Society and the Individual
Dr. Marsiglio

Key Perspectives and Concepts/Terms (updated 1/6/15)

Every discipline has a set of theoretical perspectives and concepts that provide people in the field with a nomenclature (set of terms, language) for communicating their ideas about their subject matter. I've listed <u>some</u> of the basic terms you will read, hear, and use in this class. I encourage you to make the effort to become comfortable with these terms because they represent the perspectives and concepts that are central to this course. You will need to develop a deep understanding of this nomenclature to do well in this course. Make sure that you can create your own examples for the concepts listed here.

<u>Theoretical Perspectives: (micro sociology or sociological psychology)</u>

1. symbolic interactionism

2. social exchange

3. interaction ritual chain model (IRC)

4. dramaturgical

<u>Concepts</u>

1. social structure
2. social process
3. negotiated order
4. definition of the situation
5. islands of meaning
6. neural plasticity
7. symbol
8. significant symbol
9. intersubjectivity
10. status
11. role
12. role taking
13. role making
14. role exit (disengagement and disidentification)
15. socialization (primary and secondary)
16. self

17. "I" and "me"
18. looking-glass self
19. identity
20. identity salience
21. psychological centrality
22. commitment
23. self esteem
24. self-concept
25. social identity
26. personal identity
27. reflected self
28. reflected appraisals
29. stigma
30. impression management (dramaturgical approach)
31. front
32. working consensus
33. identity work
34. identity talk
35. mutual reciprocity
36. univocal reciprocity
37. market opportunities
38. cultural capital
39. generalized cultural capital
40. personalized cultural capital
41. symbolic exchange
42. documentary method of interpretation
43. vocabularies of motive
44. self as project
45. turning points (in identity)
46. sociology of emotions
47. emotion work
48. sympathy margin
49. sympathy etiquette
50. primary relationship
51. primary network
52. habitus
53. border work/boundary work, bordering
54. human agency
55. multiphrenia
56. social capital
57. comparative appraisals
58. going concerns

59. discursive environments
60. institutional selves
61. paternal claiming
62. family dance
63. reification
64. announcements
65. placements
66. altercasting
67. cyberhood
68. self-claims
69. sociological mindfulness
70. sociosomatics
71. shame work
72. organizational frame
73. symbolic clitoridectomy
74. embodiment
75. gloried self
76. symbolic power
77. emotional socialization
78. othering
79. pregaming
80. socio-virtual imagination
81. code of the street
82. fencing
83. reality maintenance

Sheldon Stryker's Summary of Symbolic Interactionism

1) <u>Behavior is dependent on a named or classified world</u>. The names or class terms (e.g., race, marriage, adolescent, woman, father, religion) attached to aspects of the environment, both physical and social, carry meaning in the form of shared behavioral expectations. Individuals learn through social interaction how to classify these objects and how they are expected to behave toward them

2) Among the class terms learned in interaction are the <u>symbols that are used to designate "positions"</u> (e.g., father, son, employee, student) which are relatively stable aspects or components of social structure. These positions carry the shared behavioral expectations that are conventionally labeled "roles" (e.g., fathers are expected to support their families financially, sons are expected to show their fathers respect)

3) Persons who act in the context of organized patterns of behavior, i.e., in the context of social structures, <u>"name" one another by recognizing others as occupants of positions</u>. When they "name" one another they invoke expectations about each others' behavior.

4) Persons acting in the context of organized behavior <u>apply names to themselves</u> as well. Stryker calls these names "positional designations." They become part of the "self" and people internalize expectations about their own behavior

5) When entering interaction situations (e.g., classroom), <u>persons define the situation by applying names</u> to it (e.g., Society and the Individual, Intro), to the other participants in the interaction (e.g., students, professor, TA), to themselves (student), and to particular features of the situation (e.g., upper division course, lower division, elective, course for major), and use these definitions to organize their own behavior in the situation.

6) Social behavior is not completely determined by these definitions. However, initial definitions may constrain the possibilities for alternative definitions to emerge from interaction. <u>Behavior is the product of a role-making process,</u> initiated by the expectations people express as they define situations. This process may involve a tentative, sometimes extremely subtle, probing interchange among actors. It also can reshape the form and content of the interaction.

7) The degree to which roles are "made" rather than simply "played," will depend on the larger social structures in which interactive situations are embedded. Some structures are <u>"open"</u> (e.g., most college parties) and others relatively <u>"closed"</u> (e.g., courtroom trial) with respect to novelty in roles and in role enactments or performances. <u>All structures impose some limits on the kinds of definitions</u> which may be called into play without disrupting the situation and thus the possibilities for interaction.

8) To the degree that roles are made rather than only played as given, <u>changes can occur in the</u>

character of definitions, the names and the class terms used in those definitions, and the possibilities for interaction. Over time, such changes at the micro-level can lead to changes in the larger social structure within which interactions take place.

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In-class Small Group Project:
Working with the Theoretical Perspectives

PRINT YOUR NAMES AND YOUR MATERIAL FOR THIS EXERCISE ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER (I will collect these separate sheets)

Now that we've discussed symbolic interactionism (SI), social exchange (SE), and the interaction ritual chain model (IRC), it's time to put your understanding of these perspectives to the test.

1. In your small groups, I want you to begin this project by sharing with each other some of the questions you have about interpersonal interactions that intrigue you (puzzle you) the most and involve **important social issues/problems (not trivial matters that have no lasting or significant influence on social relations)**, e.g., I wonder why men [or certain categories of men–based on age, race, education, etc.] tend to.....; I wonder why women [or certain categories of women–based on age, race, education, etc.] tend to ......; I wonder why parents often.....; As you think about these and other questions you will need to identify the context within which the social activity/exchange is taking place (dating relationship, face-to-face communication in the home, meetings in public places, formal competitions, etc.). Once you've decided as a group on one research question, **write it down.**

2. Next, you should identify one of the theoretical perspectives listed above and develop an outline (**use bullet points**) to **EXPLAIN** in **DETAIL** what key concepts you would use to help you organize your thinking about the research question you've chosen. If you were actually going to conduct a study and collect interview data, what **key assumptions about social life** (based on the perspectives we've covered) would guide you as you prepared your study (e.g., Do you want to assume that individuals will act rationally in the situation of interest to you? What about the importance of emotions or people working together to construct the meaning of a situation?). Figure out what **concepts** would be appropriate to use in this context. You need to clarify **WHY** you've made these choices. Look back through your notes.

3. Finally, can you see any value in incorporating **one of the other perspectives** into your project? If so, explain your reasoning for selecting this second perspective. How does it fit with the first perspective you've chosen?

4. Time permitting, I will select one or more groups to present their project to the entire class, so please prepare your materials in an organized fashion.

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In-class Small Group Exercise:
Managing the Stigma of Genital Herpes

I want you to begin the following exercise by describing a hypothetical U.F. student according to the following characteristics (**DO THIS PART QUICKLY**):

1. Name
2. Gender
3. Age
4. Race/ethnicity
5. Family background (ie., parents and siblings)
6. Sexual orientation
7. Year in school
8. Major/career plans
9. Current dating/marital status
10. Three major hobbies person enjoys
11. Identify 3-4 major personality traits

Now, assume that this person has just discovered that he/she tested positive for genital herpes. Using as many of Goffman's concepts as possible, prepare a detailed description of this person's personal and social experiences during the next year. You are free to develop whatever type of scenario/story you would like, but it needs to be informed by the characteristics you assigned to the hypothetical student.

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In-class Small Group Project:
Goffman's Dramaturgical Approach, Impression Management, and Teams

Now that we have completed our discussion of Goffman's Dramaturgical approach I would like you to demonstrate your working knowledge of the numerous concepts he introduced that deal with a **team's efforts** to present a specific type of performance. I want you to do the following:

1. Select someone to write your material on a SEPARATE sheet of paper–you will be submitting this assignment to me at the end of the period. Print all of your names on this sheet.

2. Identify an interesting **team oriented performance** that you wish to use for your project. The team performance should deal with some type of **STIGMA**. The team can be as small as a two-person dyad or significantly larger. Please do NOT choose an example having to do with something that we have already discussed at length in class. Also, please choose an example that deals with an **IMPORTANT** issue with significant consequences for people. The stigma may be associated directly with just one person (child's genetic abnormality), but a group (two or more persons) has to be involved in managing the stigma as a team performance. Alternatively, all members of a particular group may possess the characteristic/condition that is stigmatized by others (e.g., transgender persons involved in a romantic relationship).

3. Next, I want you to develop an analytic essay (using bullet points) that incorporates the key concepts associated with Goffman's dramaturgical approach to **TEAM PERFORMANCES**. In the process, you should also synthesize into your presentation some of the more relevant concepts related to **STIGMAS**. So, I'm asking you to integrate material from two different section of the course.

4. Finally, re-read your analytic essay and figure out what three specific features of your example would be intriguing to focus on in a research study. Present your creative thoughts in the form of three research questions. For example:

- To what extent and how does the gender composition of a romantic couple affect partners' use of "staging talk" strategies to manage self-disclosures with family members concerning the couple's desires to have children?

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In-class Small Group Exercise:
Role Exit Process

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In this small group exercise, I would like you to demonstrate your understanding of Ebaugh's role exit process. As a group I want you to choose one main role exit experience (in some cases you may also want to identify other role exit experiences that are associated with the primary one). You need to choose something other than divorce or transsexuals' experiences (be creative). I then want you to develop an analytic essay (using bullet points) describing and **sociologically** examining how a particular hypothetical person might experience this role exit. Prepare this essay on a separate sheet of paper and print your names at the top.

You will need to address and say something about the following:

1. Key themes of disengagement and disidentification

2. Major moments (first doubts, seeking alternatives, the turning point, and creating the ex-role)

3. The descriptive properties that are related to the role exiting phenomenon (reversibility, duration, single versus multiple exits, individual versus group, degree of control, social desirability, degree of institutionalization, degree of awareness, sequentiality, centrality of the role, and voluntariness)

4. Incorporate at least five other social psychological concepts that you have learned in this course into your analysis

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Discussion Questions: Set #1

1. What sets us (humans) apart from other species?

2. What does it mean to say that people rely on "islands of meaning?" How do they affect our lives?

3. When we think about making sense out of something and giving meaning to events, situations, experiences, types of people, etc., what general processes come into play?

4. What does it mean to say that people need to recognize GAPS to make sense of reality?

5. What are boundaries? Are they inherent? What purpose do they serve?

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Discussion Questions: Set #2

1. What are the essential features/phases of Charles Horton Cooley's looking-glass self concept?
How does this concept inform our discussions of the self as being socially constructed?

2. How are Mead's ideas about the "self" as social structure and process similar to Cooley's
notion of the looking-glass self? What does Mead say about the "I," "me," and the "generalized
other?" How do they fit into his theory of the self?

3. To what extent and how do preschool children use racial and ethnic identity labels to organize
their social interactions with others?

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Discussion Questions: Set #3

1. What emotion management strategies do medical students tend to use in their training? How can you introduce and relate the concepts of secondary socialization and feeling rules into your understanding of medical students' training?

2. The idea of the choreographer is a powerful way of viewing familial influence. How might it apply to a member of the family network such as the biological father/mother, grandparent, or sibling?

3. What are the limitations of the "family dance" metaphor? What other metaphors might be applied to stepparenting? What additional insights do they offer for domestic relations in this circumstance?

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Discussion Questions/Exercises: Set #4

1. What is the essence of studying social interaction from a dramaturgical framework? What is the key metaphor being used? What does it mean to say that people assume that social interaction has a "moral character" to it?

2. Try to think about one celebrity of your choice (e.g, movie star, athlete, musician) and discuss how the "gloried self" concept is relevant to him/her? How do the reflected self and media self play a part in your understanding of the process associated with the creation of a "glorified self?"

3. Think of a role-exiting process you or someone close to you has experienced and comment on this process using the concepts Ebaugh introduces.

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Discussion Questions/Exercises: Set #5

1. How are social encounters and social relationships related to one another? What are categorical identities and why are they important? How is the concept "altercasting" relevant to a discussion about categorical identities?

2. Using specific concepts, how does the primary relationship/network model enable you to understand more fully the processual and structural features of social life affecting your individual well-being and life trajectory?

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Discussion Questions/Exercises: Set #6

1. What are the three techniques that mental patients use to maintain positive self-definitions, according to Goffman's "The Moral Career of the Mental Patient?" Compare and contrast these techniques with the identity talk that Anderson and Snow observed among homeless people. How does the staff at the mental hospitals influence patients' self-conceptions? How does this compare to the experiences of homeless people?

2. In the article "The Dissolution of the Self," what does Gergen mean in saying that post-modern society causes individuals to experience "multiphrenia?" What is "multiphrenia?" What are its causes? What is the "postmodern being?" Can you think of any examples in which you personally have experienced multiphrenia or the postmodern being?

3. What are discursive environments and how do they help people make sense of their lives?