

HUMA 2280 – Identity Goes Global: From Border Crossing to Boundary Remaking

Tuesdays & Thursdays 13:30-14:50pm (Room 1103)

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Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 15:00-16:00 or by appointment (Rm 3350)

I. Course Description:

In this increasing global and transient world where people from different cultures and nationalities interact on a more rapid and frequent basis, how is one's "identity" affected and renegotiated, and what factors affect its formation, re-formation or transformation? When one's identity is no longer confined by one single bloodline, race, ethnicity, nationality, language, culture, or gender even, how can we make sense of the multiple facets of one's identity? Is there such a thing called "global identity", and how can we understand it with a more comprehensive and creative approach?

To answer these questions, this course will introduce key theories, discourses and writings on the physical experiences of "border crossing" as well as the academic "clearing" and "remaking" of boundaries in the study of identity across different disciplines. Through these texts, this course will not only bring to light the complexity of hybrid identities in this age of globalization but also encourage students to think critically about their own identity and the factors that have shaped and will continue to influence the core their own identity.

II. Course Themes & Readings:

Dates	Theme	Key Question & Reading (Excerpts)
Jan 31	Course Introduction	
Feb 12 & 14	A Flat World? Rethinking Globalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Q: How "global" is this world?Thomas Friedman – <i>The World is Flat</i>
Feb 19 & 21	Clash or Harmony? – When Cultures Meet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Q: What happens when different cultures/civilizations intersect and interact?Samuel Huntington – "The Clash of Civilizations?"
Feb 26 & 28	Nation As "Imagined"?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Q: What is a nation? How is it formed and maintained?Ernest Renan – "What is a Nation?"Benedict Anderson – <i>Imagined Communities</i>

Mar 5 & 7	Global Diasporic Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q: Does one have to belong to a nation? What happen to those who don't have a nation? • James Clifford – “Diaspora” • Aihwa Ong – <i>Flexible Citizenship</i>
Mar 12 & 14	“Who Am I?” As a Historical Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q: Is “identity crisis” only a recent phenomenon? • Wu Zhuoliu – <i>Orphans of Asia</i>
Mar 19, 21 & 26	“China” and “Chineseness” Go Global	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q: Who defines “China”? Who are the Chinese? • Tu Weiming – “Cultural China: The Periphery as the Center” • Ien Ang – “Can One Say No to Chineseness?: Pushing the Limits of the Diasporic Paradigm”
Mar 28 & Apr 2	“Arbitrary” Race and Ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q: Is race or ethnicity a blessing or a curse? What are the boundaries and limitations? • Eric Liu – <i>The Accidental Asian: Notes of a Native Speaker</i>
Apr 4 & 9	Towards a More Fluid Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q: Is gender constructed? • Betty Friedan – <i>The Feminine Mystique</i> • Jeffrey Eugenides – <i>Middlesex</i>
Apr 11 & 16	The Millennial ID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q: What constitutes the core of everyday life for the millennials? Their blessings and curses? • Rowan Dobson – <i>Millennial Problems: Everyday Struggles of a Generation</i>
Apr 25 & 30	A “Third” Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q: Who are the “global nomads”? • David Pollock and Ruth E. Van Reken – <i>Third Culture Kids: Growing Up Among Worlds</i>
May 2	Course Summary	
May 7 & 9	Student Presentations	

III. Course Requirements:

- Attendance 10%
- In-Class Participation & Quizzes 15%
- 4 Journal Entries 40%
- Group Final Project
 - Presentation 10%
 - Paper 25%

1) Attendance, In-Class Participation and Quizzes:

- Attendance and in-class participation are weighed heavily in this course. Students are expected to complete the reading assignment PRIOR to coming to class and be ready to discuss and engage in class. If no participation effort is made in class, attendance alone cannot guarantee a high mark for this portion of your grade. Those who are absent for 10 class times or more will NOT pass this course.
- Pop quizzes will be given from time to time in class WITHOUT prior notice. The quiz usually consists of 2 questions only and would not take more than 15 minutes to complete.

2) Journal Entries:

Throughout the course, you will be asked to complete several journal entries (2-3 pages each) that provide personal reflections on the reading assignments and how they relate to your own life or your own journey of identity formation/transformation. There are no right or wrong answers to the journal entries, but being “truthful, thoughtful, and introspective” is the key to composing quality entries that earn high marks! All entries need to be submitted on Canvas in WORD files.

3) Group Final Project:

- The final group project consists of 2 parts – a group presentation and a group paper (3-5 students per group). Your task is to take one important issue, event or phenomenon that not only relates to the theme of “identity” but also bears close relevance to your everyday life or the community that you live in. You need to make a critical reflection and analysis of it by conducting some kind of first-hand research on it.
- For example, you may wish to interview some “third culture kids” on campus and learn more about their journeys of juggling among multiple identities; or you may investigate the meaning of “Hong Kong-er” among HKUST students by designing your own survey and distribute it on campus. The bottom line is – the more creative the better. But this should be a project that truly “matters to you” and helps you understand more about yourself or others around you.
- The group presentation needs to be conducted in some form of **multi-media style** (PowerPoint, iMovie, video clips, etc.), while the project requires some first-hand research on the proposed topic. **Each group only needs to submit ONE paper** (electronic copy via email) in which the writing contribution of each member is clearly indicated.
- The group formation will be decided by the professor and TA by taking into consideration the diversity aspect of each student’s background –cultural, ethnic, linguistic, year or disciplinary training.
- Please submit a one-page project proposal on Canvas by April 17th at 11pm the latest.

IV. Class Rules

- **NO plagiarism!!!** – This is taken VERY seriously. Violations (including using online device such as

Google translation) will result in a ZERO on your grade.

- **NO use of laptops & mobile phone** – NO use of laptops and mobile phones in class. Please turn on the silent mode of your mobile phone in class and put it away in your bag.
- **Limited use of tablets** –The use of tablets is permitted only for the purpose of accessing the in-class reading excerpts online. It is **STRONGLY** encouraged that you bring a printed copy of the reading excerpts to class.
- **Listening etiquette** – please listen carefully while someone is talking.
- **Speaking etiquette** – please allow others to finish their sentence before you offer yours.

Upon completion of this course, students are expected to be able to do the following:

- 1 To become familiar with theories of globalization and cross-cultural studies
- 2 To understand the process of identity crisis, formation, and negotiation through various case studies
- 3 To perspective on the question of "who am I?" raised by different writers and theorists
- 4 To rethink about one's own identity formation through the working of mid-term and final project