

Philosophy 2061(01): Philosophy of Identity (3 credits)
Dr. Erica L. Neely
Spring 2017

Place and Time: Burgett 115, MWF 11:00-11:50 a.m.
Email address: e-neely@onu.edu
Office Hours: MWF 12-2 p.m., and by appointment
Text: *Identities: Race, Class, Gender, and Nationality*, ed. Linda Martín Alcoff and Eduardo Mendieta
Web page: <https://northernonline.onu.edu/>

General Education Learning Outcome: An understanding of diverse cultures

Aims and Objectives

This course examines the social component of identity. Our identities are not formed in a vacuum - we are influenced by the people around us. To understand who we are, therefore, we must consider the social understanding and perception of various kinds of identity. This course will focus on several important categories of identity (race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, and nationality), as well as on how those identities overlap, intersect, and influence each other.

Assignments and Grading

Participation:	20%	First identity paper:	10%
Class leading:	10%	Second identity paper:	10%
Identity journal:	20%	Final paper draft:	10%
		Final paper:	20%

Participation 20% – An important part of any philosophy course is discussion; this is the only good way to ensure you understand the ideas we are covering. While I do not penalize for missed classes, note that it is hard to participate if you are not there. Similarly, attendance alone is not sufficient – you need to contribute to the discussions. **Note that if you are shy about speaking in whole-class discussions you may supplement your group participation by sharing your thoughts with me through email, on the discussion boards for the course, or with me after class.**

Class Leading 10% – Most days I will lead the discussion on our readings. However, the final day of discussion on each group of readings will be led by student groups. Essentially, I'll assign you to a small group and divide the topics up among you. For the final day of the topic, that group will be responsible for leading the class. The members will decide in advance what they wish to do, either sparked by the readings or by class discussion on the previous days. On that day of class, one or more of the group will lead class. The exact form of the class is open-ended – you could hold a discussion, have some kind of in-class project, find a reading that you think contributes and you want to talk about (this will require advance planning, obviously)...there are many possibilities. You should also turn in some notes about what you had planned to cover, in case you were not able to do everything you planned. (This is not a hugely formal assignment – we will talk about it more before the first group has to lead class.) This is your chance to make sure we cover what you find most interesting about a topic!

Identity Journal 20% - You will be required to keep an online journal (via assignments on Moodle) which contains reflections on identity, particularly on how your identity is shaped by social factors, and how those factors similar to or different from the factors affecting other people. You will be guided in their journal entries by weekly writing prompts in order to tie your reflections to the course readings and discussions. On Mondays at noon I will post a reflection question tied to the previous week's reading; you will have until I post the next reflection question to address the topic. This will occur every week except for Spring Break and Easter Break. Journal entries are private – while I can read them, no other student can. You should aim to write at least 300 words (roughly one page) on the topics I post, although you are welcome to write more. By the end of the semester, you should have demonstrated an ability to see and understand the factors shaping both your identities and those of other people; you will also be able to engage in thoughtful analysis of those factors.

All remaining assignments contribute towards the final paper. Handouts with more information (and topics) will be forthcoming.

First Identity Paper – **This paper is roughly 4-5 pages and will serve as a basis which you will extend into your final paper;** you will choose one of the identity themes raised in the “Foundations” readings and address it through the lens of either race or class. This may be revised before it is incorporated into your final paper.

Second Identity Paper – **This paper is roughly 4-5 pages and will also be incorporated into your final paper.** Continuing with the theme you discussed in your first paper, you will now choose any of the other categories of identity we cover and address that topic via the readings on that topic. This may be revised before it is incorporated into your final paper.

Final Paper – **This paper is roughly 12 pages and should include material from your first two papers.** Once you have decided on the topic for your second paper, you should find an account which illustrates how a real person or group of people can be affected by the intersection of those two identities. For your final paper, you will use this to tie the discussions from your previous two papers together into a cohesive account that addresses your chosen identity theme. We will have a meeting at the library fairly early in the semester so that you can learn more about the resources available to help you find an appropriate account. You may revise your draft of this paper before turning in the final version.

Note that your papers must demonstrate an ability for philosophical thought – I am not interested in a book report; I want to read your argument as to how your chosen theme is reflected in the readings.

Papers are due in class; if you know that you will be absent on a day something is due, please make arrangements to have a classmate hand it in or leave it in my mailbox. Unless something extraordinary prevents you from turning your assignments in on time, late papers will be dropped one step for each day that they are late. (Hence an A- paper that is one day late will be a B+ paper; if it is two days late it will be a B, etc.)

Note on Accommodation

Students requiring particular accommodations because of physical and/or learning disabilities should contact their Dean's office prior to or during the first week of classes. For additional information, see: http://www.onu.edu/student_life/disability_services

Special Note on Academic Dishonesty

The University expects its students to conduct themselves in a dignified and honorable manner as mature members of the academic community and assumes that individually and collectively they will discourage acts of academic dishonesty. The University also expects cooperation among administrators, faculty, staff, and students in preventing acts of academic dishonesty, in detecting such acts, reporting them, and identifying those who commit them, and in providing appropriate punishment for offenders. The University Code of Academic Student Conduct is found in Appendix C of the Student Handbook: http://www.onu.edu/student_life/student_conduct/student_handbook

Committing academic dishonesty in this course will result in an automatic failure in the course; the administration may pursue additional sanctions.

Other Information

Although final grades are limited to whole letter grades, individual assignments will use the plus/minus scale; this will enable you to see whether your B is closer to an A or closer to a C.

Please note that you are responsible for keeping track of all assignments; you are also responsible for any material covered in class.

A schedule of topics is included in this syllabus; I will give you more specific reading assignments as we progress. In general, reading assignments should be completed prior to class. You may find it helpful to bring your book to class so that you may reference the readings during class discussions.

Important Dates

M	1/30	Student class leading: Foundations
M	2/13	Student class leading: Race
F	2/24	Library meeting day
F	3/3	Student class leading: Class
F	3/17	First Identity Paper Due
F	3/24	Student class leading: Gender
W	4/5	Student class leading: Sexuality
M	4/10	Second Identity Paper Due
W	4/26	Student class leading: Nationality
		Draft of Final Paper Due
F	5/5	Journal due
W	5/10	Final Paper Due, 2 p.m.

Schedule of Topics

1/20-1/30: M	Introduction and Part I: Foundations 1/30 Student class leading: Foundations
2/1-2/13: M	Part II: Race/Ethnicity/Ethnorace 2/13 Student class leading: Race
2/15-3/3: F	Part III: Class and Identity 3/3 Student class leading: Class
3/13-3/24: F F	Part IV: Gender 3/17 First Identity Paper Due 3/24 Student class leading: Gender
3/27-4/5: W	Part IV cont.: Sexuality and Gender Identity 4/5 Student class leading: Sexuality
4/7-4/26: M F M W	Part V: National/Transnational Identities 4/10 Second Identity Paper Due 4/14 No Class – Easter Break 4/17 No Class – Easter Break 4/26 Student class leading: Nationality
4/28-5/5: F W	Part VI: Reconfigurations 5/5 Journal due 5/10 Final Paper Due, 2 p.m.

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