

SOSC 12500: Self, Culture, and Society II:
Society and the Individual

Section 6: MWF 11:30 am – 12:20pm, Regenstein Library 207

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Office Hours: M 10:00 - 11:20 AM
or by appointment

COURSE AIMS:

Welcome to the Winter Quarter of Self, Culture, and Society! In the following weeks, our focus will be on the role society and culture have in organizing the lives of individuals. To that end, we will read the work of scholars who have made tremendous contributions to theories of society, self, race, gender and more. These were perplexed, frustrated or outright angry with how the world is and how it impacts the lives of individual people—including themselves—and they thought and wrote as a way of seeking answers. Beyond acquainting you with the ideas they represent, I hope this class will encourage you to foster such an analytical approach within you as well.

Additionally, this course will continue to develop your reading and writing skills, which you will carry with you throughout your college career and beyond. You will be doing a lot of work, but I will do my best to keep the stakes low: my own goal is to get you not only comfortable with, but excited about engaging with these kinds of work, and facilitate your intellectual and personal growth.

Finally, as you read, write and participate in the class, I encourage you to do so with curiosity as well as generosity, even though you might, at times, strongly disagree with the content (or be frustrated with the writing style). In other words, to quote an English philosopher and historian R.G. Collingwood, "*My plan had been to concentrate on the question, 'What is Aristotle saying and what does he mean by it?' and to forgo, however alluring it might be, the further question 'Is it true?'*" At the same time, however, I highly encourage you to take what you're reading and see if and how it can apply to our current context, and your own experiences.

READING SCHEDULE:

- 1 Jan 7: Opening remarks
- Jan 9: Durkheim, Division of Labor pp. 1-29, 39, 83-86 (30)
- Jan 11: Durkheim, Division of Labor pp. 186-99, 291-3, 310-13, 334-40 (25)
- 2 Jan 14: Durkheim, Elementary Forms pp.1-18, 33-44 (31)
- Jan 16: Durkheim, Elementary Forms pp.190-225 (36)
- Jan 18: Durkheim, Elementary Forms pp.225-241, pp. 265-75 (28)
- 3 Jan 21: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day: No Class
- Jan 23: Durkheim, Elementary Forms pp.418-448 (31)
- Jan 25: Freud&Breuer, Anna O, (27)
+ watch: https://youtu.be/T9RPs_ysYgE
- 4 Jan 28: Freud: I, III (37)
- Jan 30: Freud: Dreams (V, VII, IX) (53)
- Feb 1: Freud, Neuroses I (XVI, XII) (37)
- 5 Feb 4: Freud, Neuroses II (XVII, XIX, XX: pp. 375-281) (44)
- Feb 6: Freud, XXXI * (29)
- Feb 8: Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents (19)
Review: Durkheim Division of Labor pp. 186-99, 334-340
- 6 Feb 11: + Lear, "After This, Nothing Happened"* (50)
- Feb 13: de Beauvoir, Introduction, Chapters II and III * (18+23)
- Feb 15: College Break: No Class
- 7 Feb 18: de Beauvoir, Chapter XXI * (27)
- Feb 20: de Beauvoir, Chapter XXV * (37)
- Feb 22: de Beauvoir, Conclusion * (17)
- 8 Feb 25: Fanon, Introduction-Chapter 3 (51)
- Feb 27: Fanon, Chapters 4-5 (56)
- Mar 1: Fanon, Chapters 6 and 8 (75)

Paper topics out!

Option 1

- 9 Mar 4: Geertz, "The Impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man"* (22)

Mar 6:	Benedict, "Anthropology and the Abnormal"*	(22)
Mar 8:	Whorf, "The relation of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language"*	(26)
10 Mar 11:	Hacking, "Why Ask What?" *	(35)
Mar 13:	Wrap-up	
Mar 15:	Reading period	
11 Mar 13:	Papers due to peer review	
Mar 21:	Papers due	

REQUIRED TEXTS:

The following texts are required and available for purchase at the Seminary Coop Bookstore. You are welcome to acquire the texts by other (legal) means (e.g. Powell's, Amazon, or Interlibrary Loans), but make sure to have the right edition. Additional readings (marked with '*') will be available through Canvas and GoogleDrive.

Durkheim, Emile, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Karen E. Fields. New York: Free Press, 1995.

Freud, Sigmund, *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*

*de Beauvoir, Simone, *The Second Sex*

Fanon, Frantz. *Black skin, white masks*. Grove Press, 2008.

* We are reading relatively short sections from Beauvoir, so I will make them available in electronic format but you can purchase the book.

DETAILS AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

This class is a discussion-based seminar, so your **main task is to do the readings and come to class ready to discuss**. To facilitate this, I am including a series of tips for approaching challenging writing (see the end of the syllabus), and I will ask you to come to each class having answered these questions to yourself (1) 'What is the text about?' (2) 'What did you find challenging and why do you think it's important to understand?' and (3) 'What did you find interesting and why?'

You will also have to do a series of **short assignments** that will be specified at least a class in advance and will constitute the majority of your grade.

Furthermore, note that **attendance is mandatory**, absences noted and persistent lateness frowned upon. If you have to miss a class, or have missed one due to unforeseen circumstances,

you should submit a **1-page reflection on the reading** for the day or come talk to me in office hours, otherwise you will be marked as absent

Finally, the seminar aims is to deepen your understanding of the texts through conversation with your peers and is as such a **group effort**. The participation is, therefore, not simply about asking me questions and contributing your opinions, but about listening to your classmates and responding thoughtfully and respectfully.

ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT:

Final grades will be determined as follows:

25%: Class attendance and participation

45%: Homework

30%: Final Paper (5-6 pages)

Participation:

Part of your participation is simply class attendance. You also need to come to my office hours at least once during to quarter (it can be directly related to class or not).

I also expect you to participate in class, though I understand that different people learn best through different practices: some of you might think best by talking it out, others prefer to sit back and listen. I will structure the class so there are many ways you can participate, but do let me know if you generally struggle with participation so we can brainstorm strategies to make the class a better experience for you.

Homework:

I will be posting a series of short assignments on Canvas, and you can skip any one of them without penalty. The goal of these is to get you to read in different ways, to write more, and to think about the readings before coming to class.

Part of your homework will be reading and commenting on a randomly assigned peer's final paper.

Final paper: The papers should be based on class readings only; which means no secondary sources or citing your class notes. You will receive more detailed guidelines later in the quarter. You will receive paper **prompts**, but if you wish to write on a different topic, you may do so after clearing it with me. Late papers will be docked one grade level per day (i.e. A- to B+)—**talk to me if you need an extension**. All papers will be submitted through Canvas, and will be due on March 21st.