

Dr. Cothran
HMXP Paper 2

In “Ingroup and Outgroup,” David G. Myers writes:

The social definition of who you are – your race, religion, sex, academic major – can also imply a definition of who you are not. The circle that includes “us” excludes “them.” Thus, the mere experience of people’s being formed into groups, quite apart from any relationship between the groups, may promote *ingroup bias*. (61)

For this essay, I would like you to consider how much of a person’s identity is determined by individual preferences, desires, and opinions, and how much it is determined by the groups to which he or she belongs. The answer to this question shouldn’t be “groups determine our identity!” or “we ourselves determine who we are!”, but instead an investigation of how these two forces *together* affect the public and private lives of individuals. Is one force stronger than the other? Is one force stronger than the other only in some instances?

Your essay should be typed, double-spaced, in 12 point font, and **4 pages** in length. Your argument should be mature and logical, and your supporting evidence should include many specific examples and details. Include ideas, either quoted or paraphrased (using correct MLA format) from at least one of the pieces we have read for class. You are not required to do outside research for this paper, but you may include information from other sources if you wish, if it is properly documented. You may go over the page requirement, but not under it.

Remember: I can help you with this paper only if you start early and bring me drafts for comments and suggestions. Good luck!