

Self & Society, Fall 2016

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Office hours: TBA (and by appointment)

Class meets: Room#, 10A: T Th 10:10-12:00 (x-hour: Wednesday 3:30-4:20 p.m).

Note:

We will be using *three* of the X-Hours for in class mid-terms, so arrange your extracurricular obligations accordingly.

Description:

This course is designed to introduce you to sociological approaches to social psychology, primarily by focusing on the relationship between self and society. Our recurring questions throughout the semester will be: How am I, as a social being, created by society? And, in turn, how is society created and/or sustained by me?

By the end of the term, you will have multiple answers to these two questions.

In contrast to a psychology class, even a psychology class called social psychology, this one takes a distinctly *sociological* point of view. Consequently, it will not overlap greatly in content with a psychology course (although there will be a few common elements).

My goals are to introduce you to a variety of sociological perspectives on the self and society, to challenge you with some of the unanswered questions and debates in social psychology, to expose you to a few of the classic studies that continue to affect social psychological thought to this day, and to enable you to identify social, contextual, and situational factors that cause you to think, feel, and believe as you do in your day-to-day life.

We will also learn strategies that can be derived from social psychological theory to help you “get ahead” in your personal goals and relationships.

Although social psychology has several different branches, most of our time will be spent dealing with symbolic interactionism.

### Learning Objectives

Apply social psychological theory to our own lives in order to better understand our own attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, as well as the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of those around us.

Distinguish between social psychological theories in order to understand ourselves and society as a whole.

Identify and analyze social processes and structures that impinge upon individual behavior.

Identify and analyze how individuals negotiate, resist, and change social processes and structures.

### Assignments:

Three Quizzes (In Class - during the X-Hour Period): 25%

Paper Draft: 10%

Paper (7-8 pages): 25%

Five Short Reflection Papers (2-3 pages): 40%

Class Participation and Attendance : My expectation is that you come to class everyday and that you participate everyday. There are many ways to participate in class. One way to participate is to answer questions and to ask relevant questions. Another way is to participate when we do in class exercises or small group work. Yet another way is to be an engaged listener.

Being an engaged listener is that you listen to me and to anyone else who is speaking, Being an engaged listener means that you are not checking out or having side conversations, which is often distracting to those in front and around you.

I will take note of attendance and participation during every class; your final grade will be raised, lowered, or stay the same, to the degree that you fail to meet, exceed, or meet my expectations.

If you have concerns about this, you should arrange to meet with me during the first two weeks of class.

Late exams: All exams are due on the date and at the time they are assigned.

If you miss one of the short exams, you will not be allowed to make it up without a note from your dean, so plan accordingly.

On the other hand, given that each exam is only 10%, you could miss one exam and still do well in the class.

The final is due, in class, on the regularly scheduled exam day.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism means "to steal and use [the ideas or writings of another] as one's own" (American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 1970, p. 1001). You plagiarize if you copy an author's words without both placing them in quotes and citing the source, and you plagiarize if you copy part or all of another student's exam. Close paraphrasing of someone else's work borders on plagiarism, too. Plagiarism, like cheating, is a violation of the honor code at Dartmouth and will be dealt with accordingly. For more information regarding the Dartmouth Honor Code: <http://www.dartmouth.edu/judicialaffairs/honor/students.html>

Disabilities: Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak to me *by the end of the second week of the term*. All discussions will remain confidential, although the Student Disabilities Coordinator may be consulted to verify the documentation of the disability.

The use of laptops and cell phones in the classroom: Laptops are not permitted in the classroom without prior permission. So if you feel compelled to argue your case, please make an appointment with me to do so.

Note, however, that the research is clear: students who take notes by hand do considerably better than those who do not - mainly because those using a computer end up surfing more than taking notes. However, students who take notes by hand tend to have a better sense of what the professor is saying as they are writing them and are more likely to capture the important concepts, etc. Studies have shown that who type are more likely to try to capture everything, verbatim, which makes it difficult to determine what matters, thus, making it harder to study.

Please turn off cell phones, etc. This should go without saying, but it still happens once a term.

If your phone rings in class, I will answer it.

Short Reflection Papers (2-3 pages):

Over the course of the term, you must turn in five short reflection papers. You can only turn in one a week. If you turn in all five in one week, I will only count the first one for credit. Keep in mind that it is often more difficult to write a good short paper than a mediocre long one.

Given the subject matter of this class, it's not hard to find connections between theory and real life. Therefore, the assignment is to take the week's (or the previous week's) readings, exercises, etc. and apply them to something that is going on in your life, on campus, or in the larger world outside of Dartmouth. You may also use them to analyze television shows, movies, etc.

Although these papers are short (~2 pages) you must provide enough detail about the theories and the situation to make it clear to an uninitiated reader what's going on and how you think whatever is happening can be informed by social psychology, etc.

If you're having difficulty with this assignment, please come see me prior to the third week of classes.

**If your schedule allows, you might consider attending the talk in the Sociology Department on Friday, September 16 at 4:00: *Group Pleasures: Sociology of Fun*. Professor Fine is one of the co-authors of your textbook and is one of the most well known social psychologists/symbolic interactionists in the country. Your response to this talk would be a fine first paper topic.**

#### Long Paper (7-8 pages)

During the second week of class, we will engage (in-class) in a well known motivational training tool that is often used by executive coaches, health coaches, etc., this is designed to create self-change by changing your beliefs, your self-attitudes, and potentially your feelings around a certain topic. In order to do this, you will need to select an identity that you would like to create. In the past, students have wanted to adopt more academic identities, healthier identities, more successful identities. It should be something that you would like to accomplish. If you can't think of something, think of a habit or behavior that you would like to eradicate and see if you can't come up with an identity that would represent the opposite of that.

Over the course of the term, you will be introduced to a number of social psychological insights and/or theories.

Your paper assignment is to use these theories/insights (minimum of 5) to illustrate why you were able to change your behavior during the course of the 10 or why you were not.

On the one hand, I have had students stop drinking, stop smoking, stop cutting, start exercises, take up martial arts, and adopt better study habits. On the other hand, I have also had students who were unable to change their behaviors, but who walked away with a deep understanding of why and what they would need to change in the future were they to try to make a concerted self-change again. Whether you "succeed" or "fail" is not the

point. In fact, some of the best papers and deepest understandings came from those who were unable to change.

### Quizzes

Quizzes are designed to test your knowledge of key concepts, theories, and findings covered in both lecture and in the readings. The format of each quiz will be determined by the content. Expect a mix of short answer or single “essay.”

### Required texts:

Sandstrom, Kent L., Kathryn J. Lively, Daniel D. Martin, and Gary Alan Fine. 2014. *Symbols, Selves, and Social Reality: A Symbolic Interactionist Approach to Social Psychology and Sociology*, Fourth Edition. Oxford University Press.

### Reading Schedule:

#### **Week One**

Sept 13 - Sandstrom, et al. Chapter One: The Meaning of Symbolic Interactionism

Sept 15 - Sandstrom, et al. Chapter Two: The Interactionist Toolkit: Methods, Strategies, and Relevant Perspectives

#### **Week Two**

Sept 20 -You Turn Exercise: Paper Assignment (In Class)

Sept 22 - Alternate Perspectives: Social Structure & Personality, Status Expectations States, and Affect Control Theory

Jessica Calarco, “‘I Need Help!’ Social Class and Children’s Help-Seeking in Elementary School.” (available on JSTOR).

Correll, Benard, & Patik, “Getting a Job: Is there a Motherhood Penalty?” (available on JSTOR)

Nelson, Steven M. “Redefining a Bizarre Situation: Relative Concept Stability in Affect Control Theory.” (Available on JSTOR)

#### **Week Three**

Sept 27 - Sandstrom, et al, Chapter Three: People as Symbol Makers and Users: Language and the Creation of Reality

September 28: First Quiz (In Class, X-Hour)

Sept 29 Readings:

Berger, Peter and Hansfried Keller. "Marriage and the Construction of Reality: in Exercise in the Sociology of Knowledge."

Goffman, Erving. Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (selected readings) (Canvas)

Goffman, Erving. Stigma (selected readings) (Canvas)

#### **Week Four**

Oct 4 - Sandstrom, et al. Chapter Four: Socialization: The Creation of Meaning and Identity

Oct 6 - Readings:

Lois, Jennifer, "The Socialization of Heroes," by Jennifer Lois (Canvas);

Cahill, Spencer, "Emotional Capital and Professional Socialization: The Case of Mortuary Science Students (and Me)" (available on JSTOR)

#### **Week Five**

Oct 11 - Sandstrom, et al. Chapter Five:

Cooley, Charles Horton, "The Nature and Significance of the Self; "The Looking Glass Self" (Canvas)

October 12 - Quiz (X-Hour, in class)

Oct 13 - Readings

Snow & Anderson. "Identity Work among the Homeless: The Verbal Construction and Avowal of Personal Identity" (available on JSTOR)

Matters de Vries, "Intersectional Identities and Conceptions of the Self: The Experience of Transgender People." (available online)

Ellen Granberg. "Is This All there Is?" Possible Selves, Self-Change, and Weight Loss." (available on JSTOR)

## **Week Six**

Oct 18 - Sandstrom, et al. Chapter Six: Role Taking, Role Making, and the Coordination of Action

Oct 20

Selections from *Becoming and Ex*, By Rose Ebaugh (Canvas);

“Now My Old Self” is Thin”: Stigma Exists After Weight Loss,” by Ellen Granberg (JSTOR)

Fraser Episode

## **Week Seven**

Oct 25 - Sandstrom, et al. Chapter Seven: Interactionist Approaches to the Study of Emotion: Emotion in Everyday Life

*Draft of Long Paper Due in Class*

Oct 27

Harlow, Roxanna. “Race Doesn’t Matter, but...”: The Effect of Race on Professors’ Experiences and Emotion Management in the Undergraduate College Classroom.” (Available on JSTOR)

Amanda Gengler. “He’s Doing Fine: Hope Work and Emotional Threat Management Among Families of Seriously Ill Children.” (available online)

Resolving Negative Affect and Restoring Meaning; Boyle and McKenzie, “Responses to Deflection Produced by Unwanted Sexual Experiences.” (available on JSTOR).

## **Week Eight**

Nov 1 - Sandstrom, et al. Chapter Eight: The Politics of Social Reality: Constructing and Negotiating Deviance

November 2, Quiz 3 (X-hour, in class)

Nov 3 - Readings:

Smith-Lovin, et al. “Heinous Crime or Unfortunate Accident.” (available on JSTOR);

Sweeney, Brian. "Masculine Status, Sexual Performance, and the Sexual Stigmatization of Women." (available on line).

Thoits, Peggy A. "Resisting the Stigma of Mental Illness." (available on JSTOR)

Howard Becker, "On Becoming a Marijuana User" (available on Canvas)

### **Week Nine**

Nov 8 - Chapter Nine: Collective Behavior and Social Movements

Nov 10 - Readings:

schuster, stef and Celeste Campos-Castillo. "Measuring Resonance and Dissonance in Social Movement Frames with Affect Control Theory." (available on Canvas)

Schrock, Douglas, Daphne Holden, and Lori Reid. 2004. "Creating Emotional Resonance: Interpersonal Emotion Work and Motivational Framing in a Transgender Community." *Social Problems*, 51:61-81. (available on JSTOR)

### **Week Ten**

Nov 15 Wrap Up and Optional Quiz (in-class; I will record the best out of three, so if you're happy with your grade you don't need to take it. However, if you're not happy with one of your quiz grades or you missed one, you might want to consider taking it - it's entirely up to you)