

**FYS: WHO AM I?**  
**A SOCIOCULTURAL APPROACH TO SELF AND IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT**  
**Fall, 2013: 3 Credit Hours**  
**312 Greene Hall, T/TH 11-12:15**

Instructor: Lisa Kiang, Ph.D. E-mail: KiangL@wfu.edu  
 Office: 446 Greene Hall Telephone: 336.758.5750 (24-hour voicemail)  
 Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description: Acquiring a sense of self or identity is an important developmental task, and one that has long been a part of human nature. This course will allow you to learn about general issues of identity development as well as help you explore who you are—personally, socially, and culturally. We will examine theoretical and contemporary perspectives on self/identity as well as scientific research on how individuals come to learn and feel about themselves. We also will examine sociocultural threats to identity including issues of power, oppression, stereotypes, and prejudice, as they impact the lives of children, adults, and families living in the United States.

Course Goals:

- To understand and expand your knowledge of self/identity development through “popular” readings, research articles, videos, lectures, and discussion.
- To apply such knowledge to your own sense of self/identity, and to recognize how your identity is linked to society and culture.
- To encourage the celebration of diversity and to be active in creating meaningful ways to apply your sociocultural awareness and knowledge gained.

Required Readings:

- Tatum, B. D. (1997/1999). *Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria? And other conversations about race*. New York: Basic Books.
- Additional readings will consist of excerpts, book chapters, and journal articles accessed through Sakai: <http://sakai.wfu.edu>.

Course Requirements:

- Autobiographical essay (100 points). **An autobiographical essay will be due ON OR BEFORE the university scheduled final exam date for this class, Dec. 12, by 12:00PM.** This paper should be approximately 10-12 pages, double-spaced. You will draw on class material and analyze your own identity development (e.g., who you are, how you learned who you are). There are different approaches you could take to complete this assignment. For instance, you could comprehensively

focus on one specific aspect of your identity (e.g., gender, ethnic, religious) and trace its evolution. Or, you could interview your family members about their sense of identity and then use their responses to help shed light on your own development. These are just some ideas...Be creative with it! The only major requirement is that you draw on class material and address some aspect of the sociocultural influence in your life. This exercise should be fun and enlightening, and what you get out of it will depend on your willingness to process information about yourself on both cognitive and emotional levels. Further details as to how this assignment will be graded will be provided.

- Children's literary analysis (a.k.a. report on children's book!) (40 points). You will read a book that is targeted for children and analyze the self/identity themes that are illustrated in the book. You will summarize the messages that the book attempts to convey and critique whether you think the book does or does not do a good job, especially given the developmental appropriateness of the book. This paper should be approximately 3-4 pages, double-spaced. **This assignment is due by Sept. 19.**
- Film analysis (60 points). For this assignment, you will watch a movie or documentary and write a 5-6 page (double-spaced) critique of the film, reflecting on core issues and on the identity development of one or more of the film's characters. You should provide a very brief summary of the film, and apply class principles in analyzing the character(s)'s identity. **This assignment is due by Oct. 15.** Feel free to come to me for suggestions, and please watch something that you have not previously seen.
- Book review (40 points). During the semester you will read a literary work of your own choosing and evaluate it for its appropriateness as a reading for this class. You can read virtually anything—a biography, a novel or work of fiction, an autobiography or memoir. The goal of the book review is to make a commentary (not a summary) of the book's themes and critically evaluate its relevance to class. This paper is concise, 2 pages single-spaced. More details about grading will be provided. **This assignment is due by Dec. 5.** Feel free to see me for suggestions, and you must choose something that you have not previously read.
- Research article critique (30 points). During the semester you will read and critique one research article related to self/identity development. The specific topic can be anything of interest to you, as long as the article is from a professional journal, describes an empirical study, and focuses on some aspect of identity (ethnic, gender, etc.). A few examples of relevant journals include *Self*

*and Identity, Journal of Research on Adolescence, or Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology.* Your 1-page report (single-spaced) should include, in your own words, a brief summary of the research findings, the key issues that the research attempts to understand, and some of your own brief suggestions for future research in the area. Please attach a copy of the first page of the article (which should include the abstract) and see me if you need help finding sources. **This assignment is due on or before Nov. 26.** Please feel free to get started on the assignment as soon as you like, or wait until after our library session (scheduled for Oct. 17) which is designed to help familiarize you with searching electronic databases and other library resources.

- Writing assignments (20 points). Throughout the semester I will assign short (1-2 paragraph) writing assignments to facilitate your critical evaluation and analysis of course content as well as deep consideration of your own thoughts and experiences in light of class material. These assignments will be announced in class and, since attendance is EXPECTED, there will be NO opportunities to make-up these assignments (unless your absence has been already "excused" (e.g., documented and approved)). Each assignment will be given a "+" if it is turned in, thoughtful, and reflective. A "-" will be given to responses that are not turned in or that appear put together without much care or synthesis of ideas. At the end of the semester, you will receive points that correspond to the percentage of assignments for which you received a "+." For instance, if you completed all assignments thoughtfully, you would receive a 20/20. If 75% of your responses received a "+" you would receive a 15/20. There will probably be between 8-10 assignments throughout the semester.
- Facilitating discussion of a self/identity topic (50 points total). You will share the responsibility of facilitating a 30-40 minute class discussion on a topic of your choice. This is your chance to "spin" our class toward your own specific interests. The range of topics is basically limitless as long as it deals with some aspect of self/identity. Please note that your role is to basically take charge of class. I will chime in where appropriate, but the selection of readings (you must choose at least one reading, given to me at least one week in advance so that I can post on Sakai), the manner in which you carry out the discussion—everything regarding the session itself is completely up to you and your co-leader. There is no right or wrong way to facilitate. Some ideas include circulating discussion questions via e-mail ahead of time, or outlining an initial framework at the beginning of class (on the board or via Power Point) to highlight important themes. The goal of facilitation is to provide structure and direction for your classmates during the discussion (and not *be* the entire discussion). You should therefore expect a high

degree of participation in both quality and quantity. For this component of the class, you will receive up to 40 points for effectively leading the discussion, choosing appropriate readings, and generating active engagement from your classmates. You will receive up to 10 points for participation in topics that you are not leading, averaged across the discussion days.

- Class participation in a class like this is essential. This means not only coming to class, but also being mentally "present". Your participation will be graded on a pass/fail basis. If you come to class and are consistently mentally "present" you will pass. If you don't come to class or do come in but zone out, you will probably fail. Whether you pass or fail may be important at the end of the semester when I calculate grades. If you are on the fence between two grades, your attendance/participation will be taken into account for better or worse. The expectation is that you will actively contribute. If you are absent, it is YOUR responsibility to get announcements, assignments, handouts, and/or notes from a classmate. Periodic absences may be "excused" only for legitimate reasons (e.g., extreme illness, emergency) and must be DOCUMENTED.
- A note on assignments. ALL and I mean **\*ALL\*** assignments must be submitted in hard copy form. If you feel the need to e-mail me an assignment, go right ahead, but I will not print anything out for you and I will not grade anything unless it is on paper. Longer papers must also be stapled. By "stapled" I mean **\*STAPLED\***.

Grading: Grades will be based on total of 340 points. The following scale will be used:

A (100-92)	B+ (89-88)	C+ (79-78)	D+ (69-68)	F (<60)
A- (91-90)	B (87-82)	C (77-72)	D (67-62)	
	B- (81-80)	C- (71-70)	D- (61-60)	

Important Guidelines: We will discuss sensitive and sometimes emotionally difficult issues in this class. Obviously, we will not all agree on all topics or perspectives. These multiple voices and opinions can enrich our learning and discussion. This can only happen if we listen carefully to each other and share talk time, be open to and respect diverse opinions, and find the courage to voice our identities and to speak our own truth.

**Course Schedule and Readings—to be completed on the day they are listed\***

August 27

- Overview of course goals, assignments, etc.
- Defining terms
- What's in a name?

August 29

- "Pop" culture and self/identity
- Phrenology, astrology, numerology, and other -ologies

September 3

- "Sociocultural" considerations \*Textbook excerpt
- Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of development

September 5

- Theoretical approaches to the self \*James: Ch. 12
  - William James (and Susan Harter) model \*Harter: Ch. 1
  - Self-esteem

September 10

- Multidimensional self/identity \*Harter: Ch. 3

September 12

- Theoretical approaches to identity \*Erikson: p. 15-43
  - Erik Erikson \*Marcia (1966)
  - Marcia's identity statuses

September 17

- Children's self/identity socialization \*Harter: Ch. 2
- \*Tatum: Ch. 3

September 19

- Discussion of self/identity themes in your children's literary analysis
- **Children's literary analysis is DUE (bring your book in if you can)!**

September 24

- What is privilege? \*McIntosh article
- Isms, Lollipop Exercise \*Tatum: Ch. 1

---

\* This schedule is subject to change.

September 26

- Film: "Mirrors of Privilege"

\*Meaning of Difference: p. 81-87

October 1

- White identity development

\*Tatum: Ch. 6

October 3

- What about affirmative action, "reverse racism"? \*Tatum: Ch. 7

October 8

- Ethnic and racial identity

\*Tatum: Ch. 4 & 8

- Multiethnic identity

- Film: "Skin Deep"?

October 10

- Threats to racial/ethnic identity

\*Tatum: Ch. 2

- Film: "Eye of the Storm"

\*Kim: "Do You Have Eyelashes?"

October 15

- Influences from the media

\*Wright: Ch. 8, p. 184-192

- **Movie Critique is DUE (share major themes from your analysis)!**

October 17

- **Meet with Mrs. Bobbie Collins at Z. Smith Reynolds Library (Rm. 204, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)**

- **Bring laptops!**

October 22

- Religious identity

\*Ream & Savin-Williams

-Film: "The Devil's Playground"

October 24

- Religious identity

October 29

- WFU excursion

\*Clayton & Opatow (2003)

- Identity of "place", environment

\*Holmes (2003)

October 31

- Environmental identity

November 5

- Gender identity

\*Kimmel: Ch. 4

November 7

- LGBTQ issues

Guest: Angela Mazaris

November 12

- "Big Tent" project
- Visit to Prof. Finn's studio

November 14

- Special self/identity topics

\*Readings TBD

November 19

- Special self/identity topics

\*Readings TBD

November 21

- Special self/identity topics

\*Readings TBD

November 26

- Promoting self/identity
- Current research on self/identity (prevalence, trends, etc.)
- **Research Article Critique is DUE (share goals and take-home points of article)!**

\*Tatum: Ch. 10

November 28

- No class—Thanksgiving!

December 3

- Proactive directions
- Film: "Not in Our Town"

\* Confessions of a Southern White

December 5

- Revisiting terms
- Who am I?
- **Book Review is DUE!**

**\*\*\*Autobiographical Essay is DUE on or before NOON on December 12!\*\*\***