SOCY 645: SELF-CONCEPT: RACE, CLASS, AND IDENTITY

Spring 2015
Section 0101
Thursday 3:30pm-6:00pm
Art-Sociology Building 1101

Professor: Dr. Rashawn Ray
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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 3:30pm-5:00pm or by appointment
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COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course will provide an introduction and overview to sociological perspectives to self-concept and identity theories with a special emphasis on racial/ethnic and classed identities. We will draw upon classic as well as cutting-edge approaches of the self, self-presentations, and evaluations and consequences of the self. We will also review the major identity theories (personal, role, structural, and social). This course will view self and identity as both social products (arising from the world surrounding us) and social forces (having an impact on the society which helped create them). As mentioned above, we pay particular attention to the social psychological dimensions of structural inequality with a special focus on the antecedents and consequences of individuals’ perceptions, explanations, and evaluations of racial and class inequality. We primarily focus on the self-concept, presentations of the self, racial/ethnic identities, and classed identities.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Readings—Eight books and several articles are required reading for this course. The books are available at the UMD Bookstore. In addition to the seven books listed below, you will select a book from the “Classic Books” section at the end of the syllabus. You will be expected to read the assigned readings before the assigned date and come to class prepared to discuss the material. All other readings are available on line, preferably at www.jstor.org.


2. **Attendance**—Class attendance is expected. Students are also expected to be on time and not leave early. Some of the material covered in class will not be covered by the readings. Therefore, attendance is vital to discuss the connection between theories and concepts and to be prepared for the assignments. If you are late to class or leave early, you will be marked absent for half of the class. If you miss class, you are responsible for the material covered in class and announcements made in class.

3. **Active Participation**—I want to hear your responses, opinions, and comments. I strongly encourage you to share your insightful, as well as mind-boggling thoughts. All viewpoints are welcome in class and all of us will be respectful of each other as we discuss these issues candidly. A large part of the active participation grade will be based on the questions you submit for discussion and your participation in class.

4. **Weekly Discussion Questions**—Each week students will submit two discussion questions to be used for class discussion. These questions should be grounded in the readings for that week, preferably with a theoretical focus, though they may address a specific reading or empirical example; be as specific as possible to get the most out of the discussion. Questions are due on Wednesday by 3:30pm.

5. **Discussion Leader**—Once during the semester, each student will lead class discussion. This student will write a 2-3 page (double-spaced) document that will be used as the introduction to the class for that week. This document should be emailed to me by 3:30pm the day before class (Wednesday). The student will then be expected to meet with me before class to discuss the document and discussion questions from the rest of the students in class.

5. **Book Review**—Students will be expected to select and read a book from the “Classic Books” section and write a book review that would be suitable for the *American Journal of Sociology*. This review should be no more than 750 words. Refer to the AJS website for examples. Students will also be expected to give a 5-10 minute overview of the book in class. The review is due by Monday, March 25 by noon.

6. **Final Paper**—Students will be expected to write a 15-20 page final paper. The paper should be double-spaced with your name, date, and title at the top. In addition to the content, students will be graded for correct grammar and spelling. This paper should serve as the front end and methods section of a paper you plan to submit for publication. This paper should preferably draw upon theories rooted in self and identity that we discussed in class. In doing so, this paper should incorporate relevant theory and include a literature review, a hypothesis or expectation section,
and a methods section detailing the specific variables to be analyzed and the rationale for including them. The final paper is due on Monday, May 13 by noon.

Leading up to the final paper:
1) Students will submit a one page, double-spaced methods statement with research questions, hypotheses/expectations, and the theory that will be utilized in the paper. This assignment is due Monday, March 4 by noon.

2) Students will submit a 5 page, double-spaced theoretical overview of the theory chosen for their paper with hypotheses/expectations. This assignment is due on Monday, April 8 by noon.

**GRADING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Discussion Questions</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion Leader</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methods Statement</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theoretical Overview</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>50%</td>
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**Total Possible:** 100%

**Final Grade Calculations:**

- A+ 97-100%
- B+ 87-89%
- A 93-96%
- B 83-86%
- A- 90-92%
- B- 80-82%
- C+ 77-79%
- C 73-76%
- C- 70-72%

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**—Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated in any manner. Students will receive an automatic F in the class and be reported to the Honors Council. Do not copy others’ work or help others cheat. Do not falsify or lie about emergencies or provide false documentation for any matter.

**SPECIAL NEEDS**

Students with special needs that might impact their ability to complete the requirements for the course should inform me as soon as possible and provide appropriate documentation. This information will be kept confidential and I will do my best to accommodate special needs.
COURSE SCHEDULE (read in the order articles are listed)

01/29 Self and Society


02/05 Self-concept


Suggested Readings


**02/12 Presentation of Self**


**02/19 Presentations of Self and Working Class Identities**


**02/26 Presentations of Self and Racialization**

03/05 Identities: Personal, Role, Structural and Social


Suggested Readings


03/12 Racial Identities I


03/16-22 SPRING BREAK

03/26 Racial Identities II


Suggested Readings


04/02 Ethnic Identities I


Suggested Readings


04/09 Ethnic Identities II


*Suggested Readings*


04/16 Race- and Middle Class Identities


04/23 Race and Working Class Identities


04/30 Self-esteem and Stress


*Suggested Readings*


05/07 Consequences of Marginalized Identities


Suggested Readings


**Responses to Marginalized Identities**

Classic Books


