associate Dean, phone (403) 220-8155.

Ethics Research: Students are advised that any research with human subjects--including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation--must have the approval of the Departmental Ethics Committee. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.

Academic Misconduct: Plagiarism, cheating and other academic misconduct are regarded as serious academic offences. Students are advised to consult the University Calendar which presents a Statement of Intellectual Honesty and definitions and penalties associated with cheating, plagiarism, and other academic misconduct.

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, e.g., outside an instructor's office or the Department main office. Written assignments must be returned to students individually, during class, or during the instructor's office hours; if a student is unable to pick up her/his assignment s/he may provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.

Safewalk: The University of Calgary provides a "safe walk" service to any location on Campus, including the LRT, parking lots, bus zones, and campus housing. For Campus Security/Safewalk call 220-5333. Campus Security can also be contacted from any of the "Help" phones located around Campus.

Academic Accommodation: Students with a disability, who require academic accommodation, need to register with the Disability Resource Centre (MC 295, phone 220-8237). Academic accommodation letters need to be provided to course instructors no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of class. **It is a student's responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre and to request academic accommodation, if required.**

Handing in papers outside of class, return of final papers, and release of final grades:

1. When students are unable to submit papers in class, they should make arrangements to hand in their papers directly to the instructor. Papers will not be accepted in the main Sociology Department office.
2. Final papers will not be returned through the main Sociology Department office. The Freedom of Information and Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place (i.e. outside an instructor's office, the department office etc.). Students who want their final papers returned by mail must make arrangements with the instructor.
3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology Department. They are available only online.