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Office location: Annex 111A  
Office hours: Tuesday, 4:00-5:00  
Thursdays and Fridays, 8:30-10:30

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### Calendar description

This course attempts to locate personal biography in the context of one's social history. Students' genealogies provide the starting point for explorations of family heritage, social history, and personal identity. Students will apply sociological ideas to help them understand how biography and history shapes personal and family histories. Three credits.

### Course objectives

Through research and discussion, we will contemplate the intersections of biography and history. The readings focus on autobiographical and storytelling methods and on how social memory, interaction, and ritual frame and influence identity. We will explore how social experiences such as class, gender, race and ethnicity influence our sense of self and identity. Students will complete a sociological family tree, and complete library research toward the completion of three autobiographical essays.

### Required reading

Course-pack (available @ Campus Store) as well as recommended readings for class discussion.

### Evaluation exercises

	Option A	Option B	Due date
1. A sociological family tree & reflection	10%	10%	Sept. 17
2. Seminar leadership and participation	20%	15%	
3. A 1500 word essay on class background	20%	15%	Oct. 15
4. A 1500 word essay on a gender	20%	15%	Nov. 5
5. A 5000 word essay <i>incorporating</i> 3 variables	30%	25%	Nov. 26
6. Final examination ~ see below	----	20%	

### Final Examination

The final exam contains short-answer and essay questions on the readings in the reader. *Option A allows each student the choice of writing the final exam.* Eligibility for Option A is reserved for students who: 1) attended at least 10 full classes, 2) completed **all** assigned work on time, 3) actively participated in seminars, and 4) maintained an average of 65 percent on course work.

### Sociological Family Tree and Reflection

Each student will complete a sociological family tree and a 400-word reflection about doing this work. Worksheets will be distributed at the first class. Provide as much *descriptive detail* as you can; variations are expected. Further instructions will be given during class. The graded family tree must be attached to all essays. *Due September 17, beginning of class.*

## **Course essays**

The course essays are auto-ethnographies (not diaries). They involve an analysis of how your ancestry and personal history influences your personal identity. The first essay is on your social class of origin. The second essay is on gender. The third essay is an integration of class, gender, and a third identity variable (e.g., race, religion, ethnicity, citizenship, etc) of your choosing. Students will discuss the *sociology* on your variables, not your autobiography, during class. Your goal in all three papers is to use the sociology literature to help you write an auto-ethnographic account of your identity. Further instructions for the papers and related seminar discussion will be provided in class. *Essays are due at the beginning of class (Attached the graded family tree).*

## **Class Attendance and Seminar Leadership and Participation**

Class attendance is required. Understanding the essay requirements is contingent upon class participation. If you cannot attend class, you are recommended to find a more suitable course.

### **Seminar Leadership**

Students working in pairs will co-lead one seminar focused on a reading. The length of your seminar will be 75 minutes because the second half of class involves other work. You will be assigned a reading and seminar partner *one week prior to your seminar*. You and your seminar partner will prepare a method to direct the class in a critical discussion of the assigned reading. Although you will collaborate to direct the seminar, each leader is responsible to write and submit a 5-page reflection on their article and seminar. This reflection will be submitted on Moodle on the Friday following your seminar, by 6:30. Late submissions are penalized by 50%.

### **Seminar preparation and participation on readings**

There are *two types of seminar work*. Normally, the first 75 minutes involves a discussion of the course readings and the second 75 minutes involves a discussion of projects and project research.

#### Discussion of the course readings

With regard to the course readings, *each student should come prepared to participate*. You are required to read the assigned article and prepare written notes. I expect each student to come to class with their reader and the notes they prepared on the assigned reading (i.e., identify and define key terms/concepts, summarize the main argument, and provide commentary, such as your thoughts on the objective, methods, premise, or conclusions of the study, and say why).

#### Discussion of research related to project work

Discussion after the break focuses on the projects, with most time spent on *your* research on *your* variables. For instance, students will be selected to introduce material from the readings they have found to be pertinent to their research (based on your library work). You are NOT asked to discuss your autobiographical analysis, but to explore the sociological aspect of the various identity variable that may inform your autobiographical analysis.

Failure to bring your reader and reading and/or project notes to class will influence your seminar grade and whether you will be eligible for "Option A". The quality of your participation will influence your seminar grade. Please make every effort to involve classmates in the discussions.