

IDENTITY POLITICS

Political Science 3910
Fall 2012

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Class hours: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 15:00-15:55
Class location: Mendenhall Lab 0115

COURSE OVERVIEW

The concept of identity is a central one in the social sciences. Each of us possesses a number of identities – national, ethnic, religious, racial, gender, sexual, professional, etc. – that are extremely influential in determining how we perceive, think, and act. Unsurprisingly, then, all of the social sciences, and political science in particular, have had to contend with the concept of identity.

Political science is often defined, following Harold Lasswell's oft-cited formula, as the study of *who gets what, when, and how*. In many political situations, both at the domestic- and international-level, attention to identity dynamics is essential in answering these questions. For example, for much of U.S. history, whether an individual's skin was black or white determined to a great extent the kind of life she could aspire to live. Similarly, in the international system today, whether a group, such as the Palestinians or the Kosovars, is recognized as a state or not largely determines what this group can do and what others can do to it. And because of the importance of identities in determining an individual's or a group's life chances, many past and contemporary social and political conflicts have been over the very terms under which given identities are recognized, that is, over the meaning of identities. Thus, contemporary political conflicts are not only waged over the distribution of scarce material resources, but often take the form of struggles for recognition.

Course objectives and organization of the course

This course has two main objectives. First, the course is meant to introduce you to the concepts and theories of identity political scientists use to make sense of identity politics. While the emphasis will be on identity 'politics,' much of the material on identity covered in the first part of the class will come from other disciplines, and mainly from sociology and psychology. This reflects the fact that much of what political scientists know about identity has been borrowed from other disciplines. As Robert Jervis noted more than 20 years ago, political science is a

borrowing discipline. This is especially true of political science research on the role of identity in politics. The study of identity politics has borrowed extensively from research on identity conducted in philosophy, social psychology, sociology, history, anthropology and many other disciplines. As such, the material and readings covered in this course will reflect the diversity of these contributions to what we know about the origins, reproduction, and effects of identities. Second, the course seeks to enable you to appreciate the impact of identity dynamics in history, contemporary events, but most importantly, in your everyday lives. The ability to identify and analyze the origins, reproduction, and effects of the various identities that compose the social matrix within which we live is an important capacity that anyone who is interested in becoming an agent of progressive change in his or her society should possess.

In order to achieve these objectives, I have divided the course into two parts. The first part of the course will introduce you to the conceptual and theoretical materials with which political scientists think about issues of identity. The concepts and theories seen in this part of the class will enable you to identify identity dynamics and understand where given identities come from, what keeps them stable and/or reinforced over time (i.e. how they are reproduced), what effects they have, and how they can be changed. In the second part of the course, we will apply the concepts and theories seen in the first part of the course to make sense of important historical and contemporary issues in identity politics.

Readings

You are required to purchase one book for this course: Berger and Luckmann's *The Social Construction of Reality*. The book is available for purchase online. All other required readings are articles or chapters which will be made available online through Carmen. I have carefully selected the articles and books assigned in this course: many of them are seminal works that have been instrumental in shaping the way we think about identity today. As such, they are extremely well-written and most importantly, extremely rich in insights that, if properly appreciated, will last you a lifetime. The reading load for this class is moderate for an advanced undergraduate course (100 pages per week, on average, and no readings assigned on the weeks of the midterm and of the final). However, none of these readings can be taken lightly; they deserve to be carefully read and **I expect you to come to class having carefully read and thought about all of the readings assigned.**

Attendance

I will take attendance at the beginning of class. By attendance, I mean (1) showing up and (2) showing up on time. If you know you are going to miss class or that you are going to be late on a given day, it is your responsibility to let me know in advance and make special arrangements with me if necessary. Poor attendance will hurt your grade. Half of your participation grade will be based on regular attendance (the other half will be based on active participation in class discussions). Missing the midterm and/or the final exam, and/or handing in the assignment late without legitimate and documented justification will lead to a grade of zero for that exam/assignment.

Surprise quizzes

To provide you with additional incentives to do the readings, a number of surprise quizzes will be administered during the quarter. The quizzes will consist of short-answer questions or multiple choice questions on the reading(s) assigned for that day and will constitute 20% of your final grade. The two quizzes with the lowest grades will be dropped, and as such, **there will be no make-up quizzes: missing a quiz will result in a grade of zero on the quiz.**

Expectations

There are 5 course requirements for this class.

- I. Berger and Luckmann assignment (10%), to be handed in at the beginning of class on September 5; **Email submissions will not be accepted.**
- II. In-class midterm (25%), with Part I scheduled on October 10 and Part II on October 12;
- III. Surprise quizzes (20%), to be administered at the beginning of class;
- IV. In-class final exam (35%), with Part I scheduled on November 30 and Part II on December 3;
- V. Class participation (10%)

IMPORTANT DATES

September 3 – Labor Day, no class
September 5 – Berger and Luckmann assignment due at the beginning of class;
October 8 – Midterm review session
October 10 – In-class midterm, Part I
October 12 – In-class midterm, Part II
November 12 – Veteran’s Day, no class
November 21 – Thanksgiving, no class
November 23 – Columbus Day, no class
November 28 – Final exam review session
November 30 – In-class final exam, Part I
December 3 – In-class final exam, Part II

THEMES AND ASSIGNED READINGS

PART I – THE ORIGINS, REPRODUCTION, AND EFFECTS OF IDENTITY

I. Introduction

Course Overview

Key Concepts in Identity Politics

II. The Social Construction of ‘Reality’

Society as Objective Reality

Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (New York: Anchor Books, 1966): pp.19-128.

Society as Subjective Reality

Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (New York: Anchor Books, 1966): pp.129-183.

Rudolphs, “Engaging Subjective Knowledge”

III. The Origins of Identity

The Social Psychology of Identity

Marilyn Brewer, “The Social Self: On Being the Same and Different at the Same Time”: 475-481.

Alan Page Fiske et al., “The Cultural Matrix of Social Psychology”: read only 915-926.

Miles Hewstone and Ed Cairns, “Social Psychology and Intergroup Conflict”: 319-336.

Tajfel and Turner, “The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior”: 355-373.

The Social Theory of Identity

Jennifer Mitzen, “Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma”: read only 344-351.

Ted Hopf, “Constructivism at Home: Theory and Method”: 1-38.

IV. Identity, Power and the Struggle for Recognition

Four Faces of Power

Peter Digeser, “The Fourth Face of Power”

Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, selection TBD

The Struggle for Recognition and the Politics of Recognition

Charles Taylor, “The Politics of Recognition”

PART II – HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN IDENTITY POLITICS

V. Culture, Civilization, and (Neo)Colonialism

Culture, Civilization, and Colonialism I: The ‘Discovery’ of America

Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*: 3-50.

Culture, Civilization, and Colonialism II: Orientalism, Then and Now

Samuel Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?”: pp.22-49.

Edward Said, *Orientalism*: preface and introduction.

Roxanne Doty, *Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North-South Relations*: 79-98.

VI. The Nation and International Relations

Identity and U.S. foreign policy

David Campbell, *Writing Security*: 133-189.

Self-Other Interactions in IR: Enmity, Rivalry and Friendship

Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*: 259-312.

VII. Divided Societies

National identity

Huntington, "Jose Can't You See: The Hispanic Challenge" (available online at: http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2004/03/01/the_hispanic_challenge)

Racial identity

Todd Boyd, *Am I Black Enough for You?:* selection TBD.

Pamela Perry, "White Means Never Having to Say You're Ethnic: White Youth and the Construction of 'Cultureless' Identities": 56-87.

VIII. Identity in Everyday Life

Gender identity

Linda Babcock and Sara Laschever, 'Nice Girls Don't Ask': 62-111.

Jane Cowan, "Going Out for Coffee? Contesting the Grounds of Gendered Pleasures in Everyday Sociability": 180-202.

Sexual identity

Deirdre McCloskey, *Crossing: A Memoir*, pp.56-63, 78-85, 132-134, 160-167, 181-184.

Didier Eribon, *Insult and the Making of the Gay Self* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004): pp.15-17, 29-34, 46-78, 97-106, 113-123.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of unethical practices on the part of the student wherever committed including, but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, unauthorized copying or collaboration, forging signatures on class rosters, and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of academic misconduct to COAM. Students found in violation of the Code of Student Conduct may receive a failing course grade and are subject to disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion from the Ohio State University (Faculty Rule 33356-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info_for_students/csc.asp).

Plagiarism

As defined by University Rule 3335-31-02, plagiarism is “the representation of another’s works or ideas as one’s own; it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person’s work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person’s ideas.” This course follows a zero tolerance policy on plagiarizing. Students who are caught plagiarizing will receive a failing grade for the course and may be referred to the Committee on Academic Misconduct.

Students with disabilities

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office of Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office of Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue, telephone 614-292-3307 (<http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu>).

Writing Center

If you experience difficulties writing and believe that your writing skills need to be improved, you can visit the Writing Center of the College of Humanities. The Writing Center “offers free help with writing at any stage of the writing process for any member of the university community.” The Writing Center also offers tutorials in which they work with students on anything from research papers to lab reports, from dissertations to resumes, from proposals to application materials. The Writing Center also maintains a resource page with writing handouts and weblinks. The Writing Center is located in 485 Mendenhall Laboratory, 125 South Oval Mall, telephone 614-688-5865 (<http://cstw.osu.edu/writingCenter>).