Personal Identity Development
Project Assignment
Photos of student projects

Honors A292
Honors Seminar in Social Sciences:
Race, Ethnicity and Identity in the Social Sciences
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Assignment

You will produce a poster, scrapbook, photo collage, video or other visual/multimedia/three-dimensional piece in which you explore your own racial/ethnic/cultural identity, and the factors that contributed to its development. You will draw on research with family members, your own reflections on your upbringing, information you can find on your personal, familial, community, ethnic and cultural history from public sources (e.g., internet, library books, newspapers), and other resources as available. The projects will be shared with the class and (with your permission) with select invited guests in the class presentation session on October 26. Students will then be asked to complete a reflection piece on the project.

Questions that should be addressed somehow in your project include:

- How do you define your identity?
  - What role do race and ethnicity play in this definition?
- What factors influenced your identity development?
  - To what extent is it your parents, grandparents, other family? How about home community(ies)? Your educational experiences? Your heritage in terms of country of national origin and/or where your distant ancestors lived? Religious affiliation? Race? Ethnicity? Gender? Other factors?
- What are some of the practices that reflect your identity vis-à-vis culture?
  - For example, are there certain foods you eat? Is it in the way you express your faith and practice your religion? How about the language(s) you use at home? Are there certain ways of describing phenomena/the world about you that reflect your culture?
- Of what aspects of your cultural/ethnic/racial backgrounds are you most proud?
Identity... 21st century

Female

Gigi
single mom
1930s
great depression

great grandma

Mom (Karen)
athlete
career
tough cookie

ATHLETE

EDUCATION

Ich spreche Deutsch weil meine Opa spreicht Deutsch.

white

gardening

Dust Bowl

FAMILY
Ethnicity...
Race...

ITALIAN

EUROPEAN

GERMAN

Eastern European

United States Census:

☑️ white
How I got to Alaska...

Father:
- Early 1900s from Italy to New York
- 1983 (Died) from New York to Alaska

Mother:
- Late 1890s from Germany to Ukraine
- 1915 from Ukraine to New York (Went straight through)
- Farming from New York to Washington
- Grandparents (1964) went from New York to military in Washington
My Umma and Uppa
Self exploration: Personal Identity Development project

Plural identity

The essence of this process is to examine the diversity of cultural, social, personal, and historical aspects that make up our identity. This process involves an exploration of individual and collective experiences that shape our understanding of who we are.

Heritage

The term refers to the legacy of past generations that influences our present and future. It includes traditions, stories, customs, and values that have been passed down through time. Understanding heritage helps us connect with our roots and the collective memory of our ancestors.

Gender roles and statuses are also an important part of my identity.

Personal stories

Each of us has a unique story that shapes our identity. Personal experiences, including our upbringing, education, and life events, contribute to who we are. Reflecting on these stories helps us understand the forces that have shaped our personal development.

Religious affiliation

Religion plays a significant role in many cultures, providing a sense of community, purpose, and guidance. My religious affiliation has influenced my beliefs, values, and practices.

Practices that reflect the identity of my vis-à-vis culture

A complex series of cultural practices shape our identity. These practices are passed down through generations and help us preserve cultural traditions. Each practice reflects a unique aspect of our identity.

Aspects of my cultural/ethnic/racial background are you most proud of?

- I am proud of the protection of my parents over me till I graduate from college.
- I am proud of being able to cook different foods, talk a variety of languages, and how much I respect my culture and how unique it is.

All my parents including my grandparents and my entire extended family have the same background. It is my heritage, through my parents, from their parents and passed on from generation to generation.
Aspects of my cultural/ethnic/racial background are you most proud of

- I am proud of the protection of my parents over me till I graduate from college.
- I am proud of who I am and being able to be a part of and experiencing two different cultures. I am black and proud of it.
- I am proud of being able to cook different foods, talk a variety of languages and of how much I respect my culture and ethnicity and how unique it is.
Enthusiasm in football, otherwise known as soccer- Another sense of a common national culture, shared amongst the people.

Gender roles and Statuses are also an important part of my identity.

- The women - feed the families, Men - bread winners of the family with a higher social status than the women and children.

- Men and guests eat before women and children what is observed in the westernized families, eating together, around a common table.

- This has been adopted by most families in the cities, even though the food of the dad and guests are dished out first before any other person, mostly as a sign of respect.
My Religion

I am a practicing Catholic. I was born and raised in the United States, where I was exposed to a variety of religions. My family is Catholic, and I was raised in a Catholic upbringing. I was baptized and confirmed in the Catholic faith, and I continue to practice it today.

Feminism

I am a feminist. I believe in women's rights and gender equality. I was influenced by many women role models, including my mother, sister, and friends. These women have taught me to be strong, confident, and to fight for what I believe in.

My Education

My education has always been a priority for me. I have attended public schools and universities, and I have received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Oceanography from the University of Washington.

My Home

Alaska is a special place to me. The landscape and the people are unique and have a special place in my heart. I grew up in a small town on the coast, and I have always been drawn to the wilderness. I am proud to call Alaska my home.

Muscular Dystrophy

I am affected by muscular dystrophy. It is a genetic disorder that affects muscle function. It is a progressive disease, and it can be very challenging to live with. However, I am determined to overcome the challenges and live my life to the fullest.
WHAT MAKES ME, ME!
Thomasina was a great family friend. She was killed in a gang related accident. Her killer was a black man in his 20s. She was my confidant growing up. I used to tell her when someone made me mad, or if I was sad about something. When she died, all I knew was that it was a black man that killed her. For a good several months, I was scared of every black man that I saw.

“When Amber grew her fear of black men, I knew there was a problem. I had Tim Carmack bring over a black man from our church for dinner one evening and explained to Amber that he would be joining us for dinner. At first she was cautious but eventually she warmed up to him. It really is all about our experiences. Sometimes a negative experience needs to be counteracted with a positive one.”

“Pamela Drake (mother)
Germany

I do not speak to my father or any of his side of the family. My mother's father refuses to speak about his side of the family. The only background of where they originate are is from my grandmother on my mother's side of the family. She stated in a recent interview that her family is from northern Germany. Many of her recipes come from this region, recipes that I grew to love as a child. It is difficult to be proud of a German ancestry because of WWII. Even German people have a difficult time at being German. I should know, I was an exchange student in Germany and the only time they brought out their flags is during soccer games. I do love the amazing foods and beer that have come from the Germans. Though, I'm glad that I got the chance to experience German culture, but when I lived there, I realized that my immediate family has just developed traditions of its own. They have hardly anything in common (beyond food) with my German host family.
Reflection- Part 2:

What aspects of my cultural/ethnic/racial backgrounds am I most proud?

While I may define myself as White American, I feel very proud to have German, Irish, Norwegian, and Swedish roots. While those roots may not have made a huge difference in my life, I respect each culture very much and am very happy that somehow my parents found each other and melded in me, their respective ethnicities, good morals, and personality traits to form the always learning, red-headed White American that I am today.
In this context, a last issue needs to be addressed: the epistemological significance of my own race and biography. I write as a Latino. The arguments I present no doubt reflect the lens through which I view the world. My perspective may differ from those of others, but I believe it is valuable and worthy of consideration. My experiences as a member of a marginalized community provide me with a unique understanding of the issues we face. I hope that by sharing my perspective, we can move closer to understanding and addressing the challenges we face as a society.

The Summit of Happiness Is Reached When a Person Is Ready to Be What He Is. ERASMUS

Where do we come from?

HeinOnline — 29 Harv C.R.-C.L. L. Rev. 56 (1994)

B. Race and Identity

Communities form a core source of personal identity and provide a crucial basis for people to interact with the larger society. The culture shared across a community lends “significance to human experience by encompassing the values, the mores, and the emotional, religious, and societal structures that define the boundaries of our identities.”

The Social Construction of Race

Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review
Reflection - Part 1:

How do I define my identity? What factors influenced my identity development? What are some of the practices that reflect my identity vis-a-vis culture?

I would define my identity as White American. While my ethnicity and heritage come from a few places around Europe I feel I have not been in enough contact with any of those cultures to have been influenced enough to relate to them and to call myself one of them yet.

I was born in Iowa where many Norwegians and Swedes settled when they first immigrated to the United States. The dominant religion there is Lutheran, which is what I was raised as. My father is ethnically Norwegian/Swedish and is from Iowa and my mother is ethnically German/Irish and is from Florida.

My family moved to Alaska when I was less than a year old. Since then I have lived all over Alaska: Kotzebue, Nome, Fairbanks, and Anchorage. Most of my influence has come from my parents themselves, as people and their personalities, not particularly their ethnic backgrounds. I was not influenced by members of my family other than my immediate family unit since we lived so far away from our other family members, we made infrequent trips to go see our other family members, and my parents did not bring any or choose to pass on any traditions to the family they started together. We did not celebrate any traditions on a regular basis besides Christmas, Thanksgiving, Easter, and Halloween; all of which can be traced back to the Christian religion or as a commercialized American holiday.

The only real influence I have received from my ethnic background has been by my grandmother on my father's side of my family. Sometimes during the yearly visits I go to see my grandparents back in Iowa, my grandmother will fix her famous Norwegian foods. When I am at my grandparents' house we pray regularly before every meal and go to church every Sunday because my grandfather is a Lutheran pastor. While that is in what I have experienced most of it have not been in enough contact with my mother's family to have been influenced or adopt any traditions from them or even from my mother herself. I do not feel like that is my identity.

As a pilot, my dad has traveled around the world hundreds of times over. One story in particular my dad told me was of when he went to Sweden. When he got off the plane there were no Scandinavians speaking in his in Swedish. My dad, though he could not speak any Swedish, went to the only place where he fit in, even though he had been raised on American with Norwegian and Swedish heritage and could not speak the language. Maybe one day I will travel to the countries of my heritage and have a similar experience.

As a language learner, I realize how much language has to do with culture. Since I only speak English I feel like my perception of language is very subjective. I was able to travel to a place and feel a sense of belonging and culture there that I otherwise would not have been able to experience. Though, that is what I will be.
Township, Knox County, Ohio, was settled first in 1822 by William Hall and a Washington Hocks. Born in Hancock County, Ohio, in 1819, he moved to Knox County in 1820, and to the settlement of South Fort and Pleasant Township in 1822. He was a member of the first county council in 1823.

In 1824, he married Elizabeth Hall, a daughter of William Hall, who had settled in Knox County in 1821. They had five children: John, William, Mary, Elizabeth, and Sarah.

In 1830, the first United States Census was taken in Knox County. The Hall family was listed as living in Pleasant Township, with William as head of the household.

In 1840, William Hall was listed as owning 100 acres of land and 20 slaves. He also operated a sawmill and a gristmill.

In 1850, the family had grown to include five children. William Hall was listed as owning 200 acres of land and 30 slaves. He was also listed as a farmer.

In 1860, the family had grown to include seven children. William Hall was listed as owning 300 acres of land and 40 slaves. He was still listed as a farmer.

In 1870, the family had grown to include nine children. William Hall was listed as owning 400 acres of land and 50 slaves. He was still listed as a farmer.

In 1880, the family had grown to include eleven children. William Hall was listed as owning 500 acres of land and 60 slaves. He was still listed as a farmer.

In 1890, the family had grown to include thirteen children. William Hall was listed as owning 600 acres of land and 70 slaves. He was still listed as a farmer.