

**SOCA 780**  
**Individual and Society**  
**Fall 2018**

**Class Meeting:** Wednesday 2:00pm-4:50pm in Knapp Hall 209

	<b>Office:</b>	<b>Office Hours:</b>	<b>E-mail address:</b>
Professor Corcoran	400-D Knapp	By appointment	kecorcoran@mail.wvu.edu

**Course Description:**

This course provides the foundation for understanding the individual in society, as defined according to two main areas of inquiry: (1) the study of how systems of ideas interact with, reproduce, and transform other social structures and social identities and (2) the analysis of the patterns of social interaction of groups of people. A main goal is to examine micro-macro linkages and discover the relationships between society and the perceptions, beliefs and behaviors of individuals. Students will study different theoretical models put forth to explain the linkages between individuals and the social world. In this course we will explore the following questions: What is the individual (or self)? What is society? How do they relate to each other? Is society completely external to the individual, internal, or both? Are people merely passive recipients of societal influence or do they take an active role in it?

Credit Hours: 3.0

**Course Learning Outcomes:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Evaluate competing theoretical paradigms within the study of individuals and society
- Evaluate competing methodological approaches to the understanding of the individual and society
- Assess how social interaction shapes the individual
- Critically examine the linkages between individuals and the social world

**Required Texts:**

Required books for the course:

Rosabeth Moss Kanter. *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective.*

Erving Goffman. *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life.*

Erving Goffman. *Interaction Ritual.*

Randall Collins. *Interaction Ritual Chains.*

Arlie Russell Hochschild. *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling.*  
All other readings will be available electronically through e-campus.

## **Class Attendance**

Class attendance is required. Missing class, arriving late, leaving early, and leaving during class (other than during break) will be reflected in your participation grade. I understand that conferences, illness, accidents, and so on may require you to miss class. You should do your best to avoid missing class. Usually, graduate students only miss one class for professional reasons, such as a conference. All absences should be discussed with me in advance.

## **Grading**

50% Seminar participation including weekly discussions and reflections

40% Final Project including workshop days

10% Final Project Presentation

## **Weekly Reflections**

Each week when you are not a discussant you will do a reflection on the readings (at least one full page, no more than 2 pages). You can respond to one or more points, connect the readings to other readings in the class or outside the class, critique the readings/identify limitations or gaps, discuss how it connects to your own research, or discuss how it connects to the major themes and questions of the course etc. **Do not summarize the readings.** You might consider the following questions (you do not need to answer these, they are just to give you an idea of what is expected): 1) What was the author's purpose in writing this? 2) What was the author's central argument? 3) Did the author effectively employ data or sound logical reasoning to develop their arguments? 4) What conclusions can be drawn regarding the implications of this piece for sociology as a discipline? (5) How does it connect to the major themes and questions of the course?

Reflections are due on the Reflection Discussion Board by **noon** on the Tuesday before class. Late reflections are not accepted unless there is a documented emergency. Please label clearly with your name and the names of the author(s) you are addressing. Do not submit as a file.

There are four possible grades for these reflections:

100% = You completed the task as directed and put in a substantial amount of effort and thought.

85% = Reflection does not show that a substantial amount of effort and thought was put in. Work is acceptable but needs improvement.

50% = Reflection was done incorrectly or only part of it was complete. Demonstrates hurried work with little attention to detail.

0 = Did not turn in the reflection.

## **Lead Discussant**

Choose two classes (or more) when you will serve as “lead discussant”:

Prepare discussion questions. Your job is to keep the discussion going, while working through the material. Do not lecture on it but pose questions that prompt discussion.

Discussion should work through the main points of the reading(s), make connections to the overarching questions of the course, bring up relevant critiques, and make connections to other reading(s) where relevant.

You may choose to address some points in colleagues’ reflections.

**You do not need to submit a weekly reflection for the weeks that you are the lead discussant. But you can post questions or materials to prepare students for discussion.**

If you have to miss class for a conference or other excused absence, you should serve as a discussant for three classes.

## **Final Project**

You are required to complete a final project (roughly 15-20 pages). The project must incorporate content from the course but can take many different forms. You should choose the project that best advances your own career. Examples of appropriate projects:

Write the frontend of a paper (everything before the methods)

Significantly revise a working manuscript

Design an empirical study

Prepare a grant/fellowship application

Design survey or interview protocols (along with a rationalization for them)

Write a conference paper, dissertation proposal, or dissertation chapter

Develop a course syllabus and rationalization for it (you’ll need to discuss this with me prior to pursuing it)

Double-dipping with other seminars/classes or collaboration with other graduate students is fine, if it contributes to a publishable or useful product. You will be required to submit a 1-2 page proposal of the project, which you will receive feedback on. This must be posted on the discussion board by Tuesday, October 16th at noon. You will also be required to submit a full draft for peer review (by Tuesday, December 4<sup>th</sup> at noon) and to give a formal presentation. Participation in the peer review workshops is required and your feedback will influence your grade. The final paper/project is due by December 12<sup>th</sup> at noon. Please email your paper/project as a Word document. Include your name in the title of the document. Late proposals and papers will not be accepted unless there is a documented emergency.

## **Academic Honesty**

The integrity of the classes offered by any academic institution solidifies the foundation of its mission and cannot be sacrificed to expediency, ignorance, or blatant fraud. Therefore, I will enforce rigorous standards of academic integrity in all aspects and assignments of this course. For the detailed policy of West Virginia University regarding the definitions of acts considered to fall under academic dishonesty and possible ensuing sanctions, please see the West Virginia University Academic Catalog at

<http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/coursecredittermsclassification/#academicintegritytext> .

Should you have any questions about possibly improper research citations or references, or any

other activity that may be interpreted as an attempt at academic dishonesty, please see me before the assignment is due to discuss the matter.

### **Inclusivity statement**

The West Virginia University community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Disability Services (293-6700). For more information on West Virginia University's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, please see <http://diversity.wvu.edu>.

### **Cell Phone and Electronic Devices Policy**

Cell phones, messaging devices, and any electronic deviance (except a laptop for taking notes) are prohibited. All prohibited devices must be turned off and placed out of sight until the class has concluded. If a phone goes off or students are looking at their phone during class time, they will be asked to leave or to miss the next class period, which will affect their grade.

### **Respect for Other Students**

WVU policy states: "The primary responsibility for managing the classroom environment rests with the faculty. Students who engage in any prohibited or unlawful behavior that results in disruption of a class may be directed by the faculty member to leave the class for the remainder of the class period. Longer suspensions from a class, or dismissal on disciplinary grounds, must be subject to the appropriate Campus Student Code. The term "prohibited or unlawful behavior" would include behavior prohibited by a faculty member. It must be emphasized that this provision shall not be used to punish classroom dissent. The lawful expression of a disagreement with a faculty member is not in itself disruptive behavior. However, dissent must be presented in a manner consistent with the classroom environment set by the faculty. A student who believes that he or she has been treated in an arbitrary manner in this regard should contact his or her Dean of Students or the Campus Student Code Administrator."

No disruptive or illegal behaviors will be tolerated, including late arrivals, early departures, and getting up and leaving during class time. If rare circumstances prevent you from arriving on time or remaining for the duration of a class, speak with me before that class.

### **Inclement Weather:**

While unlikely, if I need to cancel class due to inclement weather, I will send an email to your MIX account by noon on the day of the canceled class (or sooner if possible).

### **Course Schedule:**

The course schedule is subject to change. I will announce any changes to the schedule by email. If some pages are in bold, focus on those pages (but read all the pages listed).

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**August 15**

*Syllabus and Introduction*

No readings

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## I. *The Individual/Self and the Group/Society an Introduction*

**August 22**

*The individual/self in relation to society*

Durkheim, Emile. The Dualism of Human Nature and its Social Conditions.

Durkheim, Emile. The Division of Labor in Society (excerpt).

Durkheim, Emile. Suicide and Social Cohesion (excerpt).

### **Further readings:**

Pope, Whitney and Barclay D. Johnson. 1983. "Inside Organic Solidarity" *American Sociological Review* 48: 681-692.

Gibbs, Jack P. 2003. "A Formal Restatement of Durkheim's 'Division of Labor' Theory" *Sociological Theory* 21(2): 103-127.

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**August 29**

*The self and the group, pro-sociality/solidarity*

Kanter, Rosabeth Moss. 1972. Commitment and Community (1-31, 32-57, 61-161)

### **Further reading**

Hall, John R. 1988. "Social Organization and Pathways of Commitment: Types of Communal Groups, Rational Choice Theory, and the Kanter Thesis." *American Sociological Review* 53:679-692.

Hechter, Michael. 1987. *Principles of Group Solidarity*.

Hechter, Michael. 1990. "The Attainment of Solidarity in Intentional Communities." *Rationality and Society* 2:142-155.

Hechter, Michael and Satoshi Kanazawa. 1993. "Group Solidarity and Social Order in Japan." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 5:455-493.

Hechter, Michael and Sun-Ki Chai. 1998. "A Theory of the State and of Social Order." Pp. 33-60 in Doreian & Fararo, *The Problem of Solidarity: Theories & Models*.

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## II. *Interactions and Roles*

**September 5**

*Symbolic Interactionism: Initial studies on interaction*

Mead. Thought as Internalized Conversation [excerpt].

Cooley. Society is in the Mind [excerpt].

Fish, Jonathan S. 2013. "Homo Duplex Revisited: A Defence of Emile Durkheim's Theory of the Moral Self." *Journal of Classical Sociology* 13(3): 338-358.

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**September 12**  
*Self and identity*

Vaisey, Stephan. 2009. "Motivation and Justification: A Dual-Process Model of Culture in Action" *American Journal of Sociology* 114(6):1675-1715.

Stryker, Sheldon. 2008. "From Mead to a Structural Symbolic Interactionism and Beyond" *Annual Review of Sociology* 34:15-31.

Brubaker, Rogers, and Frederick Cooper. 2000. "Beyond 'Identity'" *Theory and Society* 29:1-47.

Ellemers, Naomi, Russell Spears, and Bertjan Doosje. 2002. "Self and Social Identity" *Annual of Psychology* 53:161-186.

Stryker, Sheldon and Peter Burke. 2000. "The Past, Present, and Future of Identity Theory" *Social Psychology Quarterly* 63(4):284-97.

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**September 19**  
*Project ideas workshop*

No readings, come prepared to discuss an idea (or ideas) for your final project.

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**September 26**

*The idea of the role and the generalization of roles*

What is a role and how does it relate to others and the self? Is there a continuum of scripted action (less to more) with roles merely being on the extreme end of more scripted action?

Goffman, Erving. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (**Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, 4, and Conclusion.**)

Goffman, Erving. *Interaction Ritual*. (Pages 1-96).

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**October 3**

*Chains of Interaction Rituals*

How are interaction rituals connected in a series of chains?

Collins, Randall. *Interaction Ritual Chains* (**Chapters 1-5, Chapter 9 (skim)**).

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**October 10**

*The Internalization of Roles*

Goffman proposes that individuals can maintain ‘role distance’ if they want to. Is that always possible or is the self an internalization of the roles we play?

Hochschild, Arlie Russell. *The Managed Heart*. (**Chapters 1-3**, Chapter 4 (skim), **Chapters 6-9**, and Appendix A).

***Further readings***

Wharton, Amy S. “The Sociology of Emotional Labor.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 35: 147-165.

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**October 17**

**Proposal Workshop and Progress Report**

Read peers’ proposals and come to class with feedback for them. Give a progress report on your final project.

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*III. Social Factors Affecting the Self*

Extending the idea that the self may be an internalization of roles we now turn to how society may shape the self.

**October 24**

*Perceptions Part I*

Do people perceive the world differently depending on how they think others perceive it?

Asch, Solomon E. “Group Forces in the Modification and Distortion of Judgements.” 450-473.

Sherif, Muzafer. “Formation of Social Norms: The Experimental Paradigm.” *Social Interaction* (136-148)

McPhail. “Chapter 3: Challenging the Myth.”

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**October 31**

*Perceptions Part II*

What affects our perceptions of others and how do those perceptions affect our behavior?

Kitts, James A. 2003. “Egocentric Bias or Information Management? Selective Disclosure and the Social Roots of Norm Misperception?” *Social Psychology Quarterly* 66(3): 222-237.

Young, Jacob T. N., J. C. Barnes, Ryan C. Meldrum, and Frank M. Weerman. 2011. “Assessing and Explaining Misperceptions of Peer Delinquency.” *Criminology* 49:599–630.

Young, Jacob T. N. and Frank Weerman. 2013. “Delinquency as a Consequence of Misperception: Overestimation of Friends’ Delinquent Behavior and Mechanisms of Social Influence.” *Social Problems* 60(3): 334-356.

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**November 7**

*Brainwashing or socialization? The Brainwashing Controversy*

What social environments are most conducive to socializing (or brainwashing?) the self? What is the difference between socialization and brainwashing? Or is there a difference?

All of the following readings are in one PDF.

The Brainwashing Controversy.

Singer, Margaret Thaler. "The Process of Brainwashing, Psychological Coercion, and Thought Reform."

Richardson, James T. "A Critique of 'Brainwashing' Claims About New Religious Movements."

Robbins, Thomas. "Constructing 'Cultist' Mind Control."

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**November 14**

*Presentations*

No reading. You will give a formal presentation on your project.

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**December 5**

*Workshop: Paper drafts*

Read peers' papers and bring feedback to class.

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**December 12**

*No Class*

Final projects are due by noon through email.