San José State University

Sociology 171, Spring 2015

Section 1: Person and Society (22413)

Instructor: Steve Nava, Ph.D.
Email: steve.nava@sjsu.edu
Office phone: (408) 924-2942
Course time: TTh 1:30pm-2:45pm Room DMH 161
Office location: DMH 223
SJSU office hours: TTh 12:20pm-1:20pm
Final Exam: Thursday, May 21, 12:15pm-2:30pm

Course Description

This course analyzes "self" as socially created and maintained through everyday interactions. We will be closely analyzing and applying the theory of symbolic interactionism throughout this course. We will explore how individuals manage and protect self-identity in a variety of social settings, such as school, family, and work. This course emphasizes the effects of race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, ability, and age on definitions of self, reality, and social hierarchy. Class discussions and research activities inside and outside class will play an important role in this course.

Written and oral student presentations in this course will be focused on students’ development of metacognitive ability in learning theory and theory application. Students will be evaluated in terms of how well they learn the content of this course as well as their mindfulness of the process of putting theory into practice. Students will also be evaluated in terms of how well they incorporate their own experiences into their written and in-class reflections. This course is as much about the students and current events as it is about learning social theories of the self and society.

An important idea to keep in mind about being successful in this course is that students are often motivated to learn new material for one of two reasons: to either get high grades, or to master the new material for its own sake/learning for self-improvement. Students that are motivated by grades, do not necessarily reach their goal as effectively as students that are motivated to learn the new material for its own sake.

Prerequisite: Sociology 1 or instructor consent.

Required Texts:


**Attendance:**
Class attendance is vital to a vibrant and critically engaged classroom community. The learning in this course is experiential and collaborative; therefore, your contributions will be needed each session. Students that do not discuss material in class do not tend to make an ‘A’ in this course. You are expected to attend all class meetings unless a compelling reason (e.g., serious illness or documented family emergency) requires your absence. You are also expected to be on time and ready to take notes for each class meeting.

If you MUST be absent for any reason:
1. Contact Dr. Nava class at steve.nava@sjsu.edu if you are to miss your class presentation or you will be late.
2. Contact another student in the class to find out what you have missed.
3. If you miss more than 3 classes for any reason, make arrangements with the instructor to explain your predicament.
4. If you must miss a class due to the celebration of religious or cultural holidays not observed by the university, please discuss this with me in advance so we can make any necessary arrangements.

**Participation:**
The readings are listed by the date they will be covered in class on the grid at then end of this syllabus. You will be expected to attend all class meetings on time, complete assigned readings, bring your syllabus to class everyday, book and writing materials, and regularly participate in class discussions. I will conduct the class on the assumption that you have read the assigned materials and are prepared to discuss the materials in a thoughtful manner. You should also be prepared to do a written analysis on the day’s readings during some class meetings.

**Classroom Norms:**
We will develop these norms as a group, but I have several expectations for classroom behavior: 1) respectful and engaged participation; 2) cell phones turned off or silenced and put away; 3) no use of portable computers unless I ask you to work on a project in class; 4) Bring all readings to class that are listed for the week. If I have to repeat the rules to you twice I will ask you to leave and not return until we have a conference about your rule infraction.

**University Policies:**

**Academic Integrity**
Students should know that the University’s Academic Integrity Policy is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial_affairs/Academic_Integrity_Policy_S07-2.pdf. Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University’s integrity policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The website for Student Conduct and Ethical Development is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html.

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person’s ideas without giving proper credit)
will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include in your assignment any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU’s Academic Policy F06-1 requires approval of instructors.

**Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act**
If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the DRC (Disability Resource Center) to establish a record of their disability.

**Student Technology Resources**
Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library. A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRÇ 112. These items include digital and VHS camcorders, VHS and Beta video players, 16 mm, slide, overhead, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

**Learning Assistance Resource Center**
The Learning Assistance Resource Center (LARC) is located in Room 600 in the Student Services Center. It is designed to assist students in the development of their full academic potential and to motivate them to become self-directed learners. The center provides support services, such as skills assessment, individual or group tutorials, subject advising, learning assistance, summer academic preparation and basic skills development. The LARC website is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/larc/.

**SJSU Writing Center**
The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. It is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. The Writing Center website is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/.

**Peer Mentor Center**
The Peer Mentor Center is located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall in the Academic Success Center. The Peer Mentor Center is staffed with Peer Mentors who excel in helping students manage university life, tackling problems that range from academic challenges to interpersonal struggles. On the road to graduation, Peer Mentors are navigators, offering “roadside assistance” to peers who feel a bit lost or simply need help mapping out the locations of campus resources. Peer Mentor services are free and available on a drop –in basis, no reservation required. Website of Peer Mentor Center is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/muse/peermentor/.

**Dropping and Adding**
Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, etc. Information on add/drops are available at http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/soc-fall/rec-298.html. Information about late drop is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/sac/advising/latedrops/policy/. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for adding and dropping classes.

**Course Requirements and Assignments**
SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in University Policy S12-3 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf.

Major Assignments:

Class Participation: Participation is of key importance. Students that are engaged in daily intelligent discussion usually get As in my courses if they fulfill all of the other requirements demonstrating excellence. Students that do not regularly engage in class discussions usually get Bs if they fulfill the other requirements successfully. Students that get As in all written work but, do not fulfill oral discussion requirements will not receive an A for the course. Ten points will be subtracted from students’ overall grade if the student does not participate in class discussions regularly either in small groups or in open class discussions. I will circulate throughout the room during small group discussions to note students that are not involved in discussions.

Reading Quizzes: You will take 5 popquizzes throughout the semester. These quizzes will not be announced. The quizzes will cover the readings from the current week, so be sure to stay up with the readings by taking clear and copious notes and bringing them to class the day we are discussion them. (10 points)

Reading Responses (4 total): The Reading Responses are typed 500-word (one page single spaced) weekly article synopses, reflections, and two discussion questions. All students will turn in weekly response papers on CANVAS Turn-it-in by the night before the week the readings will be discussed begins (5 points each). Students must address all readings for the week in each response. They are a synopsis and reflection on key connections between the course readings. Students will write four total reading responses, choosing which weeks they will turn them in between week 3 through week 14, however, students must turn in a mandatory reading responses during week 2 (Tuesday Sept. 2nd) for feedback and the purposes of our norming of written responses.

Do your best to use social theory in your in-class writing and comments to show your mastery of concepts we study. Your efforts in applying social theory to examples will make the difference when it comes to assessing your overall performance at the end of the semester. If you want to discuss your progress and current grade during the quarter, make an appointment during my office hours so we can reflect on your progress and how you can improve.

Reading Presentation: You must sign up to do a Presentation. I will pass out a sign up sheet in class with the sign-in sheet. Reading Presentations require:
(1) a synopsis of one of the readings for the week;
(2) Youtube clip example and analysis of this chosen example using key concepts effectively;
(3) Two strong critical discussion questions which you are required to facilitate until a clear conclusion or agreement is made by the class. Do not simple ask the questions then sit down. You are the facilitator during the Reading Presentations. See me if you need more explanation. (10 points)

Midterm Exam: A comprehensive Multiple Choice and True and False Exam. An 882e Scantron needed. Thurs 3/12 (20 points)

Essay 3: First-Person Fiction Writing Assignments: Students will write a 5-page first person narrative that describes your ideal life and career ten years in the future. You will describe the type of work you perform, your family dynamic, your vehicle, and your home. Describe the
political context, and the positive and negative social realities you face each day. The goal is to
further understand your own life goals, sense of ‘self’ and ‘identity’, and to reflect on the kinds of
societal changes you foresee happening in the future in terms of societal advances and structural
constraints as well as technology and cultural changes. Describe what kind of ‘identity’ you will
have based on who you are now; both socially and as a person. **Due Thursday March 5th** on
CANVAS. (10 points)

**Essay 2: Self-Made Man 3-Page Analytical Essay:** Based on their outline, students will write a
3 page double-spaced essay on *Self-Made Man*. Answer the following questions to help organize
your essay. (1) What are the three main arguments this book is asserting? (2) Did you find the
points made compelling? Why or why not? (3) Which three concepts in symbolic interactionist
theory did you see clearly used in her experiment? Explain. (4) How has your experience
resonated or differed from the types of experiences the author experienced? How does your
identity and understanding of your ‘gendered self’ shape your life experiences comparatively?
Give clear and appropriate examples. Show examples from the book for each theoretical construct
you apply and cite the pages in *Self-Made Man*. Quote the book per example clearly using the
American Sociological Association’s sociology writing style guide. **due Thursday 4/30** on
CANVAS (10 points)

**Essay 3: Social Gathering Spots and Hierarchy and Cooperation: 3-Page Field Study:** Apply
Symbolic Interactionist theory to your own 3-page analysis of a social hangout spot of your choice
using the same concepts you used in the previous essays. Go to a social hangout spot. Observe and
take notes of patterns in social behavior jotting down the patterned ‘norms’ and ‘rules of
engagement’ that are expressive of social order, hierarchy, and status.
Write a page about how useful symbolic interactionist theoretical constructs helped you understand
the patterned behaviors you observed in addition to two pages of analysis of your observations
themselves. Be sure your writing is clear and concise. Also, be sure apply theory/frame the
gestures precisely and really break down the interaction into its meanings by analyzing each
gesture back and forth between individuals.

Apply at least (5) symbolic interactionist concepts, defining these terms and citing your book. Be
sure to note instances of ‘deference’ (Goffman) and orchestrated cooperation between members of
society as well as differential treatment, expectations, and ideals based on gender, race, sexual
orientation, ability, and/or age. Three pages double-spaced. See O’Brien 232 and 379 for examples
of how to structure the quotes and explain your findings. **Due Tuesday May 12** on CANVAS . (10
points)

**Final Comprehensive Exam:** An essay exam on Canvas. (20 points)

**Six Questions Your Instructor Asks When Evaluating Your Paper**
1. How relevant and original are the student’s ideas, arguments and/or commentary?
2. How well do the student’s ideas, arguments and/or commentary contribute to an ongoing
dialogue or issues and dilemmas related to the course and the current topic of discussion?
4. How cogently are the ideas presented?
5. How well developed is the student’s main point?
6. How well organized is the paper? How well integrated are the ideas (are the ideas woven
together and balanced in terms of the amount of attention given to each idea and piece of
evidence)?
Assignments and Points:

Reading Responses: 20
Reading Quizzes 10
Student Presentation 10
First-Person Fiction Writing Assignments 10
Self-Made Man 3-Page Analytical Essay 10
Social Gathering Spots and Hierarchy and Cooperation 10
Midterm Exam 10
Final Comprehensive Exam 20

=100 points

Evaluating your performance:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95+</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>90-94</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>84-86</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>80-83</td>
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<td>70-73</td>
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<td>67-69</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<td>64-66</td>
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<td>60-63</td>
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<td>59 or less</td>
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=100 points
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Week #</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings and Due Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>1/22 Th</td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
<td>Introduction to the Course</td>
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| Week 2    | 1/27 T  | Week #2’s Question: What the focus of this course? What is ‘symbolic interactionism’? | Read before class meets (Reading Response #1 is due over Ch. 1 and “The Self, The I, and the Me,” on CANVAS Thursday 1/29):  
Tues: Ch. 1 “Introducing Social Psychology and Symbolic Interactionism,” in *Self and Society* (1-31)  
Thurs: “The Self, The I, and the Me,” (p.120-125) George Herbert Mead in *The Production of Reality*  
Activity: Apply Mead’s conception of the Self, the I, and the Me to the film clip provided in class. |
|           | 1/29 Th | Week #2’s Question: What the focus of this course? What is ‘symbolic interactionism’? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Week 3    | 2/3 T   | Week #3’s Question: How can symbolic interactionist theory help me better understand social structure and interaction? | Tues: “What is Real,” by Jodi O’Brien (1-9) and  
Thurs: “Socialization: the Internalization of Society,” by Berger and Luckmann (p.189-191)  
|           | 2/5 Th  | Week #3’s Question: How can symbolic interactionist theory help me better understand social structure and interaction? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Week 4    | 2/10 T  | Week #4’s Question: What symbols hold your society together? Is social meaning shared or unique to each point of view? | Tues: “Shared Meaning is the Basis of Humanness” by O’Brien (p.50-70)  
Tues: “Final Note on a Case of Extreme Isolation,” Kingsly Davis (1947) (p.74-81) and  
Thurs: “Metaphors We Live By,” by Lakoff and Johnson (p.87-98))  
Thurs: “Reference Groups as Perspective,” by Tamotsu Shibutani (p.192-197) (all this week’s selections are in *The Production of Reality*) |
|           | 2/12 Th | Week #4’s Question: What symbols hold your society together? Is social meaning shared or unique to each point of view? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Week 5    | 2/17 T  | Week #5’s Question: What are the main concepts in symbolic interactionism? | Tues: Ch. 2 “Basic Concepts of Symbolic Interactionism,” in *Self and Society* (p.32-60)  
Thurs: “Racism in the English Language” by Moore in *The Production of Reality* (p.98-105)  
Thurs: “Talking Back,” by bell hooks in *The Production of Reality* (p.513-516)  
Film clip: The N-Word |
<p>| (census)  | 2/19 Th | Week #5’s Question: What are the main concepts in symbolic interactionism? |                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Week 6    | 2/24 T  | Week #6’s Question: How do we understand the ‘self’?                 | Tues: Ch. 3 “Identity, Social Settings, and the Self,” in <em>Self and Society</em> (p. 61-113)                                                                                                                                   |</p>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<td>2/26 Th</td>
<td>and ‘identity’ from the symbolic interactionist perspective?</td>
<td><strong>Thurs:</strong> Discuss homework: H.W. Due: 3-Page First-Person Fiction write-up due Thursday March 5th (see instructions in Major Assignments Section of syllabus)</td>
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| Week 7     | Week #7’s Question: What is ‘mindfulness’? How does mindfulness play a role in sociological thinking and on everyday life? | **Tues:** “Mindfulness and Mindlessness,” by Langer in *The Production of Reality* (p.82-86)  
Clip: TED Salone: “*All it Takes is 10 Mindful Minutes*”, Andy Puddicombe (2012);  
**Thurs:** “The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life: Selections,” by Erving Goffman (1959) in *The Production of Reality* (p.262-271)  
*Written application of Key terms: Dhamma Brothers* (2008) Dir. A. Kukura |
| 3/3 T      | 3/5 Th                                                               | Week #8: MIDTERM                                                      |
| Week 8     | Week #8: MIDTERM                                                      | **Tues:** Preview Midterm questions and concepts in small groups and with instructor.  
**Thurs:** Take 50-Question 882e Scantron Midterm in Class |
| 3/10 T     | 3/12 Th Midterm                                                      | Week #9’s Question: What is “reality”? Which aspects of reality are fixed and universal; Which are culturally specific; Which are individually defined?  
**Tues:** Ch. 4 “Defining Reality and Accounting for Behavior,” in *Self and Society* (p.116-152)  
**Thurs:** “Islands of Meaning” Zerubavel in *The Production of Reality* (p.11-27)  
Farmingville documentary |
| Week 10    | Week #10’s Question: What is ‘double-consciousness’? How is consciousness structured from various perspectives based on various types of perceived and “real” differences? What is love of self and how does it affect one’s relation to others? Do others hinder us from self love? Do we hinder others? | **Tues:** Cesar Chavez Day. No Class Meeting  
**Thurs:** “*Double-consciousness and the Veil,*” by DuBois (p.474-478) and  
**Thurs:** “Development of Feeling Norms Underlying Romantic Love Among Adolescent Females,” by Robin W. Simon et al. (p.229-247) in *The Production of Reality*  
Film Clip 1: *This American Life: Season 2, Ep. 1: Escape* [on Disability and defining ‘love relationships’ and ‘independence’.]  
Film Clip 2: “*Love is Evil,*” Slavoj Zizek  
Film Clip 3: “*The Science of Love,*” Soul Pancakes  
**In-class writing assignment:**  
Interview a fellow student on the meaning of “love” they adhere to these days. Follow up with asking them how they defined “love” as a young teen. How has this framing changed over time and with experience? Write down their answers to each question, then analyze, or unpack the meanings of their responses explaining the change and the importance of past personal experience in shaping conceptions of |
| Week 11 | 4/7 T 4/9 Th | Week #11’s Question: How do researchers apply symbolic interactionism to understanding inequality? What kinds of gender and racial inequalities do you see at your workplace? | “Status inequality and close relationships: An integrative Typology of Bond-saving Strategies,” by Harris in *The Production of Reality* (p.430-443)  
“Persistence of Gender Inequality in Employment Settings,” by Ridgeway in *The Production of Reality* (p.444-452) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Week 12 | 4/14 T 4/16 Th | Week #12’s Question: continue with: How do researchers apply symbolic interactionism to understanding inequality? | *Self-Made Man: One Woman’s Year Disguised as a Man* by Vincent (first half)  
| Week 13 | 4/21 T 4/23 Th | Week #13’s Question: continue with: How do researchers apply symbolic interactionism to understanding inequality? | *Self-Made Man: One Woman’s Year Disguised as a Man* by Vincent (second half)  
**HW Due:** Self-Made Man 3-Page Analytical Essay due Thursday 4/30  
Film Clip: [Interview With Norah Vincent](#)  
Revisit Langer: “Mindfulness and Mindlessness,” and discuss: documentary clip: *Inside Alive* |
Film Clip: *For the Bible Tells me So* (2007); 30 Days: Straight Man in Gay World (2005)  
Film Clip: [LGBT Christians Explain Their Faith](#) (2014)  
**Thurs:** “Contested Selves in Divorce Proceedings,” by Hopper in *The Production of Reality* (p.494-503) |
| Week 15 | 5/5 T 5/7 Th | Week #15’s Question: How can I apply what I know about symbolic interactionism to my own world? | Ch. 6 “Application of the Symbolic Interactionist Perspective,” in *Self and Society* (p.181-198) |
| Week 16 | HW Due: Social Gathering Spots and Hierarchy and Cooperation: 3-Page Field Study: (10%): **Due Tuesday May 12th on CANVAS**

**Examples of useful concepts:** deference and demeanor; definition of the situation (O’Brien 263); impression management; saving face; losing face; front stage/ back stage; the front (O’Brien 266); taking a line; motivation; double consciousness; seeing social interaction through ‘the veil’; ideological beliefs; ‘discursive strategies; feeling norms; expressing conflict; violation of norms; reinforcing or violating social norms; norms of exclusivity (236); use of jokes to assuage role inconsistencies; points of view; masculine and feminine ideals.

Potluck: We will share food and drinks Tuesday and Thursnensday this week during the student presentations of research findings. |
| FINAL EXAM | **Thursday, May 21, 12:15pm-2:30pm** is our official final exam date but, your exam will be on CANVAS. I will be available for meeting with you during this time slot in our classroom or my office. |