Fall 9-1-2022

COMX 428.B01: Organizations and Identity

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Contact information:

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Office Hours: M & W from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m.

Texts:

Larson, G. S. & Gill, R. (2017). *Organizations and Identity*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Other readings available online through Moodle

Nature of the Course

Identity remains one of the most compelling research areas in the social sciences and in organizational communication in particular. The enduring popularity of identity research likely results from asking foundational questions relevant to all humans: "Who am I?" and "How should I act?" (Alvesson, Ashcraft & Thomas, 2008). The primary purposes of this class are to introduce students to contemporary theories/concepts related to identity and to show how identity intersects with control and resistance in organizational contexts. Several broad assumptions frame this course. First, language, talk, narratives and/or Foucauldian notions of discourse (Ainsworth & Hardy, 2004) are central for understanding the construction of the self. Identities are thus produced by as well as reflected through language use at various levels from micro-conversations to broad ideological discourses. Second, identities are regulated and controlled. In many contemporary organizations, workers are controlled not through coercive means, but rather through identity regulation. Finally, control and resistance go hand in hand, when you have control, you have resistance. The relationship between control and resistance will be shown to be complicated, complementary and conflicted. Overall, the course will engage these themes in a variety of interrelated ways to explore past, present and future directions for research on organizations and identity.

Course Objectives

1. Understand the rise of the individual self as a historical construction of contemporary society.
2. Understand the nature and challenges of identity work.
3. Understand the nature of identity regulation in contemporary organizations.
4. Identify the key ethical communicative responsibilities for managing and regulating identities.
5. Link identity with other key organizational concepts like technology and leadership.
6. Understand the need for diverse perspectives, including social scientific and humanistic, for understanding, creating and managing identities.

7. Develop an understanding of how to study and research identity.
8. Use an identity perspective to solve practical organizational problems.

Learning Outcomes

As a result of satisfactorily completing the course, students should be able to do the following:

1. Articulate a communication perspective for studying identity and compare that with other perspectives.
2. Identify the tensions that exist during identity work and recognize which tensions are most relevant in specific contexts.
3. Recognize and evaluate how organizations regulate identities through communication and how employees resist.
4. Describe and critique the key cultural discourses available for identity work and regulation in contemporary society.
5. Compare and contrast identity work with identity regulation and describe how these processes are interrelated.
6. Investigate your own identity influences related to work/occupation and write your own occupational identity narrative.
7. Find, evaluate, analyze, and synthesize information effectively from diverse sources.
8. Develop competence in information technology and digital literacy.

Attendance/Punctuality/Participation

The course will be discussion intensive. You are expected to attend and to participate in all class sessions. Absences will result in the loss of up to 3 points per day from your participation grade. Also, please come to class on time and prepared to discuss the day's readings.

Special Assistance

If some extenuating circumstances beyond your control prevent you from meeting your expectations for your attendance and performance, I expect you to contact me immediately. It is important that you contact me sooner rather than later.

Notice to Students with Documented Disabilities

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction by supporting collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and the Office for Disability Equity. If you have a disability and plan to request modifications for this course, please contact your instructor during the first week of the semester so that modifications can be provided in a timely manner. Please contact the Office of Disability Equity if you have questions.

Office for Disability Equity (ODE)	406.243.2243 (Voice/Text)
Lommasson Center 154	406.243.5330 (FAX)
University of Montana	ODE Website

Basic Needs Statements

Bear Necessities and Food Pantry

If you are facing barriers to succeeding in this class such as not having enough food to eat, not having stable housing, or any other basic needs insecurities, help is available! Visit the UM Food Pantry for free food, hygiene products, and SNAP application assistance. Hours and location information are on their website. For all other Basic Needs questions, visit ASUM Bear Necessities.

Student mental health needs

As people sometimes struggle with physical health, we sometimes also struggle with mental health. If you need assistance this semester, UM has resources to help. Please visit the UM Counseling webpage at or see the UM Wellness Program webpage.

Due Dates

A late written assignment will be penalized one full grade for each day it is late unless arrangements are made with me ahead of time. Presentations must be delivered on the day that they are due.

Backup Copies

You are responsible for keeping back-up copies of all work that you do for the class.

Academic Honesty
All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by

the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code.

Outside Research

Outside research, beyond the assigned readings, is required for this course.

COVID Specific Guidelines for Fall 2022

- If you feel sick and/or are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, please don't come to class and contact the Curry Health Center at (406) 243-4330.
- If you are required to isolate or quarantine, please contact me so that I can help you make-up any coursework.
- UM recommends students get the COVID-19 vaccine. Please direct your questions or concerns about vaccines to Curry Health Center.

Graduate Credit

Higher Caliber of Work: Graduate students who elect to take this course will be expected to perform at an advanced level compared to undergraduates in the class. All work on projects, assignments and exams are expected to be at the graduate level and will be graded and evaluated accordingly.

Research Project: Graduate students will work together on the third part of the semester research project to synthesize the previous interviews, develop conceptual connections and present the project findings to the class.

Term Paper: Each graduate student will be required to submit a 10-15 page research paper of a self-chosen topic. Students should meet individually with the professor early in the course to propose a project and develop a list of additional readings. A one-page project summary must be approved before proceeding with the project and annotated bibliography.

Annotated bibliography: Graduate students must complete one-page annotations of five additional readings related to both the course content and the student's term paper topic.

Evaluation: Your grade is a function of the undergrad requirements (61%), grad paper (31%), and the annotated bibliography (8%).

Requirements of the Course/Grading

Assignment	Points Available
Participation	50

Thought Questions (10 at 10 points each)	100
Identity Research Project (3 parts @ 50 pts each)	150
Final Exam	100
Total Points	400
Graduate Students Only: Annotated Bibliography: 50 points Term paper: 200 points Total Points = 650 pts	

Letter grades are figured as follows:

A = Outstanding - goes beyond expectations
B = Good - above average
C = Satisfactory - meets minimum requirements
D = Unsatisfactory - does not meet some requirements
F = Failing -- Does not meet requirements

Grade	Percent
A	100-93%
A-	92-90%
B+	89-88%
B	87-83%
B-	82-80%
C+	79-78%
C	77-73%
C-	72-70%
D+	69-68%
D	67-63%
F	Below 63%