

Second Term, Academic Year 2025-2026

Identities, Interactions, and Institutions across Place and Time

Time and Place: **Friday 11:00-13:00, Seminar Room 2**

Given by*: **Professors Valentina Di Stasio and Léa Pessin**

Administrative Contact: **Claudia Fanti, claudia.fanti@eui.eu**

*This course will be taught by Prof. Di Stasio as Prof. Pessin will be on maternity leave early in the Spring semester. Both contributed to the course content, and Prof. Pessin will attend the first lectures if possible. Some sessions will take the form of guest lectures.

Note: This syllabus is preliminary and will be revised further to better suit the final class composition and size.

Seminar Description and Objectives

From the murder of George Floyd and the rise of Black Lives Matter to the backlash against DEI initiatives and heated debates around headscarf bans and civic integration, to the unprecedented crowd at the Budapest Pride parade, many recent events make abundantly clear that identities, whether shared or contested, lie at the core of today's social and political mobilization. This seminar examines how social identities (such as gender, race, class and sexuality) are constructed, negotiated, claimed and transformed through everyday interactions and struggles for recognition.

Combining key sociological theories with interdisciplinary perspectives from social psychology and political science, the course explores the dynamic relationships between individual and collective identities, interpersonal interactions, boundary making between groups, and institutional structures. Particular attention is given to processes of social categorization, socialization, norm diffusion and sanctioning, role modeling, through which individuals internalize norms, values and social beliefs, and orient their behavior in relation to others. We also examine how processes of evaluation, meaning making and justification are embedded within cultural frames and social expectations, which reflect and may even reproduce durable patterns of inequality and reinforce unequal power relations.

Throughout the seminar, we focus on key institutional arenas, including the family, education and leisure settings, labor markets, welfare regimes and the state, across different national, policy and historical contexts. We discuss how different types of diversity are managed in, for example, private and intimate settings (e.g. through social control), competitive environments (e.g. through stereotypes and ideal worker norms) and at the local and policy level (e.g. through

assimilationist policies or bans). At various levels of analysis, we examine how gender, class, sexuality and race shape social relations, influencing the unequal distributions of roles and resources, status expectations, perceptions of deservingness, social trust, zero-sum competition, and patterns of segregation.

The course emphasizes intersectionality as a central analytical framework, examining how multiple dimensions of identity intersect to shape experiences, risks and opportunities within different institutional contexts.

Learning Outcomes

1. **Analyze social identities theoretically:** Apply major theoretical frameworks (social identity theory, boundary-making, status construction) to understand how gender, race, class, and sexuality are socially constructed and negotiated across different contexts.
2. **Employ intersectional analysis:** Examine how multiple identity dimensions intersect to shape experiences, risks, opportunities, and inequalities, using both qualitative and quantitative approaches.
3. **Connect micro-interactions to macro-structures:** Explain how individual identity processes relate to institutional structures and broader patterns of inequality across settings including families, neighborhoods, labor markets, and policy domains.
4. **Apply course frameworks to original research:** Integrate the theories, methods and intersectional perspectives discussed in the course into your own research design, demonstrating how these frameworks can expand or complicate existing approaches in your field.

Course Format

This course will be run as primarily a discussion-based class. The class will often start with a brief lecture on the week's topic that we will then connect to the assigned readings through class discussions. Researchers are responsible for leading and participating in discussions, offering critical analyses of the readings, and preparing a final two-part assignment.

Course Requirements

- Attendance and Participation
- Discussion Moderation
- Integration Project: Presentation + Written Assignment

Attendance and Participation

Regular attendance and active participation are expected. Classroom participation is an essential part of this class and a great opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of the class readings and your ability to connect these readings to concepts from the lectures. Everyone is expected to come to class well-prepared and contribute to discussion to the best of their ability.

In class, we will discuss a variety of potentially sensitive and controversial topics. You will not be evaluated to the degree to which you ascribe to specific beliefs. Social identities are rapidly

changing areas of societal discourse. The overarching goal is not to be "right" but to analyze these issues critically and engage in informed debates. You will likely have different opinions, experiences, and emotional reactions to the material. It is expected that all participants will respect the perspectives of others even when they disagree with them.

Discussion Moderator Model

A key feature of this course is the discussion moderator format. Each session will have one or two designated discussion leader(s) who will:

1. Prepare in-depth analyses of selected readings before class
2. Develop 2 discussion questions for each assigned reading
3. Guide the class through critical engagement with the texts
4. Contribute to the 'collaborative syllabus' by proposing a topic or perspective related to the sessions' theme that they believe should be addressed in the course

Every participant will serve as a discussion moderator at least once (and possibly more, depending on class size). This format promotes active engagement with the material and helps develop skills in critical analysis and discussion moderation that are valuable for both research and teaching.

All participants are expected to complete all assigned readings before each session to ensure productive discussions. They will also prepare a one-page memo containing one point for reflection for each reading. These written assignments are intended to guide participants through the assigned material, facilitate engagement with the literature, and provide the moderator(s) with a basis for leading the discussion. Assignments must be submitted online **before Wednesdays at 3:00 pm**. The discussion leader role does not exempt participants from completing other readings for that day.

Integration Project

This two-part project asks you to critically reflect on how the course's theoretical, methodological and conceptual frameworks on social identities relate to your PhD research. We would like you to engage with whether and how the course has expanded or complicated your thinking about your own work.

Part 1: Presentation

Format: 10-12 min. presentation; Due: In class, on **March 27, 2026**

Content: Present your preliminary analysis

1. Your research context. *Prepare a brief overview of your PhD project or a specific chapter/paper/component. Tell us about your core research questions and theoretical frameworks at the start of the course.*
2. Engagement with course themes. *Which course themes, theories, methods or concepts are more relevant to your work? Did the course challenge you to think differently about your PhD project? How?*

3. Potential integration. *If you were to integrate some of the course perspectives, what would that look like? Would some new research questions emerge? Would that affect your research design? If you do not foresee integrating some of the course perspectives (which is perfectly fine), what is your rationale? What might be some theoretical or empirical reasons that make other approaches more appropriate for your PhD project?*

You may use slides, but they are not required. Come prepared to receive questions and feedback from peers and the instructor.

Part 2: Written Project

Format: 5-6 pages (double-spaced, 12-point font)

Due: TBD

Content: Your paper should expand on your presentation, incorporating the feedback received in class, and providing a more detailed analysis.

Sessions

PART 1: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Note: Core readings are mandatory, and the written assignments must refer to each of them. The additional readings are optional and are intended to introduce further perspectives or expand on specific topics. Participants who join the course as auditors are still required to complete the mandatory readings and upload their reflection notes.

Week 1. Introduction and Core Theoretical Frameworks

9 January 2026

Core readings (please read all)

- Lamont, M., & Molnár, V. (2002). The study of boundaries in the social sciences. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28(1), 167-195.
- Ridgeway, C. L. (2014). Why status matters for inequality. *American Sociological Review*, 79(1), 1-16.
- Saperstein, A. (2025). Recognizing Identity Fluidity in Demographic Research. *Population and Development Review*, 51(1), 519-538.

Additional readings (optional)

- Abdelal, R., Herrera, Y. M., Johnston, A. I., & McDermott, R. (2006). Identity as a Variable. *Perspectives on Politics*, 4(4), 695-711.
- Brubaker, R. (2016). The Dolezal affair: race, gender, and the micropolitics of identity. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 39(3), 414-448.
- Kalin, M., & Sambanis, N. (2018). How to think about social identity. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 21(1), 239-257.

Week 2. Gender/Sexuality as Identity Dimensions

16 January 2026, Guest lecture by Prof. Sarah Damaske, (EUI Fernand Braudel Fellow & Professor at the Pennsylvania State University, sarah.damaske@psu.edu)

Core readings (please read all) – readings for this session t.b.c.

- Badgett, M. L., Carpenter, C. S., Lee, M. J., & Sansone, D. (2024). A review of the economics of sexual orientation and gender identity. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 62(3), 948-994.
- Ridgeway, C. L., & Saperstein, A. (2024). Diversifying gender categories and the sex/gender system. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 50.
- Thébaud, S., Avila, M., & Bridges, T. (2025). The social psychology of gender: Theoretical approaches and contemporary developments. In *Handbook of Social Psychology: Vol. 2: Meso and Macro Perspectives* (pp. 33-54). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.

Additional readings (optional)

- Bertrand, M. (2020, May). Gender in the twenty-first century. In AEA Papers and proceedings (Vol. 110, pp. 1-24). 2014 Broadway, Suite 305, Nashville, TN 37203: American Economic Association.
- Budnick, J., Pao, C., & Velasco, K. (2025). Queer Data for Sociologists of Sexualities: Introducing SOGIESC Measurement and Methods during Political Suppression. *Sex & Sexualities*, 3033371251329931.
- Ghaziani, A., & Ochoa, J. (2025). Color Outside the Lines: Methodological Invitations from the Study of Queer Nightlife. *Sex & Sexualities*, 1(1), 137-146. <https://doi.org/10.1177/3033371251329933>

Week 3. Race/Ethnicity/Immigration as Identity Dimensions

Valentina Di Stasio & Dr. Billie Martiniello (EUI Research fellow, billie.martiniello@eui.eu)

23 January 2026

Core readings (please read all)

- Roth, W. D. (2016). The multiple dimensions of race. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 39(8), 1310-1338.
- Wimmer, A. (2009). Herder's heritage and the boundary-making approach: Studying ethnicity in immigrant societies. *Sociological Theory*, 27(3), 244-270.
- Kroneberg, C., & Wittek, M. (2023). The ethnic lens: Social networks and the salience of ethnicity in the school context. *Sociological Science*, 10, 613-639.
- Tuppat, J., & Gerhards, J. (2021). Immigrants' first names and perceived discrimination: A contribution to understanding the integration paradox. *European Sociological Review*, 37(1), 121-135.

Choose one of these two studies on boundary contraction:

- Abascal, M. (2020). Contraction as a response to group threat: Demographic decline and Whites' classification of people who are ambiguously White. *American Sociological Review*, 85(2), 298-322.
- Gereke, J., Helbling, M., Kommol, A., Szafran, D., Ünal, Z., & Visser-Koomson, M. (2025). The effects of Muslim immigration and demographic change on group boundaries in Germany. *European Societies*, 1-27.

Additional readings (optional)

- Civitillo, S., Campbell-Bethancourt, E., & Jugert, P. (2025). A review of QuantCrit-informed approaches to group participants and explore ethno-racial heterogeneity in educational research. *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences*, 64, 101537.
- Golash-Boza, T. (2016). A critical and comprehensive sociological theory of race and racism. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, 2(2), 129-141.
- Verhaeghe, P. P. (2025). Five Traditions of Quantitative Research on Racism: Their Research Objects, Methods, Assumptions and Relationships. *Sociology Compass*, 19(12), e70141.

Week 4. More than the Sum of Its Parts? Intersectional approaches

30 January 2026

Core readings (please read all)

- Choo, H. Y., & Ferree, M. M. (2010). Practicing intersectionality in sociological research: A critical analysis of inclusions, interactions, and institutions in the study of inequalities. *Sociological Theory*, 28(2), 129-149.
- McCall, L. (2005). The complexity of intersectionality. *Signs: Journal of women in culture and society*, 30(3), 1771-1800.
- Carbado, D. W. (2013). Colorblind intersectionality. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 38(4), 811-845.
- Monk, E. P. (2022). Inequality without groups: Contemporary theories of categories, intersectional typicality, and the disaggregation of difference. *Sociological Theory*, 40(1), 3-27.

Additional readings (optional): On the how's of intersectional research

- Block Jr, R., Golder, M., & Golder, S. N. (2023). Evaluating claims of intersectionality. *The Journal of Politics*, 85(3), 795-811.
- Bowleg, L. (2008). When Black+ lesbian+ woman≠ Black lesbian woman: The methodological challenges of qualitative and quantitative intersectionality research. *Sex Roles*, 59(5), 312-325.
- Else-Quest, N. M., & Hyde, J. S. (2016). Intersectionality in quantitative psychological research: II. Methods and techniques. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 40(3), 319-336.

PART 2: PRIVATE AND INTIMATES SPHERES & COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Week 5. Dating and Family Dynamics

6 February 2025, 11:00-13:00, Dr. Kimberly McErlean, (EUI Research Fellow, kim.mcerlean@eui.eu)

Core readings (please read all) – readings for this session t.b.c.

Additional readings (optional)

- Williams, D. T., Curtis, M. G., Boe, J. L., & Jensen, T. M. (2024). What is QuantCrit doing in a nice field like family science?. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 86(5), 1305-1322.

Week 6. The meso-level: Social Influence and Network Dynamics

13 February 2026

Core readings (please read all)

- DiMaggio, P., & Garip, F. (2012). Network effects and social inequality. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 38(1), 93-118.
- Aksoy, O., & Gambetta, D. (2022). Commitment through sacrifice: How Longer Ramadan fasting strengthens religiosity and political Islam. *American Sociological Review*, 87(4), 555-583.
- Small, M. L., Brant, K., & Fekete, M. (2024). The avoidance of strong ties. *American Sociological Review*, 89(4), 615-649.

Pick one of these two readings:

- Kroneberg, C., Kruse, H., & Wimmer, A. (2021). When ethnicity and gender align: Classroom composition, friendship segregation, and collective identities in European schools. *European Sociological Review*, 37(6), 918-934.
- Zhao, L. (2023). From superdiversity to consolidation: Implications of structural intersectionality for interethnic friendships. *American Journal of Sociology*, 128(4), 1114-1157.

Additional readings (optional)

- McPherson, M., Smith-Lovin, L., & Cook, J. M. (2001). Birds of a feather: Homophily in social networks. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 27(1), 415-444.
- Wuestenenk, N., Nijs, T., Stark, T. H., van Tubergen, F., & Ellemers, N. (2025). The interplay of misperceptions and willingness to share opinions in full classroom networks: The case of opinions towards homosexuality. *Social Networks*, 80, 25-35.
- Schörner, K., & Bittmann, F. (2024). Children's aspirations, their perceptions of parental aspirations, and parents' factual aspirations—gaining insights into a complex world of interdependencies. *European Sociological Review*, 40(6), 981-995.

Break - No Class

20 February 2026

Week 7. The Labour Market and Workplace Dynamics

27 February 2026

Core readings (please read all)

- Browne, I., & Misra, J. (2003). The intersection of gender and race in the labor market. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 29(1), 487-513.
- Auspurg, K., Hinz, T., & Sauer, C. (2017). Why should women get less? Evidence on the gender pay gap from multifactorial survey experiments. *American Sociological Review*, 82(1), 179-210.

- Jaspers, E., Mazrekaj, D., & Machado, W. (2024). Doing genders: Partner's gender and labor market behavior. *American Sociological Review*, 89(3), 518-541.
- Rivera, L. A., & Tilcsik, A. (2016). Class advantage, commitment penalty: The gendered effect of social class signals in an elite labor market. *American Sociological Review*, 81(6), 1097-1131.

Additional readings on masculinity and femininity in the classroom (optional):

- Mittleman, J. (2022). Intersecting the academic gender gap: The education of lesbian, gay, and bisexual America. *American Sociological Review*, 87(2), 303-335.
- Morris, E. W., & Perry, B. L. (2017). Girls behaving badly? Race, gender, and subjective evaluation in the discipline of African American girls. *Sociology of Education*, 90(2), 127-148.

PART 3: CONTESTATION AROUND IDENTITIES AT THE LOCAL AND POLICY LEVEL

Week 8. The persistent reproduction of prejudice and group boundaries

6 March 2026, Dr. Filip Olsson (EUI Max Weber Fellow; filip.olsson@eui.eu)

Core readings (please read all)

- Charlesworth, T. E., & Hatzenbuehler, M. L. (2025). The Stigma Stability Framework: An Integrated Theory of How and Why Society Transmits Stigma Across History. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 19(3), e70051.
- Payne, B. K., & Hannay, J. W. (2021). Implicit bias reflects systemic racism. *Trends in cognitive sciences*, 25(11), 927-936.
- Billig, M. (1995). Flagging the homeland daily. In Banal nationalism (pp. 93–127). SAGE Publications.
- Latif, M., Simi, P., Blee, K., & DeMichele, M. (2023). Intuitive pathways into racist beliefs. *Emotions and Society*, 5(3), 348-365.

Week 9. Regulating and recognizing identities: The politics of inclusion and exclusion

13 March 2026, 11:00-13:00

- Abdelgadir, A., & Fouka, V. (2020). Political secularism and Muslim integration in the West: Assessing the effects of the French headscarf ban. *American Political Science Review*, 114(3), 707-723.
- Goodman, S. W. (2025). Who is a Good Citizen? Evidence From a Conjoint Experiment in Three Democracies. *Political Research Quarterly*, 78(2), 585-600.
- Lori, N. (2022). Possible citizens: migration enforcement as the performance of citizenship in the United Arab Emirates. *International Migration Review*, 56(3), 727-753.
- Turnbull-Dugarte, S. J., & Ortega, A. L. (2024). Instrumentally inclusive: The political psychology of homonationalism. *American Political Science Review*, 118(3), 1360-

1378.

Additional readings (optional)

- Yogeeswaran K, Verkuyten M. *The Political Psychology of National Identity*. In: Osborne D, Sibley CG, eds. *The Cambridge Handbook of Political Psychology*. Cambridge Handbooks in Psychology. Cambridge University Press; 2022:311-328. Available at [this link](#).

No Class

20 March 2026

PART 4: IDENTITY FRAMEWORKS PROJECT

Week 10. Class Presentations

27 March 2026, 11:00-13:00