

Identity in the Age of Self-Indulgence: The Self and Society  
Honors 101 Section 2 • University of Mississippi • Fall 2018

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**Class Hours:** TuTh 11.00a-12.15p [SMBHC 025](#)

**Course Description and Objectives:**

During the last century, the concept of the self has become evermore fluid and unstable. The human condition has drifted away from allegiances to cohesive communities, institutions, and a collective conscience (family, career, neighborhood, religion, nation, absolute truth, identity as embodiment) and has increasingly fixated on autonomy, narcissism, and self-indulgence (independence, instant gratification, social media, parody, immediacy, relativism, identity as performance). In this context, Honors 101 will study who we are, how we consume culture, and how we contribute to society. This course will approach these questions of identity through an intensive study of literature, social philosophy, media, painting, film, music, and popular culture.



Banksy "Mobile Lovers" (2014)

Honors 101 is a seminar course that uses dialogues and conversations in class—with readings and writings outside of class—to help students develop analytical thinking, verbal, reading, and writing skills.

**Advisory on Honors 101 Content:**

I believe that university students are adults capable of engaging scholarly material critically and analytically, regardless of how potentially controversial that material may be. Nevertheless, in consideration of students' beliefs and sensibilities, the content of this section of Honors 101 merits special advisement. Please be advised that the readings, art, and films studied in this course may contain sexually explicit content, such as nudity, sex acts, prostitution, or homosexuality; depictions of graphic violence; alcohol and drug abuse; blasphemy and profanity; and controversial political, religious, social, or moral beliefs. *Obviously this course is not intended to offend students or make any student uncomfortable.* Rather, this course proposes to intellectually challenge students, to critically examine our society, and to debate identity in the wider cultures of excess and self-indulgence. Please note that you do not need to agree with any idea or opinion studied in this course. In fact, our discussions will question whether the narratives of identity themselves condone, condemn, or contradict their own arguments.

Therefore, if you may be offended by the content studied in this course, please immediately switch to another section of Honors 101.

**Reading List** (Purchase the following texts and films; availability and required editions are at [jasonklodt.com/101](http://jasonklodt.com/101)):

1. Marx, Karl. *The Communist Manifesto*. Signet, 1998.
2. Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and Its Discontents*. WW Norton, 1961.
3. Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. Vintage, 2004.
4. Loriga, Ray. *My Brother's Gun*. St. Martin's Press, 1997.
5. Hui, Wei. *Shanghai Baby*. Simon and Schuster, 2001.
6. *Te doy mis ojos (Take My Eyes)*. Directed by Icíar Bollaín, New Yorker Video, 2003.
7. *La piel que habito (The Skin I Live In)*. Directed by Pedro Almodóvar, Sony, 2012.

Evaluation	
In-Class Participation Evidence of Preparation Evidence of Reading Comprehension	40%
Written Homework Theses & Outlines	10%
Essays	30%
Presentation of Research Topic	5%
Research Paper	15%
Total	100%

Grading Scale		
Grade	%	GPA
A	100-93	4
A-	92-90	3.7
B+	89-87	3.3
B	86-83	3
B-	82-80	2.7
C+	79-77	2.3
C	76-73	2
C-	72-70	1.7
D	69-60	1
F	59-0	0

**Course Format:**

Honors 101 is an *advanced course for dedicated students* that are serious about learning, making a diligent effort, exploring intellectual ideas, and thinking analytically. Your perspectives, observations, opinions, and questions are the basis of this course. Therefore in Honors 101 you are required to participate actively in our class discussions.

Note that 40% percent of your final grade depends on daily participation and effort in class. Consistent attendance and enthusiastic participation will raise your grade considerably. Alternately, missing class and passivity will lower your grade considerably.

You will complete reading and writing assignments outside of class and then in class you will analyze the details of the texts you've read. In other words, Honors 101 is not a hierarchical course in which a professor transmits information for students to consume. Rather, students and the professor together will collaborate to explore, problematize, and interpret the meanings of contemporary cultural identities.

You will be continually responsible for participating throughout the semester since you earn a **participation grade every two weeks** (i.e., every four classes). Missing class or lackadaisical participation during any class period will have an immediate negative effect on your participation grade. On the contrary, perfect attendance and enthusiastic participation will have an immediate positive effect on your participation grade.

Moreover, to earn a high participation grade Honors 101 requires that you...

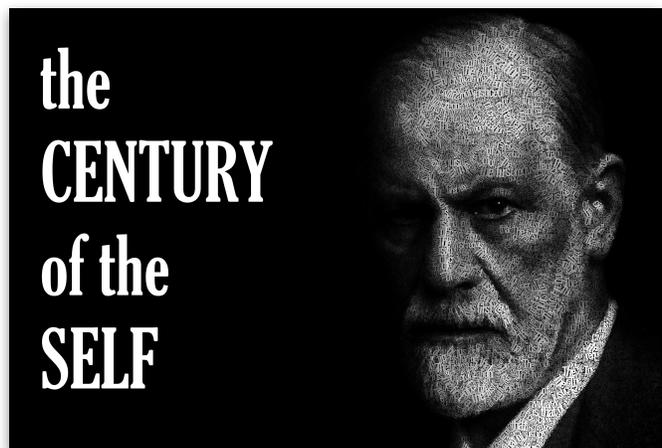
1. Arrive prepared for class discussion (having carefully read and studied that day's reading and having completed any writing assignment).
2. Bring to class the book that corresponds to that day's assignment.
3. Participate actively in all class discussions (in pairs, small groups, and whole-class conversations).
4. Engage actively with the course materials and pay careful attention to the discussions in pairs, small groups, and whole-class conversations, as well as the professor's commentaries. That is to say, not paying attention, chatting off-topic with classmates, working on materials for other courses, using a mobile phone, or deviating from the task at hand will considerably lower your participation grade.
5. Show a maturity worthy of a university student.
6. Make a consistent effort, be open to learning, be receptive to new ideas, and maintain a positive attitude.

Finally, pedagogical studies show that when a professor waits several seconds after posing a question (a technique called *wait time*), students tend to provide more elaborate and sophisticated answers. Therefore, to promote analytical thinking and to give all students an equal opportunity to express their opinions, please raise your hand and wait patiently to be called on to participate in our class discussions.

#### **Phones, Tablets, and Computers:**

It is the professor's responsibility to maintain a classroom environment free from distractions so that all students may learn. Therefore, to take maximum advantage of the limited time that we are in class, to respect the interactive format of the course, and to eliminate distractions, when class begins **all mobile phones must be stored in a pocket or bag**. Each time your phone emerges from your pocket or bag during class **you immediately lose**

**10% from your biweekly participation grade**. You may retrieve your phone only when expressly allowed by the professor for a class activity.



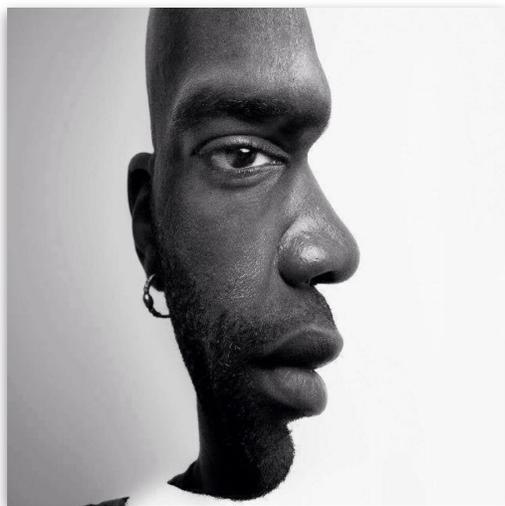
You may use electronic books, tablet computers, or laptops as long as you use these devices exclusively for class-related tasks. If at any time these devices disrupt the learning environment in our classroom or distract you from the task at hand (as

determined by the professor), **you immediately lose 20% from your biweekly participation grade**. Therefore if you choose to use an ebook, tablet, or laptop, be vigilant of your own wandering attention or the temptation to be drawn into non-class related content that may distract you from the interactive format of Honors 101.

Please note that Dr. Klodt may call for “Screens Down,” indicating that all ebooks, tablets, and computers be turned off to facilitate group discussion. Therefore come to class prepared with materials to take notes longhand.

### **Grading Policy:**

Given students’ concern with grades, please be aware of this course’s grading philosophy. *Grades are not gifts; you must earn them.* In this course, earning an A or B is difficult and requires continual work and effort. The average college grade is 75%, which is to say that a typical student will earn a C in Honors 101.



Only attending class, only completing a few assignments, and only participating sporadically is not sufficient to earn even a C in this course. Minimal effort in preparation for class participation and writings will earn a low grade such as a D or an F. To earn a higher grade, you must demonstrate superior levels of participation, scholarly writing, continuous effort, and analytical thought.

Your current grade is available anytime at [iGradePlus.com](http://iGradePlus.com). Log into your account using the activation code emailed to you. You may discuss your grade with Dr. Klodt anytime at his office in Bondurant C-109.

### **Attendance Policy:**

Logically, you are required to attend each class session (you cannot participate and learn if you are not in class) and attendance will be taken. Students with more than five (5) unexcused absences will **automatically fail** the course. Absences may be excused upon presentation of **written documentation** (i.e.: letter from a professor, coach, university official, or a signed medical excuse). For a family or medical emergency, contact Dr. Klodt by phone or email **before** you miss class.

### **Reading Guidelines and Expectations:**

The readings in Honors 101 carry the following expectations:

1. **Complete** all reading assignments, obviously.
2. **Read to understand.** Do not read quickly with a goal of simply completing the assignment. Read carefully and patiently. The time you invest in careful reading will deepen your understanding and interpretation of the text.
3. **Read analytically.** Consider the *why* behind the narrative and hypothesize the messages that the writer is communicating.

4. **Write down** your observations, interpretations, reactions, opinions, ideas, doubts, and/or questions. Use these notes to prepare your contributions to our class discussion.
5. **Review** the readings and your notes prior to class so that you are ready to actively participate.

### Essays and Written Work:

To stimulate critical thinking, you will write essays that correspond to class readings.

1. Type and print all essays following MLA format: Double spaced, an illustrative title, a clearly defined thesis, fully developed ideas supported by specific examples, and an analytical conclusion.
2. Never submit a first draft. Carefully review, edit, and polish your writing. Writing is a process and the effort you invest in careful editing and revising will yield exponentially positive results in the long run.
3. You may consult Dr. Klodt for advice, recommendations, and/or revisions, but you may not confer with **anyone else**, such as writing tutors or other students. All writing must be exclusively your own.
4. Essays and written work submitted **after the due date lose 10% per calendar day**, including days when class does not meet.

### Students with Disabilities:

I am committed to helping students with disabilities. Students may request reasonable accommodation from the [Student Disability Services \(Martindale 234; 662.915.7128\)](#). Contact [SDS](#) to complete the “Instructor Notification of Classroom Accommodations” form.

### And Finally...

I believe the essence of a professor’s work is to serve you, the student. Therefore, please do not hesitate to raise questions or comments in class —or to contact me at any time outside of class —if you have questions, problems, concerns, or would like extra help or guidance.

*¡Que tengamos un curso muy bueno!*

