



GOUCHER COLLEGE

Welch Center for Graduate and Professional Studies

Syllabus – Dynamics of Identity

Course Number.....CSP 656
Credits.....3
Semester.....Spring 2018 Online
Instructor:.....Rita Moonsammy, Ph.D.
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Welcome to our Course!

"Identity" is a key term and concept for our field. We have a tacit, yet rarely articulated, understanding of it. In this course, we will attempt to answer the questions: How does a person's identity develop and change? Where does "identity" fit into "culture"? How does our unspoken definition of the concept influence our approach to cultural sustainability projects? What are the variants of the concept of identity, and what are their historical, philosophical, and disciplinary roots? What assumptions may we be making about ourselves and the people we seek to assist in pursuing their cultural aims and needs? How does our own identity influence how we approach and interact with them?

In order to work effectively with our constituents to sustain and/or change the valued elements of their culture, we must better understand how and why individual and group identities are formed, altered, recreated, expressed, and performed. What are the biological, emotional, social, and contextual influences? How is it expressed? In this course, we will attempt to answer those questions through readings (articles, analyses, biographies, and autobiographies); films, discussions, ethnography, collaborative exercises in problem solving, and self-reflection. Through these experiences, we will become better prepared to work with groups and individuals who are facing challenges to identity.

Main Course Topics

1. Theories of self and identity
2. Identity and culture
3. Biological and gender influences on identity
4. Contexts for identity: family, community, occupation, religion, migration, place
5. Expressions of identity
6. Politics of Identity
7. Practical applications

Departmental Learning Outcomes

This course is aligned with two departmental learning outcomes, listed below. Students will meet departmental learning outcomes through successful completion of assignments and activities in core

and elective courses. A list of all departmental learning outcomes can be found at:

<http://www.goucher.edu/graduate-programs/ma-in-cultural-sustainability/curriculum>

1. MACS **Outcome 2:** Exhibit professional and ethical responsibility in managing partnerships that foster community self-determination and empower community efforts in cultural documentation, preservation, revitalization and social equity. (MACS2 Ethics)
2. MACS **Outcome 5:** Identify and demonstrate a range of professional management skills that contribute to organizational sustainability such as financial skills, communications, and leadership through collaboration, teamwork, and consensus building. (MACS5 Management)

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, you will be able to do the following:

1. Examine the operations of identity issues in one's own life as a basis for awareness of people and communities that are grappling with challenges to either, or both, perceived and self-identity.
2. Manifest awareness of and empathy for the identity struggles of others.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the different meanings and uses that are ascribed to the word "identity."
4. Describe some of the biological elements that contribute to a personal sense of identity as well as public perceptions and attributions of identity.
5. Inventory the ways that identity is expressed, e.g., language, costume/dress, symbols – both material and verbal, narrative, music, décor, etc.
7. Analyze the dynamics of identity formation, alteration, adaptation, public perception, change, and challenge.
8. Appraise the challenges and conflicts that are implicitly based in identity issues.
9. Create methods of applying the knowledge gained in the course to specific situations that may be encountered in our projects as cultural workers.

Course Format

- Online meetings
- Assigned readings
- AV lectures and assignments
- Asynchronous discussions
- Weekly blog entries
- VoiceThread presentations and discussions
- Short Written Reports
- Final project
- In-class presentation of final project
- Online links and reading resources

Assignment Instructions

Readings: You are expected to complete all assigned readings within the given time frame. In order to achieve the goals of the course, the materials should be thoughtfully considered, even when there is no written assignment pertaining specifically to them. Some weeks the reading load is lighter; it would be a good idea to begin reading assignments for later weeks then to help balance out the load. The "Recommended" resources are optional, but included so that you can broaden or deepen your knowledge of the topic if you choose. If there is a particular topic you would like to pursue with other readings, let me know. With all readings, you should keep in mind the question "How does this apply to work in Cultural Sustainability?"

Most of the required books are available used at very low prices through Amazon.com. Pdf's or links are included on the course site for most required articles and some of the recommended ones. Others are available online through JStor or other databases.

Blog: The purpose of the weekly Blog assignments is to encourage reflection on the topics and concepts of the course by examining your own experiences, opinions, and values. Such reflection will help you to internalize the concepts to be studied in the course and to develop a phenomenological perspective on your work. In a few cases, there will be an assigned length to your weekly blog, but in most cases you are free to write as much or little as you like about the assigned topic, as well as to address other topics that interest you, or simply make comments on your thoughts and experiences regarding identity. You are encouraged to show your integration of the various topics and concepts from the readings through your blogging. The blog will not be considered a formal document. You can be creative with it, both in your writing -- poetry, passages from literature -- etc. and your inclusion of other AV elements.

You are encouraged to read your classmates posts. This has been one of the most rewarding aspects of the course in previous years because you can really learn from the experiences of your peers. If you do not want your blog post to be available to others, you can send it to rather than post. This is to protect what you consider private while encouraging you to dig deep into your own experience and thoughts.

You will be graded on the depth of reflection and analysis that your posts show, the completion of all assignments, evidence of the integration of course concepts into your reflection, and the creativity that you demonstrate. The weekly blog entry is due Sunday of each week.

Discussion Forum: The purpose of these assignments is to encourage and facilitate interaction among the students, and between the students and instructor. Your posts should address the assignments but may also bring in ideas and applications that may not be addressed directly in the assignment. You are required to comment on the posts of at least two of your classmates in every Discussion Forum. Your comments on your peers' work should be polite, substantive, and concise. Encouragement is collegial, but real thought is most helpful to your classmates.

You will be graded on the acuity and completeness of your posts, the appropriateness of your comments, the degree to which they reflect what you are learning in the course, and the quality of your writing, i.e., spelling, grammar, sentence structure, clarity, etc. Discussion entries are due by the Saturday of each week, but should be posted as early as possible in the week so that others will have time to comment.

General Discussion Forum: The purpose of this component is to provide a place for students and instructor to voluntarily comment on and discuss their thoughts and ideas about the course readings and topics. This is not a graded component, but your level of participation in the course can be enhanced by your contributions here. .

Online meetings: The purpose of the Zoom sessions is to encourage face-to-face interaction, increase the awareness of our class as a learning community, provide access to the knowledge of peers, and broaden our shared knowledge bank. You will be expected to prepare for the sessions by completing the assigned readings (or other tasks) and formulating questions or comments. For review sessions, you should review the topics that have been covered in the preceding weeks, identifying and articulating concepts; examining your own progress and needs; and participate in discussion.

You will be graded on your level of participation and on the thoughtfulness and quality of critique of your comments. Attendance at the online meetings is NOT optional. If you have a compelling reason to miss a session, it is important for you to inform me beforehand in order to avoid having your grade reduced. Although the sessions will be recorded for you to view when you have missed a session, active participation is important for your learning and your grade. If you miss a session and watch the recording instead, you must post comments on the discussion in the General Discussion Forum.

Presentations: For all presentations, in class or VoiceThread, you will be graded on the quality of preparation, clarity, and conciseness of your presentation.

VoiceThread Presentations:

Introductory Presentation: Create a two-to-three minute presentation answering the question "Who Am I"? Introduce yourself, using any of the categories or concepts from the readings or otherwise. Include a photograph or picture that represents you and a key aspect of what you consider to be your identity. It does not have to be a photo of yourself. You will use this image for all your VoiceThread presentations. Watch the presentations of your classmates and make comments or ask questions.

Focus Group Presentation: Create a two-to-three minute presentation in which you identify the group that you have decided to focus on in your Final Project. Describe it and explain why you have chosen it. Comment on the entries of your classmates.

Symbolic Expressions Report: In a five-minute VoiceThread, informally present your findings on the important symbolic expressions of the group that you have chosen to work with for your Final Project. Explain how this reflects the ideas presented in the readings. Your presentation may include images or video, but does not have to. You will be graded on the quality of your research and reporting, including description of the form and meaning of the phenomena that you report on and the effectiveness of your presentation, i.e., clarity, conciseness, organization, and deportment.

Response to Acts of Faith. Describe an "aha" moment you had while reading Acts of Faith. Explain what you read that caused the response, why it meant so much to you, and how it might change your understanding of "identity". and your anticipated professional work.

In-Class Presentation:

Final Project Report: In online class, formally present your Final Project in visual form, i.e., PowerPoint or another such program. Your report should include all the elements, concisely stated and presented, required in the description of the Final Project below. It should take no more than seven minutes. You will be graded on the quality of your oral presentation and visual materials as well as completeness, clarity, articulation, composition, and deportment.

Written Reports:

Identity Politics Report: Find a report from a current source (online, magazine, newspaper, etc.) that illustrates an event based on Identity politics. Provide a link for your classmates and include your commentary about why you choose it and its specific relevance to the unit.

Interview Report: In one page, report on the interview you conduct with a member of the group (or individual) that you will focus on in your Final Project. Include the time, place, setting, tone, rapport, important information, and your assessment of the interaction. Deposit in the DropBox by April 28.

Final Project

Choose One:

1. In a minimum of twenty pages, not including bibliography, report on a symbolic expression of identity of an individual or group. Follow the symbol, e.g., language and genres of language, clothing, music, dance, festival, ritual, sites, sports, customs, etc., into the culture through written and ethnographic research. Explain the history and meaning of the expression/symbol for the subject/s, their perception of its meaning and value, in expressing their identity and encouraging community cohesion, as well as their idea of how others perceive their identity and how the symbol helps or hurts that perception and their place in society. Gather responses from people who are not of that culture on how they perceive the group or individual and the meaning of the symbol. Finally, analyze the importance, and potential problematics, of the symbolic expression in sustaining the culture of the group. You will be graded on the quality of your writing (grammar, spelling, punctuation, paragraph structure, etc.) the completeness of the assignment, and the clarity of your presentation.
2. In a minimum of twenty pages, not including bibliography, report on the work of at least two entities, e.g., non-profit organizations, government agencies, church groups, hospital/health programs, etc., with a cultural or identity group. Describe the impact of the cultural change on the sense of identity of the individual/group. Gather information about the group and its culture, as well as its sense of identity, through written sources as well as ethnographic fieldwork. Include information about expressions of identity that are important to the group. Provide a background of the intervening entity, its structure and methods. Through interviews, assess its perception of the cultural identity and needs of the group and its methodology for helping it. Finally, assess the work and success of the organization with the group, and propose changes that may make it more effective, in light of your knowledge of the culture and identity needs of the group. You will be graded on the quality of your writing (grammar, spelling, punctuation, paragraph structure, etc.,) the completeness of the assignment, and the clarity of your presentation.
3. You may propose a topic for your final project instead of one of the two described above. The topic and your development of it must, however, include ethnographic research of a particular cultural group

and examination of a critical issue of identity. In order to get approval of your topic, you must present a proposal to me before the first assignment that deals with your final paper is due, i.e., Week Four VoiceThread when you have to identify the group that you've chosen to focus on in your paper. The paper will be graded on the quality of your writing (grammar, spelling, punctuation, paragraph structure, etc.,) the completeness of the assignment, and the clarity of your presentation.

Required Readings

Textbook/s:

Books:

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *Between the World and Me*. New York: Random House, 2015.

Gergen, Kenneth. *The Saturated Self: Dilemmas of identity in Modern Life*. New York: Basic Books, 1991.

Kuchta, David. *Memoirs of a Steelworker*. Easton, PA: Canal History and Technology Press, 1995.

Lahiri, Jhumpa. *The Namesake*. New York: Houghton-Mifflin, 2003.

Lawler, Steph. *Identity: Sociological Perspectives*. Second Edition. Malden MA: Polity Press, 2014. (Selected chapters.)

Meyerhof, Barbara. *Number Our Days*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978.

Patel, Eboo. *Acts of Faith: The Story of an American Muslim, the Struggle for the Soul of a Generation*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2007.

CHOOSE ONE:

Robison, John Elder. *Look Me in the Eye*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2008.

Wiley, Lianne Holliday. *Pretending to Be Normal*. Philadelphia; Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2015.

Chapters:

Bourdieu, Pierre. "Structures and the Habitus." *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

LeDoux, Joseph. "The Big One," and "Seeking the Self." *The Synaptic Self: How Our Brains Become Who We Are*. New York: Penguin Books, 2003. (Available for download on the course page.)

Articles:

Abufarha, Nasser. "Land of Symbols: Cactus, Poppies, Orange and Olive Trees in Palestine" *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*. (2008) 15:3, 343-368,

Beale, Claire Louise. "Gender Trouble, Resistance and the Will to Power: Experiences and Societal Perceptions of the Tattooed Female Body." M.A. Thesis. College of Arts and Law Graduate School, University of Birmingham, September 2013.

Beck, Julie. "Life Stories," *The Atlantic Magazine*, August 10, 2015. [hit;s://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2015/08/life-stories-narrative-psychology-redemption-mental-health/400796/](https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2015/08/life-stories-narrative-psychology-redemption-mental-health/400796/)

Currans, Elizabeth. "Claiming Deviance and Honoring Community: Creating Resistant Spaces in U.S. Dyke Marches." *Feminist Formations*. Volume 24, Issue 1, Spring 2012, pp. 73-101

Davalos, Karen Mary. "La Quinceanera": Making Gender and Ethnic Identities." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*. Vol.16, No.2/3. Gender, Nations, and Nationalisms (1996): 101-127.

Flores, Richard R. "The Corrido and the Emergence of Texas Mexican Identity." *The Journal of American Folklore*. Vol. 105, No. 416 (Spring, 1992): 166-182.

Hochman, Oshrat and Sibylle Heilbrunn. "I Am Not a German Jew: I Am a Jew with a German Passport': German-Jewish Identification Among Jewish Germans and Jewish German Israelis." *Identities*. <http://doi.org/10.1080/1070289x.2016.1213133>Desjarlais (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site..

"It Was Just Like Beverly Hills." *Riverfront Times*.

Johnstone, Christopher. "Disability and Identity: Personal Constructions and Formalized Supports." *Disability Studies Quarterly*, Fall 2004, Volume 24, No. 4

Kapchan, Deborah. "Moroccan Female Performers: Defining the Social Body." *The Journal of American Folklore*. Vol. 107, No. 423. Bodylore (Winter 1994): 82-105.

Legerski, Elizabeth Miklya, Marie Cornwall and Brock O'Neil. "Changing Locus of Control: Steelworkers Adjusting to Forced Unemployment." *Social Forces*. Vol. 84. No. 3 (March 2006): 1521-1537.

"Life After Steel." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. April 22, 2013.

Meunier, Zoe. "What Social Media is Doing to Our Brains. *Stuff*. Last updated 10:49, May 2, 2016.

National Centre for First Nations Governance. "Reclaiming Our Identity."

Preston-Werner, Theresa. "Gallo Pinto: Tradition, Memory, and Identity in Costa Rican Foodways." *Journal of American Folklore*. Vol. 122, No. 483. (Winter 2009), 11 - 27.

Sayers, Naomi. "Belonging and Indigeneity: There Are Some Times When I Wish I Could NOT Be Indigenous" in *Urban Native*.

Wadsworth, Nancy. "Of Milestones and Millstones: Race-Religion Intersectionality, American History and the 2012 Election." Western Political Science Association, Panel 05.05, "Intersectionality, Institutions, and Public Policy."

Yunis Alam. "Automatic Transmission: Ethnicity, Racialization, and the Car," in *Identities*. 2016.

Films and Videos

- *Culture in Context: Jenny Hua*, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w8RB8vv8WIk>
- *Neurotypical*, streaming on Amazon
- *They Think I'm Chinese*, on Kanopy through Goucher Library
- *This American Life: "Status Update"* <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/573/status-update>
- *Zelig* on Amazon or Netflix

Grading

Course Elements	PERCENTAGE
Discussion Board entries, Blog entries, and participation (Online class sessions and discussion formats)	35%
Presentations	25%
Short paper	15%
Final project (includes presentation)	25%
Total	100%

Grade Scale

A	93 or more points
A-	90 - 92 points
B+	87 - 89 points
B	83 - 86 points
B-	80 - 82 points
C+	77 - 79 points
C	73 - 76 points
C-	70 - 72 points
D	60 - 69 points
F	59 points and below

Course Policies

Academic Integrity:

All final work products are to be the independent work of each student original to this course and stored in the electronic portfolio. Suspected violations of the Honor Code will be referred to the Academic Honor Board. For a description of the code and what constitutes a violation of the code, refer to Goucher College's [Academic Honor Code](#).

Accessibility Services:

Please inform me of any accommodations you need to participate fully in the course. Goucher College makes reasonable academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students requesting accommodations must make their request and provide appropriate documentation to the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS). Because classes change every semester, eligible students must obtain a new accommodation letter from the Disabilities Specialist every semester and review this letter with their professors so the accommodations can be implemented. The Director of OAS is available by appointment to answer questions and discuss any implementation issues you may have. For more information, please visit Goucher College's [Academic Accommodations](#) site.

Communication:

- Faculty will be available at their Goucher email address and will respond to queries within 24-48 hours.
- Course participants are responsible for maintaining continuous involvement with faculty, fellow students and student groups. In particular, participation in all online discussions is required. Ongoing communication allows you to gain deeper insights into the content, activities and assignments in the course. Please give notice of any obstacle that prevents this.
- You are encouraged to ask questions whenever information needs clarifying.
- For questions pertaining to your assignments: send an email directly to the instructor (please do not post personal questions on the discussion board).
- For questions about assignments that may be interesting and helpful to other class members: please use the discussion board.
- For problems with technical aspects of the course website: chat with [Canvas Support](#).

E2Campus Emergency Notification System:

In an ongoing effort to better disseminate information during emergencies and campus closings, Goucher has implemented the e2Campus Notification System. The notification system will only send information regarding emergencies and campus closings as text messages* to your mobile phone. To receive these messages, you must be registered in the system. Click the following link for information about how to create your [E2Campus account](#).

Late Policy:

For proper graduate student learning to occur, pacing of content mastery is critical. Therefore, assignments are to be completed on time. If extreme circumstances prevent an assignment to be completed in a timely fashion, please notify me before the assignment is due so a new date can be negotiated. Only follow-ups completed by the due date can be redone. Late assignments without such notification will be docked.

Inclement Weather:

Online courses will not be cancelled for inclement weather when the college campus is closed. Students and faculty are expected to access their courses just as they would if the campus were open. Each faculty member and student is expected to have a contingency plan for attending online courses in case their primary computer is unavailable or out of service. Additionally, the online component of a residency or hybrid course is not affected when the college campus is closed for inclement weather, although if the residency or hybrid course has a face-to-face meeting scheduled on the closed campus, the meeting will be rescheduled for another day. The course instructor will notify students of the makeup day and time. Only in extreme situations, such as wide spread power outages, may exceptions to this policy be made by the Office of the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs. In such severe cases, an official statement concerning online activities will be issued via normal emergency channels.

Missed Work:

You are responsible for material covered in the course. It is your sole responsibility to obtain any materials missed.

Nondiscrimination Policy:

Goucher College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, sex, age, disability, marital status or genetic information in its programs and activities. The college has adopted a [Nondiscrimination Policy](#). Further details and contact information for the college's Title IX coordinator can be found on [Goucher's Nondiscrimination Notice and Policy page](#).