

Sociology 601
Sociology of Identity
Fall 2013

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 2:00 to 4:45 on Tuesday afternoons, in room 921, Social Sciences.

Components

The course will be organized into two 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 and students 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, 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:

- Ethnicity and race
- Nationalism and cosmopolitanism
- Gender and sexuality
- Social class and consumption

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, typically through the e-Resources of the University of Calgary Library. Readings are listed below. **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 (5 weeks)

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 social construction of communities and individuals.
- Gain insight into the instructor’s process of research and claims-making.
- Develop skills to participate actively in group discussions.
- Build rapport among your graduate student peers.
- Practice the integration and synthesis of knowledge through completing a take-home examination requiring critical and creative thinking.

Week one (September 10): Introduction

- 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.

Note that in our first session, we will review a two-page document from the instructor – “Identity: twelve initial propositions” – to which we will refer in subsequent weeks.

Week two (September 17): Concepts and conflicts

- Brubaker, Rogers & Frederick Cooper (2000) Beyond “Identity”. *Theory and Society*, 29 (1) 1-47.
- 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.
- 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.
- Silva, Jennifer (2012) Constructing Adulthood in an Age of Uncertainty. *American Sociological Review*, 77 (4) 505-522.

Week three (September 24): Community

- Cohen, Anthony (1985) *The Symbolic Construction of Community*. London: Routledge.

Week four (October 1): Individual subjects

- Freud, Sigmund (1930) *Civilization and its Discontents*. New York: Norton.
- Foucault, Michel (1982) The Subject and Power. *Critical Inquiry*, 8 (4) 777-795.
- McLean, Scott (1997) Objectifying and Naturalizing Individuality: A Study of Adult Education in the Canadian Arctic. *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 22 (1) 1-29.

Note that the first take-home examination will be distributed at the end of class on October 1, and will be due (submitted via e-mail to the instructor) prior to the start of class on October 8.

Week five (October 8): Making claims in the sociology of identity

- 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 (2013) Education for freedom? Living Room Learning and the Liberal Arts of Government. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 62 (2) 159-179.

Part II (7 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 take turns leading such discussions.
- Provide feedback to your graduate student peers.
- Practice the integration and synthesis of knowledge through completing a take-home examination requiring critical and creative thinking.

Week six (October 15): Ethnicity and race

- 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.
- Pager, Devah, Bruce Western & Bart Bonikowski (2009) Discrimination in a Low-Wage Labor Market: A Field Experiment. *American Sociological Review*, 74 (5) 777-799.
- Jamil, Uzma & Cecile Rousseau (2012) Subject Positioning, Fear, and Insecurity in South Asian Muslim Communities in the War on Terror Context. *Canadian Review of Sociology*, 49 (4) 370-388.
- 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.

Week seven (October 22): Nationalism and cosmopolitanism

- 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.
- Snee, Helene (2013) Framing the Other: Cosmopolitanism and the Representation of Difference in Overseas Gap Year Narratives. *British Journal of Sociology*, 64 (1) 142-162.
- Mythen, Gabe (2012) Identities in the Third Space? Solidity, Elasticity and Resilience amongst Young British Pakistani Muslims. *British Journal of Sociology*, 63 (3) 393-411.

Week eight (October 29): Gender and sexuality

- 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.

Week nine (November 5): Social class and consumption

- 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.

Week Ten (no class on November 12 due to University of Calgary holiday)

Note that guidelines for the “book review / article reviews” assignment will be distributed on or before November 5. The assignment will require students to select and review one book or 2-3 articles relating to the sociology of identity. The review essay will be due on November 15 at noon.

Week eleven (November 19): second take-home examination

The second take-home examination will begin in the class session on November 19 (attendance mandatory), and will be due (submitted via e-mail to the instructor) by noon on November 24.

Week twelve (November 26): course wrap-up

This session will be devoted to the synthesis and discussion of the course. No required readings. Note that there will be no class session on December 3.

Assignments and grading

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

- First take-home examination due October 8 (30%)
- Book review / article reviews due November 15 (15%)
- Second take-home examination due November 24 (30%)
- Participation in, and facilitation of, class discussions (25%)

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.

Additional resources

In addition to the required readings listed on a weekly basis, the following review articles may provide further background information and useful 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.
- Callero, Peter (2003) The Sociology of the Self. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 29:115–133.
- Cerulo, Karen (1997) Identity Construction: New Issues, New Directions. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 23: 385-409.
- Eder, Donna & Sandi Nenga (2003) Socialization in Adolescence. *Handbook of Social Psychology*, John Delemater (Ed.). New York: Kluwer Academic, pp. 157-182).
- 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.
- Howard, Judith (2000) Social Psychology of Identities. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26: 367-393.
- Lamont, Michèle & Virág Molnár (2002) The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28: 167-195.
- Owens, Timothy, Dawn Robinson & Lynn Smith-Lovin (2010) Three Faces of Identity. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 36: 477-499.
- Nesbit, Tom (2005) Social Class and Adult Education. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 106: 5-14.
- Sanders, Jimmy (2002) Ethnic Boundaries and Identity in Plural Societies. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28: 327-357.
- Schrock, Douglas & Michael Schwalbe (2009) Men, Masculinity, and Manhood Acts. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 35: 277-295.
- Zukin, Sharon & Jennifer Smith Maguire (2004) Consumers and Consumption. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 30: 173-197.

OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

1. The main Sociology Department office does not deal with any course-related matters. Please speak directly to your instructor.
2. **Academic Misconduct:** Please refer to the website listed below for information on University of Calgary policies on Plagiarism/Cheating/Other Academic Misconduct:
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-2-1.html>
3. **Protection of Privacy:** The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPP) legislation does not allow students to retrieve any course material from public places. Anything that requires handing back will be returned directly during class or office hours. "If students are unable to pick up their assignments from the instructor, they provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment."
4. **Ethical 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.
5. **Deferrals:** If possible, please provide advance notice to the instructor if you are unable to write an exam or complete/turn-in assignments 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 health issue 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. If you have missed a test for a legitimate reason, the instructor can require you to write a "make up" test as close in time to the original test as possible or can choose to transfer the percentage weight to another course component. If the instructor schedules a "make up" test for you, its date and location will be at the convenience of the Department of Sociology. Deferred Final Exam Form: Please note that requests to defer a Registrar scheduled final exam are dealt with through the Registrar's Office. Further information about deadlines, and where paperwork should be taken, is available on the form, which can be found at: http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/Sp_Su_DFE_App.pdf
Deferred Term Work Form: Deferral of term work past the end of a term also requires a form to be filled out. It's available at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/defTW.pdf>
Once an extension date has been agreed between instructor and student, the form should be taken to the Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (SS 110) for approval by an Associate Dean (Students).
6. **Student Representation:** The 2013-14 Students' Union VP Academic is [name]; email: suvpaca@ucalgary.ca. The Faculty of Arts has four SU representatives who may be contacted at any of the following email addresses: arts1@ucalgary.ca, arts2@ucalgary.ca, arts3@ucalgary.ca,

and arts4@ucalgary.ca. You may also wish to contact the Student Ombudsperson for help with a variety of University-related matters: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds/role>

7. **Emergency Evacuation:** In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom, please proceed to the assembly point at {*location*}. Please check these assembly point locations for your other classes at: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>
8. **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.
9. **Academic Accommodation:** Students with a disability, who require academic accommodation, must register with the Disability Resource Centre (MC 293, phone 403-220-8237). Please provide academic accommodation letters to the instructor as early in the semester as possible and no later than two weeks after the course begins.

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

1. All assignments for this course will be submitted directly to the instructor via e-mail. Papers will not be accepted in the main Sociology Department office.
2. All feedback regarding assignments for this course will be provided by the instructor via e-mail.
3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology Department. They are available only online.