AN/PS 340 SELF AND IDENTITY IN A POST-MODERN WORLD
IES Abroad Barcelona

DESCRIPTION: Being a “self” in this postmodern, neoliberalized world, as an emerging adult, while studying abroad presents an array of challenges for the development of identity. This course interrogates identity and self in the postmodern era of globalization and neo-liberalism. As we are increasingly globalized and connected, the traditional anchors of self and identity are losing their hold. This course explores some aspects of self and identity focused in particular on the study abroad experience of emerging adults. To start with, we will attempt to explore alternative models to the traditional Cartesian self, in particular examining the notion of the “empty self” that is filled with marketed notions of selfhood, and in the process contemplate whether the self is indeed a unitary, continuous, and coherent entity, or, indeed, is multiple, discontinuous, and contradictory. Using a relational approach to selfhood, we will then explore different facets and contexts in which the self emerges, such as gender, race, social networking, spirituality, altered states of consciousness, and sexuality. We will explore what it means to be authentic on the one hand, and, on the other, what sorts of traps society and we ourselves erect that lead us down paths of self-deception. The study abroad experience will provide the focal point by which to analyze the different theoretical and conceptual positions explored. Students will be expected to synthesize the different perspectives in an analysis of their lived experience.

CREDITS: 3 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 45 hours

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: None

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:
- Experiential activities: Students will be required to reflect on and write about a range of experiential activities germane to study abroad in a postmodern and digitalized age.
- Lectures: Lectures provide the students with an opportunity to gain an overview of the course content and to clarify issues.
- Class discussion: The aim of class discussions is to facilitate the students’ ability to apply the theoretical material to lived experience. They also offer the student the opportunity to argue their views and hear the perspective of other students on selected topics.
- Article presentation: Each student presents at least one reading during the course. This further allows the student the opportunity to actively engage with theoretical material with the objective to apply it to specific, concrete situations.
- Reader: The reader is compiled of a selection of key academic readings, chosen with the aim of providing a general understanding of the subject matter.
- Reading guides: These are provided, where appropriate, to aid the student in focusing on the most relevant information.
- Group presentations: Movies such as Terminator, American History X and Matrix will be used as a case study to explore key issues discussed in class. Students will work in groups and present their findings in class presentations.
- Critical incident journals: Students keep “critical incident journals” in which they describe and analyze key experiences relevant to the course material. The objective of the journal is to actively explore the lived aspects of identity and self in the context of changing cultures.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:
- Midterm exam (25%)
- Self and identity paper (35%)
- Class participation (10%)
- Class presentation (5%)
- Movie presentation (15%)
- Journals (10%)
Class presentation: Students, either individually or in pairs, will present one of the class topics. The presentation will be 10-15 minutes long, and will in effect “bring to life” the material covered in that day’s class. They will also be required to create a glossary on Moodle of relevant terms and concepts.

Movie presentation: The movie presentation will consist of an analysis of the movie “Wild” (and, under petition, the Reluctant Fundamentalist for topics not covered in the midterm) done in groups. Each group will be assigned topics from the course which will then be developed in the presentations.

Self-reflection (academic) paper in two parts. Part one is an overview of the student’s self, in the context of studying abroad, applying the key concepts from the first half of the class, and identifying key challenges and goals to be developed in the second part. Part two will be a completion of the paper, responding to the challenges and goals, drawing from all relevant class material, particularly from the second half. Included in the second part will be a “Comfort zone assignment” in which the student will choose an activity outside of class of at least 4 hours which requires interaction and engagement with non-study abroad students, which will be proposed early in the semester.

Further guidelines for the paper and all other assignments are available on Moodle.

Midterm exam: The mid-term will consist of a case-analysis of the movie “The Reluctant Fundamentalist” as well as short answers from the course material.

Journals: Provide students with a private and relatively informal space in which to reflect on the issues we are discussing in class. Note that “issues we are discussing in class” is operative. Although they are indeed fascinating, this is not a travel journal or “my thoughts about being here in Spain”. You will be graded on your degree of engagement with the issues at hand. This is not an “academic” journal, I will be quite happy if you simply write a free-flow of your reflections on the issues at hand. What did you think about the reading? How did you feel during the discussion in class? What was that about? What does it make you think about or remind you of? Does it apply to your life, your experience? And so on. Again, it is not just “I think x or y” nor a rehash of what the most recent article says but rather an engagement with the issues we are addressing. You will note that you receive 20% of the grade for the journals, so although they need not be academic they do need to be engaged, on topic, and demonstrate both thoughtfulness but also awareness of the material.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:
By the end of the course students will be able to:

- apply the concepts of postmodernism and globalization to experiences of daily living;
- describe the self and identity in a sociocultural context;
- analyze the impact of social media and digital connectedness on the self and experience.
- analyze the notion of a “real” or “authentic” self in the context of the class readings and their own experience;
- analyze how worldwide migration, technological advances and exposure to multiple value systems can impact self and identity;
- be aware of the play of bias and “cultural filters” in the interpretation of the self
- explore the relationship between experience, consciousness, and the self
- analyze the impact of studying abroad on self and identity.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:
Attendance is mandatory for all IES Abroad classes, including course-related trips. Any exams, tests, presentations, or other work missed due to student absences can only be rescheduled in cases of documented medical or family emergencies. If a student misses more than three classes in any course 3 percentage points will be deducted from the final grade for every additional absence. Seven absences in any course will result in a failing grade.
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<td>Session 1</td>
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Nussbaum, B. (2016) Beyond Anger. Aeon |
<p>| Session 12 | Experiential session |  |
| Session 14 | Exam prep | You will need to have watched “The Reluctant Fundamentalist” prior to the exam prep as you will work in groups analyzing the movie which will form the foundation of the midterm |
| Session 15 | | Midterm exam |</p>
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**Final paper due**

**REQUIRED READING:**
- Ellis, K. (2011). Be who you want to be: The philosophy of Facebook and the construction of identity. Screen Education 56, 37-41 (5 pages)
- Krishnamurti, J. (1969) Freedom from the known (chapters 1-4) (pp. 3-28). Krishnamurti Trust: Hampshire (15 pages)
RECOMMENDED READING:

- Kellner, D. Globalization and the Postmodern Turn (available online at http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/courses/ed253a/dk/GLOBPM.htm)
- Qing, D (2004). Toward a critical feminist perspective of culture and self Feminism & Psychology, (14)2, 297-312
- Suler, J. 1998 What is this thing called self? Available online at http://users.rider.edu/~suler/zenstory/thisthing.html