

LIBA 497/LBST 590  
HUMAN INTERACTION

Dr. Anne Statham  
Fall, 2009

Office:

This course will focus on the ways in which our social world, and indeed ourselves, are constructed through our daily interactions. We will examine the theories and research on the ways that we remake ourselves and our world as we negotiate meaning with each other day to day. Understanding the processes through which this happens helps us to see that our social world is of our making, an insight which will hopefully empower us to imagine and make a better world.

READINGS: *The Production of Reality* by Jodi O'Brien, Pine Forge Press, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition  
Packet of readings on the self through short stories and poetry  
Packet of readings on brain development  
\**The Social Construction of Reality* by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, plus assigned articles for 590 students

#### GRADING

**Journal** -- You are required to keep a journal of your reflections on the readings and exercises for the course. Two entries each week, after each class, are required. Entries must briefly summarize the readings and exercises in your own words, discuss what you learned from the readings and exercises, and reflect on each class meeting. You may also apply the concepts learned to current events. Each entry should be from 1 to 1 1/2 page, typed. The journal will count as 40% of your grade. Journals will be collected and graded 4 times during the semester.

**Participation** – Class participation is critical in a seminar class such as this. You should read the material assigned each week BEFORE the first class that week, and come to class prepared to discuss the material. Come with these thoughts: What questions did the readings raise for you? How did it relate to things you already knew? What did you learn that you didn't already know? How did it change how you see things? Class participation also includes doing presentations and exercises as assigned. Participation will count as 20% of your grade.

**Project and Project Report** – We will work on a group project. Early in the semester, we will choose a community issue of importance to the class and work together to explore the interactional aspects of this issue, deciding what research we would like to do to further understand the different perspectives involved, the self claims, and the negotiation of meaning going on around the issue. From our work, we will attempt to contribute to some resolution of the issue in the community. Several assignments preparing us to work on the project will be due the first part of the course, but the bulk of the work on the project will take place during the last five weeks of the semester. During this time, we will be applying the concepts we have learned to the project as it is unfolding. For final products, students will write individual reports on various aspects of

the project, and Graduate Students will conduct a literature review and play a leadership role in compiling a general report from individual student reports. This will entail a major research paper for them.\* Work on the project will count as 40% of your grade. A handout detailing this assignment will be provided in the first few weeks of the semester.

### TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

WEEK	TOPIC	READINGS
Week 1	<u>Introduction: The Search for "Reality"</u>	O'Brien, Part I  * <i>The Social Construction of Reality</i> by Peter Berber and Thomas Luckmann, Randon House, 1966.
Week 2	<u>Humans, Symbols, and Language</u>	O'Brien, Part II  "Autonomy and conformity in Cooley's self-theory: The looking-glass self and beyond," by David Franks and Viktor Gegas, <i>Symbolic Interaction</i> , 15:49-68, 1992.
Week 3	<u>Negotiating Meaning, Naming</u>	O'Brien, Part III, p.27-167  "Identity change," by Peter Burke, <i>Social Psychological Quarterly</i> , 69:81-96, 2006.
Week 4	<u>Projecting the Definition of the Situation</u>	O'Brien, Part III, p. 168-198  *"Contesting stigma: On Goffman's assumptions of normative order," by Abdi Kusow, <i>Symbolic Interaction</i> , 27:179-197, 2004.
Week 5	<u>Negotiating a Working Consensus</u>	O'Brien, Part III, p. 199-234  *"A differentiated model of role identity acquisition," by Peter Collier, <i>Symbolic Interaction</i> , 24:217-235, 2001.
Week 6	<u>The Self as a Process of Interaction</u>	O'Brien, Part IV, p. 235-308 The self through poetry, provided

\*“The past, present and future of an identity theory,” by Sheldon Stryker and Peter Burke, *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 63:284-297, 2000.

Week 7

Self-Presentation in Interaction

O’Brien, Part IV, p. 309-332  
The self through short stories,  
provided

\*”A cartography of passing in everyday life,” by Daniel Renfrow, *Symbolic Interaction*, 27:485-506, 2004.

Week 8

Building and Breaching Reality

O’Brien, Part V, p. 333-380

“Producing institutional selves: Rhetorically constructing the dignity of sexually marginalized Catholics,” by Donileen Loseke and James Cavendish, *Social Psychological Quarterly*, 64:347-362.

“Stigmatized individuals and the process of identity,” by Joanne Kaufman and Cathryn Johnson, *The Sociological Quarterly*, 45:807-833, 2004.

Week 9

Self-Fulfilling Prophecies

O’Brien, Part V, p. 381-398

“Stigma sentiments and self-meanings: Exploring the modified labeling theory of mental illness,” by Amy Kroska and Sarah Harkness, *Social Psychological Quarterly*, 69:325-348, 2006.

Week 10

Brain Development

Readings provided

\*“Biological determinism and symbolic interaction...” by Robert Dingwall, Brigitte Nerlich, and Samantha Hillyard, *Symbolic Interaction*, 26:631-644, 2003.

Week 11

Ambiguity and Conflict in Interaction

O’Brien, Part VI

\*”Using task definition to modify racial inequality within task groups,” by Carla Goar and Jane Sell, *The Sociological Quarterly*, 46:525-543, 2005.

\*”How edge are you?’ Constructing authentic identities and subcultural boundaries in a straightedge internet forum,” by Patrick Williams and Heith Copes, *Symbolic Interaction*, 28:67-89, 2005.

Weeks 12-14            Project Work and Discussion

Weeks 15-16           Presentations and Wrap Up

\*Readings and assignments for Graduate Students only. Graduate Students are required to do all other readings and assignments, as well.