

**ENG 125, Winter 2008:**  
***Our Complex Selves: The Intersecting Identities of Gender, Sexuality, Race, and Ethnicity***  
**Mondays & Wednesdays, 11:40-1:00**  
**Room #4152 USB**

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 10 – 11am

**Course Description:**

What's in a label? Our identities, or how we think about who we are, contribute in deeply meaningful ways to our life experiences and relationships. This course will introduce students to psychological theories of identity, with a particular focus on intersecting identities. Course readings, excerpts from popular films, and self-reflection will help us to understand what it means to have an identity, and how we negotiate the multiple identities we all have. Assigned essays as well as in-class writing and discussion will challenge students to think about the significance of gender, sexuality, race, and ethnicity in forming our complex selves.

The primary reason we are working together this term is to help you to become college-level writers. I take this task seriously, and I hope you will too! I also hope that this class will be personally meaningful for you, and that you will learn about yourself as a person and as a writer. Writing is a cornerstone of intellectual development; it can help us to organize our thoughts, to think analytically and critically, to present our ideas, and to understand and solve problems. Regardless of the career or life path(s) you choose, you will be required to write in various genres throughout your life, and to organize your thoughts, arguments, and evaluations through writing. Those who develop good writing skills are likely to perform well in their courses and careers, and to submit successful applications for jobs and graduate school or professional programs. Learning to write requires *a lot* of practice. This class is designed to give you that practice and to encourage you to approach the reading and writing processes in more critical and creative ways than you may have in the past. You will work closely with your peers and the instructor to develop your voice as a writer through a series of formal and informal writing assignments and workshops.

**Course Goals:**

1. To write coherent, organized, and convincing essays.
2. To learn to use writing as an exercise in thought.
3. To provide and receive constructive criticism.
4. To practice thoughtful revision.
5. To achieve goals 1-4 by focusing on the psychological study of identity.

**Creating an Effective Classroom Environment**

In group settings, each member's participation affects the overall experience. In order for this course to work well, every class member (instructor and students alike) must take responsibility for engaging maturely with the course content and responding respectfully to others' contributions. Together, we will explore and discuss a range of topics in an environment that I hope will be challenging, stimulating, open, supportive, and exciting.

We might not always agree with each other; in fact, I hope that as the semester progresses, we will become more adept at engaging with the differences in our experiences and perspectives. However, it is imperative that we all be respectful towards each other, and that we maturely and thoughtfully consider these different topics.

**Required Text:**

Lunsford, A.A. (2005). *The Everyday Writer*. Boston: Bedford/ St. Martin's Press. [available at Shaman Drum Bookstore]

**Additional Readings (posted on our CTools course website):**

- Alsop, R., Fitzsimons, A., & Lennon, K. (2002). *Theorizing gender*. Cambridge: Polity Press. [selected chapters]
- Burns, N. (2005). Finding gender. *Politics & Gender*, 1(1), 137-141.
- Côté, J. (2005). Identity studies: How close are we to developing a social science of identity? – An appraisal of the field. *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research*, 6(1), 3-25.
- DuBois, W.E.B. (1903). The souls of black folk. [selected excerpt]
- Kesselman, A., McNair, L., & Schiedewind, N. (2008). *Women: Images and realities: A multicultural anthology*. New York: McGraw-Hill Companies. [selected excerpts]
- Konik, J. & Stewart, A. (2004). Sexual identity development in the context of compulsory heterosexuality. *Journal of Personality*, 72(4), 815-844.
- Kroger, J. (2000). Ego identity status research in the new millennium. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 24, 145-148.
- Park, C.A., Hughes, T.L., & Matthews, A.K. (1999). Race/ethnicity and sexual orientation: Intersecting identities. *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 10, 241-254.
- Sneed, J.R., Schwartz, S.J., & Cross, W.E., Jr. (2006). A multicultural critique of identity status theory and research: A call for integration. *Identity*, 6, 61-84.
- Stewart, A.J., & McDermott, C. (2004). Gender in psychology. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 55, p. 531-537. [read the section on intersectionality]
- Yip, T., Seaton, E.K., & Sellers, R.M. (2006). African American racial identity across the lifespan: Identity status, identity content, and depressive symptoms. *Child Development*, 77, 1504-1517.

**Required Films will be on Reserve at the Shapiro Library (may be viewed on your own, or during group viewings on Tuesday evenings).**

**Course Policies:**

Attendance: In every class I will assign written work, collect an assignment, or deliver important information. Therefore, it is critical that you attend class. If, for some unavoidable reason, you must miss class, please contact me immediately and make arrangements to get your work turned in on time. Please note that 20% of your grade is determined by class participation, which includes attendance as well as engagement with class activities.

Late papers: Work will be penalized 5 percentage points for every day it is late. In case of emergencies, I will allow one extension of no more than seven days.

Plagiarism: The LSA Student Bulletin defines plagiarism as “submitting a piece of work (for example an essay, research paper, assignment, laboratory report) which in part or in whole is not entirely the student’s own work without attributing those same portions to their correct sources” (p. 27). In order to uphold the moral and professional integrity of the academic community at the University of Michigan, the Department of English follows a strict standard when dealing with incidents of plagiarism. This standard typically involves a failing grade for both the assignment and the course, a report which is sent to the Dean for Student Academic Affairs, and academic probation. We will discuss plagiarism in class throughout the semester. However, each student is responsible for understanding exactly what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it. If you have any doubts, please consult the English department website: <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/english/undergraduate/plagnote.asp>

Accommodations: Please see me or email me within the first two weeks of classes if you require accommodations due to learning disabilities, religious practices, physical requirements, medical needs, or any other reason.

**Grading:**

CTools Reaction Paper & Response Postings	10%
Class Participation	20%
Essay #1	15%
Essay #2	15%
Essay #3	20%
Essay #4	20%

**CTools Reaction Paper & Responses (10%):**

- (a) **CTools Reaction Paper (6%):** Each student will be responsible for posting a 1-page reaction paper with discussion questions for one class this semester. Reaction papers should be posted on CTools (as new “threads” in the *Forum* section) by 12noon the day before class so that there will be adequate time for other students to post responses. These reaction papers should do two things: (1) describe an important issue or controversy raised by the reading or film and (2) pose at least 2 thought-provoking questions about the reading or film. There will be a sign-up sheet for this assignment; students will choose reaction paper due dates at the beginning of the semester. (Note: if you sign up for a film, you will need to watch it independently of the optional group viewings on Tuesday evenings in order to prepare your reaction paper by noon the day before class meets.)
- (b) **CTools Responses (4%):** Each student will respond to four of the posted reading/film discussion questions. Responses should be posted (as “replies” to the Reaction Paper “threads” in the *Forum* section of CTools) by midnight the day before class. Responses may be brief, but should thoughtfully address the questions or critiques posed by the reaction papers. Choose one of these options for each of your four responses:
- Response #1:** January 16<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, or 30<sup>th</sup>
  - Response #2:** February 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, or 11<sup>th</sup>
  - Response #3:** February 20<sup>th</sup>, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, or March 12<sup>th</sup>
  - Response #4:** March 24<sup>th</sup>, March 26<sup>th</sup>, or April 9<sup>th</sup>

**Class Participation (20%):**

- (a) **Peer Critiques (10%):** One important part of this course will be learning how to give feedback on others’ writing. You will do this during five in-class workshops this semester. In preparation for our first workshop on January 16<sup>th</sup>, you will develop **outlines** of peer critiques (due on CTools by midnight on Sunday, January 13<sup>th</sup>) in response to two sample essays that I will provide for you. We will also hold workshops focusing on drafts of the assigned essays; you will write **one-page critiques** for each of your workshop group members.
- (b) **Attendance and Participation in Other Classroom Activities (10%)**

**Essays (70%):**

You will submit two drafts of each essay. *Outlines do not count as drafts.* You will submit drafts of your essays both electronically (on CTools) and in person (to your group members). Paper copies of the first draft will be distributed to peer reviewers for feedback, and we will spend time in class discussing this peer feedback. You should revise your initial draft and submit the second draft for a grade from me. In addition, during full-class workshops, we will all give feedback to students based on excerpts of their essay drafts. *You may revise the final graded version of one essay and submit it a second time on or before the April 16<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 PM. If you choose to do this, you must include a one-page statement of your goals for the revision and justification of the changes made. Your grade for the revised essay will replace the original grade.*

**Formatting:** Essays should have 1-inch margins and should be typed, double spaced, and in Times New Roman, 12 pt. font. Include your name, the date, and the name of the assignment in the upper right-hand corner. Please insert page numbers and staple anything over two pages.

The Sweetland Writing Center is an excellent resource for students. You might find it helpful to visit Sweetland while you are revising drafts of essays for this class. More information is available at <http://cms.lsa.umich.edu/swc/>.

**Essay #1: Origin Stories of Racial Identity (3-4 pages/ 15 points)**

*When did you first become aware of your racial or ethnic identity? How did you learn that race and ethnicity ‘matter’? In this essay, you will describe one incident or experience that illustrates how you became aware of the salience of race or ethnicity in your own life. Then, reflect on this story given what you have learned in class over the last few weeks.*

**Essay #2: Constructing Arguments about Gender Identity (3-4 pages/ 15 points):**

*During the week of February 4<sup>th</sup>, we will read about the ways in which people think of gender as an “essential” or “natural” characteristic, as opposed to a facet of identity that develops in response to social influence. For this essay, you will do three things: (1) argue for or against social construction as **the primary explanation** for gender identity, (2) describe **a view that opposes, contradicts, or challenges your position**, and (3) construct a conclusion that accounts for the strengths of both points of view.*

**Essay #3: Balancing Competing Identities in a Social Context (4-6 pages/ 20 points):**

*Reflecting on one of the course readings or films, describe two different identities held by the author or one of the main characters. Explain how this person has responded to the social pressures and expectations of each identity. Then, reflect on the factors of the social environment might make it easier or more difficult for this person to fully engage with both aspects of his or her self.*

**Essay #4: Application & Analysis (4-6 pages/ 20 points)**

*Choose a film from a list to be provided in class. First, using course readings, describe how one character demonstrates aspects of at least two of the following: racial, ethnic, gender, and/or sexual identity. Next, consider how that character’s identities intersect with, or relate to, each other. Finally, identify how you would change the film in order to help the audience to better understand the character as a whole person with intersecting identities.*

**Staying Organized in this Class:**

There are multiple deadlines and methods of turning in assignments for this class. Planning ahead will help you to keep up with the course requirements. Here are a few reminders and instructions to help:

1. **Check the due date and time as well as the format for each assignment.** For example, some assignments need to be posted on CTools, and these due dates are generally on Tuesdays and Fridays at noon or midnight. In addition, some assignments involve bringing one or more paper copies with you to class.
2. **Using CTools:**
  - **Reaction Papers and Responses** should all be posted in the *Forum* section of CTools. All students will have access to your postings in this section. **To post a Reaction Paper**, follow these instructions: After you have written your Reaction Paper (remember – you will write just one reaction paper this semester), go to the *Forum* section of CTools and click on the author's name or title of the article (in blue font). Post your Reaction Paper by choosing "Post New Thread" near the top left of the screen (just below the bar that says "Forum." Upload your reaction paper as an attachment in this new thread. (Choose "Add Attachment," then "Browse," and then "Continue.") Finally (this is important!), choose "Post Message." **To post a Response**, follow these instructions: First, read the reaction paper by clicking on the author's name or title of the article (in blue font) and then downloading the attached reaction paper. Next, post your response by choosing "Reply" near the top right of the box with the reaction paper attachment. Type your response in the text box, and then choose "Post Message." **For both Reaction Paper and Response postings, see the Côté posting for an example of the correct format.**
  - **Peer Critiques and Essay Drafts** should generally be posted in the *Assignments* section of CTools. Only the instructor will have access to your postings in this section.
  - **Essay Excerpts** submitted for full class workshops should be submitted in the *Resources* section of CTools. This is because these excerpts will serve as the assigned reading for the rest of the class, in preparation for our workshop.

## Schedule of Events:

Date	Topic/Subtopic	Readings (most assignments posted on CTools)	Homework Due
7-Jan (M)	<b>Part I: Introduction</b>		
9-Jan (W)	/Intro to Identity	Côté, J. (2005)  Kroger, J. (2000)	<b>Bring readings to class</b> - also, bring your notes on the readings
14-Jan (M)	/Intro to Peer Critique	Sample Essays (2)  <i>The Everyday Writer (EDW)</i> ("Broad Content Issues," & "The Twenty Most Common Errors")	<b>Two Critique Outlines</b> (1 page each): (by midnight Sunday on CTools: <u>Assignments</u> ) + bring 1 copy of each to class
16-Jan (W)	<b>Part II: Racial &amp; Ethnic Identities</b> /Defining Race & Ethnicity	DuBois, W.E.B. (1903). <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i> [excerpts]  "White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack"  <i>EDW</i> ("Exploring Ideas" & "Drafting")	<b>Reaction Papers</b> (by noon Tuesday on CTools: <u>Forum</u> ) <b>&amp; Responses</b> (by midnight Tuesday night on CTools: <u>Forum</u> )
21-Jan (M)	No Class - MLK Day	Yip, Seaton, & Sellers (2006)  Sneed, Schwartz, & Cross (2006)	<b>Reaction Papers</b> (by noon Sunday on CTools: <u>Forum</u> ) <b>&amp; Responses</b> (by midnight Sunday night on CTools: <u>Forum</u> )
23-Jan (W)	/Psychological Research on Racial & Ethnic Identities	Review Yip, Seaton, & Sellers (2006) and Sneed, Schwartz, & Cross (2006)	<b>Essay #1 Draft Due</b> (By midnight Tuesday on CTools: <u>Assignments</u> ) + Bring 3 paper copies to class for group members
28-Jan (M)	<b>Workshop: Peer Groups</b>	Peer Essay Drafts  <i>EDW</i> ("Revising & Editing")	<b>Peer Critiques (1 page each)</b> (By midnight Sunday on CTools: <u>Assignments</u> ) + Bring paper copies for group members
29-Jan (Tu)	Showing of "Ma Vie en Rose": TBA		
30-Jan (W)	<b>Part III: Gender Identities</b>	"Ma Vie en Rose" (Film)  Chapter on essentializing & naturalizing theories of gender	<b>Reaction Papers</b> (by noon Tuesday on CTools: <u>Forum</u> ) <b>&amp; Responses</b> (by midnight Tuesday night on CTools: <u>Forum</u> )

Date	Topic/Subtopic	Readings (most assignments posted on CTools)	Homework Due
3-Feb (Su)			<b>Essay #1</b> (Due by noon on CTools: <i>Assignments</i> )
4-Feb (M)	/Gender Identity Development	Chapter on the social construction of gender  "X: A fabulous child's story"	<b>Reaction Papers</b> (by noon Sunday on CTools: <i>Forum</i> ) <b>&amp; Responses</b> (by midnight Sunday night on CTools: <i>Forum</i> )
5-Feb (Tu)	Showing of "Whale Rider": TBA		
6-Feb (W)	/Femininities	"Whale Rider" (Film)  EDW ("Constructing Arguments")	<b>Reaction Papers</b> (by noon Tuesday on CTools: <i>Forum</i> ) <b>&amp; Responses</b> (by midnight Tuesday night on CTools: <i>Forum</i> )
10-Feb (Su)			<b>Essay #2 Excerpts: Opening Paragraphs - Group A Only -</b> (Due by 6pm on CTools: <i>Resources</i> )
11-Feb (M)	/Femininities & Masculinities	Burns (2005)  [in-class viewing of "Tough Guise"]	<b>Reaction Papers</b> (by noon Tuesday on CTools: <i>Forum</i> ) <b>&amp; Responses</b> (by midnight Tuesday night on CTools: <i>Forum</i> )
13-Feb (W)	<b>Workshop: Whole Class</b>	Essay Excerpts (Group A: Opening Paragraphs of Essay #2)  EDW ("Organization & Presentation")	
15-Feb (F)			<b>Essay #2 Draft Due</b> (By midnight Friday on CTools: <i>Assignments</i> ) + Email to group members
18-Feb (M)	<b>Workshop: Peer Groups</b>	Peer Essay Drafts  EDW ("Writing & Its Rhetorical Situations")	<b>Peer Critiques (1 page each)</b> (By midnight Sunday on CTools: <i>Assignments</i> ) + Bring paper copies for group members
19-Feb (Tu)	Showing of "8		

Date	Topic/Subtopic	Readings (most assignments posted on CTools)	Homework Due
	"8 Mile": TBA		
<b>20-Feb (W)</b>	/Masculinities	"8 Mile" (Film)  Gender, race, & ethnicity narrative (TBA)	<b>Reaction Papers</b> (by noon Tuesday on CTools: <i>Forum</i> ) <b>&amp; Responses</b> (by midnight Tuesday night on CTools: <i>Forum</i> )
<b>24-Feb (Su)</b>			<b>Essay #2</b> (Due by midnight Sunday on CTools: <i>Assignments</i> )
<b>25-27 Feb</b>	<b>Spring Break</b>	Read whatever you want to read, or catch up on sleep. ☺	None ☺
<b>3-Mar (M)</b>	/Intro to Intersectionality	Alice Walker essay  Stewart & McDermott (2004; pp. 531-537 ONLY)	<b>Reaction Papers</b> (by noon Sunday on CTools: <i>Forum</i> ) <b>&amp; Responses</b> (by midnight Sunday night on CTools: <i>Forum</i> )
<b>5-Mar (W)</b>	/Masculinities	<i>EDW</i> ("Constructing Strong Paragraphs") [in-class viewing of "Malcom X" (excerpts)]	
<b>7-Mar (F)</b>			<b>GROUP B: Essay #3 Excerpt Due</b> (By midnight Friday on CTools: <i>Resources/Readings</i> )
<b>10-Mar (M)</b>	<b>Workshop: Whole Class</b>	Essay Excerpts (Group B: Section of Essay #3)  <i>EDW</i> ("Constructing Strong Paragraphs")	
<b>11-Mar (Tu)</b>	Showing of "TransAmerica":		
<b>12-Mar (W)</b>	/Transgender Identities	"TransAmerica" (Film)  <i>EDW</i> ("Pronouns," "Writing to the World," "Language That Builds Common Ground")  Special Guest in Class: Dr. Martha Vicinus	<b>Reaction Papers</b> (by noon Tuesday on CTools: <i>Forum</i> ) <b>&amp; Responses (last option for #3)</b> (by midnight Tuesday night on CTools: <i>Forum</i> )
<b>14-Mar (F)</b>			<b>Essay #3 Draft Due</b> (By midnight Friday on CTools: <i>Assignments</i> ) + Email to group members
<b>17-Mar (M)</b>	<b>Student Conferences</b> (1/2 of Class: Small-Group Workshops)	Peer Essay Drafts	<b>Peer Critiques (½ - 1 page each)</b> (By midnight Sunday on CTools: <i>Assignments</i> ) + Bring paper copies with feedback written in the margins
<b>18-Mar(Tu)</b>	<b>Student Conf.</b>		
<b>19-Mar (W)</b>	<b>Student Conf.</b>		

Date	Topic/Subtopic	Readings (most assignments posted on CTools)	Homework Due
	(1/2 of Class: Small-Group Workshops)		
23-Mar (Su)			<b>Essay #3</b> (Due by midnight Sunday on CTools: <u>Assignments</u> )
24-Mar (M)	<b>Part IV: Sexual Identities</b>	Konik & Stewart (2004)	<b>Reaction Papers</b> (by noon Sunday on CTools: <u>Forum</u> ) <b>&amp; Responses</b> (by midnight Sunday night on CTools: <u>Forum</u> )
26-Mar (W)	/Heteronormativity	None	
31-Mar (M)	/Intersections of Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Class, & Sexuality	"Chicana lesbians: Fear and loathing in the Chicano community"  Park, C.A., et al (1999)	<b>Reaction Papers</b> (by noon Sunday on CTools: <u>Forum</u> ) <b>&amp; Responses</b> (by midnight Sunday night on CTools: <u>Forum</u> )
1-Apr (Tu)	Showing of "Y Tu Mama Tambien": 8:00PM, G463 Mason		
2-Apr (W)	/Race, Ethnicity, & Sexuality	"Y Tu Mama Tambien" (Film)  Narrative on sexuality (Webpage/ class handout from Monday, March 24 <sup>th</sup> )  <i>EDW</i> (Chpts. 22 & 27: "Coordination & Subordination" and "Sentence Variety")	<b>Reaction Papers</b> (by noon Tuesday on CTools: <u>Forum</u> ) <b>&amp; Responses</b> (by midnight Tuesday night on CTools: <u>Forum</u> )
4-Apr (F)			<b>GROUP C: Essay #4 Excerpt Due</b> (By noon Friday on CTools: <u>Resources/Readings</u> )
6-Apr (Su)			<b>Essay #4 Draft Due</b> (By midnight Sunday on CTools: <u>Assignments</u> ) + Email to group members
7-Apr (M)	<b>Workshop: Whole Class</b>	Essay Excerpts (Group C: Section of Essay #4)	
9-Apr (W)	<b>Workshop: Peer Groups</b>	Peer Essay Drafts	<b>Peer Critiques (½ - 1 page each)</b> (By 11:30AM Wednesday on CTools: <u>Assignments</u> ) + Bring paper copies with feedback written in the margins
9-Apr (W)	Film showing: TBA, 8:00PM		
13-Apr (Su)			<b>Essay #4 Final Draft Due</b> (By midnight Sunday on CTools)



Date	Topic/Subtopic	Readings (most assignments posted on CTools)	Homework Due
14-Apr (M)	Wrap-Up!	Film (Chutney Popcorn) and Reading (Gays in India)	<b>Reaction Papers</b> (by noon Friday on CTools: <i>Forum</i> ) <b>&amp; Responses</b> (by midnight Sunday night on CTools: <i>Forum</i> )
16-Apr (W)			<b>If you choose to revise one of            your earlier essays, be sure to            turn it in to me by Wednesday,            April 16th at 5:00pm (on            CTools: <i>Assignments</i>)</b>