
Social Psychology:
Theories of Self in Society
JSB551

Charles University, Prague
Institute of Sociological Studies
U Krize 8, Building B, room 1031
Thursdays, 11:00-12:20 – Fall 2019

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Office Hours: Building B, room 3066
Office hours before class on Thursdays (10:30-11:00) or by appointment

Course Description: This course explores how modern social institutions (e.g. media, the economy, education system) and culture shape us as unique human beings. We will examine theories of selfhood written by prominent social theorists in the modern and postmodern eras and discuss the dynamic tension between the individual and society. In this course, you will be asked to think critically about your role(s) and position in society. In addition to studying various approaches to understanding – or theorizing – the self, we will also work together to form a safe and productive learning community.

Expectations: You are responsible for all materials presented in class and in the course readings (accessed via email each week). I will sometimes refer to specific pages from your assigned readings during lecture, so I suggest you take notes during class. This will make exploring theoretical views of the self a little easier and will better prepare you for the in-class quizzes.

Moment, prosím - Attention, please! Learning social theories is challenging – it takes time, effort, and mental energy to understand theoretical arguments. Like the learning of any new subject, learning to use theories – to analyze and critique them, for example – does not come easily to all students. If you wish to do well in this course, you will need to **read the material regularly before you come to class**. This way, what you hear in class will reinforce what you have already read. If you choose to come to class unprepared, you will not know the details behind the theories we are discussing that day and in the end, this will harm your scores. Please take notes as you read - You should be **summarizing main themes, writing down your own examples of theoretical concepts, and writing any questions** you have that you would like to ask in class.

Learning environment:

In class, we will actively work to form a learning community where all participants can feel connected to the larger social group. Because this is an upper division course, the class format will follow that of a seminar. In a **seminar format**, students participate more in what goes on during class than is usually the case with a typical lecture format. Students are expected to come to class having read the assigned material before class; class time is devoted to helping students further explore theoretical positions by means of lecture, group discussion, writing reflections, critical analysis of media clips, and other in-class activities. If you need help, you may attend office hours at any time during the semester - come talk with me before class about what you are learning, you don't have to bring a specific question to attend office hours.

Attendance: This class meets just once a week - we will have a lot to do each day.

I believe the best way to earn a good grade in any course is **to attend class regularly and come prepared to discuss the material**. To reward students who show commitment to the course by coming prepared, attending regularly and participating in class, I include attendance and participation as a component of your course grade. Attendance will be taken in this course through the use of a daily attendance sheet, which you will sign each time you attend. Participation comprises a small component of your grade and is measured by my assessment of the number of times you choose to participate in class, in small group work, and in paired discussions. If you are shy, try to speak in small groups or come to office hours and talk with me to earn your participation points.

Excused absence policy: You are permitted **one excused absence** from this class. An excused absence is arranged by email, prior to missing class, with me. You may use your excused absence for any reason at all, simply **email me in advance of missing class**. If you are ill and have already used your excused absence, please email me what is the problem and then when you return to class and you will be allowed to make up any work due on the day you missed. Special arrangements will be made in the event of an extended illness which is documented by a doctor's note. Please note: the absence policy applies strictly to in-class assignments such as learning goal evaluations.

Make-ups: There are three quizzes and a final exam in this course. These must be taken in class on the dates they are scheduled (see the course calendar for specific dates) unless an excused absence has been arranged or some extenuating circumstance arises. As described above, you are permitted one excused absence and are expected to use this in the event you need to be absent on a date in which a quiz occurs. All students are expected to be present on the last day of class when the final exam is submitted.

Themes to be explored in Social Psychology

- Unit 1- *Modern Theoretical Approaches to the Self:* Historical background of the concept; cultural development in theories of self and society
- Unit 2- *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life:* Self in interaction; self as daily performance; self and the physical body; effects of gender, race, age
- Unit 3- *Social Psychology, the Social Order, and the Embodied Self*

Community Learning Goals

- 1) Foster a safe and productive learning community.
Mechanisms for Assessment:
 - I. Develop a community where students can feel comfortable, valued, and secure in the learning environment.
 - II. Encourage appreciation for the diversity of opinions that results from having multiple participants in the class community.
 - III. Learn to trust one another in discussion: Work to value the verbal comments and ideas of other students; do away with the notion that what the professor has to say is automatically more valuable or insightful than what your peers have to say.
- 2) Encourage each of you to develop your writing skills in order to prepare you for future courses and life experiences.
Mechanisms for assessment:
 - I. Develop the writing skills necessary to clearly and concisely convey theoretical ideas through response papers, quizzes, and a written final exam.
 - II. Work to “make connections” between various aspects of the self/selfhood by completing in class “two-minute writing exercises.”
- 3) Facilitate useful, engaging discussions of the self / selfhood.
Mechanisms for assessment:
 - I. Participate in the shaping of in-class discussions of selfhood by ensuring you come prepared to class each time by reading the assigned course materials.
 - II. Perform successfully on in-class quizzes designed to assess your understanding of course materials as learned in class lectures, discussions, and reading materials.

Course Grade Composition

In-Class Quizzes (3) Brief, to assess comprehension and application ability	300
Final Exam: Complete 2 essay questions from 4 options	100
Response Paper: Introductory Letter to Instructor	20
Written assessment of progress - community learning goals	20
Attendance & Participation Score	60
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Total possible points	500

Grade Point Breakdown

A – 91% or higher =	455+ /500
B – 81-90% =	405-455 /500
C – 71-80% =	355-404 /500
D – 61-70% =	305-354 /500
E – 51-60% =	255-304 /500
F – 0-50% =	254 – 0 /500

Miscellaneous:

1. **I do not discuss student grades over email.** Please do not email me about your grades (the Internet is not secure) instead, please schedule a meeting to discuss in person.
2. **An excused absence is arranged prior to missing class, by email, with me.** If you tell me you must miss a class but forget to email me about it, your absence will not be excused.
3. **No make-up quizzes will be administered in this course for any reason.** If you miss a quiz and have not arranged in advance to use your excused absence, you will take a zero.
4. **Class begins promptly at 11:00 and ends at 12:20,** please request permission in advance of class if you must be late or leave early. You can ask me or email before class about this.
5. **You may eat or drink during class** provided you do not disrupt the learning of others.

Reading Materials

sent by email each week

TEXTBOOK: Shulman, David and John P. Hewitt, 2009. 11th edition.

Self and Society: A Symbolic Interactionist Social Psychology.

Abbreviation for reading calendar: **S&S**

Becker, Howard. 1953. "Becoming a Marihuana User." Selected reading.

Goffman, Erving. 1959. ***The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life.***

Note: You can purchase this book in Czech or in another language online if you like.

Holstein and Gubrium, "Formulating a Social Self." 1999.

Chapter 2 from, ***The self we live by: Narrative identity in a postmodern world.***

Important Dates

Response Paper (Letter to Instructor): October 10

Quiz 1: October 24

Quiz 2: November 7

Quiz 3: December 5

Learning Goal Evaluation, completed in class on: November 21

Final Exam (set of two typed essays) due in class on: December 19

In the event you are in need of additional time to complete the final exam due to illness, a family concern, or some other item, please discuss with me so we can make arrangements for completion in January.

Although I do not expect to have to do so, this syllabus is subject to change should modifications be necessary during the semester.

Course Components in Detail...

Quizzes

There are three quizzes in this course, consisting of brief responses to questions given, to be completed in class on the dates scheduled on the course calendar. Quizzes contain multiple-choice, true/false, short answers, and a single short essay question.

Final Exam

The final exam in this course consists of two essay responses - to be completed at home and submitted in printed form on the last day of the course. You will choose two essay questions to respond to (response length: 3-4 pages) from four options. Responses will be graded for your depth of understanding of the theoretical concepts addressed in the question. You should work to include terms, concepts and theories from the course material into your responses.

Response Paper: Introductory Letter to the Instructor

To provide me some initial understanding of who you are as an individual/self, each of you will write a brief “letter” that provides me with some background information about your interests and what you hope to gain from this class. This is the space for you to share with me any information that I may need to know regarding your performance in the course. If you are working in addition to taking classes, or you have children, a learning disability, ADHD, or some other condition that may affect your behavior, please include this in your letter. Your letter must be typed and printed out in paper form to hand in to me in class Oct 10. Instructions are at the end of the syllabus. Length: 1-2 pages.

Learning Goal Evaluations: **Assessment of Progress toward Learning Goals**

Once during this course you will evaluate how well you believe that we as a learning community are achieving the goals of the course. **This exercise is done in class and you must be present to complete the assignment.** I will provide instructions & explain the assignment: we will spend about 30 minutes at the end of class completing the exercise.

In addition to our three community learning goals, you may choose to develop a personal learning goal that you may also evaluate on this day for extra credit. If you choose to write a personal learning goal, you will state your personal goal in the “letter to a friend” assignment. **Possible extra credit: up to 10 points** for personal goal completion (assessed once, mid-semester, on the date provided in the course calendar).

Self in Society – Course Calendar, Fall 2019

Note: The dates given for the required readings indicate the date by which the readings should be completed; *you should read the material before you come to class.*

Oct 3, 2019	<u>First day of class:</u> Introductions, Syllabus , Learning goals, Lecture - Basic Concepts in Sociology
Oct 10, 2019	<u>Lecture: Introduction to Selfhood, Part 1:</u> “What is the Self?” & Intro. to Social Construction theory <u>Reading: S & S (Shulman & Hewitt textbook)</u> Chapter 1: pgs. 1-9 <u>Response Paper Due</u> (Introductory Letter to Instructor)
Oct 17, 2019	<u>Lecture: Introduction to Selfhood, Part 2:</u> Basics of Social Psychology; Intro. to Symbolic Interactionism <u>Reading: S & S (Shulman & Hewitt textbook)</u> Chapter 1: pgs. 22-30
Oct 24, 2019	QUIZ 1: Introductory concepts <u>Lecture: Basic Concepts of Symbolic Interactionism, PT I:</u> Symbols History of Identity Development in Europe, North America Film clip analysis - <i>Sense and Sensibility</i> <u>Reading: S & S (Shulman & Hewitt textbook: Symbols)</u> Chapter 2: pgs. 35-48
Oct 31, 2019	<u>Lecture: Basic Concepts of Symbolic Interactionism, PT II:</u> Objects Lecture on the Performance of Self & Objects - <i>Cell Phone Exercise</i> <u>Reading: S & S (Shulman & Hewitt textbook: Objects)</u> Chapter 2: pgs. 48-69 <i>A – Bring st, tape for activity</i>
Nov 7, 2019	QUIZ 2: Self, Symbols, Objects, Roles <u>Lecture: Presentation of Self in Everyday Life:</u> Goffman, Introduction Writing workshop <u>Reading: Erving Goffman, Pres. of Self, pgs. 1-16</u>

Nov 14, 2019	<p><u>Small Group Discussions:</u> Goffman, Idealization Each student comes prepared with 2 discussion Qs on the material</p> <p><u>Reading:</u> Erving Goffman, Pres. of Self, pgs. 34-51</p>
Nov 21, 2019	<p><u>Small Group Discussions:</u> Goffman, Teams Each student comes prepared with 2 discussion Qs on the material</p> <p>Learning Goal Evaluations, completed in class</p> <p><u>Reading:</u> Erving Goffman, Pres. of Self, pgs. 77-105</p>
Nov 28, 2019	<p><u>Lecture:</u> Self, the Physical Body, Deviance & Drug Use Considering effects of beverage alcohol and marijuana use for selfhood</p> <p><u>Reading:</u> Becker, “Becoming a MJ User”</p>
Dec 5, 2019	<p>QUIZ 3: Key Concepts – Goffman readings, Deviance lecture notes Film clip analysis – <i>GATTACA</i> clip</p>
Dec 12, 2019	<p><u>Lecture:</u> Review of what we have learned, remaining questions</p> <p><u>Reading:</u> Holstein and Gubrium, review of theories of social self</p> <p>Final Exam packet in class: Choose 2 essay questions from 4 response options, complete at home, submit in class in printed form on December 19</p>
Dec 19, 2019	<p>Course wrap up: Small-group & then large-group discussions of what we have learned about social psychology, language, body, & theories of self</p> <p>Final Exam Due: Submit printed copy of your responses in class</p>

This course is designed to explore one branch of social psychological theories in depth - symbolic interactionism. Theories written in this tradition represent just one of many approaches within the discipline of sociology designed to explore relationships between the individual and society. If you enjoy this course and are interested in learning more about other social psychological theories, you might explore the following: social representations theory, experimental approaches, rational-choice actions theories, community social psychology, cognitive social psychology, or applied social psychology.

Due in class October 10 – Must be typed and printed, submitted in paper form

Please write a brief letter telling me about you. This paper is informal - I will not be grading for grammar but please write clearly and provide detail. Thanks!

Section 1: provide in order at the top of the page:

Your full name as registered with Charles University
Your nickname or the name you want to be addressed by
The email address you check most often
Your year (first, second, third, etc.)
Subject of study

Section 2: please answer each question in one paragraph:

Q1: Where are you from and which languages do you speak?

Q 2: Why did you enroll in this class, or what do you hope to learn in Social Psychology?

Q 3: What are some of your interests or hobbies? (Favorite TV shows, sports, music, hobbies, volunteer work, faith/religion, politics, etc.)

Section 3: Write a personal learning goal if you want to...

On page 6 of the syllabus, I explained that if you want, you may write and submit to me **one personal learning goal**, to be evaluated for extra credit on the day that we do learning goal evaluations in class. If you choose to write a personal learning goal, ***your goal should be one sentence in length and it should be specific.***

Your goal can be written to address your verbal participation in class, your attitude toward the comments of others, your ability to keep up with the reading; attendance, being on time, performance on exams, coming to office hours, etc. – anything you personally think might help you to improve as a student. Your personal learning goal should be specific to you: if you know yourself to be shy or generally uncomfortable with speaking in class, you will need to write a goal that addresses this purpose. Similarly, if you are often late to classes or have family obligations that make attending difficult, consider writing a goal to help you to improve in this area.

You should write your personal goal such that it is **attainable** and **concrete** in nature.

(Instructions continued on next page)

For example, the goal, “I want to speak regularly during class discussions” is not sufficient: **you need a clearly stated, concrete goal** such as, “I want to participate in class **once each time we meet.**” Similarly, the goal: “I am a shy student, so I want to speak more in small group discussions,” is not sufficient because it is not easy to assess. A better-written goal is, “I am a shy student, so **I want to speak up each time we meet in small groups.**” The point of writing a personal learning goal (as well as having community learning goals) is to help you become a better participant within the learning community. Students confront a unique learning community in every class they take, but this fact is rarely given much attention. By drawing attention to your role in our class, I hope to help you find your personal space within the learning community.

If you choose to write a personal learning goal, write it clearly and concretely so that you will be able to assess it in one paragraph. State your personal learning goal in this section of your letter to a friend...

If you would prefer not to write a personal learning goal, just state that in this section. (The personal learning goal is optional/for extra credit purposes only.)

Section 4: align left as normal and answer each question in one paragraph

Q 4: Do any components of this class (structure or assignments) seem awkward to you? (Are you worried about anything on the syllabus? Do you want further explanation for why I have chosen to include a particular assignment? Does everything make sense?)

Q 5: What else do I need to know pertaining to your performance in class this semester? Are you working in addition to taking a full course load? Are you an athlete? Are you currently on academic probation or having problems with your role as a student? Do you have ADHD, a learning disability, or another condition that may affect your performance in this class? Are you a parent, or taking care of another family member regularly?

At the bottom of your letter, state clearly that you have read and agree to abide by the syllabus. Write this & then sign the letter.

Last minute reminders...

- Your letter should be typed and turned in on paper so I can write comments on it
- Maximum length: 2 pages (you can print on both sides of one page, it's ok)
- Feel free to include a photo of yourself if you want to ☺