School of Psychology & Neuroscience | Module Cover Sheet

PS4101

Selves and Identities | Semester 2

Instructor(s)

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Location

Seminar Room

Time and Duration

Thursday 11am-1pm   Weeks 1-11   First class: **26th January, 2017**

Practicals: TBA

Evaluation

Continuous Assessment   50%

- **2000-word (max) Assignment due: March 1st, 2017.**

Exam   50%   2 hours

- **Mainly short-answer exam**

Overview

The central theme of the course is the balance between fluidity and stability in the way we define ourselves and others, personally and socially. This framing allows the possibility of exploring a range of important phenomena in personality and social psychology that are linked by that broad theme. The course is also intended to balance theoretical models of the self and social perception with practical outcomes like personal wellbeing and social change.

Topics

	Week Date	**Topic**
1	26 January 2017	Introduction to the themes of stability and variability.
2	02 February 2017	Personality: Models of stability and variability
3	09 February 2017	Multiple self-aspect models
4	16 February 2017	Social Identity Theory and Self-categorization Theory approaches to stability and fluidity of social selves
5	23 February 2017	Stereotyping: stability and variability of groups, homogeneity, lay theories, essentialism
6	02 March 2017	Dual-process models: Impression formation, entitativity
7	09 March 2017	An integrated SCT model of personal, social, role and other selves
	16 March 2017	**Spring Vacation**
	23 March 2017	**Spring Vacation**
8	30 March 2017	Faces: When is a face a person? The categorization and identification of faces.
9	06 April 2017	Ideologies and Religious Identities at the nexus of personal and social identities?
10	13 April 2017	Action-based identities, models of identity and collective action, models of personal behaviour change
11	20 April 2017	Conclusions and Integrations

Class Format

For the majority of weeks, particularly in the early part of the course, the class will primarily use a discussion-based format with only occasional formal lecture input from me. The issues are ones around which all participants in the class can reasonably have some experience and perspective to offer, so a high level of engagement in the discussion is expected. However it is also central to the course that we consider the theoretical and empirical explorations of these issues in the relevant literatures. **To achieve this it is very important, and expected, that the key readings for each week will be digested before each seminar.**

The first section of the course (weeks 1-6) will be oriented heavily to discussion of various key papers in the literature on a variety of topics relating to self and identity (social and personal). Week 7 will offer an integrated view of these topics using Self-categorisation theory as the underlying framework. The remaining 3 topics are intended to show how an integrated framework can be used as a basis for future research in several specific domains. (These are intended as set out in the guide above but may change in orientation slightly depending on the way in which the class discussion evolves over the semester.)

The exact format of discussion will depend on enrolment numbers. However the likely format in the mainly seminar-based weeks will include time for discussion of the key readings for the week in manageable-sized smaller groups, followed by a broader discussion where questions can be raised for discussion with the lecturer.

In addition to the lectures and discussions, some practical sessions will run in the computer lab to allow the class to explore a number of scales and measures used to look at different aspects of self.

Assessment

The assessment is 50% (2000-word) essay and 50% final (2-hour) exam.

Essay question:

Compare and contrast the person-by-situation approach to personality, the multiple self-aspect models of self, and the idea of dynamic interactionism. How well do these different approaches help us understand both stability and variability in the self?

You should start your exploration with the key papers set for these three topics in the course (from weeks 2, 3, and 4). You should use these to explore further into each of these models, but you can also draw upon other ideas and frameworks discussed in the course if that helps you address the question more clearly. So you should read more widely in each theme as well as using other ideas that come up in the course.

Essay Format:

To help provide you with some structure for how to approach the essay, I would like the essays to make use of the following format.

Introduction: Set out your approach to the question and identify the key themes that you will use in examining the three perspectives. This can be relatively short, leaving your key answer to the essay question for the discussion; or you can have a larger introduction in which you set out your position up front. **Aim for between 300 and 700 words** depending on how you approach it.

The three approaches: Have a section for each approach (person by situation; multiple self-aspects; dynamic interactionism) where you set out the key elements of each approach. You should put each in its historical perspective where relevant, the key point of each approach and the particular problem of the self or identity that each tries to solve. Each approach should be separately labelled with an appropriate heading, and you can also use sub-headings in each section if it helps. **Aim for 250-400 words for each approach**.

The approaches can be covered in any order, but you might find that the way you approach the question will encourage a certain order. There is no right order. Also they don't have to be completely independent in that you can start the process of contrasting the approaches as you introduce each new section. However you must make sure that each approach is given enough space to cover the key points of each approach. (That is, don't focus on one approach and then treat each of the others as simple points of comparison. The essay should demonstrate that you understand each perspective in its own right.)

Conclusion: Here you will bring together the key points of similarity and difference in the approaches to give a clear answer to the question. If you had a simple introduction then here is where you will substantively bring together the threads of your argument. If you set out the key points of your argument in the introduction, then you will simply summarise your evidence to establish your conclusion. In other words the length of introduction and conclusion will be somewhat complementary in length. **Aim for between 300 and 700 words** depending on your approach.

The 2000-word limit is the upper limit. A length of 1500 words is perfectly reasonable if you can deal with each of these sections in an efficient way.

Essay referencing style: The essays should be in an author-date referencing format. You can use the APA format as a guide. Though I won't pedantically mark down for violations of APA style I do consider good or poor use of referencing to be an element of good writing. Therefore the way in which referencing is integrated into the writing does contribute to assessment of the quality of the essay.

Exam Format:

The exam will consist of a series of short-answer type questions. There will be some choice in which questions to answer, but the goal of the exam is to test some breadth of knowledge across the course themes. Therefore you should expect to have to answer questions across a range of topics. More details will be available later in the semester.

Seminars and Readings

The readings will generally be available via an online reading list set up with the library and available through the Moodle link. Some papers are not on the electronic reading list and will be available for download directly from Moodle. You are also expected to read more widely to contribute to the discussions and for your assignment.

More information and guidance in how to approach the topics will be provided throughout the semester.

Extra Labs/Workshops

In addition to talking about the various topics, it is also a goal of the course to help you to see how a number of these core constructs are measured or explored empirically. Therefore we will have several sessions in the lab (and associated online exercises) where we will use and analyse various measures of self and identity. More information about these lab sessions will be provided during the semester.

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