

Irvine
Fall
2000

THE SELF IN MODERN SOCIETY

SOCY 3151-002

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00-12:15

Hale 230

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Who *are* you? How do you know? Does that sense of yourself exist in your brain, your heart, or somewhere else? How do you appear to others? How do you remain recognizable--to yourself as well as to others--but still manage to change in many ways? How do you lead a meaningful life? These are some of the most intriguing questions that human beings face. This course does not promise answers, and it may even raise more questions. But it will change the way you think about self-identity and what it means to be a person.

Few ideas in modern societies are as taken for granted as the idea that people possess selves. But "the self" is itself an idea, and ideas have social origins, histories, and consequences. This course is organized around exploring these origins, histories, and consequences.

COURSE OUTLINE

Part I

Sociohistorical context

- *Medieval and Early Modern History of Identity*
- *Identity in Modern History*
- *New Forms of Mental Life: The Nineteenth Century*
- *Romanticism and Selfhood*
- *Postmodern Perspectives*

Part II

Modes of Selfhood

- *The Dramaturgical Perspective*
- *Impression Management*
- *The Self as Story*
- *The Self, the Body, and Illness*
- *Therapy, Psychopharmacology, and Technologies of the Self*

COURSE PROTOCOL

This is an upper-division course that many students find quite challenging. The course will require you to do a *considerable* amount of reading. You must keep current with the lectures, even if you must miss a class. In addition, you must come to class on time and stay through the entire class. Arriving late or leaving early is disruptive to me and your classmates. Once class begins, please conduct yourself in a professional manner and refrain from sleeping, talking, reading the newspaper, or engaging in other forms of rudeness. Please turn off beepers and cellular phones during class.

No make-up quizzes will be offered, and no late papers accepted. I will make exceptions to this rule in the case of legitimate emergency (sudden, serious illness, death in the family, accident, or arrest). If you have such an emergency, please inform Mr. Krueger or me at your first opportunity.

If you cannot do the readings, attend class regularly, and abide by these protocols, please do not take this class. ***However***, *If you have any condition, such as a physical, mental, or emotional disability, that will make it difficult for you to carry out the work outlined in this syllabus, please notify me during the first two weeks of the course so that we may make appropriate arrangements.*

COURSE MATERIALS

You may purchase the following books at the UMC bookstore:

- Frank, Arthur W. 1995. *The Wounded Storyteller: Body, Illness, and Ethics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Irvine, Leslie. 1999. *Codependent Forevermore: The Invention of Self in a Twelve Step Group*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kramer, Peter D. 1997. *Listening to Prozac*. New York: Penguin.
- McAdams, Dan P. 1993. *The Stories We Live By: Personal Myths and the Making of the Self*. New York: Guilford Press.

Seven copies of each of the following articles are on 24-hour reserve in Norlin:

- Baumeister, Roy F. 1986. Chapters Three and Four ("Medieval and Early Modern History of Identity" and "Identity in Modern History") Pp. 29-95 in *Identity: Cultural Change and the Struggle for the Self*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gagnon, John. 1984. "Success = Failure/Failure = Success." Pp. 97-108 in *Romanticism and Culture*. Edited by H.W. Matalene. Columbia SC: Camden House.
- Gagnon, John. 1992. "The Self, Its Voices, and Their Discord." Pp. 221-243 in *Investigating Subjectivity*. Edited by Carolyn Ellis and Michael Flaherty. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Gergen, Kenneth. 1991. Selections from *The Saturated Self: Dilemmas of Identity in Contemporary Life*. New York: Basic Books.
- Goffman, Erving. 1959. Selection from *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Garden City NY: Anchor Books

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Three Essays

On the first day of class, you will write a one-page, ungraded essay answering this question: *What does it mean to say that the self has social origins, histories, and consequences?* Towards the end of the course, I will return this essay to you. You will then write a three-to-five page revision of the paper, including a short assessment of how your understanding of the self has changed in the course. Turn in this revised paper--along with the original--at the last class meeting. On the date of the final exam, I will return these to you. You will then learn your grade, including the revised essay. If, on that date, you have attained 90 points or more (equal to a grade of A in the class) you are exempt from the final. Students with 90 or fewer points must take the exam.

Note: if you add the class after the first day, please write an essay once you know you have been added. Turn it in to Mr. Krueger or me immediately after adding the course.

Twice during the semester, you must write a summary report. This is an essay, of seven pages maximum, that integrates the material from reading and lectures up to that point on the schedule. You will receive a style guide for writing during the first weeks of the course. See the course schedule below for due dates.

- *Use these questions to guide your first summary report:* What is the social history of the self? Why does this history begin with modernity? What makes the modern self “modern”? What are the causes and characteristics of the postmodern self?
- *Use these questions to guide your second summary report:* How can we describe the self as “narrative”? What is the evidence for the claim that the self is narrative? How do people put together self-narratives?

The first and second summary reports are worth 20 points each, and the final essay is worth 30 points. Together, writing potentially contributes 70 points towards your grade.

Three quizzes

Three times during the semester, we will have in-class quizzes. These will consist of ten multiple choice, true/false, and fill-in-the-blank questions. Dates for the quizzes will be determined by weekly drawings in class. Each Tuesday, a student will determine, by random selection, whether we will have a quiz on the Thursday of that week..

Each of the three quizzes is worth 10 points, for a total of 30 possible points.

Final Exam

If you have 90 or more points by the date of the final, you are exempt from taking the exam. The final will consist of multiple-choice, short answer, and essay questions.

DAY	DATE	READING
Tues.	8/29	Introduction to the course
Thurs.	8/31	Baumeister, Ch. 3, pp. 29-33 (up to "Transition...")
Tues.	9/5	Baumeister, Ch. 3, pp. 33-46 (from "Transition..." to "Puritanism")
Thurs.	9/7	Baumeister, Ch. 3, pp. 46 to end
Tues.	9/12	Baumeister, Ch. 4, pp. 59-76 (up to "The Twentieth Century")
Thurs.	9/14	Baumeister, Ch. 4, pp. 76 to end
Tues.	9/19	Gagnon, "The Self, Its Voices, and Their Discord"
Thurs.	9/21	Gagnon, "Success=Failure/Failure=Success"
Tues.	9/26	Gergen, pp. 28-47
Thurs.	9/28	Gergen, Ch. 3
Tues.	10/3	Goffman, "The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life" <i>Summary Reports due today.</i>
Thurs.	10/5	McAdams, pp. 1-39
Tues.	10/10	<i>Fall Break</i>
Thurs.	10/12	McAdams, pp. 40-90
Tues.	10/17	McAdams, pp. 91-132
Thurs.	10/19	McAdams, pp. 133-193
Tues.	10/24	McAdams, pp. 192-250
Thurs.	10/26	Irvine, pp. 1-42
Tues.	10/31	Irvine, pp. 43-83
Thurs.	11/2	Irvine, pp. 85-122
Tues.	11/7	Irvine, Ch. 7
Thurs.	11/9	Irvine, Ch. 8 & Conclusion. <i>Summary Reports due today.</i>
Tues.	11/14	Frank, preface and Ch. 1
Thurs.	11/16	Frank, Ch. 2
Tues.	11/21	Frank, Chs. 3&4
Thurs.	11/23	<i>Happy Thanksgiving!</i>
Tues.	11/28	Frank, Chs. 5&6
Thurs.	11/30	Frank, Chs. 7&8
Tues.	12/5	Kramer, Introduction & Ch. 1
Thurs.	12/7	Kramer, Chs. 3&4
Tues.	12/12	Kramer, Chs. 5&6 (Optional: Chs. 7&8)
Thurs.	12/14	Kramer, Ch. 9. <i>Final essays due today.</i>
Tues.	12/19	<i>Grade notification and Final exam, 7:30-10:30 a.m.</i>