

**American Identity Politics
POSC 31533; Spring 2016
MW 3:30-4:50pm, BAI 101**

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Office Hours: MW 11am-12pm**

*The whole campaign was a tragic case of mistaken identity.
—George McGovern*

*What is at stake in the debate over healthcare is more than the mere crafting of policy. The issue is now the identity of the Democratic Party
—Thomas Frank*

*2010 is not a choice between Republicans and Democrats. 2010 is not just a choice between liberals and conservatives. 2010 is a referendum on the very identity of our nation.
—Marco Rubio*

*We, the people. Manifest Destiny. Conceived in liberty. Fear itself. Ask not. Morning in America. United we stand. Yes, we can. In times of great change and tumult, presidents seek to inspire beleaguered Americans by reminding them of their national identity.
—Ron Fournier*

COURSE DESCRIPTION

It has often been said, “The personal is political.” Underlying this adage is the notion that the way one views oneself, others, and oneself vis-à-vis others dictates political attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. In other words, identity, broadly defined, has nontrivial political implications.

This course is about identity politics in the United States, which is a complex interdisciplinary topic that covers issues of race, gender, class, religion, age, and myriad of other identities that are core to human self-concept. As such, the course is divided into three sections. First, we will cover the central theories of identity in sociology and social psychology that have been used by political scientists to understand political phenomenon. The second section of the course will critically examine specific identities—those that have received disproportionate attention in political science literature—in light of the identity theories. The final section of the course will reflect on proposed strategies for best handling the oft-contentious nature of identity politics in a diverse democratic society.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Midterm 1:	20%	February 15
Midterm 2:	20%	March 28
Final exam:	25%	May 2 via dropbox by 11:59pm
Quizzes:	5%	
Video project:	25%	
Participation:	5%	

MIDTERMS: There will be two midterms. The first is a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and essay. The second is all essay. Midterms CANNOT be made up unless there is a very serious emergency situation, including student hospitalization or death in the family, or if a student has a previously identified university excused absence. I need written documentation (in advance in the case of an excused absence) of the incident to arrange a make-up examination.

FINAL EXAM: There will be a final take home exam due on Monday, May 2 via Dropbox by 11:59pm. The take home exam will receive a 1/3 grade reduction for each HOUR it is late past the deadline. For example, a paper that would have received a B that is two hours late will received a C+.

QUIZZES: There will be a 5-minute quiz on the assigned course material at the beginning of each class period. It will consist of straight-forward questions that you should be able to answer quickly if you have done the reading. If you miss a quiz due to absence or being tardy, YOU WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO MAKE IT UP, unless the absence is excused due to some emergency (e.g., illness with a doctor's note or death in the family). The lowest 3 quiz grades will be dropped.

PARTICIPATION: Participation is based on two things. First is turning in periodic short assignments ON TIME. **Late or incomplete assignments will receive a zero.** We will be discussing these assignments in class the day after they are due, which is why it is important to complete them by the deadline. The second aspect of the participation grade is my subjective assessment of your participation and engagement in class.

VIDEO PROJECT: The final aspect of your grade is a video project that is designed for students to critically analyze their own identities and develop an understanding of how and why certain identities map onto their political self. There are SIX interim assignments associated with developing this video. See accompanying identity politics video assignment document in LearningStudio for a complete description of the interim assignments, the due dates, and more particulars regarding how to create a video. We will have someone from the New Media Writing Studio come to class to instruct on how to create a digital story, and we will be showing and discussing our videos the last three class periods of the semester.

GRADING SCALE

You will receive a final grade according to the scale below. If a grade falls at 0.5 between a + or -, the grade will be rounded up. For example, a final grade of 92.5 will become a 93, a final grade of 89.5 will become a 90, etc.

A = 93-100	C+ = 77-79
A- = 90-92	C = 73-76
B+ = 87-89	C- = 70-72
B = 83-86	D+ = 67-69
B- = 80-82	D = 60-66
	F = < 60

COURSE READINGS

There is no textbook for this class. There is a course packet for sale in the Political Science office that contains all the readings for the class. You must pay cash for the course packet.

GENERAL POLICIES BY WHICH I WILL ABIDE

1. *Email Communication*
 - I will return emails within 24 hours during weekdays.
 - Generally, I am unable to reply to emails sent after 5pm or emails sent over the weekend.
2. *Grading*
 - I will grade papers/assignments/exams within two weeks.
 - I will keep the gradebook in LearningStudio up-to-date.
 - I will provide you with grading rubrics when applicable
3. *Face-to-Face Communication*
 - I will be in my office during office hours
 - I am always available and happy to meet by appointment, too.

GENERAL POLICIES BY WHICH YOU SHOULD ABIDE—“The 3 Rs”

1. *Be Resourceful*—
 - search for instructions/definitions online if it's something you can find an answer to yourself.
 - Before asking me a logistical question about class, thoroughly read and search the syllabus for an answer. If it's not in there, then ask.
2. *Be Respectful*—
 - Use proper classroom etiquette

- Take notes and come prepared
 - DO NOT search the internet, text, or check email during class. I have a zero tolerance policy on this and will not hesitate to ask you to leave the first time I see it.
 - Be civil and respectful to classmates
 - Use proper email etiquette. You should always start and end emails using proper salutations. Emails should also be written with proper grammar, full sentences, punctuation, etc. Write in proper English, not “textlish.”
3. *Be Responsible*—
- show up, meet deadlines, study hard, engage in class, plan ahead, ask questions, invite challenge.
 - If you do all these things, you can do well in this class.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

**Academic Misconduct (Sec. 3.4 from the Student Handbook) –Any act that violates the academic integrity of the institution is considered academic misconduct. The procedures used to resolve suspected acts of academic misconduct are available in the offices of Academic Deans and the Office of Campus Life. Specific examples include, but are not limited to:

- Cheating: Copying from another student’s test paper, laboratory report, other report, or computer files and listings; using, during any academic exercise, material and/or devices not authorized by the person in charge of the test; collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or laboratory without permission; knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in its entirety or in part, the contents of a test or other assignment unauthorized for release; substituting for another student or permitting another student to substitute for oneself.
- Plagiarism: The appropriation, theft, purchase or obtaining by any means another’s work, and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of that work as one’s own offered for credit. Appropriation includes the quoting or paraphrasing of another’s work without giving credit therefore.
- Collusion: The unauthorized collaboration with another in preparing work offered for credit.

DISABILITY

Texas Christian University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 regarding students with disabilities. Eligible students seeking accommodations should contact the Coordinator of Student Disabilities Services in the Center for Academic Services located in Sadler Hall, 1010. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the Coordinator as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations. Further information can be obtained

from the Center for Academic Services, TCU Box 297710, Fort Worth, TX 76129, or at (817) 257-6567.

Adequate time must be allowed to arrange accommodations and accommodations are not retroactive; therefore, students should contact the Coordinator as soon as possible in the academic term for which they are seeking accommodations. *Each eligible student is responsible for presenting relevant, verifiable, professional documentation and/or assessment reports to the Coordinator.* Guidelines for documentation may be found at http://www.acs.tcu.edu/disability_documentation.asp.

Students with emergency medical information or needing special arrangements in case a building must be evacuated should discuss this information with their instructor/professor as soon as possible.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Jan. 11: Introduction

Jan. 13: Identity Theory

Central Questions

- What are the central elements of identity theory?
- What are you? Who are you?

Read: Stryker, Sheldon and Peter Burke. 2000. "The Past, Present, and Future of an Identity Theory." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 63(4):284-297.

Jan 18: No Class (MLK Day)

Jan. 20: Social Identity Theory

Video Assignment #1 due. Upload to DocSharing before class.

Central Questions:

- What are the central elements of social identity theory?
- What are minimal groups?
- What are your social identities?

Read: Brown, Rupert. 2000. "Social Identity Theory: Past achievements, current problems and future challenges." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 30:745-778.

Listen: Henri Tajfel and Minimal Groups

Jan. 25: Comparison of Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory

Central Questions

- What are the similarities and differences between identity theory and social identity theory?
- Are they complementary or contradictory? How?

Read: Stets, Jan E. and Peter J. Burke. 2000. "Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 63(3):224-237.

Read: Hogg, Michael, Deborah Terry, and Katherine White. 1995. "Take of Two Theories: A Critical Comparison of Identity Theory with Social Identity Theory." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 58(4): 255-269.

Jan. 27: Social Identity Complexity Theory

Video Assignment #2 due. Upload to DocSharing before class.

Central Questions

- What is social identity complexity?
- What might be the effects of social identity complexity?
- Should we avoid social identity complexity or invite it? What are the pros and cons?
- How does social identity complexity differ from an "identity crisis"?

Read: Roccas, Sonia and Marilynn Brewer. 2002. "Social Identity Complexity." *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 6(2): 88-106.

Watch: TED Talk: Alice Dreger, "Is Anatomy Destiny?"

Feb. 1: Optimal Distinctiveness Theory & Collective Identity

Central Questions

- What is optimal distinctiveness theory?
- Why do people need to be optimally distinct and what are the implications?
- What is a collective identity?
- When does the collective identity matter?
- When do personal identities matter?

Read: Brewer, Marilynn. 1991. "The Social Self: On Being the Same and Different at the Same Time." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 17(5):475-482.

Read: Brewer, Marilynn and Wendi Gardner. 1996. "Who is this "We"? Levels of collective identity and self representations." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 7(1):83-93.

Feb. 3: Identity Politics

Video assignment #3 due. Upload to DocSharing before class.

Assignment: Upload *one definition* of identity politics from the Bernstein reading and *one definition* from the Heyes reading to **Dropbox by 5pm February 5. Write in the text box. Do not upload a Word document.** We will be discussing these definitions in class.

Central Questions

- What is identity politics?
- How is identity politics positive or negative for democracy?
- Does identity politics create boxes by essentializing or is it constructive and helpful for making sense of a complex world?

Read: Bernstein, Mary. 2005. "Identity Politics." *Annual Review of Sociology* 31:47-74.

Read: Heyes, Cressida, "Identity Politics", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2012 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.)

Feb. 8: The good, the bad, and the ugly of identity politics

Assignment: Take the Implicit Associations Test. You have the option to take the test for race, religion, gender-career, or age. Save the final page as a .pdf document and upload it to dropbox folder **by 5pm on February 10.**

Central Questions

- What are the benefits (personal, political, social) of identity politics?
- What are the costs (personal, political, social) of identity politics?

Read: Parker, Richard. "Five Theses on Identity Politics." *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy* 29(1): 53-59.

Read: Friedman, Ann. 2010. "All Politics is Identity Politics." *The American Prospect*, July 29.

Read: Fish, Stanley. 2008. "When 'Identity Politics' Is Rational." *The New York Times*, February 17.

Feb. 10: American National Identity

Central Questions:

- Is there an American national identity? If so, what is it?

- What are the pros and cons to having a national identity?
- Is a national identity a unifier or a divider?
- What is the difference or similarity between American nationalism and patriotism?

Read: Citrin, Jack, Beth Reingold and Donald Green. 1990. "American Identity and the Politics of Ethnic Change." *The Journal of Politics* 52(4):1124-1154.

Read: Song, Sarah. 2009. "What does it mean to be an American?" *American Academy of Arts & Sciences*, Spring.

Feb. 15: MIDTERM #1

Feb. 17: Party identity politics

Central Questions

- Is party id a social identity? For whom and under what conditions?
- What are the pros and cons of party identification being a social identity as understood in the context of Social Identity Theory?

Read: Greene, Steven. 1999. "Understanding Party Identification: A Social Identity Approach." *Political Psychology* 20(2):393-403.

Read: Munro, Geoffrey, Carrie Welch and Jeffrey Tsai. 2010. "Motivated Suspicion: Asymmetrical Attributions of the Behavior of Political Ingroup and Outgroup Members." *Basic and Applied Social Psychology* 32(2):173-184

Feb. 22: Racial identity politics

Central Questions

- What is symbolic racism? What is racial resentment?
- Why does race politics exist? What is at the root of it, and is the root different for different people?

Read: Rabinowitz, Joshua, David O. Sears, Jim Sidanius, and Jon Krosnick. 2009. "Why do white Americans oppose race-targeted policies? Clarifying the impact of symbolic racism." *Political Psychology* 30(5):805-828.

Read: Sniderman, Paul and Edward Stiglitz. 2008. "Race and the Moral Character of the Modern American Experience." *The Forum* 6(4).

Feb. 24: Racial identity politics (continued)

Central Questions

- How do the ideas in Dawson's *Behind the Mule* and Kennedy's *Sellout* either comport with or contradict one another?
- What is racial denial? Is it legitimate?

Read: Review of *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African-American Politics* by Michael C. Dawson. Review by Walter Allen in *Contemporary Sociology* 24(4):345-346.

Read: Johnson, James and Cheryl Kaiser. 2013. "Racial identity denied: are wealthy black victims of racism rejected by their own group?" *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 4(3):376-382.

Watch: Randall Kennedy lecture on his book *Sellout: The politics of racial betrayal*. <http://www.thirteen.org/forum/topics/sellout/6/>

Feb. 29: Ethnic identity politics

Central Questions

- Why do inter-ethnic political cleavages exist?
- Why do intra-ethnic political cleavages exist?
- How can inter- and intra-group cooperation be achieved?

Read: Huddy, Leonie and Simo Virtanen. 1995. "Subgroup Differentiation and subgroup bias among Latinos as a function of familiarity and positive distinctiveness." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 68(1):97-108.

Read: Segura, Gary and Helena Alves Rodrigues. 2006. "Comparative Ethnic Politics in the United States: Beyond Black and White." *Annual Review of Political Science* 9:375-395.

Mar. 2: New Media writing studio instructs on videomaking

Video assignment #4 due. Upload to DocSharing before class.

Mar. 7: Spring Break

Mar. 9: Spring Break

Mar. 14: Gendered identity politics

Central Questions

- How does gender impact electoral voting behavior and congressional voting behavior?

- How would you define gendered identity politics? Why does it exist?

Read: Weldon, Laurel. 2006. "Women's Movements, Identity Politics, and Policy Impacts: A Study of Policies on Violence Against Women in the 50 United States." *Political Research Quarterly* 59(1):111-122.

Read: Read, Jen'nan Ghazal and John Bartkowski. 2000. "To Veil or Not to Veil: A case study of identity negotiation among Muslim Women in Austin, Texas." *Gender & Society* 14(3):395-417.

Mar. 16: Religious identity politics

Video assignment #5 due. Upload to DocSharing before class.

Central Questions

- What does it mean for the United States to be a "Christian" nation?
- What is the relationship between religious and political identity? Why do these relationships exist?

Read: Patrikios, Stratos. 2008. "American Republican Religion? Disentangling the Causal Link Between Religion and Politics in the U.S." *Political Behavior* 30:367-389.

Read: Jacobs, Carly and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse. 2013. "Belonging in a 'Christian Nation': the explicit and implicit associations between religion and national group membership." *Politics and Religion* 6(2):373-401.

Mar. 21: Religious identity politics (cont'd)

Central Questions

- What is the role of religion in the politics of minority groups?
- Why do religious institutions play a role in the politics of minority groups?

Read: Jamal, Amaney. 2005. "The Political Participation and Engagement of Muslim Americans: Mosque Involvement and Group Consciousness." *American Politics Research* 33(4):521-544.

Read: Wilcox, Clyde and Leopoldo Gomez. 1990. "Religion, Group Identification, and Politics Among American Blacks." *Sociology of Religion* 51(3):271-285.

Mar. 23: Other identity politics

Central Questions

- Why/how do identities beyond those traditionally studied in political science matter for political considerations?

- What are some of the challenges to politically organizing around these other identities?

Read: Huddy, Leonie, Jeffrey Jones, and Richard Chard. 2001. "Compassionate Politics: Support for Old-Age Programs Among the Non Elderly." *Political Psychology* 22(3):443-471.

Read: Stratford, Michael. 2013. "Senate Democrats launch new push on student loan debt, college accountability." *Inside Higher Ed*, December 20.

Read: Sacco, Julie. 2013. "Protest Over Student Loans." *The Los Angeles Loyolan*, December 5.

Mar. 28: MIDTERM #2

Mar. 30: Debrief

Apr. 4: NMWS presents on video projects

April 6: Selective perception

Central Questions

- What is selective perception?
- How does selective perception help foster identity politics?
- Can we overcome this?

Read: Bartels, Larry. 2002. "Beyond the Running Tally: Partisan Bias in Political Perceptions." *Political Behavior* 24(2):117-150.

Read: Jerit, Jennifer and Jason Barabas. 2012. "Partisan perceptual bias and the information environment." *Journal of Politics* 74(3):672-684.

Apr. 11: Cross-categorization & Cross-Cutting Social Networks

Central Questions

- What is cross-categorization?
- How can cross-categorization mitigate the divisiveness of identity politics?
- What are the potential positive and negative effects of having cross-cutting social networks?
- What are the challenges to creating cross-cutting social networks?

Read: Migdal, Michael J., Miles Hewstone and Brian Mullen. 1998. "The effects of crossed categorization on intergroup evaluations: a meta-analysis." *British Journal of Social Psychology* 37(3): 303-324.

Read: Mutz, Diana C. 2002. "Cross-cutting social networks: Testing democratic theory in practice." *American Political Science Review*, 96(1):111-126.

Apr. 13: Contact theory & Discourse/Deliberation

Video assignment #6 due. Upload to DocSharing before class.

Central Questions

- What is the central premise of contact theory? What are the pros and cons?
- What is the theoretical role of discourse/deliberation in a diverse democratic society? What are the pros and cons?
- What are the challenges to achieving these goals?

Read: Pettigrew, Thomas F. and Linda Tropp. 2006. "A meta-analytic test of intergroup contact theory." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 90(5):751-783.

Read: Bickford, Susan. 1999. "Reconfiguring Pluralism: Identity and Institutions in the Inegalitarian Polity." *American Journal of Political Science* 43(1):86-108.

Apr. 18: Watch identity video projects

Upload digital identity story to private class YouTube channel before class!

Apr. 20: Watch identity video projects

Apr. 25: Watch identity video projects

Apr. 27: Watch identity video projects

May 2: Final Exam due by 11:59pm via Dropbox