Course Prerequisite: SOC 212 or consent of instructor

Course Description and Objectives:

Imagine you show up at a hotel, check into a room, and find that you will be sharing the bed with three strangers. You’d probably find another hotel but from the fifteenth to seventeenth century in Europe, sharing inn beds with strangers was a social norm. In contemporary society we have a rather specific view of the self that privileges individuality, free choice, and moral responsibility, concepts that can be linked back to the subject of classical economics, “homo economicus.” As suggested by the example of sleeping arrangements in medieval inns, how we relate to ourselves and to others is neither “natural” nor solely dictated by personal psychology. Rather, how we understand ourselves, regulate our relations with others, and perceive matters of personal choice are the social and historical outcomes of different forms of power. This course draws on the work of well-known twentieth-century social theorists to explore historical relations of “the self” and the relation of subjectivity to social formations of gender, race, and social class. By pursuing how social theorists have conceptualized “the self” and its relation to power, the course examines different theories about how external moral regulation becomes internalized, the processes through which deviant and abnormal selves have been constituted, and how “the self” has been central to the production of social difference and exclusion.

The course has two objectives. First, I want each of you to develop the theoretical skills and knowledge to begin to critically rethink how and why the self in contemporary western societies is organized around the “individual.” These tools will give you the foundations to rethink how we conceive of human sociality and understand the nuances of how power produces different notions and representations of the self, and how these representations are often internalized. Second, I want to give each of you the foundational knowledge of what are important sociological texts such as early psychoanalysis, historical sociology, the early Chicago school, the work of Michel Foucault, and contemporary feminist theory. Knowing these different theoretical traditions is not only
important in understanding how social theorists have tried to understand the relation of power to the self but it will familiarize you with ongoing debates within the discipline.

Texts:


Grade Distribution

The breakdown of grading is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Mark</th>
<th>Mark Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three critical reviews</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>15, 20, 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q &amp; A</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grading:

Marks for assignments, tests, and exams are given in percentages, to which letter grades are also assigned, according to the table below “Sociology Department Undergraduate Grading Scale.” The percentage mark resulting from the entire term work and examination then produces the final letter grade for the course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>90–100</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Exceptional work and achievement*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>86–89</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Excellent and displays high comprehension of material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>82–85</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Great work with good comprehension of material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>78–81</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Good and better than average comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>74–77</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Solid understanding of course material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>70–73</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Satisfactory to good performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>66–69</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Satisfactory work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>62–65</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Slightly exceeds minimum requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>58–61</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>Meets minimum requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>54–57</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Poor engagement with course material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>50–53</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>Barely acceptable work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0–49</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>Unacceptable engagement with course material</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Explanatory Notes on Assignments

**Critical Reviews**

You will be asked to write three critical review papers [1500–1800 words each] on any two of the weekly lectures. These are worth 60% of your total grade and increase in value progressively: the first paper is worth 15%, the second 20%, the third, 25%). Please hand in your first two reviews in hardcopy at the start of class any week up until June 9th. For this wishing to write on readings from the last week of lectures you may hand in your last review on June 15th, after this time reviews will not be accepted. These papers are a chance to critically engage with the assigned readings with the aim of both critically evaluating the argument and the concepts. Note that these are not summaries. You are welcome and encouraged to make links to themes and topics from other weeks but you are not required to use material outside this course. These assignments are meant as way for you to receive feedback about your approach to the course material, develop your writing skills and develop an approach to assessing and writing about social theory. As such, it is highly recommended that you hand one assignment in within the first four lectures so you may use the feedback and comments to strengthen your subsequent critical reviews. You may hand in your last critical review

**Q and A**

This assignment requires that you draft a total of 10 critical questions about the assigned readings, two questions per a week up until the final week of lectures. The objective is for you to develop questions that are intended to prompt critical reflection on the big ideas and core concepts in the readings. You are required to submit these questions in a word document via email by Monday every week (so your questions from the first of week lectures are due Monday May 16th, the questions from the second week are due on Monday May 23rd and so on). In addition to posing these two questions each week you must also provide a brief (300 word) answer to one of the questions you have posed. I will read your response and provide feedback and further questions. To provide you with a final grade I will evaluate the originality and incisiveness and clarity of answers for your two best questions and three best responses you have submitted. In addition, your questions will be used (anonymously) to create pop-quizzes and reflection topics for other members of the class. As such, the quality of in class reflections and quizzes will be partially dependent on your own engagement in the course. Please take the time to craft questions that engage meaningfully with the material and help your colleagues further their understanding of social theory.

**Participation**

In this course, your class participation and engagement is worth 20 percent of your total mark. 10 marks are earned through attendance. Each class is worth 1% of your attendance mark, which means you can effectively miss one class without being
penalized. The remaining 10 marks are graded based on in class engagement, pop-quizzes, in class reflections and active participation. Speaking in class is one of the more conventional ways to participate but the quality of interventions is worth more than the quantity. As some people are less comfortable speaking in class or take time to feel comfortable, feel free to visit me during my office hours. I consider office hour discussions on course material to count towards course engagement.

**Policy for Late Assignments:**

Late papers will be marked down 5% percent for each day past the deadline. If you anticipate that you will struggle to meet a deadline for health or personal reasons please contact me in advance so we can arrange an appropriate accommodation. Please note that having multiple assignments due in close succession is not valid reason to seek accommodation.

**Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:**

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections 23.3(1) and 23.5.6 of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

**Lecture Outline**

**Lecture 1: May 10th, The Liberal Origins of the Self as an Autonomous Individual:**

Renee, Descartes, “Mediations on First Philosophy” from *The Philosophical Writings* 1-31.

**Lecture 2: May 12th, A Self Divided: Freud**

Freud Sigmund, *Civilization and its Discontents*

**Lecture 3: May 17th, Getting Medieval: Norbert Elias on changes in manners**


**Lecture 4: May 19th, Elias cont. From External Regulation to Self Control**

**Lecture 5: May 24th, The Self and Social Representation: Race**

W.E.B Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, Chapter I, Chapter II, Chapter IX, Chapter XXI, Chapter X

**Lecture 6: May 26th, Foucault Power and the Self**

Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality vol. 1* Part 1–Part 4

**Lecture 7: May 31st, Foucault cont. Power and the Self**

Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality vol. 1* 103-159

Michel Foucault, “Technologies of the Self” 145-167

**Lecture 8: June 2nd, Presentation of the Self**

Erving Goffman, *Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*, Introduction to Chapter I

**Lecture 9: June 7th, Presentation of the Self cont.**


**Lecture 10: June 9th, Feminist Reflections on the Self and Patriarchal Power**

Simone de Beauvoir, “Second Sex Chapter 3: The Point of View From Historical Materialism” https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/ethics/de-beauvoir/2nd-sex/ch03.htm

Simone de Beauvoir, “Lived Experience, Chapter 2” in *Second Sex*, 341-382

**Lecture 11: June 14th, Post-Humanist Interpretations of the Self and Emancipation?**


**Student Accessibility Services:**

If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you are not already registered with Student Accessibility Services, contact their office immediately ( 1-80 SUB; Email sasrec@ualberta.ca; Email; phone 780-492-3381; WEB www.ssds.ualberta.ca ).
**Required Notes:**

“Policy about course outlines can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University Calendar.”

**Academic Integrity**

“The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at [http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/en/CodesofConductandResidenceCommunityStandards/CodeofStudentBehaviour.aspx](http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/en/CodesofConductandResidenceCommunityStandards/CodeofStudentBehaviour.aspx)) and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.”

**Learning and working environment**

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring that all students, faculty and staff are able to work and study in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The department urges anyone who feels that this policy is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the Student Ombuds Office: ([http://www.ombudservice.ualberta.ca/](http://www.ombudservice.ualberta.ca/)). Information about the University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures is described in UAPPOL at [https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/PoliciesProcedures/Pages/DispPol.aspx?PID=110](https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/PoliciesProcedures/Pages/DispPol.aspx?PID=110).

**Academic Honesty:**

All students should consult the information provided by Student Conduct and Accountability regarding avoiding cheating and plagiarism in particular and academic dishonesty in general (see the Academic Integrity Undergraduate Handbook and Information for Students). If in doubt about what is permitted in this class, ask the instructor.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the Academic Discipline Process.

**Recording of Lectures:**

Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the content author(s) or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).