

Political Science 3304F

Course Title:	Politics of Identity 3304F
Instructor:	Liddell Hastings
Office Hours:	3:30-4:30
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Prerequisite(s): 2200-level course or above, or permission of the department.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Syllabus

Course Description

It could be argued that identity has become the focal point of 21st century politics. This class looks at identity in all its beauty, messiness, and tribalism. How do identities influence politics and social movements? How does politics encourage identitarian thinking? How do political identities form coalitions or break coalitions? Is a greater or lesser emphasis on identity the path towards fixing polarization and democratic backsliding? These are the central questions of this course. The first half of the course focuses on defining identity politics and studying different political identities and how they mobilize politically. The second half of the class focuses on how these identities interact, the differences between right- and left-wing identitarian politics, and then concludes with normative perspectives on identity politics overall. The structure of each class consists of class readings, a pre-class audio primer, and a hybrid class lecture/discussion style. Some weeks feature simulations and have their unique format (see below/brightspace for more details).

Learning Outcomes

This course aims to enable students to:

- Define identity politics and how it influences political discourse, social movements, and partisan politics.
- Be comfortable assuming different perspectives through “empathetic roleplaying” and position taking.
- Gain experience navigating complex and controversial topics through interactive and experiential learning.

Course Format

This course features a two-hour block on Tuesdays, with the time being divided between short lectures, discussions, and simulations. Short lectures will build on readings and provide students with additional context to enrich the class discussions that week. Readings in this course are **necessary** as they provide important background information about that week’s content and feature heavily in class discussion. Failure to complete the readings will seriously hurt your ability to participate in weekly discussions and readings will feature heavily in mid-term and final exams. The final two weeks include

a simulation based around identities and partisanship, attendance to these weeks are mandatory and require excused absences if you are unable to attend. These weeks are marked on the course schedule (seen below) and contribute heavily towards your overall participation grade. Assignments in this course also draw heavily on the readings, with the intent that you think critically about each reading and how certain readings build on one another while others clash. Success in this course comes with understanding these debates and how to accurately portray various sides and perspectives.

Course Materials

***There is no required textbook for purchase this term. The readings will be accessible on Brightspace, at the "Course Readings" site. Optional Podcasts can be found on brightspace

Each Assignment has its own document on Brightspace outlining the expectations, requirements, and a rubric, please read them in advance so questions can be asked in class or office hours.

COURSE READINGS/ SCHEDULE

Sep 15th Week 1: What Is Identity

No Readings

Sep 22nd Week 2: Tribalism, Group Psychology, and Social Identity Theory

Reading 1: Henri Tajfel and John Turner, *An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict*

Reading 2: *Uncivil Agreement: Identity-Based Democracy*, Chapter 1

Optional Reading: Browning, C. R. (1998). *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. New York: Harper-Collins Publishers, Inc. Chapter 18: Ordinary Men.

Sept 29th Week 3: Indigenous Identity and Settler Colonialism

Reading 1: Corntassel, J. (2003). "Who is Indigenous? 'Peoplehood' and Ethnonationalist Approaches to Rearticulating Indigenous Identity." *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 9(1), 75–100.

Reading 2: *Contested Colonialism: Responsible Government and Political Development in Yukon*, pp. 375–385, 392.

Optional Reading: *The Roles of Settler Canadians within Decolonization: Reevaluating Invitation, Belonging and Rights*

Oct 6th Week 4: National Identity and Nationalism

Reading 1: Fukuyama, F. (2018). *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Chapter 7: Nationalism and Religion.

Reading 2: Fukuyama, F. (2018). *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Chapter 12: We the People.

Optional Reading: Anderson, B. (1983). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Chapter 8: Patriotism and Racism.

Oct 13th Week 5: Reading Week (No Office Hours)

Oct 20th Week 6: Critical Race Theory and Racial Identity

Reading 1: Ray, V. (2023). *On Critical Race Theory: Why It Matters & Why You Should Care*. Random House Trade Paperbacks. Introduction: Why Critical Race Theory Matters (pp. 13–26) and Chapter 3:

Colorblind Racism (pp. 47–57). ©

Reading 2: McWhorter, J. *Woke Racism: How a New Religion Is Betraying Black America*. Chapter 1: What Kind of People?

Reading 3: McWhorter, J. *Woke Racism: How a New Religion Is Betraying Black America*. Chapter 4: What's Wrong with It Being a Religion? It Hurts Black People.

Oct 27th Week 7: Gender and Sexual Identity

Reading 1: Beasley, C. *Gender & Sexuality: Critical Theories, Critical Thinkers*. Chapter 8: Postmodern Feminism: Butler.

Reading 2: Murray, D. (2019). *The Madness of Crowds: Gender, Race and Identity*. Bloomsbury Publishing. Chapter 4: Trans (pp. 185–255).

Reading 3: Goodhart, D. (2017). *The Road to Somewhere: The Populist Revolt and the Future of Politics*. Oxford University Press. Chapter 8: What About the Family (pp. 193–210).

Nov 3rd Week 8: Midterm

Nov 10th Week 9: Intersectionality and the Left's Conundrum

Reading 1: Carastathis, A. (2016). *Intersectionality: Origins, Contestations, Horizons*. University of Nebraska Press. Chapter 5: Identities as Coalition (ebook pp. 160–190).

Reading 2: Murray, D. (2019). *The Madness of Crowds: Gender, Race and Identity*. Bloomsbury Publishing. Conclusion and Afterword (pp. 256–266).

Optional Reading: Westlake, D., Robbins-Kanter, J., Koop, R., & Troup, D. (2025). "Electoral Coalitions and the Working Class: The Case of the Liberal Party." In *The Working Class and Politics in Canada*, pp. 132–157.

Nov 17th Week 10: Partisan Identity and Polarization

Reading 1: Abramowitz, A. I., & Webster, S. W. (2018). "Negative Partisanship: Why Americans Dislike Parties but Behave Like Rabid Partisans." *Political Psychology*, 39, 119–135.

Reading 2: Mason, L. (2022). *Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity*. University of Chicago Press. Chapter 3: A Brief History of Social Sorting.

Optional Reading: Mutz, D. C. (2006). Chapter: Benefits of Hearing the Other Side. In *Hearing the Other Side: Deliberative versus Participatory Democracy*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 57–88.

Nov 24th Week 11: Populist Backlash and Identity Politics

- Short Paper Due

Reading 1: Kaufmann, E. (2018). *Whiteshift: Populism, Immigration and the Future of White Majorities*. Penguin UK. Chapter 6: Canadian Exceptionalism and Populism in the Anglosphere.

Reading 2: Goodhart, D. (2017). *The Road to Somewhere: The Populist Revolt and the Future of Politics*. Oxford University Press. Chapter 2 (pp. 19–44); Chapter 3 (pp. 69–81).

Optional Reading: Fukuyama, F. (2018). *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Chapter 14: What Is to Be Done.

Dec 1st Week 12: Simulation 1

- **Simulation notes due before class**

Dec 8th Week 13: Simulation 2

- **Simulation reflection due Dec 10th**

Methods of Evaluation

Participation 20%

Participation works a little differently in this course and is a major part of your overall grade. Your participation grade is a combination of submitted discussion questions and your participation in class discussions. Class discussions will draw directly from assigned readings; demonstration you have read the readings is the most reliable way to get participation points. If you want to achieve an A- or higher in participation, extra readings (listed for each week) and weekly podcasts are highly encouraged to give your participation more depth.

The Podcast list can be found on Brightspace

I am not looking for well rehearsed responses, if you show up each with a few prepared questions for me or your fellow students or opinions on the readings and show active engagement (listening, eye contact, not scrolling reddit) you are well on your way to getting a good mark. Questions can be posted on Brightspace in a discussion forum before class.

*****The best ability is availability, if you miss more than one class it will seriously hurt your grade.**

Simulation 20% (Dec 1st and Dec 8th)

- Look at Brightspace for further details and rubrics. There is a written component and a post simulation reflection that needs to be completed before and after the simulation. Simulations are considered evaluation days and will need excused absences if you can not make it. Makeups for the simulation include an additional written assignment. Simulations seek to roleplay class themes, be prepared to apply class concepts.

Short Paper 20% (Nov 24th)

- Students will write a 6–8 page essay examining a recent political controversy involving identity. The essay should fairly explain the major competing perspectives, assess the strengths and weaknesses of their arguments using academic research and real-world evidence, and conclude by proposing a reasonable compromise or way forward. Students must use at least 3–4 academic sources and should connect their analysis to themes and concepts from the course. See Brightspace for more details and a Rubric.

Mid Term 15% (Nov 3rd)

- More details to be announced in classes leading up to the midterm. It will be long form and open book.

Final Exam 25% (Date TBD)

- More details are to be announced in classes leading up to the Exam Period. It will be long form and open book.

Late Marks

5% per day. The Short paper has a 5 day extension if you need it, the simulation written work has no automatic extension.

Non-medical and medical accommodation

Please email the instructor if you cannot make a class or will miss an evaluation. The following assignments can be made up, IF YOU HAVE AN EXCUSED ACCOMODATION, in the following ways:

Midterm: A make-up date for all who miss it.

Final Exam: A make-up date for all who miss it.

Simulation: An extra written assignment.

Small Paper: You can have an automatic 5 day extension, if you need more than 5 days you must have a documented note from Academic Advising.

Participation: You get one free absence (still let me know) after that it will impact your grades.

To see an excused absence or extension:

https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academic_considerations/index.html

Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs.

Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Electronic devices can be used for note taking, this is a reminder that extended indications you are using your device for other purposes than note taking will hurt your participation grade.

Open book mid-terms and exams include hand written notes only (or printed) no electronic devices can be used.

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken very seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences_26SEP.pdf

Plagiarism

Plagiarism involves reliance on the work of another author without attribution. Students must compose their own essays and assignments, in their own words. Whenever students incorporate an idea, or a passage, or data from another author, they must fully acknowledge this by using quotation marks where appropriate and by properly citing the borrowed material.

Plagiarism can be direct, involving straightforward copying of an author's work without providing both attribution and quotation marks. It can be less direct, involving lightly paraphrasing an author's work, rearranging their sentences while maintaining the same general structure and meaning, or stitching together material from two or more sources — these would count as plagiarism even with the source or sources identified, as they rely too heavily upon the way the author or authors chose to present their ideas. Take note that students may satisfactorily write up an author's ideas in their own words, but then neglect to cite the source or sources of the ideas, which also counts as plagiarism. And students may plagiarize themselves by submitting work they have previously submitted in other courses.

Plagiarism is a major academic offence, one which is taken seriously at Western.

See Scholastic Offence Policy (above) and Procedures in the Western Academic Calendar for more detail:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/undergrad_scholastic_offence_procedure.pdf

Plagiarism Checking: "All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>)."

Multiple-choice tests/exams: Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to

submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

Statement on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

It is okay to use AI for formatting or in the research process, but all written work should start with your writing and only then should AI be providing minor grammar and spelling edits. If you use AI in such a way, please keep a log of your AI chat logs because they may be used as assurances that you have not extensively relied on it. I also ask that you supply an "AI use statement" describing what you used AI for and a document that tracks changes made by AI (a feature in Word under the "references" heading) to show what changes AI made. While AI is a permanent fixture in our world today, you are doing yourself a disservice if you are using it as a shortcut to complete course material. This will come through in the simulations and exams as you will not be able to use AI in those settings. Please ask the instructor if you have any questions about fair AI use or refer to this website: <https://ai.uwo.ca/governance/policies.html>

When using AI, reliance on false citations (i.e., AI hallucinations) will also be considered as an academic offense. Although this doesn't involve plagiarizing from a specific author, it does involve inclusion of AI-generated material without proper attribution, and which simply may not exist to properly attribute.

Essay course requirements

The essay requirement in this course is at least 2,500 words as per department guidelines.

Security and Confidentiality of Student Work:

"Submitting or Returning Student Assignments, Tests and Exams - All student assignments, tests and exams will be handled in a secure and confidential manner. Particularly in this respect, leaving student work unattended in public areas for pickup is not permitted."

Duplication of work

Undergraduate students who submit similar assignments on closely related topics in two different courses must obtain the consent of both instructors prior to the submission of the assignment. If prior approval is not obtained, each instructor reserves the right not to accept the assignment.

Grading and grade adjustments

The Department of Political Science has a policy that undergraduate final course grades will only be rounded to the next whole grade if they end at 0.5 or higher; otherwise, they will be rounded down.

In order to ensure that comparable standards are applied in political science courses, the Department may require instructors to adjust final marks to conform to Departmental guidelines.

Students registered in Social Science should refer to <https://www.advising.ssc.uwo.ca/index.html> for information on Medical Policy, Term Tests, Final Examinations, Late Assignments, Short Absences, Extended Absences, Documentation and other Academic Concerns. Non-Social Science students should refer to their home faculty's academic counselling office.

Accessibility at Western: Please contact accessibility@uwo.ca if you require any information in plain text format, or if any other accommodation can make the course material and/or physical space accessible to you.
<https://accessibility.uwo.ca/index.html>

Support Services

The website for the Office of the Registrar, and the same for affiliated university colleges when appropriate, and any appropriate Student Support Services (including the services provided by the USC) and Academic Support Page 3 and Engagement, should be provided for easy access.

<https://www.uwo.ca/health/case-management/index.html>

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts on the Wellness and Wellbeing website <https://www.uwo.ca/health/gbsv/index.html> . To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. <https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental-health/index.html>