Ancestry, Society and Personal Identity

SOCl 421

Department of Sociology

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Office location: Annex 111A
Office hours: Wednesday, 2:30-4:00
Tuesdays and Fridays, 8:30-10:00

Calendar description
This course attempts to locate personal biography in the context of social history. Students’ genealogies provide the starting point for explorations of family heritage, social history, and personal identity. Students will apply sociological ideas to help them understand how society helped shape their personal and family histories. Three credits.

Course objectives
Through lectures, discussion and exercises, we will contemplate how personal identity or self reflects familial and social experiences. The readings focus on the autobiographical method, also called autoethnography, social memory, and social experiences influencing identity, such as gender, race, ethnicity, class, place, and so on. You will seek out sociological readings and examine your family traditions and socio-cultural experiences to complete two papers.

Required reading
Course-pack (available @ Campus Store)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation exercises</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Due date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A sociological family tree</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>September 29, start of class</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. A 2000 word essay on class background</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>October 20, start of class</td>
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<td>3. Quizzes</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>4. Contribution to class discussion</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. A 5000-6000 word term essay</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>December 1</td>
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Course essays
Both essays are auto-ethnographies, involving an analysis of how one’s ancestry and history has influenced your personal identity. Students are not expected to discuss their family and ancestry in class. Further instructions for the two papers will be provided in handouts and in class.

Quizzes and attendance
Class attendance and preparation is required. You are required to follow the reading schedule outlined below. Three surprise quizzes will be given, focused on the readings assigned to that date. Your best two grades will be used for your mark. There are no “make-up” quizzes. There will not be a pop quiz on the Sept 29 or Oct 20, as you have projects due those days.

If you miss a class, you are required to submit a 100 word critical summary of the reading for that day before the next class begins. Failure to do will result in a penalty.
Schedule of Readings for Sociology 421 (see bold for possible quiz dates on each reading)


**Sociological family tree due September 29**


**Essay on social class background due October 20, beginning of class**


As noted in this Schedule of possible in-class quiz dates, the themes from these readings will discussed more than once during the course. In November, we will focus on their relatedness.