



UNSW Course Outline

ARTS2876 Understanding the Self - 2024

Published on the 20 Feb 2024

General Course Information

Course Code : ARTS2876

Year : 2024

Term : Term 1

Teaching Period : T1

Is a multi-term course? : No

Faculty : Faculty of Arts, Design and Architecture

Academic Unit : School of Social Sciences

Delivery Mode : In Person

Delivery Format : Standard

Delivery Location : Kensington

Campus : Sydney

Study Level : Undergraduate

Units of Credit : 6

Useful Links

[Handbook Class Timetable](#)

Course Details & Outcomes

Course Description

Each of us has a self and an identity by virtue of being human. But do other living beings have a self? Do other living beings have society in the same way humans do? In this course, you will consider some traditional assumptions of selfhood (e.g., the capacity for reason, speech, and

memory) from different sociological perspectives. You will consider some interdisciplinary challenges to these assumptions. You will examine arguments for and against extending selfhood to other living beings to add complexity and texture to sociological attempts to understand the self. This course will give you many opportunities to consider the relevance of theories of the self for further studies in Sociology and for other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences.

Course Learning Outcomes

| Course Learning Outcomes |
|--|
| CLO1 : Explain key issues relevant to sociological perspectives on the self. |
| CLO2 : Distinguish between sociological perspectives on the self. |
| CLO3 : Apply sociological perspectives on the self to lived experience. |

| Course Learning Outcomes | Assessment Item |
|--|-----------------------|
| CLO1 : Explain key issues relevant to sociological perspectives on the self. | • Essay |
| CLO2 : Distinguish between sociological perspectives on the self. | • Workbook • Essay |
| CLO3 : Apply sociological perspectives on the self to lived experience. | • Workbook • Essay |

Learning and Teaching Technologies

Moodle - Learning Management System

Assessments

Assessment Structure

| Assessment Item | Weight | Relevant Dates |
|--|--------|--|
| Workbook Assessment Format: Individual | 60% | Start Date: Not Applicable Due Date: Submission 1: 01/03/2024 (23:59 PM) and Submission 2: Due 05/04/2024 (23:59 PM) |
| Essay Assessment Format: Individual | 40% | Start Date: Not Applicable Due Date: 25/04/2024 23:59 PM |

Assessment Details

Workbook

Assessment Overview

You will prepare written reflections of approximately 600 words on the assigned readings each week. You will submit 6 reflections over the course of the term.

You will receive written feedback, a marked rubric, and a numerical grade within ten working days of submission. The rubric will be available at the start of term to allow you to work towards clearly defined standards.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CLO2 : Distinguish between sociological perspectives on the self.
- CLO3 : Apply sociological perspectives on the self to lived experience.

Detailed Assessment Description

Please see Moodle for detailed description.

Assessment Length

Approximately 500 words per week

Assessment information

You will submit your workbook entries for Weeks 2 and 3 on 1 March 2024 (23:59 PM) for graded feedback.

If required, a 4-day automatic Short Extension without documentation is available for the week 2 and 3 workbook submissions. You can apply by accessing the Short Extension Student Portal on the [Special Consideration login page](#). This will be visible, and open for student applications, from 13 February 2024.

You will submit entries for Weeks 4, 5, 7 and 8 on 5 April 2024 (23:59 PM) for graded feedback.

If required, a 7-day automatic Short Extension without documentation is available for the week 4, 5, 7 and 8 workbook submissions. You can apply by accessing the Short Extension Student Portal on the [Special Consideration login page](#). This will be visible, and open for student applications, from 13 February 2024.

Assignment submission Turnitin type

This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

Essay

Assessment Overview

You will write an essay (2000 words) on course themes.

You will receive written feedback, a marked rubric, and a numerical grade within ten working days of submission. The rubric will be available at the start of term to allow you to work towards clearly defined standards.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CLO1 : Explain key issues relevant to sociological perspectives on the self.
- CLO2 : Distinguish between sociological perspectives on the self.
- CLO3 : Apply sociological perspectives on the self to lived experience.

Detailed Assessment Description

Please see Moodle for detailed description.

Assessment Length

1500 words

Assessment information

The essay is due on 25 April 2024 at 23:59 pm.

If required, a 4-day automatic Short Extension without documentation is available for this assessment. You can apply by accessing the Short Extension Student Portal on the [Special Consideration login page](#). This will be visible, and open for student applications, from 13 February 2024.

Assignment submission Turnitin type

This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

General Assessment Information

Please see Moodle for more detail.

Grading Basis

Standard

Requirements to pass course

You must achieve a composite mark of at least 50 out of 100 in order to pass the course.

Course Schedule

| Teaching Week/Module | Activity Type | Content |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|--|
| Week 1 : 12 February - 18 February | Module | Hello, and welcome to ARTS2876 Understanding the Self! Please log into Moodle which is the course learning system, familiarise yourself with the site, and then, please watch the welcome video. |
| | Reading | Week 1 Required Reading* Tzvetan Todorov (1984 [1982]) 'The Discovery of America' Pp. 3-13 in <i>The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other</i> (trans. Richard Howard). New York: Harper Perennial. *Please note: Electronic copies of the readings for the course are available on Moodle via Leganto Recommended Readings (Extension) - Available on Moodle |
| | Lecture | Week 1 Lecture - Introduction (14 February 2024) This class will introduce the course, identify some of its main questions and themes. We will discuss the course aims and its structure. |
| | Tutorial | Week 1 Tutorial Tutorials are held on Thursdays. You will meet your tutor and classmates. We will introduce each other, and address your questions about the workbook. We will also discuss attendance requirements and other administrative details. |
| | Online Activity | Week 1 Online Activity Please do the online activity on Moodle. It will help you identify strategies to enable you to reflect on the readings in the course, and is designed to support you in preparing your workbook. |
| Week 2 : 19 February - 25 February | Reading | Week 2 Required Reading René Descartes ([1641]1986) <i>Meditations On First Philosophy</i> (Trans. John Cottingham). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Excerpts Pp. 12-15, 16-23. Recommended Readings (Extension) - Available on Moodle |
| | Homework | Preparation for Week 2 Prepare your before-class workbook entry in advance of Week 2's lecture. Please read Descartes's first and second meditations. Try to identify a passage that speaks to you. Dwell on it, and try to articulate in writing why it is meaningful to you. Here are some prompts in case you get stuck: How does Descartes understand the self? What is the method that Descartes adopts to access the self? To what extent are the process (that is his method) and the outcome (that is the self) inextricable? Write your reflections in your workbook. |
| | Lecture | Lecture 2: Thinking the Self – Descartes (21 February 2024) |
| | Tutorial | Week 2 Tutorial We will address any administrative questions you might have. We will discuss the lecture and the readings, and in so doing, we will try to build on themes from this week and last week. |
| | Homework | Finishing Up Week 2 After tutorial this week, complete your after-class workbook entry to conclude Week 2. After your tutorial, take some time to reflect on what you've learned from Descartes, and try to make connections between his conception of selfhood and Todorov's critical inquiry in <i>The Conquest of America</i> . Return to your workbook, and re-read your previous entry. Reflect on your entry, and add any new insights. Avoid deleting your previous work if you find that you don't like what you have already written. Remember that your workbook is a living document – in other words, there is no definite 'right' or 'wrong' answer. Your workbook should change and evolve as your thinking does. |
| Week 3 : 26 February - 3 March | Reading | Week 3 Required Reading Émile Durkheim ([1914] 2005), 'The dualism of human nature and its social conditions', <i>Durkheimian Studies</i> , vol.11, pp.35-45. Recommended Readings (Extension) - Available on Moodle |
| | Homework | Preparation for Week 3 Prepare your before-class workbook entry in advance of Week 3's Lecture. Here are some prompts in case you get stuck: What is Durkheim's conception of self? To what extent does it borrow some of Descartes's assumptions? How does Durkheim extend or transform some of Descartes's central ideas? In short, what does Durkheim's perspective offer to our attempt to 'understand' the self? Reflect on these questions, and record your thoughts in your workbook. |
| | Lecture | Week 3 Lecture: Society and the Self - Durkheim (28 February 2024) |
| | Tutorial | Week 3 Tutorial We will address any administrative questions you might have. We will discuss the lecture and the readings, and in so doing, we will try to |

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| | | build on themes from this week and last week. Remember that your workbook entries for Weeks 2 and 3 are due this week! |
| | Homework | <p>Finishing Up Week 3 After tutorial this week, complete your after-class workbook entry to conclude Week 3.</p> <p>After your tutorial, reflect on what you've learned about Durkheim's conception of the self. Return to your workbook, and re-read your previous entry. Reflect, and add any new connections you have identified (if any) between Durkheim and the other thinkers we have discussed. Remember, please do not delete your previous work. Just date your new entries to keep your previous entry separate from your new insights.</p> |
| | Assessment | Workbook Submission Your Workbook entries for Week 2 (Descartes) and Week 3 (Durkheim) are due on 1 March 2024 at 23:59 PM. |
| Week 4 : 4 March - 10 March | Reading | <p>Week 4 Required Reading G.W.F. Hegel ([1807]1977) 'Independence And Dependence Of Self-Consciousness: Lordship And Bondage' In <i>Phenomenology Of Spirit</i> (Trans. A.V. Miller). Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 111-119.*</p> <p>*This short reading is arguably among the most difficult in the history of Western thought. But it is so very important for our attempts to interrogate different conceptions of selfhood. In short, the reading is hard, but please don't be discouraged. We'll tackle it together in lecture and you'll come to appreciate it more than you might think!</p> <p>Recommended Readings (Extension) - Available on Moodle</p> |
| | Lecture | Week 4 Lecture: Recognition and the Self - Hegel (6 March 2024) |
| | Homework | <p>Preparation for Week 4 Prepare your before-class workbook entry in advance of Week 4's Lecture.</p> <p>Here are some prompts: Focus on the first line of the reading. What does it mean to you? What does it suggest as a necessary condition for selfhood? Next, think about what Hegel says about the Master (or Lord), and then the Slave (or Bondsman). What does the Master have that the Slave doesn't? And what does the Slave have that the Master doesn't?</p> |
| | Tutorial | Week 4 Tutorial We will concentrate on the reading, and work on different facets of the text to consolidate your understanding of the Master/Slave dialectic. We will consider the lecture's themes, and situate them in relation to the other perspectives on the self we have considered thus far. |
| | Homework | <p>Finishing Up Week 4</p> <p>After tutorial this week, complete your after-class workbook entry to conclude Week 4.</p> <p>Reflect on what you have learned from Hegel. Return to your workbook, and re-read your previous entry. Can you identify elements of your interpretation that were consistent with your new understanding? Write these down, add your new insights, and be sure to date your new thoughts and reflections. Try to reflect on how the concepts and themes we have discussed are beginning to build on one another from week to week.</p> |
| Week 5 : 11 March - 17 March | Reading | <p>Week 5 Required Reading Frantz Fanon (2008 [1952]) 'The Lived Experience of the Black Man' Pp. 89-119 in <i>Black Skin, White Masks</i> (trans. Richard Philcox). New York: Grove Press.</p> <p>Recommended Readings (Extension) - Available on Moodle</p> |
| | Homework | <p>Preparation for Week 5 Prepare your before-class workbook entry in advance of Week 5's Lecture.</p> <p>Here are some prompts in case you get stuck: What defines the experience of blackness for Fanon? And how does this experience of blackness contrast the image of whiteness he presents? What resonances can you detect with other thinkers that we've studied in the course?</p> |
| | Lecture | Week 5 Lecture: Otherness and the Self - Fanon (13 March 2024) |
| | Tutorial | Week 5 Tutorial We will address any administrative questions you might have. We will discuss the lecture and situate Fanon in relation to Todorov, and then, in relation to the other thinkers we have studied. |
| | Homework | <p>Finishing up Week 5 After tutorial this week, complete your after-class workbook entry to conclude Week 5.</p> <p>Here are some prompts in case you get stuck: Reflect on what you've learned from our discussions about selfhood and otherness with respect to Fanon. Return to your previous entries and try to make connections the thinkers we have studied in this section of the course. Add any new insights to your entry for this week and to your other entries, and be sure to date them.</p> |
| Week 6 : 18 March - 24 March | Other | Flexibility Week! There are no scheduled lectures or tutorials this week. |
| Week 7 : 25 March - 31 March | Reading | <p>Week 7 Required Reading Leslie Irvine (2007) "The Question of Animal Selves: Implications for sociological knowledge and practice." <i>Qualitative Sociology Review</i> 3 (1): 5-22.</p> <p>Jacques Derrida (2004) 'Violence Against Animals' Pp.62-76 in <i>For What</i></p> |

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| | | Tomorrow: A Dialogue. Stanford: Stanford University Press. Recommended Readings (Extension) - Available on Moodle |
| | Homework | Week 7 Preparation Prepare your before-class workbook entry in advance of Week 7's Lecture. Here are some prompts in case you get stuck: To what extent do you agree with Irvine's argument that non-human animals have object orientation, and hence satisfy the sociological criteria for selfhood? How does her argument resonate with Derrida's? In other words, what are the points of overlap and/or dissonance? In the end, are all non-human animals selves or are there limits? And if so, what are they? |
| | Lecture | Week 7 Lecture: Animals and the Self - Irvine and Derrida (27 March 2024) |
| | Tutorial | Week 7 Tutorial We will discuss the lecture and the readings, and in so doing, we will try to build on themes from this week and last week. Remember that the next installment of your workbook entries is due next week! |
| | Homework | Finishing up Week 7 Complete your after-class workbook entry to conclude Week 7. Reflect on your sense of selfhood and what it requires as a minimum condition. Return to your previous entries and try to make connections between Irvine/Derrida and the work of the other thinkers we have studied. And if you are feeling ambitious, reflect on all of the thinkers we have studied thus far: to what extent have they helped you to 'understand the self'? |
| Week 8 : 1 April - 7 April | Reading | Week 8 Required Reading Eduardo Kohn (2013) 'The Living Thought' Pp. 71-100 in <i>How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology Beyond the Human</i> . Berkeley: University of California Press. Recommended Readings (Extension) - Available on Moodle |
| | Homework | Week 8 Preparation Prepare your before-class workbook entry in advance of Week 8's Lecture. Here are some prompts in case you get stuck: How does Kohn conceive of selfhood in this text? What distinguishes his argument from the attribution of selfhood to non-human animals as discussed last week in our treatment of Irvine? How does Kohn's work extend or deviate from the previous authors we have discussed? |
| | Lecture | Week 8 Lecture: Forests and the Self - Kohn (3 April 2024) |
| | Tutorial | Week 8 Tutorial We will address any administrative questions you might have in preparation for your workbook submission on Friday. We will discuss the lecture and the readings, and begin to consider the final essay in the course. |
| | Homework | Finishing up Week 8 Complete your after-class workbook entry to conclude Week 8. Reflect on what selfhood means to you. Can selfhood be attributed to nonhuman living beings (such as plants, forests, trees) and/or to nonhuman animals (such as dogs, mice, possums)? Return to your previous entries and try to make connections between Kohn and the work of the other thinkers we have studied. Reflect on all of the thinkers we have studied thus far: to what extent have they helped you to 'understand the self'? |
| | Assessment | Workbook Submission Your Workbook entries for Weeks 4, 5, 7 and 8 are due on 5 April 2024 at 23:59 PM. |
| Week 9 : 8 April - 14 April | Reading | Week 9 Required Reading Jean-Luc Nancy (2008 [2000]) 'The Intruder' Pp. 161-170 in <i>Corpus</i> (Trans. Richard A. Rand). New York: Fordham University Press. Recommended Readings (Extension) - Available on Moodle |
| | Online Activity | Week 9 Online Activity Please do the online activity on Moodle. It is designed to support you in preparing your essay. |
| | Lecture | Week 9 Lecture: Machines and the Self - Nancy (10 April 2024) |
| | Tutorial | Week 9 Tutorial We will address any administrative questions you might have. We will discuss the lecture and the readings, and discuss the final essay. |
| Week 10 : 15 April - 21 April | Reading | Week 10 Required Reading Henri Bergson (1983 [1907]) <i>Creative Evolution</i> . London: Macmillan Press. Excerpts Pp. ix-xv, 1-7. Recommended Readings (Extension) - Available on Moodle |
| | Lecture | Week 10 Lecture: Life and the Self - Bergson (17 April 2024) |
| | Tutorial | Week 10 Tutorial We will discuss lecture themes and the reading for Week 10, discuss the essay, and reflect on the course to tie things together. |
| Week 11 : 22 April - 28 April | Assessment | Essay Your essay is due on 25 April 2024 at 23:59 PM. |

Attendance Requirements

Students are strongly encouraged to attend all classes and review lecture recordings.

Course Resources

Prescribed Resources

Electronic copies of the readings are available in the weekly toggles via Leganto on the ARTS2876 Moodle page: <http://moodle.telt.unsw.edu.au>.

Course Evaluation and Development

Student feedback will be gathered through myExperience surveys, and you will be given opportunities throughout the term to give informal feedback. This course received excellent feedback in the 2023 myExperience course and teacher surveys. What's new for 2024? Well, for one thing, the course has a new convenor who has revised the course reading list to introduce greater diversity into the course content. The course has new readings, ideas, and themes that will take the course in a new direction. We look forward to your feedback!

Staff Details

| Position | Name | Email | Location | Phone | Availability | Equitable Learning Services Contact | Primary Contact |
|----------|-----------------|-------|------------------|-------|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Convenor | Melanie White | | Morven Brown 163 | | In-Person (F2F), Zoom, Skype and/or Teams by appointment | Yes | Yes |
| Tutor | Madelene V eber | | | | | No | No |

Other Useful Information

Academic Information

Due to evolving advice by NSW Health, students must check for updated information regarding online learning for all Arts, Design and Architecture courses this term (via Moodle or course information provided).

Please see: <https://www.unsw.edu.au/arts-design-architecture/student-life/resources-support/protocols-guidelines> for essential student information relating to:

- UNSW and Faculty policies and procedures;
- Student Support Services;

- Dean's List;
- review of results;
- credit transfer;
- cross-institutional study and exchange;
- examination information;
- enrolment information;
- Special Consideration in the event of illness or misadventure;
- student equity and disability;

And other essential academic information.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of others and presenting them as your own. It can take many forms, from deliberate cheating to accidentally copying from a source without acknowledgement.

UNSW groups plagiarism into the following categories:

- Copying: Using the same or very similar words to the original text or idea without acknowledging the source or using quotation marks. This includes copying materials, ideas or concepts from a book, article, report or other written document, presentation, composition, artwork, design, drawing, circuitry, computer program or software, website, internet, other electronic resource, or another person's assignment without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Inappropriate paraphrasing: Changing a few words and phrases while mostly retaining the original information, structure and/or progression of ideas of the original without acknowledgement. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another's ideas or words without credit and to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without appropriate referencing.
- Collusion: Working with others but passing off the work as a person's individual work. Collusion also includes providing your work to another student for the purpose of them plagiarising, paying another person to perform an academic task, stealing or acquiring another person's academic work and copying it, offering to complete another person's work or seeking payment for completing academic work.
- Inappropriate citation: Citing sources which have not been read, without acknowledging the "secondary" source from which knowledge of them has been obtained.
- Duplication ("self-plagiarism"): Submitting your own work, in whole or in part, where it has previously been prepared or submitted for another assessment or course at UNSW or another university.

The UNSW Academic Skills support offers resources and individual consultations. Students are also reminded that careful time management is an important part of study. One of the identified causes of plagiarism is poor time management. Students should allow sufficient time for

research, drafting and proper referencing of sources in preparing all assessment items. UNSW Library has the ELISE tool available to assist you with your study at UNSW. ELISE is designed to introduce new students to studying at UNSW, but it can also be a great refresher during your study.

Completing the ELISE tutorial and quiz will enable you to:

- analyse topics, plan responses and organise research for academic writing and other assessment tasks
- effectively and efficiently find appropriate information sources and evaluate relevance to your needs
- use and manage information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- better manage your time
- understand your rights and responsibilities as a student at UNSW
- be aware of plagiarism, copyright, UNSW Student Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use of UNSW ICT Resources Policy
- be aware of the standards of behaviour expected of everyone in the UNSW community
- locate services and information about UNSW and UNSW Library

Use of AI for assessments

As AI applications continue to develop, and technology rapidly progresses around us, we remain committed to our values around academic integrity at UNSW. Where the use of AI tools, such as ChatGPT, has been permitted by your course convener, they must be properly credited and your submissions must be substantially your own work.

In cases where the use of AI has been prohibited, please respect this and be aware that where unauthorised use is detected, penalties will apply.

[Use of AI for assessments | UNSW Current Students](#)

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Turnitin Submission

If you encounter a problem when attempting to submit your assignment through Turnitin, please telephone External Support on 9385 3331 or email them on externalteltsupport@unsw.edu.au

Support hours are 8:00am – 10:00pm on weekdays and 9:00am – 5:00pm on weekends (365 days a year). If you are unable to submit your assignment due to a fault with Turnitin, you may apply for an extension, but you must retain your ticket number from External Support (along with

any other relevant documents) to include as evidence to support your extension application. If you email External Support, you will automatically receive a ticket number, but if you telephone, you will need to specifically ask for one. Turnitin also provides updates on their system status on Twitter.

Generally, assessment tasks must be submitted electronically via either Turnitin or a Moodle assignment. In instances where this is not possible, alternative submission details will be stated on your course's Moodle site. For information on how to submit assignments online via Moodle: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/how-submit-assignment-moodle>

Late Submission Penalty

UNSW has a standard late submission penalty of:

- 5% per calendar day,
- for all assessments where a penalty applies,
- capped at five calendar days (120 hours) from the assessment deadline, after which a student cannot submit an assessment, and
- no permitted variation.

Students are expected to manage their time to meet deadlines and to request [Special Consideration](#) as early as possible before the deadline. Support with [Time Management is available here](#).

School Contact Information

School of Social Sciences

Location: Room 159, Morven Brown Building (C20), Kensington campus

Opening Hours: Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm (except public holidays)

Telephone: +61 2 9385 1807

Email: soss@unsw.edu.au

Web: <https://www.unsw.edu.au/arts-design-architecture/our-schools/social-sciences>