

ID7001 Questions of Identity in Europe – Part 1

Module type Compulsory (core module)

Term / hours Michaelmas / 22

ECTS 10

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Lecturer(s) Prof Mary Cosgrove
Prof Michael Cronin
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Dr Rachel Hoare
Dr Radek Przedpelski

Module description

Together with its sister module (Part 2), this module explores the question of identity by providing students with a strong theoretical grounding in key issues of identity in Europe. The module is taught by a team of colleagues, each exploring a different identity-based topic. The standard format for each topic will include one 2-hr introductory lecture/seminar on the theoretical implications of the topic, followed by one 2-hr seminar looking at case studies (this format may vary depending on the topic). Topics explored in this module are listed below.

Syllabus

Introduction: The Age of Identities (Dr James Hanrahan)

This seminar serves as a general introduction to the core modules.

1. What is Enlightenment? (Dr James Hanrahan)

These seminars will examine contemporary views of the heritage of the Enlightenment. Was the Enlightenment a Western phenomenon and what do claims that it was (or was not) do for the identity of the West in general and Europe in particular? Was Enlightenment radicalism or a more moderate cosmopolitanism the true source of European modernity?

2. Living the past (Prof Mary Cosgrove)

These seminars explore some of the core concepts in memory theory, such as collective memory, multidirectional memory, prosthetic memory, and post-memory. Taking as a case study the Holocaust memorial to the Jewish victims of National Socialism in Berlin, the seminars use theory to evaluate, first, how in recent years the memorial has been rejected by elements of the growing far right in Germany; and, second, to examine critical responses to this development. In this way, the seminars examine how the past gets instrumentalised for present political purposes, also connecting what is happening in Germany to larger shifts in contemporary transnational politics, culture, and memory of western democracies.

3. My language is my home (Dr Rachel Hoare)

These seminars explore the connections between variation in language use and the construction, negotiation, maintenance and performance of identities at the level of the individual and the group at the intersection of the region and the nation. Examining a range of issues around the language/identity nexus, this core topic focuses on complex identity contexts and transnational identities in order to gain clearer insight into the identity-making and marking functions of language. The seminars draw upon a range of perspectives from social-psychology, sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology and social psychology.

4. What did Earth ever do for us? (Prof Michael Cronin)

The advent of human-induced climate change and the entry of humanity into the new geological era of the Anthropocene raises fundamental questions about the nature of what it is to be human in such radically altered circumstances. In these seminars, we explore the emergence of the concept of 'transversal subjectivity' (Braidotti) as a way of trying to think about new forms of human subjectivity in the context of the relationship to other animal species and to the world of the organic and inorganic elements in which humans are immersed. Questions of sustainability, resilience and biocultural diversity are also examined in the framework of changing paradigms of the human and post-human.

5. Are you postmodern? (Dr Radek Przedpelski)

These seminars examine cultural expression in a range of media (literary and popular fiction, cinema, visual arts and visual culture) through the theoretical lens of postmodernity. First, we explore concepts of postmodernism, looking at the work of key theoreticians, with particular focus on the emergence of the idea of the postmodern from the modernist movement in mid-late 20th century, as well as the points of intersection between postmodernism and postcolonial theory. Second, we focus on visual arts and visual culture, exploring various trends and media, including photography, street art, installation art and performance art. Discussion focuses on both 'classic' postmodern art of the 1970s and 1980s, as well as more recent problematics around technology and the posthuman. Finally, we look at cinema and film media, with a focus on features of recent cinema such as genre-blending, narrative disruption, polystylism and meta-reference.

Assessment

The module is assessed by completing two assignments:

- (1) A recorded presentation (7-8 minutes) using dynamic presentation software (such as Canva or Prezi) that focuses on a specific institution/organisation/performance/event experienced during the field trip to Belgium (worth 20%), to be submitted by the Friday of Teaching Week 10 (Calendar Week 12);
- (2) An essay (3,500 words) on one of the core topics covered in the module (worth 80%), to be submitted by the Friday of Revision Week (Calendar Week 15).

For more details on the assessment of this module (presentation guidelines, sample essay titles, etc.), please consult the module on Blackboard.

Please note: students who are *not* enrolled in the Identities & Cultures of Europe programmes (and who therefore join this module from other degree programmes) are exempt from completing the

first component of the above assessment (i.e. the recorded presentation). They are thus required to complete only the second component (i.e. the essay), worth 100% in their case.

Indicative bibliography

Introduction

Fukuyama, Francis, *Identity: Contemporary Identity Politics and the Struggle for Recognition* (Profile Books, 2018).

Topic 1

Ferrone, Vincenzo, *The Enlightenment: History of an Idea*, trans. by Elisabetta Tarantino (Princeton UP, 2015).

Israel, Jonathan I., *Democratic Enlightenment: Philosophy, Revolution, and Human Rights, 1750-1790* (OUP, 2012).

Pagden, Anthony, *The Enlightenment and Why it Still Matters* (OUP, 2013).

Topic 2

Hirsch, Marianne, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust* (Columbia UP, 2012).

Landsberg, Alison, 'Prosthetic Memory: Total Recall and Blade Runner', *Body & Society*, 1: 3/4 (1995), 175-89.

Roth, Michael, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford UP, 2009).

Topic 3

Edwards, J., *Language and Identity* (Cambridge UP, 2009).

Evans, D., *Language and Identity: Discourse in the World* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

Preece, S., *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Identity* (Routledge, 2016).

Topic 4

Braidotti, Rosi, *The Posthuman* (Polity, 2013).

Cronin, Michael, *Eco-Translation: Translation and Ecology in the Age of the Anthropocene* (Routledge, 2017).

Morton, Timothy, *Being Ecological* (Pelican, 2018).

Topic 5

Barthes, Roland, trans. Richard Howard, *Camera Lucida* (Vintage, 1993).

Docherty, Thomas, ed., *Postmodernism: A Reader* (Routledge, 2016).

Jameson, Fredric, *The Geopolitical Aesthetic: Cinema and Space in the World System* (Indiana UP, 1992).

Learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

- LO1 Identify and describe identity issues as they emerge in a range of cultural manifestations across Europe and beyond.
- LO2 Compare and contrast different methodological approaches to questions of identity.
- LO3 Accurately and critically deploy key concepts drawn from the various fields and disciplines covered in the core topics.
- LO4 Critically assess textual and audio-visual forms through systematic reflection and close reading of select passages from various works and artefacts.
- LO5 Develop critical, analytical and presentation skills through audio-visual delivery and academic writing.