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Sociology 3000: Social Psychology Weber State University, Spring 2013

**Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays 8:30 – 9:20 am
SS 44**

Course overview and objectives

The sociological study of social psychology considers the realm of social life in which we interact with others, generate shared meanings and common understandings, and continuously shape and reshape our world. Also known as the study of “everyday life,” “face-to-face interaction,” and “micro-sociology,” students of social psychology can reach profound insights into the nature of their selves and the immediate world in which they live. At the same time, the lens of the perspective can be focused on broad historical and cultural differences, and it is often employed to make sense of large-scale phenomenon.

By the end of this course, you should have: an understanding of the main perspectives, theories, concepts, and debates in the sociological subfield of social psychology; an understanding that our perceptions of “reality” – including symbols, the self, emotions, objects, and places – are multiple and constantly fluctuating constructions, grounded in historical, cultural, and situational circumstances; and refined skills in writing, critical thinking and comparative analysis, as well as the ability to apply abstract ideas to “real world” examples.

Required readings

Norman, Donald A. (2002) *The Design of Everyday Things*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
ISBN: 9780465067107

O'Brien, Jodi A. [Ed.] (2010) *The Production of Reality: Essays and Readings on Social Interaction, Fifth Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press. ISBN: 9781412979443

Additional readings found online.

Course requirements and grade percentages

<i>Reaction papers</i>	40%
<i>Final assignment</i>	30%
<i>Group presentation</i>	10%
<i>Mini-assignments</i>	20%

Reaction papers – To help you keep up with and process the class material, as well as develop your skills of analysis and critical thinking, I am asking you to complete **two reaction papers**. These are **typed, double-spaced, five page essays** where you will be asked to answer a question or questions, explaining as well as comparing and contrasting the course materials of the preceding weeks. The week before they are due, I will distribute a prompt with complete instructions. The papers are due in class on the **Fridays of Week Five (February 8th) and Week Ten (March 22nd)**. Papers received after this will be marked down 4% (from 20 to 16, etc.), and then 4% per day late. (**2 papers X 20% each = 40%**)

Final assignment – Your final assignment will be an expanded version of a Reaction paper, a **typed, double-spaced, eight page essay** where you will analyze the course materials, but you will also apply them to your own example of ethnomethodological common sense, objects and design, or your childhood home. The week before it is due, I will distribute a prompt with complete instructions. It is **due Wednesday, April 24th at noon**. Late papers will be marked down 4% (from 30 to 26, etc.) and then 4% per day. (**30%**)

Group presentation – In order to further discuss and digest the material, you will be asked to present a week's readings to the class. Your task for these presentations will be to **facilitate a discussion**, asking the class questions regarding the main points of the readings, confusing and/or controversial sections, and integrating examples that students bring to class (see below). Presentations will be graded on the quality of your preparation and performance. (**10%**)

Mini-assignments – In order to help facilitate the presentations, as well as illustrate and expand the course readings with “real life” illustrations, I am asking you to periodically bring to class “mini-assignments” on Mondays. See instructions on **page 6** of the syllabus. Late assignments will not be accepted. (**5 assignments X 4% each = 20%**)

Disclaimers

- My preferred method of contact is in person, then by email. I do **NOT** respond to messages sent through the Canvas system.
- If you miss an assignment, be in touch with me as soon as possible. I am much more sympathetic to those who contact me before missing the assignment.
- Cheating will not be tolerated. Plagiarism – the use of others’ words and/or ideas without clearly acknowledging their source – is also a form of cheating. I will take appropriate disciplinary action against offenders.
- If you are a student with a disability and require classroom accommodations, please meet with me to discuss arrangements (If you have not yet contacted Services for Students with Disabilities, please do so – Student Services Center, Room 181 or call (801) 626-6413).
- This syllabus, including all readings and assignments, is subject to change given the flow of the course and unforeseen circumstances. I may deliver such updates by email, so please regularly check your Weber email address or be sure that it forwards to your regular address.

Reading and lecture schedule

Part I: Reality as a collective hunch

WEEK ONE: Introduction

(January 7-11)

- “What is Real?” Jodi O’Brien (pp. 1-9)
(All readings are from *The Production of Reality*, unless otherwise noted.)

WEEK TWO: Reality and realities

(January 14-18)

- “Five Features of Reality.” Hugh Mehan and Houston Wood (pp. 363-379)
- Chapter Fourteen of *Crashing Through*. Robert Kurson (pp. 230-255 ONLINE)

WEEK THREE: Symbols and meaning

(January 23-25)

No class – Monday, January 21st

- “Shared Meaning is the Foundation of Humanness.” Jodi O’Brien (pp. 49-68)
- “When Belief Creates Reality: The Self-Fulfilling Impact of First Impressions on Social Interaction.” Mark Snyder (pp. 404-408)

WEEK FOUR: The multiple realities of 9/11

(January 28 – February 1)

[Mini-assignment #1 due Monday, January 28th]

- “Consuming Terrorism.” David L. Altheide (pp. 410-419)
- “Being Middle Eastern American.” Amir Marvasti (pp. 306-317)

[Reaction Paper 1 prompt distributed]

Part II: The self

WEEK FIVE: Introduce your self

(February 4-8)

[Mini-assignment #2 due Monday, February 4th]

- “Who Am I? Developing Character.” Jodi O’Brien (pp. 107-120)
- “Looking-Glass Self.” Charles Horton Cooley (pp. 126-128)
- “The Self, the I, and the Me.” George Herbert Mead (pp. 121-125)

[Reaction Paper 1 due Friday, February 8th]

WEEK SIX: The performed self
(February 11-15)

- “Meaning is Negotiated Through Interaction.” Jodi O’Brien (pp. 249-259)
- “The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life.” Erving Goffman (pp. 262-271)
- “Behavior in Private Places.” Joan Emerson (pp. 272-285)

WEEK SEVEN: The marginalized self
(February 20-22)

No class – Monday, February 18th

- “Boundaries and Contradictions.” Jodi O’Brien (pp. 453-471)
- “Panhandling Repertoires and Routines for Overcoming the Nonperson Treatment.” Stephen E. Lankenau (pp. 295-306)

WEEK EIGHT: The racial self
(February 25 – March 1)

- “Double Consciousness and the Veil.” W.E.B. DuBois (pp. 474-478)
- “Shades of White.” Pamela Perry (pp. 198-218)

WEEK NINE – Spring break
(March 4-8)

WEEK TEN: Body and self
(March 11-15)

[Mini-assignment #3 due Monday, March 11th]

- “The Managed Heart.” Arlie Hochschild (pp. 320-325)
- “Smell, Odor and Somatic Work.” Dennis Waskul and Phillip Vannini (pp. 288-294)

[Reaction Paper 2 prompt distributed]

Part III: Consciousness

WEEK ELEVEN: Ethnomethodology
(March 18-22)

- “Building and Breaching Reality.” Jodi O’Brien (pp. 337-358)
- “A Conception of and Experiments with “Trust” as a Condition of Concerted Stable Actions.” Harold Garfinkel (pp. 379-390)

[Reaction Paper 2 due Friday, March 22nd]

WEEK TWELVE: Phenomenology
(March 25-29)

- “The Common-Sense World as Social Reality: A Discourse on Alfred Schutz.” Aron Gurwitsch (ONLINE)
- “Mindfulness and Mindlessness.” Ellen Langer (pp. 82-86)

Part IV: Space and place

WEEK THIRTEEN: Objects and design
(April 1-5)

- “The Psychopathology of Everyday Things.” Chapter One of *The Design of Everyday Things*. Donald Norman (pp. 1-33)
- “The Psychology of Everyday Actions.” Chapter Two of *The Design of Everyday Things*. Donald Norman (pp. 34-53)
- *Film: Objectified*

WEEK FOURTEEN: Objects and space
(April 8-12)

[Mini-assignment #4 due Monday, April 8th]

- “Knowledge in the Head and in the World.” Chapter Three of *The Design of Everyday Things*. Donald Norman (pp. 54-80)
- “Doing Scene: Identity, Space, and the Interactional Accomplishment of Youth Culture.” Pepper Glass (ONLINE)

WEEK FIFTEEN: Childhood homes
(April 15-19)

[Mini-assignment #5 due Monday, April 15th]

- “The House. From Cellar to Garret. The Significance of the Hut” from *The Poetics of Space*. Gaston Bachelard (ONLINE)

[Final assignment prompt distributed – due by noon on Wednesday, April 24th in my mailbox]

“The Western conception of the person as a bounded, unique, more or less integrated motivational and cognitive universe, a dynamic center of awareness, emotion, judgment, and action organized into a distinctive whole and set contrastively both against other such wholes and against its social and natural background, is, however, incorrigible it may seem to us, a rather peculiar idea within the context of the world's cultures” – Clifford Geertz

Mini-assignments

- 1 *A news article of Middle Eastern Americans as a “spoiled identity”* (January 28th). Bring in a newspaper or online news article that illustrates the idea that Middle Eastern Americans are a “spoiled identity,” as described by Amir Marvasti.
- 2 *The “Twenty Statements Test”* (February 4th). Complete the “Twenty Statements Test,” as described on pages 108-109 of *The Production of Reality*, and bring to class a typed write up of your twenty statements.
- 3 *A personal example of “emotion work”* (March 11th). Write a brief paragraph where you give a specific and detailed example of “emotion work” you did at a job, as described by Arlie Hochschild. If you have never held a job (lucky you!), think of a compatible example of a time you did emotion work (for example, in a college classroom).
- 4 *An example of good and bad design* (April 8th). In *The Design of Everyday Things*, Donald Norman gives multiple – and often outdated – examples of design, including telephones, doors, and car controls. Bring in a picture of two things, or even the things themselves if they are small, one of which being an example of “good” design and the other an example of “bad” design. Begin to think about *why* these objects are well or poorly designed, according to Norman’s theories.
- 5 *A “poetic map” of your childhood home* (April 15th). In *The Poetics of Space*, Gaston Bachelard argues that homes, and especially the home where you grew up, are spaces of the self through daydreams and solitude. Following his theory, consider the spaces of your childhood home (or homes) through a “poetic map” that outlines your emotional and imaginative memories of it. This can be a literal map, labeled with different events, activities, and feelings, or a description of several places within the home.