
COMMUNICATING IDENTITY AND DIFFERENCE: A CRITICAL INTERPERSONAL APPROACH

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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

Discussions about the intersections of identity, culture, and communication are quite common when it comes to teaching courses in the interpersonal communication discipline. Textbooks utilized in introductory courses of this nature tend to dedicate a full chapter to understanding how individuals can develop competence when communicating across cultural differences and the impact of communication on one's self-concept. Not as common are courses that take on a critical interpersonal approach and engage students in content that demands in-depth self-reflection and examinations of the social construction of identity and the social discourses that define cultural differences. The course introduced in this manuscript is one that I developed as a 300-level Communication Studies undergraduate course entitled, "Communicating Identity and Difference." The course's structure and content can be particularly useful for those instructors wanting to explore topics of identity and difference from a critical interpersonal communication perspective.

CONNECTION TO DEPARTMENT, UNIVERSITY, AND DISCIPLINE MISSIONS, VISIONS, AND GOALS

A key factor that played a role in this course's initial development was its alignment with department and university mission statements, vision statements, and goals. The department saw a need to increase course options for students in the Interpersonal Communication area of concentration that would allow them to learn about communication and identity beyond what was offered in the curriculum at the time. The Communicating Identity and Difference course provided a solution to close the gap in elective course offerings for students by including core content that explores intersections of identity and communication (e.g., race, gender, social class, disability).

The course offers an examination of strategies for effective and appropriate interpersonal communication in relationships marked by difference. The development of such a course adheres to my department's and university's commitment to adapt and expand our curriculum to meet the demands of evolving disciplines in which diversity, equity, and inclusion are central components. The course also directly addresses learning outcomes that are supported by the Communication Studies discipline's national organization for teaching and scholarship, the National Communication Association (NCA). NCA's Learning Outcome in Communication (LOC) Project inquires, "When students complete a program of study in Communication, what should they know, understand, and be able to do?" (NCA's learning outcomes in communication project, 2015). The Communicating Identity and Difference course particularly relates to LOC #8 – Utilize

Communication to Embrace Difference. This relationship between the course and LOC #8 assists students in the learning process of articulating their own social standpoints in life as well as recognizing and celebrating cultural and co-cultural differences, similarities, and points of intersection and using that insight to communicate in various cultural contexts.

The class teaches students how to become productive, valuable, and respectful citizens of the communities in which they take part. Learning how to communicate across social and cultural differences is integral to achieving that goal, a goal that the Communicating Identity and Difference course attends to through its required readings, course content, and pedagogical instruction. Thus, the course satisfies an academic plan of preparing students for the communicative interactions and relationships that they will inevitably encounter in their personal and professional lives.

INTERDISCIPLINARY AND GENERAL EDUCATION CONTRIBUTIONS

The Communicating Identity and Difference course was taught experimentally for two semesters but has since then been approved as a permanent course in the Interpersonal Communication area of concentration in my department. The course has enrolled a cap of twenty-five students nearly every semester it has been scheduled in the last few years. In that time, the course has generated interest from students outside of the major. That interest has contributed to collaborations on campus. The course was recently added to the curriculum for two interdisciplinary minors, including the Ethnic Studies in the United States Minor and the Gender Studies Minor. This type of course therefore serves institutions well in terms of being housed in a variety of departments and offered as a core or elective course for a range of interdisciplinary programs.

Students can also obtain general education credits from enrolling in the course. The student learning outcomes as outlined in the course master syllabus are aimed almost entirely at developing students' knowledge of social constructions of identity and difference within the United States, the impacts of communication on cultural identities, the effects of socially constructed meanings of difference on interpersonal relating, and communication strategies that aim for competent interpersonal communication across differences and social justice outcomes. Additionally, course content and assignments encourage students to reflect on their own cultural identities and their experiences with cultural diversity and difference across several master statuses, including race and ethnicity, sex and gender, social class, sexuality, and disability. Course content and assignments also inspire students to develop skills for interacting with individuals from backgrounds that are quite different from their own. Approximately two-thirds of the course content and assignments are designed to facilitate students' knowledge of diversity and difference and their implications. One-third of the course then explores how students can use this knowledge to build on their communication skills. Therefore, the distribution of general education points (GEPs) is 2 GEPs in Goal 4: Cultures and Diversity and 1 GEP in Goal 1: Communication. Other universities that provide a general education curriculum could easily integrate this course into their program requirements.

CRITICAL INTERPERSONAL PEDAGOGY

Interpersonal communication scholarship has certainly evolved over the years. However, it is still subject to critiques in terms of what the scope of research offers, which then influences the kinds of pedagogical approaches faculty adopt in the classroom. As one scholar notes, the discipline is on the cutting edge in

terms of epistemological inquiries (how we know what we know). Still, the discipline lacks in its attention to "ideological commitments" or the underlying structures of the discipline that influence research in the first place (Lannamann, 1991). When scholars and teachers do not take into consideration the historical contexts in which social norms are developed and consequently dictate communicative rules of relating, we are not being entirely responsible in our research and pedagogical practices. Moore (2016) contends that interpersonal empirical research takes on more of a postpositivist lens rather than an interpretive or critical approach. Although important in its own right, postpositivist research does not lend itself well to acknowledging discourses and power as structural and systemic rather than individual-level variables (Moore & Manning, 2019). The Communicating Identity and Difference course addresses this gap in the discipline and integrates critical interpersonal theories, concepts, and classroom activities. Students are not only exposed to interpersonal variables of importance, such as 'identities' and 'relationships,' but are challenged to ascertain the social structures that determine their existence and render some in line with ideologies of normalcy, whereas others are pushed to the margins.

The course structure begins with an overview of essentialist and constructionist approaches to identity and difference. Students are asked to consider the approach(es) they assume in their understanding of the world. Through written reflections of the assigned readings and paper assignments, students then explore their own identities and reflect on how their social locations have been constructed through naming and interpersonal communication processes. Once they have a foundational understanding of these ideological perspectives, the students are poised to appreciate the social locations and lived experiences of others. They learn to distinguish between stereotypes, social stigma, prejudice, and discrimination and demonstrate knowledge of the 'isms' that perpetuate these individual- and societal-level attitudes and practices. For their second paper assignment, students are asked to provide an in-depth written analysis of a cultural identity and its potentially associated standpoints that they have been enlightened on during their time in the class, using academic research as a guide. The paper aims to develop knowledge of and appreciation for an identity of 'difference'. The final unit of the class is dedicated to students exploring options for implementing their newfound knowledge through allyship and social justice activism.

Students often convey frustration and despair for their own and others' struggles after learning about systemic and interpersonal methods of oppression and 'othering' throughout the semester. As a means of channeling those emotions in productive ways, the students work in groups on a final course project to create a Public Service Announcement (PSA) regarding a particular cultural identity of their choosing. The purpose of the PSA is to educate the broader community on effective and appropriate communication regarding that cultural identity and raise awareness of difference from its associated social standpoint. The project enables students to select a master identity status that they feel is currently misunderstood or misrepresented, assess current social discourses surrounding it, and develop best practices for communicating about this identity for public consumption. Project assessment is based less on the quality of the creative design the PSA assumes and places emphasis instead on contributing to a global discussion about how to redefine 'difference' so that it is celebrated, rather than feared, ignored, and oppressed. Thus far, results from this project have comprised of tangible resources that a variety of campus and local community entities have considered integrating into their message campaigns. Examples include a social media video developed to discuss intersectional feminism for a Women's Resource Center and a brochure providing information about the effects of compulsive masculinity on gay men for an LGBTQA Resource Center. The PSA project helps students and community members construct positive understandings of identity and difference as well as competent communication practices.

This course has been a true labor of love and one that I am happy to share with others whose academic home is critical interpersonal communication work or for those hoping to pursue it.

COURSE SYLLABUS: COMMUNICATING IDENTITY AND DIFFERENCE

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course focuses on the role of communication in the construction of cultural identities. It addresses processes by which individual identities are formed, maintained, and executed during interpersonal interactions. Class content will explore communicative factors that impact identity development, maintenance, and negotiation to make sense of social, cultural, and interpersonal structures of relating within the United States. The primary goals of the course include understanding the social construction of difference and social justice strategies for bridging the gap in identity differences to improve interpersonal functioning.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Recognize and comprehend social constructions of cultural identities.
- Identify conceptual and theoretical frameworks for constructing categories of identity and difference.
- Apply communication theory and case studies to contemporary issues of diversity and difference.
- Analyze socially constructed meanings of difference and their impacts on interpersonal relating.
- Display strategies for cultural competence in intergroup interactions.
- Identify avenues for social justice in various identity contexts.

REQUIRED TEXTS

One textbook is required for this course.

Rosenblum, K. E., & Travis, T. C. (2015). *The meaning of difference: American constructions of race, sex and gender, social class, and sexual orientation* (7th ed.). New York, McGraw - Hill Higher Education. ISBN-13: 9780078027024

*Additional reading materials are made available on the online course integrated learning platform. Below is a selection of the supplemental readings required for the course:

Bell, E., & Blauer, D. (2006). *Performing gender and interpersonal communication research*. In B. J. Dow & J. T. Wood (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Gender and Communication*, (pp. 9–23). Sage.

Frost, D. M. (2011). Social stigma and its consequences for the socially stigmatized. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 5(11), 824-839. doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9004.2011.00394.x

- Galvin, K. M. (2006). *Diversity's impact on defining the family: Discourse-dependence and identity*. In L. H. Turner & R. West (Eds.), *The Family Communication Sourcebook* (pp. 3–19). Sage.
- Jackson, R. L. (2002). Cultural contracts theory: Toward an understanding of identity negotiation. *Communication Quarterly*, 50(3-4), 359-367. doi.org/10.1080/01463370209385672
- Kendi, I. X. (2020, May 12). *Who gets to be afraid in America?*. The Atlantic. <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/05/ahmaud-arbery/611539/>
- Meisenbach, R. J. (2010). Stigma management communication: A theory and agenda for applied research on how individuals manage moments of stigmatized identity. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 38(3), 268-292. doi.org/10.1080/00909882.2010.490841
- Orbe, M. P., & Roberts, T. L. (2012). Co-cultural theorizing: Foundations, applications & extensions. *Howard Journal of Communications*, 23(4), 293-311. doi.org/10.1080/10646175.2012.722838
- Simpson, J. L. (2008). The color-blind double bind: Whiteness and the (im)possibility of dialogue. *Communication Theory*, 18(1), 139-159. doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2007.00317.x
- Watt, S. K. (2007). Difficult dialogues, privilege and social justice: Uses of the privileged identity exploration (PIE) model in student affairs practice. *College Student Affairs Journal*, 26(2), 114-126.

CLASS ACTIVITIES, ASSIGNMENTS, AND EVALUATIONS

PEDAGOGICAL INSTRUCTION:

The course is taught using various methods including lectures, class discussions, individual and group activities, integration of selected documentaries, case-study analyses, and student presentations. Considering the course topic and its focus on understanding difference through identity constructions, students will benefit from open dialogue in the classroom that fosters student-centered learning. Students will engage in course content through personal reflections and critical analyses of academic research. A recommended class size of 25 students allows for these interactive course activities. It is imperative that students come to class ready to discuss their thoughts, questions, and comments.

Students' progress in the course will be evaluated based upon the following:

PARTICIPATION: (WORTH 100 POINTS; 10% OF FINAL COURSE GRADE)

The success of class depends upon everyone's input and active engagement. Please come to class prepared to talk about the assigned readings for the week and engage in class activities and discussions. Simply attending class and not actively participating will result in a lower participation point value. Participation points cannot be made up either before or after an absence by completing extra credit assignments.

Participation points will be based on the following:

- Class attendance.

- Contributions to class discussions, group activities, and individual in-class assignments (THIS IS KEY).
- Making insightful comments about classroom topics that display an understanding of the required readings.
- Active engagement and attention to lectures, discussions, and activities.
- Respectful attention to others when they are speaking.

READING REFLECTIONS: (WORTH 100 POINTS; 10% OF FINAL COURSE GRADE)

This course is only as successful as we, as a class community, make it. One way to enact positive class citizenship is to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings and share your ideas with your peers. To help organize your thoughts, you will be required to submit a two-page, double-spaced reflection for FIVE different class periods throughout the semester. These reflections must be about the assigned reading(s) due for the days you select. For example, you can ask insightful questions about material you find confusing, make comments that constructively critique the readings or integrate previously discussed class material with the readings, or reflect on your personal experiences as they relate to the readings. Each reflection will be worth twenty points. To receive full credit, your reflections need to address the assigned readings and demonstrate that you have fully read the material and are making thought-provoking critiques and inquiries, not summarizing the readings. You can only submit ONE Reflection for each class day and only write about a particular reading once. You may only write on upcoming class content, not content we have already covered.

PAPERS: (WORTH 250 POINTS TOTAL; 25% OF FINAL COURSE GRADE)

Students will be responsible for writing two individual papers for this course. Specific assignment instructions and grading criteria will be provided prior to each assignment deadline.

PAPER #1 – WHO AM I?: PERSONAL IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION ANALYSIS. For this five-page minimum paper, you will use information from section one of the textbook as well as class lectures and discussions to analyze your own cultural identity and explore ways in which it has been socially constructed. This paper is worth 100 points or 10% of your final grade. (Please see Appendix A for assignment instructions.)

PAPER #2 – WHO ARE YOU?: UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENCE. After moving through the second unit of the course, you will be taking in a wealth of information about various cultural identities and their respective social standpoints. The purpose of this paper is to focus on a particular cultural identity that you have learned about. For this seven-page minimum paper, you will select a cultural identity that you were previously unaware of, have had little interaction with, or have recently changed your perception of. You will discuss how you think that cultural identity has been socially constructed using class material as the basis for your arguments and discuss how your understanding of that identity has changed. You will also discuss at least 2 scholarly, peer-reviewed journal articles that examine this cultural identity. The articles must be connected to the Communication Studies discipline in some way. This paper is worth 150 points or 15% of your final grade.

EXAMS: (WORTH 300 POINTS TOTAL; 30% OF FINAL COURSE GRADE)

There will be three in-class exams throughout the semester. Each exam will be worth 100 points or 10% of your final grade (30% total). The third exam will occur during the scheduled final exam time slot, but it

will NOT be cumulative. Exams will test your knowledge of course material covered in class readings, lectures, discussions, and activities, all of which you are responsible for knowing, even on days you are absent. Information about the specific material covered on the exams as well as the exam formats will be provided closer to each exam date. Exam formats could include multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and essay questions. (Please see Appendix B for sample exam questions.)

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT (PSA) GROUP PROJECT: (WORTH 250 POINTS; 25% OF FINAL COURSE GRADE)

Students will work in groups of 3-4 to create a Public Service Announcement (PSA) regarding a particular cultural identity of their choosing. The PSA will focus on educating the community on effective and appropriate communication regarding that cultural identity and raise awareness of difference from the social standpoint of that particular identity. PSA projects can take on various creative designs (e.g., original video, skit, professional poster, or print materials). As a part of this project, each group will be responsible for interviewing at least one person or group of people associated with the selected cultural identity and including the data from that interview in the development of the PSA message. Details regarding the project's required components and grading criteria will be provided early on in the semester.

Group tasks can sometimes be complex undertakings, but it is important for you to learn how to work effectively with your peers. It is up to you to motivate and hold one another accountable. In the event that a group conflict cannot be resolved amongst its members, I will intervene and potentially remove the student(s) in question from the group and ask them to complete the assignment individually. Each student is expected to contribute equally to the group project. Students who indicate equal input but fail to uphold their group responsibilities will be reported to the University for academic dishonesty. I will schedule some class time for groups to work on their projects, but the assignment will require out-of-class group work.

PROJECT PROPOSAL: (WORTH 50 POINTS; 5% OF FINAL COURSE GRADE)

Throughout the semester, I will work with students to approve topics for the group project and provide feedback on their progress. A part of that process will include each group submitting a 2-page minimum written project proposal. Students will provide the topic of their PSA, a brief history of the social construction of their selected cultural identity, a quick overview of current communicative challenges surrounding that identity, a brief overview of the creative direction of the PSA, and a list of tentative interviewees and a rationale for those selections.

PSA GROUP PAPER: (WORTH 100 POINTS; 10% OF FINAL COURSE GRADE)

In addition to creating a PSA, group members will be responsible for writing a paper that details the topic of the PSA and provides the following: a review of the social construction of the cultural identity selected for analysis, an overview of some of the most prominent communicative challenges surrounding that identity, suggested changes for public rhetoric and interpersonal communication as well as implementation plans for those changes, and a rationale for and description of the group's PSA.

PSA PRESENTATION: (WORTH 75 POINTS; 7.5% OF FINAL COURSE GRADE)

Each group will be responsible for making a formal 15-minute presentation of their PSA during the last week of class. All group members must participate equally in the development and presentation of the PSA and will be graded on their preparedness, professionalism, and creativity.

GROUP EVALUATION: (WORTH 25 POINTS; 2.5% OF FINAL COURSE GRADE)

Students will submit an evaluation form on the last day of class assessing each of their group members' contributions to the group project. All group members will receive the same grade on the PSA project paper and presentation; however, I recognize that students do not always provide equal input when working on group assignments. The evaluation form is put in place to compensate for any potential discrepancies in group member contributions. This percentage of your grade will result from averaging the ratings you receive from each of your group members as well as my evaluation of your involvement in the project.

GRADING

Grades for this class are based on a point system. Final grades will be calculated by adding up the total number of points you have earned for each assignment based on the point allocations as previously described. In order to track your progress in the class, you can fill in your earned point value after each assignment has been graded and returned.

Participation	_____	out of 100 points
Reading Reflections	_____	out of 100 points
Paper #1	_____	out of 100 points
Paper #2	_____	out of 150 points
Exam #1	_____	out of 100 points
Exam #2	_____	out of 100 points
Exam #3	_____	out of 100 points
PSA Project Proposal	_____	out of 50 points
PSA Group Paper	_____	out of 100 points
PSA Group Presentation	_____	out of 75 points
Group Evaluation	_____	out of 25 points
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Total Points Earned	_____	out of 1,000 points

GRADE DISTRIBUTION (IN POINTS):

A = 925 – 1000	B = 825 – 864	C = 725 - 764	D = 595 - 664
A- = 895 – 924	B- = 795 – 824	C- = 695 - 724	F = 594 - 0
B+ = 865 – 894	C+ = 765 – 794	D+ = 665 - 694	

COURSE POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

ATTENDANCE:

It is vital to attend every class! Attendance will be taken via a sign-in sheet, which each student is responsible for signing at the beginning of every class. Tardiness and/or early departure from class will result in the deduction of participation points. *Missing more than 25 minutes of class in a 75-minute session will result in a documented absence for the day.*

You are allotted TWO absences from class for the semester without penalty; no participation points will be deducted, and no questions will be asked about your reasons for the absences. Following those two absences, you will have 25 points deducted from your total participation point score for each consecutive absence that is considered unexcused.

If you are absent seven class periods during the semester (regardless of whether or not they are excused or unexcused absences), your final grade will be reduced by half a letter grade (e.g., B to a B-). If you miss eight classes, your final grade will be reduced by a full letter grade (e.g., B to a C). Each consecutive absence thereafter (after eight absences) will continue to result in a full letter grade reduction (e.g., nine absences will result in a second full letter grade reduction, ten absences will result in a third full letter grade reduction, and so on). Therefore, failing to attend class regularly will put you at risk of failing the course. *Students who have zero absences for the semester will earn ten bonus points in the class.

Absences will only be considered excused if the proper, official documentation is provided to me within one week of the absence (i.e., note from physician, letter/e-mail from university professor or organization leader, event program). If you are unable to attend class for either excused or unexcused reasons, it is your responsibility to get notes or information you missed in class from a fellow student and contact me about questions that you may have regarding the material. It is also your responsibility to submit assignments by the specified due dates regardless of an absence. As soon as you know you will be absent from class the day an assignment or presentation is due, please email me so that we can discuss the absence, missed work, and assignment submission details.

CLASSROOM DECORUM:

Debates and disagreements are likely to occur during class discussions and are encouraged to foster the free exchange of ideas; however, it is expected that students treat each other with respect when engaging in large-group discussions and all other classroom interactions. Students will work together with the instructor to determine a set of classroom guidelines at the beginning of the semester that will help facilitate respectful classroom discussions. (Please see Appendix C for a sample set of classroom guidelines.)

Class interruptions of any kind will not be tolerated. Students who leave the classroom (during lecture, group activities, individual activities, etc.) will lose all participation points for the day, except in cases of emergencies. Students are encouraged to take care of all personal matters in advance of the scheduled class time.

COMMUNICATE!

If you have questions or concerns about the class, please contact me as soon as possible. There is little I can do for you if you wait until after an assignment, exam, or absence has taken place and very little I can do if you wait until the end of the semester to express concerns about your academic progress in the course. Timely communication is the key to a successful semester.

The most important thing to remember while in class is to have fun and try to be as open-minded as possible while learning new ideas and concepts related to communication and its function in our everyday lives!

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Topic of the Day	Reading(s) to Complete Prior to Class	Assignments Due
1	Introduction to the Course; Review of Syllabus	Read Syllabus	
	In-Class Identity Activity – Understanding Identity Privilege	Supplemental Reading: Kendi (2020)	
2	Constructing Difference – Understanding Master Statuses	Section 1 (pg. 1-43)	
	Essentialist and Constructionist Perspectives of Identity	Finish Section 1 (pg. 1-43)	
3	Stigma and Marginalization	Supplemental Reading: Frost (2011)	
	Identity Constructions (Race)	Section 1, Readings 1-4 (pg. 51-79)	
4	Identity Constructions (Race), cont.	Section 1, Readings 5-8 (pg. 80-114)	
	Identity Constructions (Sex, Gender, & Sexuality); Performing Gender	Section 1, Readings 9-11 (pg. 115-127) AND 15-17 (pg. 142-158); Supplemental Reading: Bell & Blaeuer (2006)	
5	Identity Constructions (Social Class & Disability)	Section 1, Readings 12-14 (pg. 127-142) AND 18-20 (pg. 159-191)	
	Review for Exam #1 (Jeopardy Review)	Review Class Notes & Readings	Paper #1 Due
6	Exam #1		This exam will cover all class material from Weeks 1-5
	Experiencing Difference	Section 2 (pg. 193-220)	
7	Applying Co-Cultural Theory	Supplemental Reading: Orbe & Roberts (2012)	
	Exploring –isms (Racism & Colorism);	Section 2, Readings 21-24 (pg. 225-260);	

	Whiteness and Theories of Dialogue	Supplemental Reading: Simpson (2008)	
8	Exploring –Isms (Sexism, Heterosexism, and Transgender Oppression/Transphobia)	Section 2, Readings 25-30 (pg. 261-303)	
	Exploring –Isms (Classism)	Section 2, Readings 31-33 (pg. 303-317)	Project Proposals Due
9	Exploring –Isms (Ableism and Ageism)	Section 2, Readings 34-36 (pg. 317-338)	
	Review for Exam #2 (Jeopardy Review)	Review Class Notes & Readings	
10	Exam #2		This exam will cover all class material from Weeks 6-9
	Meaning of Difference; Part I of Documentary – 13 th (2016, DuVernay)	Section 3 (pg. 339-355) AND Readings 37-42 (pg. 359-405)	
11	Meaning of Difference, cont. Part II of Documentary – 13 th (2016, DuVernay)	Section 3, Readings 43-54 (pg. 405-480)	
	Theorizing Difference (Cultural Contracts Theory & Theory of Stigma Management Communication)	Supplemental Readings: Jackson (2002) & Meisenbach (2010)	Paper #2 Due
12	Theorizing Difference, cont. (Discourse Dependence & Identity)	Supplemental Reading: Galvin (2006)	
	Out-of-Class Activity – PSA Group Work & Development of Interview Protocols		Online Assignment Due
13	Building Cultural Alliances & Ally Activism	Supplemental Reading: Watt (2007)	
	Bridging Differences	Section 4 (pg. 481-490) AND Readings 55-58 (pg. 492-516)	
14	Course Material Wrap-Up, Course Evaluations, & Exam #3 Review	Review Class Notes & Readings	Last Day to Submit Reading Reflections
	Out-of-Class Activity – PSA Group Work (Finalize Group Presentations)		
15	PSA Presentations (Groups 1-3 Present)		
	PSA Presentations		PSA Group Papers &

	(Groups 4-6 Present)		Evaluations Due
16	Final Exam (Scheduled by the Registrar's Office)		This exam will cover all class material from Weeks 10-14

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX A

PAPER #1 – WHO AM I? PERSONAL IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION ANALYSIS

100 Points

For this 4-5-page paper, you will use information from Section 1 of the textbook as well as class lectures and discussions to analyze your own cultural identity and explore ways in which it has been socially constructed. To organize your thoughts, I would like you to structure your paper around your responses to the following prompt questions:

- In your own words, what does it mean to take on an essentialist view toward identity? How does this differ from taking on a constructionist view of identity?
- Which perspective, essentialist, constructionist, or perhaps both, do you adhere to when it comes to understanding your own cultural identity? Please respond to EACH of the following sub-questions to help guide your response.
 - With which statuses and master statuses do you identify (identify at least three)? This list does not need to be exhaustive; you only need to discuss those aspects of your identity that you feel comfortable revealing. Please note that this paper will be confidential in that I will be the only person reading it.
 - In what ways do you find that these statuses/master statuses have been socially constructed? Be sure to discuss EACH status (social position; aspect of your identity) that you believe to be a socially constructed concept.
 - How has naming (labels associated with aspects of your identity) impacted how you see yourself AND how you present yourself to others (public image)?
- In what ways have you experienced intersectionality in regard to your cultural identity?
- To the extent that you feel comfortable discussing, in what ways have you experienced stigma in relation to the various aspects of your identity? Please use specific concepts from class in your analysis (e.g., public stigma, internal stigma, courtesy stigma, stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination).
- How would you describe your social standpoints in life? How have these standpoints influenced who you are today? Think about our discussions of identity privilege when responding to these questions.

*I expect that EACH of these questions will be answered in full throughout your paper.

Papers should adhere to the following:

- This paper does not require a particular type of thesis. I expect that there will be a concise introduction paragraph in which you briefly provide an overview of the main topics I have asked you to discuss. The structure of the paper is up to your discretion; however, it would likely make sense to talk about each of the above topics in the order I have presented them. I will allocate points based on your detailed responses to ALL of the questions I have asked you to consider.

- Papers should be a minimum of *four-to-five* pages in length. In order to earn full credit, the paper must be a minimum of four full pages. Please use the page maximum as a guideline. I will NOT take points off if the paper goes beyond five pages. I would rather you have more detail than not enough.
- Papers should draw evidence for arguments directly from the textbook, supplemental class readings, and class discussions. When citing evidence from these sources, be sure to use proper APA citation style (please refer to the posted APA handouts). Please use direct quotations sparingly and only when necessary.
- All papers should be proofread, typed, double spaced, one-inch margins, 12-point, and in Times New Roman font. This paper must be written using first person point of view.
- Papers should have a clear organization, including an introduction paragraph, body paragraphs that respond to each of the prompt questions, and a brief conclusion paragraph that synthesizes (not repeats) the arguments being made throughout the paper.
- Each topic sentence at the beginning of each body paragraph should present a clear understanding of what that paragraph will be discussing in reference to one of the prompt questions.
- Make sure that each paragraph transitions into the next.
- Be sure to use examples throughout the paper to help expand on claims that are made.
- Papers do NOT require a title page or reference page unless citing material other than the class textbook or readings (but you should not have to do any outside research for this paper).
- The writing should be clear, concise, and free of grammatical, mechanical, and spelling errors.
- All papers should be submitted via hard copy at the beginning of class on the day of the deadline. Papers that are submitted after that day and time will be subject to the late assignment policy.

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE EXAM QUESTIONS

EXAM #1:

Reggie realizes that her ability privilege affords her certain advantages in life. For example, she does not have to worry about the accessibility of buildings, prejudicial attitudes about her mental capabilities, or fear of miscommunication due to hearing impairment. Reggie's critical understanding of these realities is an example of her:

- social location
- intersectionality
- objectification
- social standpoint

EXAM #2:

As someone who identifies as a transgender man, Asher has been struggling to find a restroom on campus that he feels comfortable using. His preferred outcome is to work within the dominant social structure of the university to find a solution, such as designating gender-neutral bathrooms. His communication approach is to emphasize how these bathrooms will help not only himself but other students, faculty, and staff as well. According to Co-Cultural Theory, Asher is utilizing which communication orientation?

- Assertive Accommodation
- Assertive Separation
- Nonassertive Assimilation
- Aggressive Accommodation

EXAM #3:

According to the discussion by Watt (2007) in her article, which of the following **IS** an example of social justice?

- Someone raising awareness of their own identity privilege
- Someone evaluating how social class contributes to inequities in school systems
- Someone challenging the hegemonic ideology that people with disabilities function at a deficit in life (are 'less than' the perfect human)
- All of the above are examples of social justice.
- Only b. and c. are examples of social justice.

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE CLASSROOM GUIDELINES

Adapted from Brenda J. Allen, Ph.D.

1. In every way, we will work to create a safe atmosphere for open discussion. We will respect the courage of those who share things we may find highly objectionable. We may learn the most from their comments.
2. We will recognize the uniqueness of each individual.
3. We will assume that people are doing the best they can and have good intentions.
4. We acknowledge that sexism, racism, ageism, heterosexism, and other types of discrimination have most often been systematically taught and learned.
5. We cannot be blamed for information we have learned, but we will be held responsible for repeating misinformation after we have learned otherwise.
6. We will try to enact humility regarding ways that we are privileged, but others may not be.
7. We will actively pursue information about our own identity groups and those of others. We are each assumed to be the experts on our own reality and very much involved in researching that reality with each other.
8. We will share information about our own identities with each other to the extent we feel comfortable, and we will NEVER demean, devalue or in any way put down people for their experiences.
9. We each have an obligation to actively combat the myths and stereotypes about our own identity groups and other groups so that we can break down walls, which prohibit group cooperation and group gain.
10. The instructor's role is to act as a problem-poser, facilitating the process of uncovering important issues and reflecting on them, in addition to sharing knowledge and skills. Because all participants are experts on their own reality and learning style, the instructor is a co-learner in the classroom.
11. We will become lifelong learners, continually accepting differences among diverse populations, including: race, ethnicity, disabilities, nationality, social class, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, religion, and culture.
12. Our class 'safe word' for class discussions will be _____. We will use it when we feel that we need further clarification or discussion of a topic when someone is providing their thoughts/feedback during class.

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