

## Culture, Identity, and Alterity (S0J95A)

Mondays 2:00-4:00pm

Location: SW 02.05

Instructor: Galen Watts, [galen.watts@kuleuven.be](mailto:galen.watts@kuleuven.be)

Office: SW 02.115

Office Hours: 1:00-3:00pm on Wednesdays

### Course Description:

How do we come to know *who* and *what* we are? What are the social preconditions—cognitive, linguistic, institutional, and ethical—for identity? What are the implications of living in a world where plural, overlapping, and conflicting identities co-exist in close proximity (real or virtual) to one another? And what do we make of the fact that those identities exist not in perfect equality but rather within and across hierarchical and stratified social orders? In this course, we will examine classical and contemporary sociological responses to these questions. More specifically, we will cover how sociologists have theorized the social and cultural construction of identity, thereby introducing you to sociological perspectives on individuality, community, solidarity, authority, alterity, exclusion, and stigma.

### Learning Objectives:

You will learn how to think sociologically about the construction and production of identity, community, and “otherness” (*alter*) in (late) modernity – with a special focus on developments within the sociology of culture (broadly understood). The second objective is to transform this theoretical sociological background into a useable “toolbox” that will enable you to better understand and assess the world around you.

### Course Format:

All lectures will be given in person, unless circumstances do not permit this. I will post lecture slides on Toledo on the day of the lecture. Lectures will be recorded, and uploaded onto Toledo 2 weeks after class. The expectation is that lectures will be interactive, offering opportunities for you to actively engage with myself and your fellow students. Key concepts and theories discussed in the readings will be elaborated by me in lectures, however, you are encouraged and expected to ask questions and share your thoughts in class. Expressing your ideas and engaging with those of others in the class is an important skill to develop. What’s more, it is beneficial for all of us to be exposed to a diversity of views and experiences. So, in this course, I expect both teaching and learning to be a joint venture.

**Assessments:** The course evaluation will be composed of two parts.

- 1) **Short Research Essay (40% of final grade):** You will be required to apply one or more of the theories discussed in readings and lectures to a specific empirical case study. The idea here is twofold: first, I am looking for you to demonstrate that you understand the material. Second, I want you to use the theory in question to illuminate something about the world “out there.” In other words, show us how you *do* sociology, by putting the theoretical tools provided by the readings into practice. (I will provide more detailed instructions later in the term).

**Deadline:** January 2, 2023

- 2) **Closed Book Oral Examination (60% of final grade)** during the examination period with open questions about the course materials.

**Date of Exam:** January 31, 2023

**Late Policy:**

Assignments that are submitted late will receive a 5% deduction each day. If there is an extenuating circumstance that you would like me to consider, please try to e-mail me *before* the deadline rather than after it has passed.

**Statement on Academic Integrity:**

KU Leuven students, faculty, administrators and staff all have responsibilities for supporting and upholding the fundamental values of academic integrity. Academic integrity is constituted by the five core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (see: <https://www.kuleuven.be/english/research/rri>) and by the quality of courage. These values and qualities are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive.

**Student Accommodation:**

KU Leuven is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you are a student with a disability and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact a Disability Officer as early as possible: <https://www.kuleuven.be/english/stuvo/studentswithadisability/contact-campus-leuven>.

**CLASS SCHEDULE & Reading List**

\* All required and supplementary readings are available on Toledo\*

**Week 1: Monday, October 3**

**Course introduction**

***Supplementary Readings:***

- Wesley Morris. 2015. "The Year We Obsessed Over Identity." *The New York Times Magazine*.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/11/magazine/the-year-we-obsessed-over-identity.html>
- Anand Giridharadas. 2018. "What Is Identity?" *The New York Times*.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/27/books/review/francis-fukuyama-identity-kwame-anthony-appiah-the-lies-that-bind.html>

## **Week 2: Monday, October 10**

### **Durkheim on modernity, social identity, and human nature**

#### ***Required Readings:***

1. Emile Durkheim. 1973. "Chapter 8: Division of Labor in Society: Consequences." In *Emile Durkheim on Morality and Society*. Edited by Robert N. Bellah. University of Chicago Press. Pp. 114-133.
2. Emile Durkheim. 1973. "Chapter 10: The Dualism of Human Nature and Its Social Conditions." In *Emile Durkheim on Morality and Society*. Edited by Robert N. Bellah. University of Chicago Press. Pp. 149-166.

#### ***Supplementary Readings:***

- Emile Durkheim. 1973. "Chapter 4: Individualism and the Intellectuals." In *Emile Durkheim on Morality and Society*. Edited by Robert N. Bellah. University of Chicago Press. Pp. 43-57.
- Steven Seidman. 1985. "Modernity and the Problem of Meaning: The Durkheimian Tradition." *Sociological Analysis* 46 (2): 109-130.
- Jerrold Seigel. 1987. "Autonomy and Personality in Durkheim: An Essay on Content and Method." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 48 (3): 483-507.
- "Robert A. Nisbet. 1952. "Conservatism and Sociology." *American Journal of Sociology* 58 (2): 167-175.

## **Week 3: Monday, October 17**

### **Simmel on the stranger and the city**

#### ***Required Readings:***

1. Georg Simmel. 1971. "The Stranger." In *Georg on Individuality and Social Forms*. Edited by Donald N. Levine. University of Chicago Press. Pp. 143-149.
2. Georg Simmel. 1971. "The Metropolis and Mental Life." In *Georg Simmel on Individuality and Social Forms*. Edited by Donald N. Levine. University of Chicago Press. Pp. 324-339.

#### ***Supplementary Readings:***

- Georg Simmel. 1971. "How Is Society Possible?" In *Georg Simmel on Individuality and Social Forms*. Edited by Donald N. Levine. University of Chicago Press. Pp. 6-22.
- Georg Simmel. 1971. "The Problem of Sociology" In *Georg Simmel on Individuality and Social Forms*. Edited by Donald N. Levine. University of Chicago Press. Pp. 23-35.

- Georg Simmel. 1971. "Group Expansion and the Development of Individuality." In *Georg Simmel on Individuality and Social Forms*. Edited by Donald N. Levine. University of Chicago Press. Pp. 251-293.
- Georg Simmel. 1971. "The Conflict in Modern Culture." In *Georg Simmel on Individuality and Social Forms*. Edited by Donald N. Levine. University of Chicago Press. Pp. 375-394.

#### **Week 4: Monday, October 24**

##### **Berger and Luckmann on the social construction of reality**

###### ***Required Readings:***

1. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann. 1971 [1966]. "Part II: Society as Objective Reality, I. Institutionalization." *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. London: Penguin. Pp. 65-97.
2. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann. 1971 [1966]. "Part III: Society as Subjective Reality, I. Internalization of Reality." *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. London: Penguin. Pp. 149-166.

###### ***Supplementary Readings:***

3. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann. 1971 [1966]. "Introduction. London: The Problem of Sociology." *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. London: Penguin. Pp. 11-30.
- Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann. 1971 [1966]. "Chapter 1: The Reality of Everyday Life." *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. London: Penguin. Pp. 33-42.
- Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann. 1971 [1966]. "Chapter 3: Language and Knowledge in Everyday Life." *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. London: Penguin. Pp. 49-62.
- Alan Sica. 2016. "Social Construction as Fantasy: Reconsidering Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's *The Social Construction of Reality* after 50 Years." *Cultural Sociology* 10 (1): 37-52.

#### **Week 5: Monday, October 31**

##### **Du Bois on being black**

###### ***Required Readings:***

1. W. E. B. Du Bois. 2007 [1903]. "The Forethought." *The Souls of Black Folk*. Oxford University Press.

2. W. E. B. Du Bois. 2007 [1903]. "Chapter 1: Of Our Spiritual Strivings." *The Souls of Black Folk*. Oxford University Press.
3. W. E. B. Du Bois. 2007 [1903]. "Chapter 9: Of the Songs of Master and Man." *The Souls of Black Folk*. Oxford University Press.

***Supplementary Readings:***

- Brent Hayes Edwards. 2007. "Introduction." In *The Souls of Black Folk*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- W. E. B. Du Bois. 2003 [1920]. "The Souls of White Folk." *Monthly Review* 55 (6): 44-58.
- José Itzigsohn and Karida Brown. 2021. "The Sociology of W. E. B. Du Bois." *Sociological Forum* 36 (2): 511-514.
- José Itzigsohn and Karida L. Brown. 2020. "Chapter 1: Double Consciousness: The Phenomenology of Racialized Subjectivity." *The Sociology of W. E. B. Du Bois: Racialized Modernity and the Global Color Line*. New York: New York University Press.

**Week 6: Monday, November 7**

**Bourdieu on class and distinction**

***Required Readings:***

1. Pierre Bourdieu. 1984. "Introduction." *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Pp. 1-7.
2. Pierre Bourdieu. 1989. "Social Space and Symbolic Power." *Sociological Theory* 7 (1): 14-25.
3. Pierre Bourdieu. 2013 [1978]. "Symbolic capital and social classes." *Journal of Classical Sociology* 13 (2): 292-302.

***Supplementary Readings:***

- Pierre Bourdieu. 1985. "The Social Space and the Genesis of Groups." *Theory and Society* 14 (6): 723-744.
- Omar Lizardo. 2014 "Taste and the Logic of Practice in Distinction." *Czech Sociological Review* 3: 335-364.
- Rogers Brubaker. 1985. "Rethinking Classical Theory: The Sociological Vision of Pierre Bourdieu." *Theory and Society* 14 (6): 745-775.

## **Week 7: Monday, November 14**

### **Foucault on discourse and sexuality**

#### ***Required Readings:***

1. Michel Foucault. 1978. "Part One: We 'Other Victorians'." *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1*. Pantheon Books. Pp. 1-13.
2. Michel Foucault. 1978. "The Incitement to Discourse." *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1*. Pantheon Books. Pp. 17-35.
3. Michel Foucault. 1978. "Part III: Scienta Sexualis." *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1*. Pantheon Books. Pp. 53-72.

#### ***Supplementary Readings:***

- Adam Isaiah Green. 2010. "Remembering Foucault: Queer Theory and Disciplinary Power." *Sexualities* 13 (3): 316-337.
- Lisa Downing. "Chapter 6: Works: *The History of Sexuality*." In *The Cambridge Introduction to Michel Foucault*. Cambridge University Press. Pp. 86-103.
- Michel Foucault, Geoff Bennington, and Bernard-Henri Lévy. 1980. "The History of Sexuality: Interview." *Oxford Literary Review* 4 (2): 3-14.
- T. J. Berard. 1999. "Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, and the Reformulation of Social Theory." *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 29 (3): 203-227.

## **Week 8: Monday, November 21**

### **Butler on gender and performativity (No in-person class; virtual lecture posted on Toledo)**

#### ***Required Readings:***

1. Judith Butler. 1999 [1990]. "Preface (1999)." *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London: Routledge.
2. Judith Butler. 1999 [1990]. "Chapter 1: Subjects of Sex / Gender / Desire." *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London: Routledge. Pp. 3-44.

#### ***Supplementary Readings:***

- Sara Ahmed. 2016. "Interview with Judith Butler." *Sexualities* 19 (4): 482-492.
- Anoop Nayak and Mary Jane Kehily. 2006. "Gender Undone: Subversion, Regulation and Embodiment in the Work of Judith Butler." *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 27 (4): 459-472.

- Cecilia L. Ridgeway. 2009. "Framed Before We Know It." *Gender & Society* 23 (2): 145-160.
- Candace West and Don Zimmerman. 1987. "Doing Gender." *Gender and Society* 1(2): 125-151.
- Joanne Entwistle and Ashley Mears. 2012. "Gender on Display: Performativity in Fashion Modelling." *Cultural Sociology* 7 (3): 320-335.

### **Week 9: Monday, November 28**

#### **Skeggs on the classed subject**

##### ***Required Readings:***

1. Beverley Skeggs. 2004. "Chapter 1: Making class: Inscription, exchange, value and perspective." *Class, Self, Culture*. London: Routledge. Pp. 1-26.
2. Beverley Skeggs. 2004. "Chapter 6: Representing the working-class." *Class, Self, Culture*. London: Routledge. Pp. 96-118.

##### ***Supplementary Readings:***

- Laura Mankki and Timo Aho. 2020. "Feminist Class Politics Revisited: An Interview with Beverley Skeggs." *NORA: Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research* 28 (1): 70-75.
- Beverley Skeggs. 2011. "Imagining Personhood Differently: Person Value and Autonomist Working-Class Value Practices." *The Sociological Review* 59 (3): 496-513.
- Beverley Skeggs and Vik Loveday. 2012. "Struggles for value: value practices, injustice, judgment, affect and the idea of class." *The British Journal of Sociology* 63 (3): 472-490.

### **Week 10: Monday, December 5**

#### **Lamont on stigma and self-worth; Alexander and civil repair and incorporation**

##### ***Required Readings:***

1. Michèle Lamont. 2018. "Addressing Recognition Gaps: Destigmatization and the Reduction of Inequality." *American Sociological Review* 83(3): 419-444.
2. Jeffrey C. Alexander. 2001. "The long and winding road: Civil repair of intimate injustice." 2001. *Sociological Theory* 19(3): 371-400.

##### ***Supplementary Readings:***

- Matthew Clair and Michèle Lamont. 2016. “Destigmatization and health: Cultural constructions and the long-term reduction of stigma.” *Social Science & Medicine* 165L: 223-232.
- Mark A. Pachucki, Sabrina Pendergrass, Michèle Lamont. 2007. “Boundary processes: Recent theoretical contributions and new developments.” *Poetics* 35: 331-351.
- Jeffrey C. Alexander. 2013. “Struggling over the mode of incorporation: backlash against multiculturalism in Europe.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36 (4): 531-556.
- Andrea Voyer. 2013. “Notes on a cultural sociology of immigrant incorporation.” *American Journal of Cultural Sociology* 1 (1): 26-41.

### **Week 11: Monday, December 12**

#### **Brubaker on trans**

##### ***Required Readings:***

1. Rogers Brubaker. 2016. “Introduction.” *Trans: Gender and Race in an Age of Unsettled Identities*. Princeton University Press. Pp. 1-14.
2. Rogers Brubaker. 2016. “Chapter 1: Transgender, Transracial?” *Trans: Gender and Race in an Age of Unsettled Identities*. Princeton University Press. Pp. 15-39.
3. Rogers Brubaker. 2016. “Chapter 2: Categories in Flux.” *Trans: Gender and Race in an Age of Unsettled Identities*. Princeton University Press. Pp. 40-64.

##### ***Supplementary Readings:***

- Rogers Brubaker. 2016. “The Dolezal affair: race, gender, and the micropolitics of identity.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 39 (3): 414-448.
- Tey Meadow. 2017. “Whose chosenness counts? The always-already racialized discourse of trans – response to Rogers Brubaker.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40 (8): 1306-1311.
- Anthony Moran. 2017. “Is trans-race possible in an era of unsettled identities?” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40 (8): 1299-1305.

### **Week 12: Monday, December 19**

#### **Course Recap / Exam Preparation**