

Spring 2016

Psychology 455 - Honours Seminar in Social Psychology:
Personal Identity and Autobiographical Memory

Seminar time and location: Tuesdays 1:00 pm to 2:50 pm in PAS 4032

Instructor: Richard Eibach, **Office:** PAS 3053,

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Office hours: Thursdays, 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm, and by appointment

Course description

How are people able to maintain a sense of personal identity continuity in the face of the dramatic physical and psychological transformations that they experience during their lives? In this seminar we will examine the various ways that people draw on memories of personal experiences to construct coherent identities and build a sense of meaning in their lives. Readings and discussions will explore how self-theories and present identity needs influence people to reconstruct memories for events in their lives. We will cover a number of topics such as: the role of nostalgia in connecting people to past meaningful events, how friends and family members co-construct meaning from events in their lives, how perceiving a contrast between their past and present selves can help people break from criminal activities, how developing a politicized identity narrative can fuel social activism, the role that disruptions of autobiographical memory might play in psychological disorders such as schizophrenia, and the function of "coming out" narratives in managing stigmatized identities.

Prerequisite courses: PSYCH 253/253R (or 220R); PSYCH 391

Required reading

Each week we will read and discuss approximately 4 articles from the published literature on personal identity and autobiographical memory processes. The assigned readings will be available for downloading from the course webpage on LEARN.

Summary of evaluation

Class participation – 20%

Research reflection papers (2) – 20% each

Narrative interview case study – 40%

Class participation: (20% grade): Grading will be based on regular attendance of class meetings and active participation in seminar discussions. Active participation requires that you come to class prepared to engage in thoughtful discussion of the assigned readings. You thus should have read and reflected on the assigned readings before the seminar meeting. To facilitate discussion you should bring copies of the assigned readings with you to class along with any relevant notes that you may have taken. Note that you might be randomly called on to provide a brief explanation of the study design or key results of a study in one of the assigned readings.

Research reflection papers (20% each): You will submit two brief (approximately 2 page) research reflection papers in which you propose an original study to test a hypothesis related to one or more of the assigned readings discussed in the preceding weeks. Each paper should have a clear statement of your hypothesis and a description of a proposed study designed to test your hypothesis. Your proposed study should be related to the work we examined in the seminar. For example you might propose a study to test an alternative explanation of one of the research findings; or you might propose a study that will examine an unexplored boundary condition of an effect documented in one of the papers that we reviewed; or you might propose a study that tests how a given research finding might be used to design a practical application or clinical intervention. Grading will be based on the originality of your analysis and the quality of your insights into research methodologies.

Narrative interview case study (40%): You will conduct a narrative interview with an older adult acquaintance in which you will ask them to reflect on the biggest social change that they experienced in their lifetime and then to describe a memory of one event that illustrates how that social change personally impacted their life. After conducting the interview you will write a detailed account of your interviewee's reflections and then analyze any relevant identity-related themes, accommodation patterns, or indications of psychological change that you noted in their narrative and relate these to theory and research findings discussed in the course. You will also reflect on your own perspective as an interviewer, exploring how you responded to your interviewee's reflections and what role if any your identity and responses may have played in shaping their account. Your final paper should be approximately 8 pages long. Detailed instructions and guidelines for this assignment will be provided later in the term. Note that there will be a few additional reading assignments to provide background on narrative interviewing and case study methodologies. The case study paper is due by August 2.

Schedule of reading assignments and research reflection papers

May 3: Organizational meeting

May 10: Constructing past and future selves

- Ross, M. (1989). Relation of implicit theories to the construction of personal histories. *Psychological Review*, 96(2), 341-357. doi:10.1037//0033-295X.96.2.341
- Wilson, A. E., & Ross, M. (2001). From chump to champ: People's appraisals of their earlier and present selves. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 80(4), 572-584. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.80.4.572
- Quoidbach, J., Gilbert, D. T., & Wilson, T. D. (2013). The end of history illusion. *Science*, 339, 96-98.
- O'Brien, E. (2015). Mapping out past and future minds: The perceived trajectory of rationality versus emotionality over time. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 144, 624-638.

May 17: Self-continuity and the "true self"

- Strohminger, N., & Nichols, S. (2015). Neurodegeneration and identity. *Psychological Science*, 26(9), 1469-1479. doi:10.1177/0956797615592381
- Hershfield, H. E. (2011). Future self-continuity: How conceptions of the future self transform intertemporal choice. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1235, 30-43.
- Sedikides, C., Wildschut, T., Routledge, C., & Arndt, J. (2015). Nostalgia counteracts self-discontinuity and restores self-continuity. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 45(1), 52-61. doi:10.1002/ejsp.2073
- Schlegel, R., Hicks, J., King, L., & Arndt, J. (2011). Feeling like you know who you are: Perceived true self-knowledge and meaning in life. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 37(6), 745-756. doi:10.1177/0146167211400424

May 24: Autobiographical memory processes

- Klein, S. B., German, T. P., Cosmides, L., & Gabriel, R. (2004). A theory of autobiographical memory: Necessary components and disorders resulting from their loss. *Social Cognition*, 22, 460-490. doi: 10.1521/soco.22.5.460.50765
- Klein, S. B., & Nichols, S. (2012). Memory and the sense of personal identity. *Mind*, 121, 677-702. doi:10.1093/mind/fzs080
- Brown, N. R., & Schopflocher, D. (1998). Event clusters: An organization of personal events in autobiographical memory. *Psychological Science*, 9(6), 470-475. doi:10.1111/1467-9280.00087
- Rathbone, C., Moulin, C., & Conway, M. (2008). Self-centered memories: The reminiscence bump and the self. *Memory & Cognition*, 36(8), 1403-1414. doi:10.3758/MC.36.8.1403

May 31: Narratives of identity and change

- McAdams, D. P., & Bowman, P. J. (2001). Narrating life's turning points: Redemption and contamination. In McAdams, D. P., Josselson, R., & Lieblich, A. (Eds). *Turns in the road: Narrative studies of lives in transition*, (pp. 3-34). Washington, DC, US: American Psychological Association. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/10410-001>
- McAdams, D. P. (2013). Life authorship: A psychological challenge for emerging adulthood, as illustrated in two notable case studies. *Emerging Adulthood, 1*, 151-158. doi:10.1177/2167696813481774
- Adler, J. M. (2012). Living into the story: Agency and coherence in a longitudinal study of narrative identity development and mental health over the course of psychotherapy. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 102*(2), 367-389. doi:10.1037/a0025289
- McAdams, D. P., Hanek, K. J., & Dadabo, J. G. (2013). Themes of self-regulation and self-exploration in the life stories of religious American conservatives and liberals. *Political Psychology, 34*(2), 201-219. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9221.2012.00933.x

June 7: Relationships and the co-construction of identity narratives

- Fivush, R. (2010). Speaking silence: The social construction of silence in autobiographical and cultural narratives. *Memory, 18*(2), 88-98. doi:10.1080/09658210903029404
- McLean, K. C., & Jennings, L. E. (2012). Teens telling tales: How maternal and peer audiences support narrative identity development. *Journal of Adolescence, 35*(6), 1455-1469. doi:10.1016/j.adolescence.2011.12.005
- McLean, K. C., & Pasupathi, M. (2011). Old, new, borrowed, blue? the emergence and retention of personal meaning in autobiographical storytelling. *Journal of Personality, 79*(1), 135-164. doi:10.1111/j.1467-6494.2010.00676.x
- Coman, A., Manier, D., & Hirst, W. (2009). Forgetting the unforgettable through conversation: Socially shared retrieval induced forgetting of September 11 memories. *Psychological Science, 20*(5), 627-633. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9280.2009.02343.x

June 10: First research reflection due (covering readings up to and including June 7)

June 14: Possible selves, counterfactual selves, and meaning-making

- Kray, L. J., George, L. G., Liljenquist, K. A., Galinsky, A. D., Tetlock, P. E., & Roese, N. J. (2010). From what might have been to what must have been: Counterfactual thinking creates meaning. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 98*(1), 106-118. doi:10.1037/a0017905
- King, L. A., & Smith, N. G. (2004). Gay and straight possible selves: Goals, identity, subjective well-being, and personality development. *Journal of Personality, 72*(5), 967-994. doi:10.1111/j.0022-3506.2004.00287.x
- King, L. A., Scollon, C. K., Ramsey, C., & Williams, T. (2000). Stories of life transition: Subjective well-being and ego development in parents of children with Down Syndrome. *Journal of Research in Personality, 34*(4), 509-536. doi:10.1006/jrpe.2000.2285
- Oyserman, D., Bybee, D., & Terry, K. (2006). Possible selves and academic outcomes: How and when possible selves impel action. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 91*(1), 188-204. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.91.1.188

June 21: Collective memory processes and group narratives

- Hammack, P. (2006). Identity, conflict, and coexistence. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 21*(4), 323-369. doi:10.1177/0743558406289745
- Schuman, H., & Corning, A. (2014). Collective memory and autobiographical memory: Similar but not the same *Memory Studies 7*, 146-160. doi:10.1177/1750698013508196
- Peetz, J., Gunn, G., & Wilson, A. (2010). Crimes of the past: Defensive temporal distancing in the face of past in-group wrongdoing. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 36*(5), 598-611. doi:10.1177/0146167210364850

Gabriel, S., & Young, A. (2011). Becoming a vampire without being bitten: The narrative collective-assimilation hypothesis. *Psychological Science*, 22(8), 990-994. doi:10.1177/0956797611415541

June 28: Identity uncertainty, loss, and the quest for personal significance

Silva, J. M. (2012). Constructing adulthood in an age of uncertainty *American Sociological Review*, 77, 505-522. doi:10.1177/0003122412449014

Vandello, J. A., & Bosson, J. K. (2013). Hard won and easily lost: A review and synthesis of theory and research on precarious manhood. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, 14(2), 101-113. doi:10

Kruglanski, A. W., Gelfand, M. J., Bélanger, J. J., Sheveland, A., Hetiarachchi, M., & Gunaratna, R. (2014). The psychology of radicalization and deradicalization: How significance quest impacts violent extremism. *Political Psychology*, 35, 69-93. doi:10.1111/pops.12163.1037/a0029826

Shapira, H. (2013). From the nativist's point of view. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 54(1), 35-50. doi:10.1111/tsq.12007

July 5: Role of narrative in identity repair

Maruna, S. (2001). The rhetoric of redemption. In *Making good: How ex-convicts reform and rebuild their lives.*, (pp. 85-108). Washington, DC, US: American Psychological Association

Maruna, S. (2001). Mea culpa: Shame, blame, and the core self. Chapter in *Making good: How ex-convicts reform and rebuild their lives.*, (pp. 131-145). Washington, DC, US: American Psychological Association.

Landman, J. (2001). The crime, punishment, and ethical transformation of two radicals: Or how Katherine Power improves on Dostoevsky. In McAdams, D. P., Josselson, R., & Lieblich, A. (Eds). *Turns in the road: Narrative studies of lives in transition*, (pp. 35-66). Washington, DC, US: American Psychological Association.

Dunlop, W. L., & Tracy, J. L. (2013). Sobering stories: Narratives of self-redemption predict behavioral change and improved health among recovering alcoholics. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 104(3), 576-590. doi:10.1037/a0031185

July 12: Transformative experiences

Miller, W. R., & C'deBaca, J. (1994). Quantum change: Toward a psychology of transformation. Heatherton, T. F., Weinberger, J. L.(Eds), *Can personality change?* (pp. 253-280). Washington, DC, US: American Psychological Association.

McAdam, D. (1989). The biographical consequences of activism. *American Sociological Review*, 54(5), 744-760

Luhrmann, T. M. (2004). Metakinesis: How God becomes intimate in contemporary US Christianity *American Anthropologist*, 106(3), 518-528

Silva, J. M., & Pugh, A. J. (2010). Beyond the depleting model of parenting: Narratives of childrearing and change. *Sociological Inquiry*, 80, 605-627.

July 15: Second research reflection due (covering readings from June 14 through July 12)

July 19: Sexual and gender identity fluidity

Diamond, L. M. (2006). Careful what you ask for: Reconsidering feminist epistemology and autobiographical narrative in research on sexual identity development. *Signs*, 31, 471-491.

Diamond, L. M., & Butterworth, M. (2008). Questioning gender and sexual identity: Dynamic links over time. *Sex Roles*, 59(5-6), 365-376. doi:10.1007/s11199-008-9425-3

Schilt, K. (2006). Just one of the guys? How transmen make gender visible at work. *Gender and Society*, 20(4), 465-490. doi: 10.1177/0891243206288077

Davis, E. C. (2009). Situating "fluidity". *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 15(1), 97-130. doi:10.1215/10642684-2008-020

Accommodation for course requirements

Students requesting accommodation for course requirements (attending class, assignments, etc.) due to illness should do the following:

- seek medical treatment as soon as possible and obtain a completed uWaterloo [Verification of Illness Form](#)
- submit that form to the instructor within 48 hours.
- (is possible) inform the instructor by the due date for the course requirement that you will be unable to meet the deadline and that documentation will be forthcoming.

In the case of a missed assignment, the instructor will either:

1. waive the course component and re-weight remaining term work as he/she deems fit according to circumstances and the goals of the course, or
2. provide an extension.

In the case of bereavement, the instructor will provide similar accommodations to those for illness.

Appropriate documentation to support the request will be required.

Students who are experiencing extenuating circumstances should also inform their academic advisors regarding their personal difficulties.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Note for students with disabilities: The [AccessAbility Services](#) office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the [UWaterloo Academic Integrity webpage](#) and the [Arts Academic Integrity webpage](#) for more information.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Concerns About a Course Policy or Decision

Informal Stage. We in the Psychology Department take great pride in the high quality of our program and our instructors. Though infrequent, we know that students occasionally find themselves in situations of conflict with their instructors over course policies or grade assessments. If such a conflict arises, the Associate Chair for Undergraduate Studies (Richard Eibach) is available for consultation and to mediate a resolution between the student and instructor: Email: reibach@uwaterloo.ca; Ph 519-888-4567 ext. 38790

A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. See [Policy 70](#) and [72](#) below for further details.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances](#), Section 4. When in doubt, please be certain to contact Richard Eibach, the Associate Chair for Undergraduate Studies who will provide further assistance; reibach@uwaterloo.ca.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72 - Student Appeals](#).

Official version of the course outline. If there is a discrepancy between the hard copy outline (i.e., if students were provided with a hard copy at the first class) and the outline posted on LEARN, the outline on LEARN will be deemed the official version.

Research Experience Marks: Information and Guidelines

Experiential learning is considered an integral part of the undergraduate program in Psychology. Research participation is one example of this, article review is another. A number of undergraduate courses have been expanded to include opportunities for Psychology students to earn grades while gaining research experience.

Since experiential learning is highly valued, students may earn a **"bonus" grade of up to 4%** in this course through research experience. Course work will make up 100% of the final mark and a "bonus" of up to 4% may be earned and will be added to the final grade if/as needed to bring your final grade up to 100%.

The two options for earning research experience grades (participation in research and article review) are described below. Students may complete any combination of these options to earn research experience grades.

Option 1: Participation in Psychology Research Research participation is coordinated by the Research Experiences Group (REG). Psychology students may volunteer as research participants in lab and/or online (web-based) studies conducted by students and faculty in the Department of Psychology. Participation enables students to learn first-hand about psychology research and related concepts. Many students report that participation in research is both an educational and interesting experience. Please be assured that all Psychology studies have undergone prior ethics review and clearance through the Office of Research Ethics.

Educational focus of participation in research To maximize the educational benefits of participating in research, students will receive feedback information following their participation in each study detailing the following elements: 1) Purpose or objectives of the study, 2) Dependent and independent variables, 3) Expected results, 4) References for at least two related research articles, 5) Provisions to ensure confidentiality of data, 6) Contact information of the researcher should the student have further questions about the study, 7) Contact information for the Director of the Office of Research Ethics should the student wish to learn more about the general ethical issues surrounding research with human participants, or specific questions or concerns about the study in which s/he participated.

Participation in LAB studies has increment values of 0.5 participation credits (grade percentage points) for each 30-minutes of participation. Participation in ONLINE studies has increment values of .25 credits for each 15-minutes of participation. Researchers will record student's participation, and at the end of the term the REG Coordinator will provide the course instructor with a credit report of the total credits earned by each student.

How to participate? Study scheduling, participation and grade assignment is managed using the SONA online system. All students enrolled in this course have been set up with a SONA account. You must get started early in the term.

[Participating/SONA information: How to log in to Sona and sign up for studies](#)

****** Please do not ask the Course Instructor or REG Coordinator for information unless you have first thoroughly read the information provided on this website.******

More information about the REG program is available at: [REG Participants' Homepage](#)

Option 2: Article Review as an alternative to participation in research Students are not required to participate in research, and not all students wish to do so. As an alternative, students may opt to gain research experience by writing short reviews (1½ to 2 pages) of research articles relevant to the course. The course instructor will specify a suitable source of articles for this course (i.e., scientific journals, newspapers, magazines, other printed media). *You must contact your instructor to get approval for the article you have chosen before writing the review.* Each review article counts as one percentage point. To receive credit, you must follow specific guidelines. The article review must:

- **Be submitted before the [last day of lectures](#). Late submissions will NOT be accepted under ANY circumstances.**
- Be typed
- Fully identify the title, author(s), source and date of the article. A copy of the article must be attached.
- Identify the psychological concepts in the article and indicate the pages in the textbook that are applicable. Critically evaluate the application or treatment of those concepts in the article. If inappropriate or incorrect, identify the error and its implications for the validity of the article. You may find, for example, misleading headings, faulty research procedures, alternative explanations that are ignored, failures to distinguish factual findings from opinions, faulty statements of cause-effect relations, errors in reasoning, etc. Provide examples whenever possible.
- Clearly evaluate the application or treatment of those concepts in the article.
- Keep a copy of your review in the unlikely event we misplace the original.