

Politics of Identity and Inequality
POLS 3540
Fall Semester 2023
Monday and Wednesday, 3pm-4:20pm, Gardner Commons 5680

Instructor: Dr. David De Micheli

Email: david.demicheli@utah.edu

Office Location: Gardner Commons, Suite 3345, Office 3229

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 1:30pm-2:30pm, and by appointment

Office Hours Sign-up: <https://calendly.com/ddemicheli>

Required Materials

Students will be required to access one of these texts (student's choice) for the essay assignment:

Appiah, Kwame Anthony. 2018. *The Lies that Bind: Rethinking Identity*. London: Profile Books.

Brubaker, Rogers. 2016. *Trans: Gender and Race in an Age of Unsettled Identities*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Bennett, Brit. 2020. *The Vanishing Half*. New York: Riverhead Books.

Scott, Paulo. 2022. *Phenotypes*. New York: And Other Stories.

These can be acquired for free via Marriott or the Salt Lake public libraries, or inexpensive used copies can be purchased online. I have not made these available via the bookstore. All other assigned material is available via Marriott Library's electronic catalogue or via Canvas.

Course Description

What is identity and how does it shape social and political behavior? When, where, and why do identities become politicized? And how does this occur? The notion that individuals possess multiple and overlapping social memberships is a ubiquitous fact of social and political life. This course will focus on what is often called "identity politics," aiming to understand: 1) where identities come from and how they come into formation in the first place; 2) how identities become salient and politicized; and 3) the myriad consequences identities and identity politics carry for important outcomes like development, representation, and inequality. We will interrogate these questions by taking a comparative approach, immersing ourselves in such diverse contexts as Latin America, Africa, South Asia, Western Europe and the United States across a range of historical time periods.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- engage in scholarly debates on the nature of origins of social and political identities;
- command political science theories on how and why identities become politicized;
- understand the reciprocal ways identities and politics shape one another;
- grasp political science research methods and various theoretical approaches to the study of politics; and
- engage with and analyze texts that explicitly or implicitly deal with the major themes of identity politics.

Teaching and Learning Methods

This course is designed as a participatory lecture course. I will primarily deliver the major concepts, theories, and empirical application during class meetings, but students are expected and encouraged to play an active role in the lecture by asking questions, drawing connections to current events, or challenging notions or arguments in the assigned readings. As such, students are expected to come to class having completed all assigned readings for the day and prepared with any clarification or discussion questions. Students are also encouraged to bring in lessons or connections from other courses they are taking, and on-going political phenomena or current events that relate to the course. In short, though this is a lecture-style course, I encourage students to actively dialogue with me and the course material.

Course Policies

Assignments: Unless otherwise indicated, all assignments are to be submitted in 12-point, Times New Roman font with one-inch margins. Text should be double-spaced. References and in-text citations may follow either Chicago (in-text or footnote variants) or American Political Science Association styles. Both styles are available for download in Zotero (which I highly recommend). Written assignments (essays) must be submitted in either .pdf or .docx formats. Under no circumstances may you submit a document that you can continue to edit after the due date (e.g., Google Docs). Your submitted assignment should consist of a file, not a URL. Late assignments will be accepted, subject to a penalty of one-third of a letter grade for every 12 hours past the due date/time.

Participation and Conduct: Students are expected to participate actively in discussion and to engage with the assigned readings in good faith. Participation can take a variety of forms, including offering critique, insight, commentary, or topics of discussion; it can also entail active listening, note-taking, asking clarifying questions, and responding to points raised by peers. Good faith engagement entails thinking critically about the ideas/arguments presented in each text, taking the author on her terms, and avoiding overly harsh critique simply for the sake of nay-saying. Offering criticism and identifying flaws is an essential part of academic discussion, but our goal in seminar is to advance understanding through productive and constructive criticism and analysis.

Food & Drink: Consumption of food and drink is permitted during class, on the condition that doing so not disrupt the lecture for me or any other students in the course (loud or overly odorous food). Students should also leave no trace of food or drink in the classroom when lecture ends.

Electronic Devices in Class: The use of laptops and/or tablets is permitted in this class, however I ask that you silence and put away smartphones. While computers are permitted, I encourage students to avoid using *all* electronic devices in class for several reasons. First, laptops can be distracting to students, who may use them for non-academic purposes. When this occurs, it is obvious to the instructor as well as to your peers (despite what you may think). The main consequence is that this deprives the discussion of the contributions you could otherwise make were you attentive and engaged. Second, there is considerable scientific evidence that the use of computers inhibits engagement when consuming academic material, the absorption of facts/knowledge, and memory functions. While typing notes may be more efficient, any potential benefits are far outweighed by the costs. Finally, placing an open laptop in front of you acts as a physical barrier between you and the rest of your peers, which can also inhibit the quality of in-class discussion. Again, the choice is yours, but I encourage a more analog approach.

Course Grading

The course grading scheme follows in the table below. When a course grade falls between integers, I apply a standard rounding procedure: any point total that ends in .0 to .49 will be rounded *down* to the nearest whole number, while any point total that ends in .50 to .99 will be rounded *up*.

Course Points	Letter Grade	Description
97+	A+	Above and beyond expectations in terms of quality of content and communications. The work constitutes an original contribution.
93-96	A	Outstanding work in terms of content, quality, and creativity of written and oral expression.
90-92	A-	Very good work—thorough in content and generally well written, though with minor flaws and/or omissions.
87-89	B+	Good work—covers the essentials with adequate depth in substance as well as quality of written/oral expression.
83-86	B	Acceptable work—covers most of the essentials with adequate quality of written/oral expression, though lacks depth in some explanations of subject matter.
80-82	B-	Marginal work—borders on unacceptable—weak written/oral expression, coverage of subject matter lacks attention to some essential points and/or is overly vague about them.
73-79	C+/C	Below standard—lacks adequate coverage of essential points, written/oral expression is very weak.
>72	C- and below	Inadequate work/performance overall. Fails to answer questions, writing is very confusing, vague, and/or does not cover many essential points.

Course Grading and Assignments

Semester grades will be based on performance on the following assignments and weights:

Attendance	15%	Monitored and recorded via Canvas
Syllabus Quiz	5%	Due by August 25 th
Discussion Posts	10%	Due by 2:30pm each day of class
Midterm	25%	October 16 th
Book Response Essay	20%	November 22 nd
Final Exam	25%	December 13 th

Attendance. Attendance is required in this course and will be necessary to ensure your success in this course. All students are permitted one unexcused absence per semester for which their grade will suffer no penalty. See the University Regulations (Section III.O) for criteria on excused absences. In order for an absence to be excused, students must notify me in writing via email *prior to the start of the class meeting* that will be missed. Punctuality is also expected as a sign of respect for the other students in the class.

Syllabus Quiz. This is a short quiz given via Canvas to ensure that students have read and understand the important details of the syllabus. This is not designed to trick you and should be an easy A. You will have two attempts at this quiz with the highest of your two scores counted toward your final grade. This must be completed by the start of class on Monday, August 28th.

Discussion Questions. At least once per week, students should submit a discussion question based on the assigned readings. These can be critical or thought-provoking questions, as well as clarifying questions. The point is to demonstrate that you've read the course material, and to help me tailor the lecture towards your points of interest or confusion. Links to these discussion posts will be found in each module on Canvas. These questions are due by 2:30pm on the relevant day.

Midterm. Formal exams in the class will consist of one midterm and one final exam. The midterm exam will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions, along with one short essay question. It will cover all topics and readings discussed in the course until that point. This exam will be given via Canvas on October 16th (the Monday after Fall break) and will be due by 11:59pm. We will not meet for class this day.

Book Response Essay. For this assignment you will choose one of the four optional books listed above and write a 4 to 5-page response based on a prompt that I will provide well in advance of the due date. You are welcome to select your book and are encouraged to begin reading well in advance of the due date. Students may pursue a non-fiction or fiction option. (Prompts will be tailored toward each of these two genres.) Feel free to come speak with me if you are unsure about which book to choose. This assignment is due November 22nd (the Wednesday before Thanksgiving) by 11:59pm. We will not meet on either the 20th or 22nd of November to allow sufficient time to complete this assignment.

Final Exam. Your final assessment will be the final exam, which will mimic the format of the midterm (multiple choice, short answers, and essay). This exam will be comprehensive, but will place greater emphasis on material covered since the midterm. The finale exam will be given via Canvas, and is due on December 13th by 5:30pm.

University Policies

1. **The Americans with Disabilities Act.** The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, (801) 581-5020. CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.
2. **University Safety Statement.** The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit safeu.utah.edu.
3. **Addressing Sexual Misconduct.** Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).

Lauren’s Promise: Lauren’s Promise is a vow that anyone – faculty, staff, students, parents, and community members – can take to indicate to others that they represent a safe haven for sharing incidents of sexual assault, domestic violence, or stalking. Anyone who makes Lauren’s Promise vows to: 1.) listen to and believe those individuals who are being threatened or experiencing sexual assault, dating violence or stalking; 2.) represent a safe haven for sharing incidents of sexual assault, domestic violence, or stalking; and 3.) change campus culture that responds poorly to dating violence and stalking. By making Lauren’s Promise, individuals are helping to change campus cultures that respond poorly to dating violence and stalking throughout the nation.

4. **Academic Misconduct Statement.** It is expected that students adhere to University of Utah policies regarding academic honesty, including but not limited to refraining from cheating, plagiarizing, misrepresenting one's work, and/or inappropriately collaborating. This includes the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools without citation, documentation, or authorization. Students are expected to adhere to the prescribed professional and ethical standards of the profession/discipline for which they are preparing. Any student who engages in academic dishonesty or who violates the professional and ethical standards for their profession/discipline may be subject to academic sanctions as per the University of Utah’s Student Code: <https://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-410.php>.
5. **Diversity Statement.** I stand in support of compassion, dignity, value-of-life, equity, inclusion and justice for all individuals regardless of color, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, language, socioeconomic status, ability, gender, gender identity or expression, immigration status, or any type of marginalization. I stand in support of making our society more inclusive, just, and equitable for all individuals. I stand against individual and systemic racism in all its various forms.
6. **Undocumented Student Support Statement.** Immigration is a complex phenomenon with broad impact—those who are directly affected by it, as well as those who are indirectly affected by their relationships with family members, friends, and loved ones. If your immigration status presents obstacles to engaging in specific activities or fulfilling specific course criteria, confidential arrangements may be requested from the Dream Center. Arrangements with the Dream Center will not jeopardize your student status, your financial aid, or any other part of your residence. The Dream Center offers a wide range of resources to support undocumented students (with and without DACA) as well as students from mixed-status families. To learn more, please contact the Dream Center at 801.213.3697 or visit dream.utah.edu.
7. **Drop/Withdrawal.** The last day to drop (delete) this course, or elect CR/NC, is Friday, September 1, 2023. The last day to withdraw from this course is Friday, October 20, 2023.
8. **Other important information to consider:**
 - a. Student Code: <http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>
 - b. Accommodation Policy (see Section Q): <http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-100.php>
9. **The University of Utah provides resources for students of various needs, including for:**
 - a. Wellness: <https://wellness.utah.edu/>
 - b. Veterans: <https://veteranscenter.utah.edu/>
 - c. LGBTQ+ students: <https://lgbt.utah.edu/>
 - d. Learners of English as an Additional/Second Language: <https://eli.utah.edu/>
 - e. First generation and low-income students: trio.utah.edu
 - f. Students of marginalized or intersectional identities: diversity.utah.edu/centers/CESB/
 - g. Undocumented students: dream.utah.edu
 - h. Students with children: childcare.utah.edu

SEMESTER SCHEDULE

Module 1: Foundations

Aug. 21 Course Introduction

Aug. 23 Categories, Identities, and Groups

Loveman, "Is Race Essential?"

Brubaker, "Ethnicity without Groups," read pp. 163-173.

Aug. 28 Primordialism and Constructivism

Chandra, "Cumulative Findings in the Study of Ethnic Politics"

Van Evra, "Primordialism Lives!"

Jared Diamond, "Race without color"

***Recommended: PBS documentary: "Race - The Power of An Illusion" (stream via Marriott Library)

Aug. 30 Social Identity Theory

Tajfel and Turner, "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior"

Sept. 4 NO CLASS – Labor Day

Module 2: Nature and Origins of Identity

Sept. 6 Identity Fluidity: Boundary-Crossing and Situational Salience

Waters, "The Social Construction of Race and Ethnicity"

Sept. 11 How states "make" race: South Africa, Brazil, and the United States

Marx, Anthony. "Race-Making and the Nation-State."

Sept. 13 How states "make" race: colonial institutions and commonsense

Laitin, David D. "Hegemony and Religious Conflict: British Imperial Control and Political Cleavages in Yorubaland," (ch. 9 in *Bringing the State Back in*)

Sept. 18 Censuses: Do they reflect or produce social boundaries?

Loveman, "Census Taking and Nation Making in Nineteenth-Century Latin America"

Sept. 20 Identity Subjectivity and Change

De Micheli, David. "Racial Reclassification and Political Identity Formation," read pp. 1-22, skim rest.

Module 3: Politicization – Electoral Politics

Sept. 25 Demography, Political Elites, and the Electoral Utility of Ethnicity

Posner, "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference"

Sept. 27 Electoral Consequences of Fluid Identities: Bolivia

Madrid, "The Rise of Ethnopolitism in Latin America"

Oct. 2 Cohesion among Cross-Cutting Cleavages

Dawson, *Behind the Mule*, read pp. 3-11 and 45-68

Oct. 4 The Gender Gap

Inglehart and Norris, "The Developmental Theory of the Gender Gap"

Oct. 9 FALL BREAK

Oct. 11 FALL BREAK

Oct. 16 Midterm

Midterm given via Canvas, due by 11:59pm.

Module 4: Politicization – Social Mobilization

Oct. 18 From Stratification from Mobilization

McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency*, read ch. 5 and pp. 125-145.

Oct. 23 Sudden and Uneven Mobilization: Indigenous Movements in Latin America

Yashar, *Contesting Citizenship*, pp. 3-8, 19-27, and 54-82.

Oct. 25 Feminist Mobilization and Suffrage

Teele, *Forging the Franchise*, chs. 1 and 3.

Module 5: Politicization – Violence

Oct. 30 Inter-Group Conflict

Cederman et al, *Inequality, Grievances, and Civil War*, ch. 3

Nov. 1 Immigrant-Native Conflict

Dancygier, *Immigration and Conflict in Europe*, read pp. 1-9 and 138-177.

Nov. 6 Extreme Politicization: Genocide

Straus, *The Order of Genocide*, pp. 1-4, 7-14, 17-35, and 65-94.

Recommended: Hotel Rwanda (streaming on Canvas)

Module 6: Representation and Inclusion

Nov. 8 Does Descriptive Representation Matter? Part 1

Lupu and Carnes, “Rethinking the Comparative Perspective on Class and Representation: Evidence from Latin America”

Nov. 13 Does Descriptive Representation Matter? Part 2

Krook, Mona Lena. “Reforming Representation: The Diffusion of Candidate Gender Quotas Worldwide”

Nov. 15 Does Nationalism Unify or Divide?

Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp. 1-7

Bleich, “Anti-racism without races: Politics and Policy in a ‘Color-Blind’ State”

Youtube documentary on the National Front (link on Canvas)

Nov. 20 NO CLASS – Work on your papers

Nov. 22 THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS

Module 7: Seeing and Not Seeing Inequality

Nov. 27 Contesting Inequality: a question of false consciousness?

Eyerman, "False Consciousness and Ideology in Marxist Theory" (skim for concepts of false consciousness)

Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness*, read pp. v-xi, 3-5, 13-25, 33-44, and 47-83.

Nov. 29 Which inequalities?

Cramer, "Putting Inequality in Its Place"

Dec. 4 Objective and Subjective Class Identities

Sherman, "A Very Expensive Ordinary Life"

Dec. 6 The Long View of Inequality and Polarization in the U.S.

McAdam and Kloos, *Deeply Divided*, read chs. 1 and 3.

***** Final Exam is due on December 13th by 5:30pm *****