

SOC350: Advanced Topics: Identity Politics

Fall 2006, Term 2

College Hall 313

Professor Erin Davis

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Wednesday 3-4 and by appointment

Class Meeting Times: Generally we will meet Monday 9-11:30am, Tuesday through Thursday 12:30-3:00pm, and Friday 9-11:30am. However not all days fit this pattern and there are two required events that take place outside of this regular schedule. See the attached calendar for more specific details.

Course Description

“Identities are often personal and political projects in which we participate, empowered to greater or lesser extent by resources of experience and ability, culture and social organization.” –Craig Calhoun

This sociology topics course examines the construction, negotiation, and representation of social identities. We will discuss differing theoretical approaches to understanding identity, explore the tensions and conflicts of identification, and investigate the relations between social identities, groups, cultures, and institutions. Sexual identities, cultures, and social movements will be the primary focus. Gender, race/ethnicity, disability and other identifications will also be examined.

This course is reading intensive, theoretically grounded, and may involve controversial readings. You should not take this class if you feel that you are unable to (1) complete the required reading, (2) examine course material from an analytic, sociological perspective, and (3) engage in productive, challenging discussions in a noncombative manner.

Course Requirements

Informed Participation (10%)

This advanced seminar course is designed to promote interaction and exchange, which means your active participation is essential. Most of our time will be spent discussing the material. The quality of your learning and of each class session is highly dependent on completing the reading and coming to class prepared to engage the material.

This course is reading intensive. While readings are not always lengthy, they may be theoretical and dense. Some of the material will be difficult to read but it is imperative that you make every effort to critically read and think about this material thoroughly.

If you come to class unprepared to learn from and to teach your classmates, you do yourself and the rest of the class a great disservice. Students will be evaluated based on the quality of their presence in the classroom. “Quality” here is defined as informed, engaged, and respectful participation in class.

“Quality” participation is impossible to obtain without carefully reading and thinking about the assigned reading before every class, attending class, and interacting respectfully with others in the classroom. You are responsible for all assignments and material covered in class, whether or not you attend and regardless of the reasons for any absence. I will encourage and support your participation in our classroom community, but the final responsibility is yours.

Analytic Reflections (15%)

For each day, you must submit short analytic reflections on the reading via Moodle 1 hour before the beginning of class. For each article, submit a 1-paragraph analysis of how this article relates to the day’s thematic focus. This is not a summary of the article; rather these reflections should examine how specific readings address key issues and questions of the day. Analytic reflections will be graded “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory” and will not be returned. I will look for evidence that you have read carefully and critically and that you have put some thought into your reflections. If reflections receive an “unsatisfactory” evaluation, I will let you know.

Case Study Facilitation and Essay (25%)

We will be examining 3 “case studies”, including the lesbian feminist movement, men’s movements, and the hijab debate. You and possibly one other class member will (co)facilitate one of the case study class meetings.

For the case study essay (5-8 pages), you will analytically explore some aspect of one of the “case studies” in more depth and locate this issue within larger socio-historical contexts, structures of power and privilege, and prevailing (sub)cultural ideologies and debates. You should submit a short description of your essay topic on or before the day that you facilitate. Your essay will be due either October 23rd or October 25th depending on the case study selected. More details will be discussed in class.

Midterm Exam (25%) and Final Exam (25%)

More specifics on these essay exams will be discussed in class.

Other Relevant Information

Moodle

A range of course information is available via moodle. The moodle address is:
<https://secure.cornellcollege.edu/moodle/>

Course Material

Required readings are available either in a Reserve Binder in the library or are accessible via Moodle. You should make a hard copy of all readings and bring the day’s assigned reading to class with you.

Late Work

Late reflections will not be accepted and exams will not be rescheduled without evidence of a serious emergency.

Evaluation and Grade Scale

Evaluation of your work is based on an assessment of the following elements: (1) demonstration of knowledge of material; (2) development of ideas and depth of argument; (3) level of sociological analysis; (4) use of course materials and empirical information; (5) organization, coherence, writing and/or presentation style.

For your final grade, I will use the following scale: A 93-100; A- 90-92; B+ 87-89; B 83-86; B- 80-82; C+ 77-79; C 73-76; C- 70-72; D+ 67-69; D 63-66; D- 60-62; F Below 60

Course Accommodations

I would appreciate hearing from anyone in this class who has a special need. If you would like to request course accommodations for any reason, see me after class or during my office hours within the first 3 days of the course. While I am reasonably sure we can work out whatever arrangement is necessary, course accommodations should be requested before there is a failure to meet course requirements.

Academic Dishonesty

Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Any student in this course who is involved in academic dishonesty (portraying another person's work or ideas as their own, submitting the same or similar papers in more than one course without permission from the course instructors, intentionally facilitating plagiarism, etc.) will not earn credit for the relevant assignments and may be formally charged with academic dishonesty. See the Cornell student handbook, *the Compass*, for more information on academic dishonesty.

Cross-Listings

This course may also contribute to a Women's Studies major/minor.

Reading Schedule

Adjustments in readings and class schedules may be made if needed as we move through the course.

Introduction: Theorizing Identity (8/2)

Gecas, Selection from "Self-Concept" pp. 1-4, 10-17 (moodle)

Calhoun, Selection from "Social Theory and the Politics of Identity" pp. 12-29

Essentialism and Constructionism: The Contested Basis of Identification (8/3)

Hacking, Making Up People (moodle)

Boswell, Revolutions, Universals, and Sexual Categories

Halperin, Sex before Sexuality

Postmodernism: From Identity Politics to Deconstructed Subjects (8/4)

Seidman, Selection from "Deconstructing Queer Theory," (pp.146-153)

Butler, Judith. Selection from "Imitation and Gender Insubordination" (to p. 338)

Stein and Plummer, Selection from "I Can't Even Think Straight" (pp.130-136)

Identity and Culture (8/5)

Nagel, Constructing Ethnicity

Barnes and Mercer, Selection from “Disability Culture” (pp. 515, 522-528, 531-532)

Required Evening Event: Spoken Word Performance, Ami Mattison, 6pm Ratt.

Identity Politics and Performance Activism (8/6)

Guest Speaker: Ami Mattison

No required readings and no reflection required—attend Thursday evening performance

Authenticity (8/9)

Appiah, African Identities

Nagel, False Faces (pp. 81-88 optional)

Maira, *Desis reprazent*: Bhangra Remix and Hip Hop in New York City

The Structural Production of Selves: Presenting and Narrating the Self (8/10)

Goffman, Selection from Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (pp. 17-21,34-51,70-76,242-243, 252-255)

Stein, Being Lesbian

Cover, My Performed Identity (moodle)

The Structural Production of Selves: Presenting and Narrating the Self, Part 2 (8/11)

Atlantic Monthly, New Way to Be Mad (moodle)

Putting Your Best Face Forward (moodle)

Mason-Schrock, Transsexuals Narrative Construction of the True Self

Paradoxes of Identity (8/12)

Weeks, History, Desire, Identity

Hekman, Identity Crisis

Humanities & Arts Interest Group Lecture – “Crazy for This Democracy: Psychoanalysis, African-American Autobiography, and Interdisciplinary Improvisations,” Catherine Stewart, 11:10 a.m., Hedges Conference Room.

Identity Conflicts: Boundary Negotiations (8/16)

Williams, Being Queer, Being Black (moodle)

Williams, Race as Process

Finkelstein, Koyama, and Wehman, A Fest in Distress

Intra-Group Conflicts: Identity Politics in the Lesbian-Feminist Community (Case Study #1) (8/17)

Stein, Sisters and Queers

Rust, The Pink and Blue Herring

Healy, Pain without Gain

Not Just the “Other”: Collective Identity Work in the Maintenance of Privilege (Case Study #2) (8/18)

Schwalbe, Men’s Work as Identity Work
Ferber, Racial Warriors and Weekend Warriors
Kimmel, Globalization and Its Mal(e)contents

Politics of Recognition/Politics of Difference (8/19)

Taylor, Selection from “Politics of Recognition” (pp 25-44, 51-63)
Appiah, Identity, Authenticity, Survival
Tamir, Siding with the Underdogs

Politics of Recognition/Politics of Difference, Part 2 (8/20)

Fraser, Rethinking Recognition
Yoshino, The Pressure to Cover (moodle)

Tensions of Multiculturalism: The Hijab Debate (Case Study # 3) (8/23)

Delphy, Gender, Race, and Racism: The Ban of the Islamic Headscarf in France
Ruby, Listening to the Voices of Hijab (moodle)
Maruoka-Ng, Joining the Hijibeers Club: Construction of Pan-Islamic Identity... (moodle)
Carle, Hijab and the Limits of French Secular Republicanism (moodle)

Collective Social Movements: Debates over the Relevance and Centrality of Identity (8/24)

Gamson, Must Identity Movements Self-Destruct?
Cohen, Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens
Mohanty, The Epistemic Status of Cultural Identity
Bernstein, The Strategic Uses of Identity

SOC350: Identity Politics

Fall 2006, Term 2 Course Topics and Meeting Times

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2	3	4	5	6
Introduction: Theorizing Identity	Essentialism and Constructionism	Postmodernism	Identity and Culture	Identity Politics & Performance
9:00-9:30 1:30-3:00	12:30-3:00	1:00-3:00	9:00-11:30 Spoken Word Performance 6pm (required)	9:00-11:30
9	10	11	12	13
Authenticity	Structural Production of Selves	Structural Production of Selves (cont.)	Paradoxes of Identity HAIG lecture 11:10 Hedges (required)	Midterm Exam
9:00-11:30	12:30-3:00	12:30-3:00	1:00-3:00	
16	17	18	19	20
Identity Conflicts	Intra-Group Conflicts	Not Just the Other	Politics of Recognition/ Difference	Politics of Recog/Difference (cont.)
9:00-11:30	12:30-3:00	12:30-3:00	12:30-3:00	9:00-11:30
23	24	25		
Tensions of Multiculturalism	Collective Social Movements	Final Exam		
9:00-11:30	12:30-3:00			

