Identity & Agency in Political Worlds
Anthropology 759
Fridays, 12:00 to 2:50 pm, Alumni (Anthropology Building) 203

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The course examines the significance of identity as a force in and mediator of human life, drawing together the work of cultural and ethnographic studies with a productive and explicit theory that situates identity squarely in contentious social practice informed by sociohistorical resources and institutions. This "social practice theory of identity" begins with a basis in American pragmatism (Peirce, Dewey and Mead) and Russian the cultural historical school of psychology (Vygotsky, Luria, Leont'ev), and elaborates it semiotically and sociologically through the critical theories of Bakhtin and Voloshinov, and of later European theorists of practice especially Bourdieu. These theorists together provide accounts of the social and cultural formation of agency in individuals and groups that allow us to go beyond the black box of 'habitus', the conundrums of actants or "text-determined" selves, or "subjects" and the often acultural and asocial "individuals" of empirical psychology. In this framework, "person," "society," "culture," and "environment" are related, neither contingently nor determinately, but collaboratively—in performance—as equally real (and equally imaginary) sites or moments in the production of human experience, action and activity. Identities, at once "material," "cultural" and "psychologically intimate," transport us as embodied pivots or interfaces of these moments. This semester's readings trace the work of identity in a variety of critical areas of contemporary life, e.g., social movements, (symbolic) economies, and enduring inequalities.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COURSE AND EXPECTATIONS:

1) 30% **Discussion**: Participants are expected to read the materials and contribute cogently to class discussion.

2) 20%: **Presentations:** Sign up for at least two presentations including one "research project insight" report and at least one "warm up/make it hotter" panel regarding a reading or set of seminar readings. Presentations must be limited to the lengths described below and accompanied by a one-page handout (print copies for everyone in the class including me) with SS bullet points describing either your research and insights in the first case or your responses to the warm up prompts in the second.
   • **Warm Up/Make it Hotter Panels about One or More of the Readings for the Day**: I (or someone from the seminar) will pose a question that panel members answer in 4 minutes. **Bring copies of three bullet points for seminar participants and me**. Participants will be able to volunteer for a panel in the subsequent meeting.

- **Research Insight Presentation:** 8-10 minutes to describe your "research project" AND 5 minutes to explain how the reading(s) for the day inspired your developing ideas vis a vis the project. (Work on getting your ideas honed and sharpened and presentable for the small time frame.) Prepare a 1-2 page sheet that gives bullet points describing your research project and a one ½ to 1 page sheet with bullet points on insights from the day's readings for your project. **Bring copies of the pages for seminar participants and me**. Two-sided printing encouraged.

3) 50% **Seminar Paper or Proposal**: Course participants are expected to become conversant with the concepts of the course and proficient in applying a social practice framework to research problems in their areas of study. At the end of term, each of those taking the course for credit should submit a succinct, polished essay (12-20 double spaced pages in length) demonstrating this proficiency. You are encouraged to apply aspects of the conceptual framework to your own research, either as a case analysis or as a theoretical essay or proposal outlining how your research problem would be cast or conceived in terms of a social practice theory approach. Alternatively, in the absence of a project of your own, you may explore contemporary theoretical issues in relation to class content. **A first draft of an "abstract" for you seminar paper or proposal is due on October 4th**. The draft should be no longer than a page and ½. **A revised draft is due on Nov 1st**. **An e-copy of the final paper/proposal is due to me as an email attachment on December 9th at 9 am.**

4) **Note: We will meet in the time of the scheduled final, December 13th noon to 2:30**.

READINGS:

Copies of the following required texts have been ordered from the Student Stores (they may not all be in yet). Articles and chapters are available online through Sakai or the UNC library.

Holland, D.C., Lachicotte, W.S., Skinner, D. G., and Cain, W.C. 1998. *Identity and agency in cultural worlds*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

Price, Charles. 2009 Becoming Rasta: Origins of Rastafari Identity in Jamaica. New York, NY: New York University Press.

Satterfield, Terre 2002. *Anatomy of a conflict: Identity, knowledge and emotion in old growth forests*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

Wardlow, Holly (2006). *Sexuality and Agency in a New Guinea Society* Berkeley: University of California Press. 2006.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

1. Aug 23: Introduction

Why is identity ubiquitous across the social sciences and humanities? Themes of the Seminar

2. Aug 30: Sociohistorical Formations; Subjects, Identities & Selves Forming in Worlds of Difference

Worlds & Social Identities of Difference (forming around Cultural/Ethnic Group, Race, Gender, Class, etc.); Intimate Identity and Psychological Well Being; How does the person become engaged with society, its institutions and its cultural imaginaries?

- Hall, Stuart (1990) Cultural Identity and Diaspora. In J. Rutherford, ed. Identity: Community,

<u>Culture, Difference</u>. London: Lawrence & Whishart. Pp. 222-237.

- Fisher, Steve (2007) Appalachian Identity: Oppositional Politics or Insular Regionalism. Paper presented at the ASA meetings. March 2007
- Erikson, E. H. (1968). <u>Identity: Youth and crisis</u> [selections]. Pp. 15-43. Pp 155-165. New York: Norton.
- (Optional) Sawin, Patricia (2004) Listening for a Life. Selections from chapters 1-3. Pp. 22-67.
- (Optional) Calhoun, Craig (1994) Social Theory and Politics of Identity. In C. Calhoun, ed., Social Theory and the Politics of Identity. Oxford: Blackwell. Pp. 9-36.

3. Sept 6th: More on Identities of Difference

Social Identities as Mediating Society's Engagement with Persons; Intimate Identities as Mediating the Person's Engagement with Society; Why/how does the person (group) become engaged with society and identities of difference?

Visitor: Jean Dennison

- Dennison, Jean (2012) Colonial Entanglements: Constituting a 21st Century Osage Nation. Chapters: Introduction, Chapter 2 Blood and Chapter 3: Culture. Pp. 2-18, 60-95, 96-128 (combined pdf)
- Hall, Stuart (1996) "Introduction: Who Needs Identity?" In Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (eds): *Question of Cultural Identity*, pp. 1-17.
- Walkerdine, Valerie. 2006. Workers in the new economy: Transformation as border crossing. Ethos 34(1): 10-41. (A pdf is on Sakai, but as a Board Member of Ethos, I'd appreciate it if you'd download this article by going to UNC libraries, E-Journals, *Ethos* (Berkeley, Calif), AnthroSource, volume 34, Issue 1)

4. Sept 13th: The Meta-theory of Practice & the Shift to the Actor in Practice

What do our big 4 theorists have in common? Bourdieu and the Meta-Theory of Practice; Shift to Actor in Practice; Implications for Studies of the Self and Identity (and Cultural Resources)

- Bourdieu (1977). Outline of a Theory of Practice. New York: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 1-15.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977) The economics of linguistic exchanges. Social Science Information 16(6):645-668.
- Holland et al. (1998) Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds. Chap. 1, "The Woman Who Climbed up the House." Chap 2, "A Practice Theory of Self and Identity."
- Spangler, Sydney (2011)"To Open Oneself is a Poor Woman's Trouble: Embodied Inequality and Childbirth in South-Central Tanzania" Medical Anthropological Quarterly. 25(4): 479–498.

5. Sept 20th: The Social Formation of Self and Identity

G. H. Mead: Worlds of Action/Identities (Plural); Figuring & Performing Cultural Worlds/Identities; Activity theory; Cultural Resources: cultural imaginaries and their importance as collective interpretations of activity &

spaces of practice; Figured Worlds; Imaginaries of Worlds of Action Versus Imaginaries of Difference

- Mead, G. H. (1913). The Social Self. Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods, 10)14): 374-380.

- Mead, G. H. (1912). The Mechanism of Social Consciousness. Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods 9(15): 401-406.

- Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds Chap 3: "Figured Worlds", Chap 4: "Personal Stories in Alcoholics Anonymous"; Chap. 5, "How Figured Worlds of Romance Become Desire." Pp 66-97, 98-124

- Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). Mind in Society. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Pp. 19-57, 92-104.

- (optional) Leont'ev (1974/5). The Problem of Activity in Psychology. Soviet Psychology (Winter 1974-75): 4-33.

6. Sept 27th: More on the Social Formation of Mind and Self: Materiality, Cultural Resources and Positioning in Local Spaces of (Contentious) Practice

Cultural resources and their centrality in the formation of social & intimate identities; Vygotsky, semiotic mediation & self control--the gateway to agency, extending Vygotsky to theorize intimate identity; positioning/subject making, why focus on local spaces of practice?

- Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds: Chaps. 6, "Positional Identities" & 7, "The Sexual Auction Block."

- Holland, D., and W. Lachicotte. 2007. Vygotsky, Mead and the new sociocultural studies of identity. In The Cambridge Companion to Vygotsky, ed. H. Daniels, M. Cole and J. Wertsch, 101-135. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.

- Basso, Keith (1996) Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, Chapter 2: Stalking with Stories, Pp 37-70.

- Dunk (2002): Remaking The Working Class: Experience, Class Consciousness, and the Industrial Adjustment Process American Ethnologist. 29(4): November 2002 (Pages 878 - 900) (Note: we may not get to this article on this day—may discuss it next time.)

- (encouraged)   Volosinov (1973) Marxism and the Philosophy of Language. Selection_3 pdfs

- (encouraged) Wortham, Stanton (2006) Learning Identity: The Joint Emergence of Social Identification and Academic Learning. Chapter 2: Social Identification and Local Metapragmatic Models Pp. 29-89.

- (optional) Brumfiel, E.. (2005). Materiality, feasts, and figured worlds in Aztec Mexico. In E. Demarrais, C. Gosden, & C. Renfrew (Eds.), Rethinking materiality. Cambridge: MacDonald Institute for Archaeological Research.

- (optional) Carlone, H., J. Frank, A. Webb (2011) "Assessing Equity Beyond Knowledge- and Skills-Based Outcomes: A Comparative Ethnography of Two Fourth-Grade Reform-Based Science Classrooms" Journal of Research in Science Teaching. Pp. 2-27.

7. Oct 4th: Local Spaces of (Contentious) Practice, the "Space of Authoring, Dialogic

Selves, & the Importance of Cultural Production

Bakhtin's addition: Dialogic Selves; the Space of Authoring, Social Images, the Importance of Cultural Production and the Inhabitation of Structures

- Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds. Chaps. 8, "Authoring Selves", Pp. 169-191.

- Lachicotte, W. (2002). Intimate powers, public selves: Bakhtin's space of authoring. In J. Mageo (Ed.), Power and the self (pp. 48-66). New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Willis, Paul (1977) Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs. New York: Columbia University Press. Preface, Chapters 1-3.

- (selected) Holland, D., and J. Lave. 2001. Introduction. In History in person: Enduring struggles and the practice of identity, ed. D. Holland and J. Lave. Albuquerque, N.M.: School of American Research Press. Pp. 3-18 especially the Figure on page 7 and the section on Bakhtin.

- (optional) Goodman, Yehuda C. and Nissim Mizrachi (2008) "The Holocaust Does Not Belong to European Jews Alone": The Differential Use of Memory Technologies in Israeli High Schools. American Ethnologist 35(1):95-114.

- (optional) Merten, Don, and Gary Schwartz (1982) "Metaphor and Self: Symbolic Process in Everyday Life." American Anthropologist 84:796-810. (Library e-journals)

- (optional) Murakami, Kyoko and David Middleton (2006) "Grave Matters: Emergent Networks and Summation in Remembering and Reconciliation" Ethos 34(2): 273-296

- (optional) Gregory, Stephen (2001) Placing the Politics of Black Class Formation.   In Holland, D. and J. Lave, eds., History in Person: Enduring Struggles, Contentious Practice and Intimate Identities. School of American Research Press.

- (optional) Holland, Dorothy, Gretchen Fox, and Vinci Daro (2008) Social Movements and Collective Identity" Anthropological Quarterly 81(1): Winter 2008, pp. 95-126

- (optional) Taylor, Verta and Nancy Whittier (1999). "Collective Identity in Social Movement Protests: " In Social Movements Since the Sixties: People, Passion, Power. Jo Freeman and Victoria Johnson. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

- (strongly recommended) Bettie, Julie 2003 Women without Class: Girls, Race, and Identity. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

8. Oct 11th: Spaces of Authoring/Positioning and (Difficulties of) Subject Making

Does subject position determine intimate identity? Revisiting Resistance and Barriers to Subjectification & Change, Selves/Identities Forming in Worlds of Action AND Difference; the Production of Difference in Local Spaces of Practice

- Aretxaga, B. (2001) Engendering Violence: Strip-Searching of Women in Northern Ireland. In Holland, D. and J. Lave, eds. History in Person: Enduring Struggles, Contentious Practice and Intimate Identities. School of American Research Press. Pp. 37-61.

- van Meijl, Toon (2006) Multiple identifications and the dialogic self: Urban Maori youngsters and the cultural renaissance. Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute 12:917-933.

- Ewing, K. 2006. Between cinema and social work: Diasporic Turkish women and the (dis)pleasures of hybridity. Cultural Anthropology 21(2): 272-294

- Start Satterfield, Terre (2002) Anatomy of A Conflict: Identity, Knowledge, And Emotion In Old-Growth Forests, Chapters 1,2, and 3
- (optional) McDermott, R. P. (1993). "The acquisition of a child by a learning disability." In S. Chaiklin & J. Lave (Eds.), Understanding practice (pp. 269-305). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (optional) Guthman, Julie (2008) Bring Good Food to Others: Investigating the Subjects of Alternative Food Practice. Cultural Geographies 2008 15:431-447

Oct 18th: Fall Break, Enjoy!

9. Oct 25th: Movements, Activism and the Space of Authoring Group Actors

New worlds/identities, dialogic relations; hegemonic discourses/topics,

- Satterfield, Terre. (2002) *Anatomy of A Conflict: Identity, Knowledge, And Emotion In Old-Growth Forests*. Remaining chapters.
- Holland, D. 2003. Multiple identities in practice: On the dilemmas of being a hunter and an environmentalist in the USA. In Multiple identifications and the self, ed. T. van Meijl and H. Driesson. Special issue. Focaal: European Journal of Anthropology 42:23-41.

10. Nov 1st: Enduring Struggles & Identities: The Making of New Worlds/Identities

Collective actors and Cultural Production in Sociohistorical Time/Space; Enduring Struggles;

- *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds*: Chapters 11, 12 and 13. Pp. 235-288
- Price, Charles. Becoming Rasta: Origins of Rastafari Identity in Jamaica. Introduction, Chapter 1 and 2.
- (optional) Escobar, A. (2008) Places and Regions in the Age of Globality: Social Movements and Biodiversity Conservation in the Colombian Pacific. Durham: Duke University Press. Introduction: Pp. 1-26, Chapter 5: Identity, Pp. 200-253.

11. Nov 8th: The Making of New Worlds/Identities (Cont.)

A Case of an Identity of Difference becoming an Identity of Action

Visitor: Charles Price

- Price, Charles. Becoming Rasta: Origins of Rastafari Identity in Jamaica. Remaining Chapters.

12. Nov 15th: Sociohistorically Privileged Identities and How They Become Facts in the World

How do sociohistorical struggles and the sociohistorical identities they produce become part of spaces of local

practice? How does local cultural production become sociohistorical production?

- Rubin, Beth (2007) "There's Still Not Justice": Youth Civic Identity Development Amid Distinct School and Community Contexts *Teachers College Record* Volume 109, Number 2, February 2007, pp. 449–481.
- Dumit, Joseph (1997) A Digital Image of the Category of the Person: PET Scanning and Objective Self-Fashioning. In *Cyborgs and Citadels: Anthropological Interventions in Emerging Sciences and Technologies*, edited by Gary Lee Downey, and Joseph Dumit, 83-102. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press
- Rouse, Roger. (1995) Questions of Identity: Personhood and collectivity in transnational migration to the United States. *Critique of Anthropology* 15: 351-380.
- Leve, Lauren (2011) "Identity". *Current Anthropology* 52(4):513-535.

13. Nov 22nd: Gender, Agency & the Complex Terrains of Identity

Agency, Subject Making Versus Self Making; Subjectivities and the Inhabitation of Structures, Gendered Identities

- Wardlow, Holly (2006). *Sexuality and Agency in a New Guinea Society* Berkeley: University of California Press. 2006. Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, and 3.

Nov 29th: Thanksgiving ** enjoy!

Dec 9th (9 am): Seminar Papers Due as Email Attachments to me

14. Dec 13 (12 pm to 2:30 pm (scheduled exam Period): Wrap Up

- Wardlow, Holly (2006). *Sexuality and Agency in a New Guinea Society* Berkeley: University of California Press. 2006. Remaining chapters.