Self and Subject in History and Theory
285A (Graduate)
Bunche 20150
Wednesday, 9-11:50 am
Professor Jeffrey Guhin
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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 1 pm to 2 pm (and by appointment)

Welcome and Overview

Hello! This is going to be a great class. It's going to be a lot of work, but by the end of the quarter, you should have a very good sense of historical debates about the self and the subject.

Attendance and Absences

We only have ten meetings. If you miss more than two, it will affect your grade. I won't ask why you're not there (you're an adult!), but if you will need to miss more than two, please do contact me. Please be respectful of each other regarding the use of smart phones and social media and other random websites in class.

Contacting Me and Office Hours.

My office hours are 1 to 2 Tuesday and Thursday in Haines 296. You can set up a meeting here: https://www.slotted.co/guhinfall2017. I'm also available most days by appointment.

Papers

You will write two papers, with the option of the second paper being an extension and elaboration for the first with the possibility of future publication. The papers should be no shorter than five pages (Garamond or Times New Roman or something similar, double space, 1 inch margins). They should have a clear argument about the themes we discuss in class, either using your own data or engaging in a theoretical or methodological critique. Papers should be e-mailed to me no later than 11:59 pm of the day they're due. Late papers will be deducted one letter grade each day.

Readings, Presentations, and Participation

Each week we're going to read just one book. I'll provide some supplementary stuff you can also look at, but just the book is required. I know it's hard to read all of a book, and we can talk about strategies to skim but the conversation really will go best if we read the books as seriously as we can and come with notes, ready to discuss them. I'd strongly suggest taking reading notes that you can then refer back to in class. I'll e-mail reading suggestions about a week before each class.

I understand some people have an easier or harder time talking in class. Here's my quick rule: say at least two things. Also if you're talking too much (and I'm definitely one of those people), sometimes it's important to let there be a little silence. Not everyone talks right after someone else finishes talking (even if, well, I do that all the time: this is what growing up in a huge family does to you.)

Grading

Paper 1: 35%
Paper 2: 35%
Class Participation: 30%

Academic Honesty
If you're caught plagiarizing, you get an automatic 0 on the paper (which is a 0, making it pretty hard to pass my class). I'll also report you to the Dean virtually without exception.

Difficult Material
Some material in this class might be hard for some students. If you're worried that's the case, please contact me beforehand.

Week 1: How did we get here?
The Passions and the Interests by Albert O. Hirschman

Week 2: What do we owe each other?
The Theory of Moral Sentiments by Adam Smith

Week 3: How does freedom work?
Some Thoughts Concerning Education by John Locke

Week 4: How do we become free?
Emile, or, On Education by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (tr. Allan Bloom)

Week 5: What Does it mean to find yourself?
Essential Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson (edited by Brooke Atkinson)
-emphasize "Nature" "The American Scholar" "An Address" "Self-Reliance" "Heroism" "Gifts"
"Society and Solitude" "Emancipation in the British West Indies" "The Fugitive Slave Law" "John Brown" "The Emancipation Proclamation" (I might add or remove some of this as we get closer)

Week 6: What makes a person a person?
Human Nature and Conduct by John Dewey

Week 7: How does marginalization affect personhood?
The Souls of Black Folk by W.E.B. DuBois

Week 8: What kind of person is (a) woman?
The Second Sex by Simone De Beauvoir

Week 9: What does it mean to be a subject?
Gender Trouble by Judith Butler

Week 10: What does it mean to be a free subject?
Politics of Piety by Saba Mahmood