

The Self in Modern Society

MONDAY 6-8 PM VAC 1B88

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 3:45-5:45 PM or by appointment

Welcome:

Thanks for deciding to be a part of this class. I am glad you are here and hope your experience is meaningful.

“It can be said that the first wisdom of sociology is this – things are not what they seem” – Peter Berger

At some point in your lives, most of you have probably asked the question, “Who am I?” Maybe your question has taken the form of “Who is the *real* ‘me’?” or “What do I want out of life?” When we ask these questions, exactly who—or what—is doing the asking? And what role does society play in shaping who we are? In this course, you will have the opportunity to consider these questions in the context of the sociological research on the self. In the process, you will explore the social origins and consequences of the idea of the self. You will come to understand the rise of the sense of individual identity in the early modern era and follow it through contemporary times. You will learn how sociologists study the self. You will investigate how culture and individual experiences shape the self by examining ethnicity, sexual preference, and even mind-altering substances. You may not find out who you are, but you will gain the tools to ponder the question more thoroughly.

About This Class:

- You will refine your “sociological imagination,” an exciting way of understanding social life that helps you grasp how people relate to one another and how society “works” (and *doesn’t* work!).
- You will become familiar with the sociological perspective on the self.
- This is a **compressed hybrid** course, which means we will only meet **once** per week for **ten** weeks. You will have additional work to complete online every week without exception. It is **your** responsibility to keep up with the schedule and submit all assignments on time.
- **You must include the course title, section #, and your full name in all messages.** Further, you **MUST** use proper grammar and spelling at all times. **I will not respond to e-mails that fail to follow these instructions.** I will respond to ALL e-mails within 24 hours as long as they you send them by 6 PM Friday. *I will answer weekend e-mails by Sunday evening.*



This space respects all people regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, age, social class, religion, ethnicity, or ability.

Class Texts:

You will have a reasonable amount of reading to complete before coming to class each week; all readings are on D2L. Further, you must bring printed copies of the assigned articles to class; please budget your time and money appropriately.

Assignments and Grades:

Syllabus Quiz	1 x 5pts = 5 pts
In Class Writing	5 x 3 pts each = 15 pts
Reading Notes:	8 x 5 pts each = 40 pts
Response Papers:	4 x 10 pts each = 40 pts
Written Assignments (1):	1x 50 pts each = 50 pts
Exams (2):	2x 50 pts each = 100 pts

TOTAL = 250 pts

A: 233-250; A-: 225-232;
B+: 218-224; B: 208-217; B-: 200-207;
C+: 193-199; C: 183-192; C-: 175-182;
D+: 168-174; D: 158-167; D-: 149-157;

F: Below 149



- **Reading Notes:** Students will take notes on each week's assigned readings and viewings; each student will submit these notes electronically and bring a hard copy to class. In these notes, students will offer a brief synopsis and **two** discussion questions for each assigned reading/viewing (4-6 sentences per piece).
- **In-Class Writing:** There will be brief writing exercises throughout the semester. They will happen at various points in our class meetings. You cannot make up an in-class writing assignment without an official medical, legal, or university excuse.
- **Reflection Papers:** Students will write **four, and only four**, brief papers (1.5-3 pages) in response to prompts in D2L. You must complete at least two response papers before the first exam.
- **Written Assignments:** All students will complete **one** 4-6 page paper in this course and submit it to D2L through the TurnItIn plagiarism checker. **I will not accept any papers via e-mail.**
- **Exams:** Students will complete **two** unit exams over the course of the semester. These exams will primarily focus on the material since the previous exam; however, the exams are cumulative in a *thematic* sense. Your weekly reading notes will serve as your study guides.
- **Attendance/Participation:** In this class, attendance is not mandatory; however, I will take weekly attendance for my own records. We only meet once per week, so even one absence puts you at a severe disadvantage. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to contact a classmate and get a copy of their notes. My office hours are **not** a time for me to reteach material to students who do not attend class.

I encourage you to participate in class discussions as much as you can. We all have important and interesting ideas to share. I think participation is too difficult to grade directly. However, I will use it to 'bump you up' if you are on the borderline (**one** point away or less) of a higher grade. Participation means speaking out in class, taking risks, engaging your classmates, being open to new ideas, sharing your own ideas and enthusiastically engaging the course material. If you are consistently absent, regularly show up late, and/or fail to actively participate, you should understand that you will not be eligible for this.

- **A Note on Grades:** You are all students at a research university with high standards. If you attend all classes, understand most of the material, and complete all of the assignments, you will be in the high 'C' to low 'B' range. If you go **above and beyond** the requirements, push yourself, and exceed my expectations, you will be able to enter the 'B+' to 'A' range. **Remember, your grade reflects neither what I think of you nor your potential as a human being.**

Computers:

Laptops, netbooks, tablets, and e-readers are not allowed in the classroom unless the student has a documented medical condition that necessitates the use of a computer. This is **nonnegotiable**.

Late Work:

I do not accept late work, save for the most serious circumstances. If you miss an assignment for a medical or university-related reason, I will need official documentation for you to make it up. Most assignments are due at midnight; if you wait until 11:59 to submit your work and have technical difficulties, you are out of luck.

Special Needs Accommodations:

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to your professor a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner (for exam accommodations provide your letter at least one week prior to the exam) so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact Disability Services at [303-492-8671](tel:303-492-8671) or by e-mail at dsinfo@colorado.edu. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Injuries guidelines](#) under the Quick Links at the [Disability Services website](#) and discuss your needs with your professor.

Religious Accommodations:

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, *students must notify me of religious events that conflict with the course in the first two weeks of the class*. See [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

CU Honesty Policy:

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to [the academic integrity policy](#) of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; [303-735-2273](tel:303-735-2273)). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Additional information regarding the [Honor Code policy can be found online](#) and at the [Honor Code Office](#).

Cheating and plagiarism are both violations of the student code and I approach them with **utmost seriousness**. Evidence of either of these behaviors will result in an **automatic failure** in the course and I will hand the case over to university officials. To be clear, plagiarism refers to using the work, ideas, or knowledge of other people as your own. It includes all forms of exam or quiz cheating, using other people's work, copying all or sections of papers from the web, and "borrowing" (without citing) from published sources. Please do not give me ANY reason to suspect this type of behavior. If you are unclear about the rules regarding plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, or collaboration, please ask for further clarification.


Discrimination and Harassment:


The University of Colorado Boulder (CU-Boulder) is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. CU-Boulder will not tolerate acts of discrimination or harassment based upon Protected Classes or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. For purposes of this CU-Boulder policy, "Protected Classes" refers to race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at [303-492-2127](tel:303-492-2127) or the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSC) at [303-492-5550](tel:303-492-5550). Information about the OIEC, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be found at the [OIEC website](#). The [full policy on discrimination and harassment](#) contains additional information.

Course Calendar:


This is a tentative calendar. As with all else in life, it is subject to change. I will announce any significant changes in class and on D2L. Students are responsible for these announcements whether they are in class or not. I expect you to have completed all readings and assignments **before coming to class**.

Week 1: Getting Started with the Self – February 1


 **What to read:** Course Syllabus, Mills “The Promise”

 **Assignments:** Syllabus quiz (on D2L) – due before Week 2


Week 2: Symbols, Meaning, Self – February 8

 **What to read:** Maines "The Social Construction of Meaning," Cooley "The Social Self - the Meaning of I," Mead "The Social Self," Zussman “The Self”


 **What to watch:** Adichie "The Danger of a Single Story" (TED Talk)

 **Assignments:** Reading Notes, Written Assignment 1 (pt 1)


Week 3: Self and Context – February 15


 **What to read:** Goffman "Introduction and Conclusion," Miner "Body Rituals of the Nacirema," Zimbardo "You Can't be a Sweet Cucumber in a Vinegar Barrel," The Onion "College Freshman Cycles Rapidly Through Identities"

 **What to watch:** Video Lecture, *Quiet Rage*

 **Assignments:** Reading Notes

Week 4: Self and Narratives – February 22


 **What to read:** Kosut "Tattoo Narratives: The Intersection of the Body, Self-Identity, and Society," Irvine “Better than the Real Thing,” Thompson "Sometimes I Think I Say Too Much," Wilkins "Becoming Black Women"


 **Assignments:** Reading Notes

Week 5: The Deviant Self – March 1


 **What to read:** Adler and Adler "The Cyber Worlds of Self-Injurers: Deviant Communities, Relationships, and Selves," Goffman "Total Institutions," and "Stigma and Social Identity," Rosenhan "Being Sane in Insane Places,"


 **What to watch:** Video Lecture, *Brown Eyes VS Blue Eyes*

 **Assignments:** Reading Notes (**MUST** have completed two response papers by today)


 **Exam 1 TODAY**


Week 6: The Altered Self - March 8

 **What to read:** Becker "Becoming a Marihuana User" and "The Social Basis of Drug-Induced Experience," Loe and Cuttino "Grappling with the Medicated Self"

 **Assignments:** Reading Notes

Week 7: The Self and Race – March 15

 **What to read:** Feagin “The Foundation of White Racism,” McIntosh "Unpacking the Knapsack," Sampson "Rethinking Immigration and Crime," Striffler "Inside a Poultry Processing Plant"


 **What to watch:** *Race: The Power of an Illusion, Beyond Beats and Rhymes*

 **Assignments:** Reading Notes


Week 8: The Self and Gender – March 29


 **What to read:** Boswell and Spade “Fraternities and Collegiate Rape Culture: Why are Some Fraternities More Dangerous Places for Women?” Hochschild "The Managed Heart," Messner "Becoming 100% Straight," and "Barbie Girls VS Sea Monsters,"


 **What to watch:** "A Call to Men" (TED talk), *Killing Us Softly 3*

 **Assignments:** Reading Notes


Week 9: The Self and the Economy – April 4


 **What to read:** – Doyle "Deindustrialization," Durkheim "Anomie and the Modern Division of Labor," Rifkin "The End of Work," "Summary of the Community Manifesto," Schor "Keeping up with the Trumps"


 **What to watch:** *Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Prices*


 **Assignments:** Reading Notes, Written Assignment #1 (pt 2)

Week 10: New Directions in the Study of the Self/Wrap Up – April 11

 **What to read:** Adler & Adler "Transience and the Postmodern Self," Gergen "Social Saturation and the Populated Self," Haraway "Cyborg Manifesto, Wiley "The Post-Modern Self: A Retrospective"

 **What to watch:**

 **Assignments:** Reading Notes

 **Exam 2 TODAY**