

**Identity Politics 101<sup>\*†</sup>**  
Fall 2020  
MW 10 AM - 11:20 AM

Professor Hakeem Jefferson  
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Virtual Office Hours: By Appointment

**Course Overview:**

How do we understand the political choices citizens make? Why do Black and White Americans disagree so vehemently in their reactions to racially-charged incidents like officer-involved shootings? What explains disagreements over policies like welfare and immigration? How do we understand ethnic conflict, both in the United States and around the world? What explains our commitments to salient social groups? Under what conditions should we expect group members to join in solidarity with one another? When does solidarity break down? And what helps us make sense of this strange time we find ourselves in? Identity does that—or at least it does a lot of it.

But what is an identity? What are the conditions under which identities become politicized? How do identities work to structure attitudes and affect behavior? Over the course of the quarter, we will read a series of scholarly papers from across academic disciplines that provide some answers to these important questions. By the end of our time together, I hope to convince you that all politics is identity politics, and that identity—in all of its complexity—is a thing worth thinking rigorously about.

**Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:**

Through active engagement with and successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Think in sophisticated ways about the meaningfulness of identity across a range of domains, including, but not limited to, politics.
- Develop skills to read, synthesize, and critique scholarly texts about identity.
- Ask theoretically-driven research questions related to identity and politics.
- Analyze complex social and political phenomenon using concepts and ideas from various literatures related to identity.
- Describe the conditions under which identity motivates conflict and inspires solidarity.
- Recognize aspects of political messages that leverage or exploit various aspects of identity.
- Reflect on class content and engage peers, family members, friends, and others in thoughtful dialogue about the role identity plays in affecting all aspects of human existence.

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\* Updated 9/10/2020

† Thanks to Stanford's Center for Teaching and Learning for providing assistance in creating this syllabus. Reading schedule and assignments subject to change.

## Course Expectations

I expect that each of us will engage course material carefully and come to each seminar meeting prepared to discuss them. I expect that we will do more than skim the readings assigned, and that we will each come having taken notes about those aspects of the readings that stood out, resonated with us, or raised new questions to consider. In short, I expect that we will engage all course material as scholars, with an eye toward becoming more sophisticated thinkers about the role that identity plays in all domains of life. It is also my expectation that we will all remain open to having our ideas challenged and that we will engage each other respectfully even, and especially, when we disagree. And given the nature of the course, I want to note that none of us has the right to monopolize discussion or to create an environment in which others feel that they cannot contribute to our conversations. And though I will strive to create a welcoming and relaxed environment that is conducive to the free exchange of ideas, disrespectful and demeaning behavior from any member of our classroom community will not be tolerated. I also want to note that, although this is a class about politics, the course should look nothing like what we see on cable TV. We will strive to be smarter, more thoughtful, and a lot more nuanced than that.

## A Note on the Times

These are *hard* times for all of us. This is truer for some of us than it is for others. There are undoubtedly those whose home situations make it challenging to be as invested in the course as would be the case if we were all back on campus. Know that I understand this and will be as accommodating as possible on all fronts. Given the nature of this course, I do expect that you will show up for our time together and that you will be prepared each time we meet, but I also understand that none of us can predict, with any certainty, what tomorrow may bring in this dumpster fire of a moment we find ourselves in. **Your well-being is my top priority.** If you need anything as we move throughout the quarter, please let me know. I can't be helpful if I don't know there is a problem, and I want to be as helpful as I can be.

## Course Structure:

This course will be facilitated entirely online through Canvas. Our Canvas website is: <https://canvas.stanford.edu/courses/126447>. Any suggested reading and other course material will be posted on Canvas. Announcements will also be made through the Canvas site, and any questions should be posted to the Discussions tab. All assignments should be submitted via the Canvas Assignments tab.

Seminar: Our class will meet virtually Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:00-11:20 AM on Zoom. The seminar will be almost entirely discussion based, with mini-lectures built in, as necessary, to introduce important concepts and ideas. Given the discussion-based nature of the course, I do not plan to record sessions, but we will discuss this at the start of the quarter. The very strong expectation is that students will attend all sessions, barring some emergency. Students who cannot commit to attending all sessions of the course should consider applying to take the course another time.

## **Course Privacy Statement:**

As noted in the University's [recording and broadcasting courses policy](#), students may not audio or video record class meetings without permission from the instructor (and guest speakers, when applicable). If the instructor grants permission or if the teaching team posts videos themselves, students may keep recordings only for personal use and may not post recordings on the Internet, or otherwise distribute them. These policies protect the privacy rights of instructors and students, and the intellectual property and other rights of the university. Students who need lectures recorded for the purposes of an academic accommodation should contact the [Office of Accessible Education](#).

## **Technology:**

It is required that you have a device that connects to the internet so that you can access email, Canvas, and Zoom. All course details and materials will be posted on our Canvas course site and all class meetings will occur in Zoom. Please download Zoom and follow [these instructions](#) to help you get set up. **It is important that you do not share our course Zoom links or meeting passwords with anyone outside of our course to protect the privacy of everyone in attendance.**

Because we are going to be in conversation with each other throughout the course, I ask that you keep your video turned on throughout our meetings. It's simply easier to have discussions when we can see and hear each other. I understand, however, that, for a range of reasons, some may feel less comfortable keeping video on, or various technology issues may prevent you from having video during a given session. That's ok. I encourage us to have video on as the default, but trust that you will make the decision that works best for you. And, of course, feel free to turn your video off if you need to step away or take a short break.

## **What You Can Expect from Me:**

I am excited to teach this course and you can expect that I will bring that enthusiasm to our conversations. You can also expect that I will strive to create an inclusive and welcoming space for all students, regardless of their background, their beliefs, or their politics. Like all of you, I come to this class with my own set of identities and experiences in the world. They are no more or less valuable than the identities and experiences you bring to the table. You can expect that I will speak honestly and forthrightly with you about what I believe, but that I will strive to keep our focus on what matters: learning about identity in all of its complexity. As former students will tell you, I do have high expectations for all of my students, but you can expect that I will communicate my expectations clearly and that I will fairly evaluate your assignments and your contributions to the seminar. You can also expect that I will prioritize your well-being, and that I will be responsive to concerns you raise. And you should feel empowered to raise concerns when they arise. You can also expect that I will respect you and treat you as a full partner as learn together this quarter. I am eager to get to know you and encourage you to schedule some time to chat with me.

The best way to reach me is by email ([hakeem@stanford.edu](mailto:hakeem@stanford.edu)). You can expect a response within 24-48 hours, depending on the nature of the inquiry. If I fail to respond within 48 hours, please resend the email.

### **What I Expect from You:**

I am tired of Zoom, too, but this is the hand we have been dealt. If you're like me, you will be tempted to distract yourself with other tasks during our online meetings. Push against that temptation. I expect you to be fully engaged for the 80 minutes we'll spend together each meeting. Free riding will not be tolerated and students who fail to engage meaningfully in seminar discussions will do poorly in the course. Each of you is expected to come to seminar having read the material *closely*—prepared to answer key questions about the text and its relevance to on-going discussions and debates. Some readings will be tougher to get through than others, but I expect that you will engage each reading carefully, and that you will come to our seminar with comments AND questions about the material. I also know that online spaces can be a bit weird. In particular, it is easy to forget that there are real people in those Zoom boxes. Let's not forget that as we engage each other this quarter. We really never know what other folks are dealing with, so our default position should be compassion and respect. I also expect that you will communicate with me about your needs, so don't hesitate to email me or set up a meeting if you need help. I expect this course will challenge you, but I also think each of you is up for the challenge.

### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:**

The diversity of this seminar will prove to be one of its greatest strengths. You come from various backgrounds and represent a wide array of identities—some that I don't even know about yet, having read your statements of interest. We're going to read and discuss a lot of material that bears on these various identities, and I expect that we will do this respectfully and with care. I also want to acknowledge that it is likely that there is diversity of access to resources among students and plan to support all of you as best as I can. I will always strive to be attentive to these diverse needs, but will undoubtedly fall short on occasion. Don't hesitate to reach out and let me know how I can better meet your needs or the needs of others in the class. In addition, if any of our class meetings conflict with your religious events, please let me know so that I can make arrangements for you.

You also have a right to be referred to in accordance with your personal identity. Please indicate the name that you prefer to be called and, if you choose, the pronouns with which you would like to be addressed.

### **Support Services:**

This COVID-19 pandemic and the vicarious experience of racial violence have caused a great deal of stress for many of us. In addition, you may experience a range of other challenges that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce your ability to participate in daily life. Stanford is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services

are available. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus here <https://vaden.stanford.edu/caps-and-wellness/counseling-and-psychological-services-caps>

### **Hume Writing Center:**

Communicating well takes hard work and lots of practice. As you hone your skills as a writer and as a presenter, I encourage you to check out the services offered by the Hume Writing Center. The Hume Center for Writing and Speaking supports the written and oral communication of all Stanford students. In free one-to-one sessions, trained tutors help students get started on assignments; understand academic conventions in their fields; address and overcome writer's block and speech anxiety; learn strategies for revising, editing, and proofreading; and refine their written and oral delivery. Students may bring work in any genre, including assignments for writing projects or presentations in the major, PWR, IntroSem or Thinking Matters courses, multimedia projects such as websites or PowerPoints, Honors theses, creative projects, or fellowship or job applications.

### **The Honor Code:**

I have a zero-tolerance policy for academic integrity violations. It is expected that you and I will follow Stanford's Honor Code in all matters relating to this online course. You are encouraged to virtually meet and exchange ideas with your classmates while studying and working on homework assignments, but you are individually responsible for your own work and for understanding the material. You are not permitted to copy or otherwise reference another student's homework or computer code. Compromising your academic integrity may lead to serious consequences, including (but not limited to) one or more of the following: failure of the assignment, failure of the course, disciplinary probation, suspension from the university, or dismissal from the university.

You, as students, are responsible for understanding the University's Honor Code policy and must make proper use of citations of sources for writing papers, creating, presenting, and performing their work, taking examinations, and doing research. For tips on how to uphold the honor code in an online learning environment, read [these recommendations](#). If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact me.

### **Academic Accommodation:**

Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the OAE as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066, URL: <http://oe.stanford.edu>).

### **How You Will be Evaluated as a Student:**

As you may know, for this academic year, Stanford is requiring that faculty offer students to take courses for a letter grade or for Credit/No Credit. Regardless of what option you choose, I will grade all assignments fairly and students will know where they stand by the deadline at which students must decide their grading preference. Also, regardless of the grading option you choose, you are expected to complete all assignments, and failure to do so will result in a grade of zero for that assignment. According to the university's guidelines, a student must receive a grade of C- or better to receive a "satisfactory" grade for a course. *All* students are expected to fully participate in the full workings of the seminar and be contributing members of our classroom community.

**Assessments will include the following:**

*Seminar participation (30 points)*

You are expected to come to class having read course material carefully. You should be ready to engage fully in seminar discussions, which includes commenting and raising questions that help clarify concepts and ideas discussed in the assigned readings or in other assigned material. Excellent seminar participation is not simply about the quantity of your engagement, but the quality of that engagement. If, for some reason, you do not think you will be able to fully participate in a particular seminar, please alert me ahead of time via email. **Each student is allowed one seminar absence, no questions asked.** For each absence beyond the first, students will lose 2 seminar participation points/per absence.

*Class assignments (30 points)*

Throughout the syllabus, you will note that there are various assignments that you should complete before class, unless a specific date and time is noted. For those assignments that are scheduled to be completed before class, you should upload them to Canvas by 9pm Pacific Time the evening before our seminar meeting. These assignments provide you an opportunity to reflect, sometimes in creative ways, on the material we cover in the course. Regardless of the assignment, your task is to demonstrate an understanding of concepts and ideas discussed in course material. Failure to seriously and thoughtfully engage course material in your assignments will result in poor performance in the course.

You will notice that you can receive varying numbers of points for assignments over the course of the quarter. If I have done my math correctly, there should be 35 points worth of assignments on the syllabus. This means that there is a wee bit of flexibility built in to account for the possibility that you simply won't be able to get to one assignment or may not have the bandwidth to focus as carefully on a given assignment. In addition to assignments listed throughout the syllabus, students can receive up to 2 assignment points for providing supplementary material on the "Living Syllabus," provided at the following link: <https://rb.gy/0bpupa>. For each session, students are invited to add links to other material (e.g., readings, Instagram posts, tweets, magazine articles, films, etc.) that help to supplement those readings already assigned. This material should be included on the Google Doc under *Student Suggested Material*. There is no requirement to do this, but I think it will help make the course more interesting and ensure that it better reflects our collective interests and experiences. Even after you've received your 2 points, feel free to continue adding to the syllabus.

*Discussion leader (10 points)*

Each student will serve as a discussion leader for one seminar meeting. Because of the number of students in the seminar, there will be occasions when more than one student is assigned to a particular session. Your job as the discussion leader is to highlight and briefly summarize the key points of the readings and to highlight those aspects of the readings that stood out to you and questions that remain having read the texts. It is also useful to consider your role as helping us better understand concepts and ideas covered in the texts by connecting the reading to some issue or topic relevant to politics today. Think of your role as helping to kick off the conversation for the day. You should plan to speak for 5-7 minutes at the start of the seminar meeting you are assigned. When more than one student is assigned for the day, students should work together to divide responsibilities and each student should demonstrate that they have read and engaged the readings and assigned material carefully.

*Final Presentation (30 points)*

By the time the end of the quarter gets here, we will have had quite a time together. For your final presentation, you are tasked with teaching some concept or idea you learned in the course to us, your public audience. You can choose to teach us in whatever way you decide, but it must be in a format that is accessible to folks who haven't spent all quarter in our course. You can choose to write a popular essay, for example, or you might choose to create a magazine article, a podcast episode, or a video. Again, whatever method you choose, the objective is the same: teach us something. A rubric for this assignment will be provided, but excellent products will demonstrate a command of some concept covered in the course, be well executed, and legible to those outside the course.

**Course Materials:**

Jardina, Ashley. White Identity Politics (Available online via Stanford Library)

Additional readings available on course Canvas site, unless otherwise stated

**Course Schedule:**

M 9/14      **Introduction and Course Overview**

Reading to be completed before class

Fukuyama, "Against Identity Politics"

Abrams, "Identity Politics Strengthens Democracy"

Assignments to be completed before class

Read the syllabus in full

Write brief introduction of yourself on Canvas by 9pm Sunday, Sept. 13 (2 pts)

W 9/16      **What is Identity?**

Reading to be completed before class

Fearon, “What is Identity (as we now use the word?)”

Assignment to be completed before class

Using Fearon’s essay as a guide, answer the following question *in your own words*: “What is identity?” Note, I’m not interested in a summary of Fearon’s text (I’ve read it). I’m asking, having read Fearon’s essay, how might you describe “identity” to some alien who comes to earth and asks, “What is identity?” Feel free to be creative in how you respond to the alien’s question but be sure to answer the question! (500 words—5 pts)

*Student suggested material:*

**M 9/21      The Social Self: Social Identity Theory**

Reading to be completed before class

Tajfel and Turner, “The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior”

Assignment to be completed before class

No assignment due. Just read Tajfel and Turner very carefully with an eye toward the key insights we can take away from the theory? What stands out as important? What’s confusing? Come to seminar ready to discuss.

*Student suggested material:*

**W 9/23      The Social Self: Stereotypes and Self-Categorization Theory**

Reading to be completed before class

Hogg and Turner, “Intergroup Behaviour, Self-Stereotyping and the Salience of Social Categories”

Wilkins and Rieck, “Detecting Racial Identification: The Role of Phenotypic Prototypicality”

Assignment to be completed by Friday 9/25

Write a blog post describing to your “followers” the key insights of social identity theory and how you think it can help us understand some feature of politics today. (500 words—5 points)

*Student suggested material:*

**M 9/28      The Political Consequences of Group Identification**

Reading to be completed before class

McClain et al., “Group Membership, Group Identity, and Group Consciousness: Measures of Racial Identity in American Politics.” (Skim—I’ll provide a mini lecture on these concepts)

White, Laird, and Allen, “Selling Out?: The Politics of Navigating Conflicts Between Racial Group Interest and Self-Interest.”

No Assignment due before class. In reading White, Laird, and Allen, consider the following question: What do the authors argue is the glue that keeps so many African Americans attached to the Democratic Party?

*Student suggested material:*

W 9/30      **The Political Consequences of Group Identification (Continued)**

Reading to be completed before class

Egan, “Group Cohesion without Group Mobilization: The Case of Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals.”

Listen to the podcast: “From Stonewall to the Present, Fifty Years of L.G.B.T.Q. Rights” From the New Yorker Radio Hour (<http://www.wnycstudios.org/story/stonewall-present-fifty-years-lgbtq-rights/>)

Assignment due by Friday, 10/2 at noon

Reflecting on the readings and podcast from the week, consider the role that experiences of discrimination play in politicizing identity. What do you think will happen as conditions improve for minoritized identity groups? Should we expect that members of these minoritized groups will see themselves less as a collective with shared political aims? Why or why not? (500 words—5 points)

*Student suggested material:*

M 10/5      **“Dominant” Groups Have Identities, Too**

Reading to be completed before class

Jardina, *White Identity Politics*, Chapters 1-5

No Assignment due before class.

*Student suggested material:*

W 10/7

Reading to be completed before class

Jardina, *White Identity Politics*, Chapters 6-9

Illing, “White Identity Politics is about More Than Racism” (Optional)

Assignment due by Friday, 10/9

Construct a “tweet thread” describing the main findings of Jardina’s *White Identity Politics*. The tweet thread can have no more than 5 tweets and each tweet must adhere to the 280 Twitter character limit. Feel free to use links or images in your tweets. (3 points)

*Student suggested material:*

M 10/12      **Indigenous Peoples’ Day**

Reading to be completed before class

Beauvais, “The Political Consequences of Indigenous Resentment”

*Student suggested material:*

W 10/14      **Identities and Intergroup Conflict**

Reading to be completed before class

Kinder and Sanders, *Divided by Color* (Chapter 5)

Tesler, “Views about Race Mattered More in Electing Trump than in Electing Obama”

No assignment due before class.

*Student suggested material:*

M 10/19      **Identities and Intergroup Conflict (Continued)**

Reading to be completed before class

Blumer, “Race Prejudice as a Sense of Group Position”

Mousa, “Building Social Cohesion between Christians and Muslims Through Soccer in Post-ISIS Iraq”

Assignment to be completed before class

React to Mousa’s experimental study? What stood out to you about the design of the study as it relates to Mousa’s attempt to examine the effectiveness of contact? What questions remain for you after having read the paper? What research ideas did the study inspire for you? (500 words—5 points)

*Student suggested material:*

W 10/21      **Prosocial Emotions**

Reading to be completed before class

Chudy, Piston, Shipper, “Guilt by Association: White Collective Guilt in American Politics”

Chudy, “Racial Sympathy and Its Political Consequences”

No assignment due before class.

*Student suggested material:*

M 10/26      **Stigma**

Reading to be completed before class

Major and O'Brien, "The Social Psychology of Stigma"

Jefferson, "Respectability and the Politics of Punishment among Black Americans"

No assignment due before class.

*Student suggested material:*

W 10/28      **Racial Fluidity**

Reading to be completed before class

Davenport, "The Role of Gender, Class, and Religion in Biracial Americans' Racial Labeling Decisions"

Saperstein and Penner, "Racial Fluidity and Inequality in the United States"

Assignment to be completed before class

Talk with a friend or family member about the readings and write a brief summary of how that conversation went. Be prepared to share in discussion. (500 words—5 points)

*Student suggested material:*

M 11/2      **Democracy Day**

Reading to be completed before class

Bartels, "Ethnic Antagonism Erodes Republicans' Commitment to Democracy"

Valentino and Neuner, "Why the Sky Didn't Fall: Mobilizing Anger in Reaction to Voter ID Laws"

Assignment to be completed before class

Be sure you have a plan to vote, if you have not already voted!

*Student suggested material:*

W 11/4      **Election Day Recovery Day (No Class)**

M 11/9      **Conversation about the Election and Role of Identity in Election Outcome**

Reading TBD

Assignment to be completed before class

Reflect on the outcome of the election and what you think it tells us about the role of identity in American politics (500 words—5 pts)

*Student suggested material:*

W 11/11      **Identity and Inequality**

Reading to be completed before class

Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color”

Jefferson, Neuner, and Pasek, “Seeing Blue in Black and White: Race and Reactions to Officer-Involved Shootings”

No assignment due before class.

*Student suggested material:*

M 11/16      **Student Presentations**

W 11/18      **Student Presentations**