

Spring 2008
Sociology 3151- 002
Self in Modern Society
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11A Ketchum Hall 303.492.8838
T-R 5-8:15pm
Office hours: T-R 3:30-4:30pm

Welcome to what I hope will be an intriguing examination of the self we live by. It would seem at first glance, that the nature and character of the self are rather obvious. We are whatever we are. We talk about ourselves, we talk to ourselves, and we are constantly presenting ourselves before varied audiences. Heck, we even google ourselves. We tend to have a definite sense of being certain about what we are experiencing as we interact with the social world. And we develop a self identity through those experiences. Straightforward, personal stuff!

Yet the character of the self has some peculiar, sociological properties. Most notably, it's reflexive and abstract nature. The development of the self arises from and is continually shaped through social interaction with others and involves the process whereby actors (subjectively) reflect on themselves as objects. Thus, the self has the rare ability to be both subject and object. It is this reflexive process, and the patterned regularities of social life shaping this - rather personal - process that is of great sociological interest. Through the self, the individual and society are dynamically conjoined.

The capacity to see this linkage of individual biography and social history, self and society, individual agency and social structure, necessitates a keen sociological imagination. This is the promise of sociology. This is our objective for the next sixteen weeks. We will draw broadly from the wealth of classical and contemporary sociological insights into the modern world to describe and analyze, this most central of sociological concerns, the social construction of self. We will familiarize ourselves with the symbolic interactionist approach and highlight the interactional processes through which we produce and reproduce our social worlds.

I have chosen two rich and provocative texts to guide our discussions. These two required texts are available exclusively at **Left Hand Books**, 1200 Pearl St. - lower level 303.443.8252

Symbols, Selves and Social Reality (2nd ed.) by Sandstrom, Martin and Fine

Inside Social Life: Readings in Sociological Psychology and Microsociology (fifth edition) ed. Spencer Cahill

Since these books will serve as the basis for our classroom discussions, it is vital that you possess them, make a strong commitment to reading them, and bring them to class with you. Given the contemporary context and richness of the social concerns introduced in these texts, I expect lively and thoughtful participation by all members of this class. I expect you to read the appropriate material for each class meeting and come ready to talk, share, apply, refine, and/or challenge the topic at hand. I favor frequent and informed participation. **I strongly encourage you to make every effort to become a "regular member" of this class. Please bring your book(s) to each class meeting.** Your grade for this course will be based on the following criteria: participation (20%); four exams (10% ea. / 40 %); two writing assignments (20 % ea. / 40%).

Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities who qualify for academic accommodations must provide me notification from Disability Services and discuss specific needs with me, preferably during the first two weeks of class. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities (303-492-8671, Willard Hall, room 322.)

Religious Observances

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, please inform me as to any classes you expect to miss due to a religious observance.

Classroom Behavior Policy

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat all students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which they and their students express opinions. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender variance, and nationalities.

Student Honor Code

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council(honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and nonacademic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion).

Policy on Discrimination and Harassment

The University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships applies to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550.