

Section II: Self and Other

HMXP102

Prof. Oakes

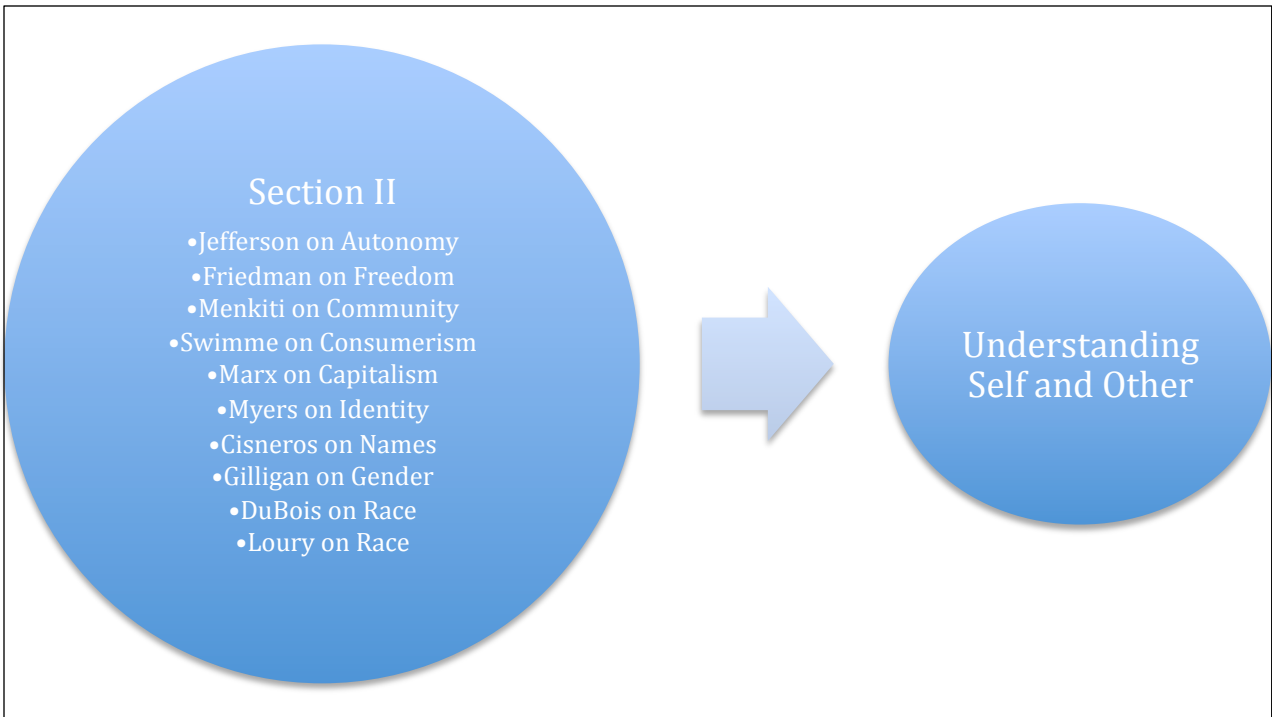
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This file contains the following:

- An overview of the section and its goals;
- The requirements of this section;
- Due-Dates and other reminders for this section.

Overview and Goals

The overall structure of this section is like that of the previous section and of the course as a whole. We have readings and discussion and other exercises that contribute to an understanding of a certain topic in human nature.



In this case, our topic is the relationship between the self and other persons. Obviously, this is a broad and fundamental part of what it is to be a human, a major part of your experience as a human. Thus, our readings will be extensive and varied.

We will focus on two themes, in our examination of Self and Other. First is the *ontological status** of the individual person *vis a vis* his or her community. We in the West tend to think of the human person as an *autonomous* being, i.e., as a being that exists independently of other beings. In other cultures, however, there is a tendency to view the human person as a part of the broader community in which it lives and works. We can thus raise the question: to what extent is a human person an autonomous individual as against a being dependent for its existence as such on its community? The readings by Jefferson, Friedman, Menkiti, Swimme, and Marx all bear on this issue.

Our second theme will be the related question of *identity* – those factors that make a human unique, or by which we distinguish one human from others. On one account, human identity is a fact independent of external factors. Others, however, maintain that all or a significant portion of one's identity is a function of social and other external relations. Here, our question involves the extent to which one's identity is just such a function of external, especially social factors. Our readings from Myers, Cisneros, Gilligan, Loury, and DuBois bear on this issue.

One way of distinguishing these two issues is in these terms: the question of ontological status is the question of *what* I am; the question of identity is the question of *who* I am. Obviously, these questions are related. And we can consider them together or separately.

In the end, as in Section I, you will write an essay in which you state and defend a position on either or both of these issues concerning the relationship between the human self and others.

Thus, our goals in this section are as follow:

- To gain an appreciation of the relationship/s between self and other;
- To become acquainted with major views of these relationships;
- To understand the concept of human autonomy;
- To understand the concept of the socially constructed identity;
- To discuss these matters intelligently;
- To write effectively on this topic.

Requirements of this Section

A set of readings

Reading exercises for each of the readings

Classroom discussion of the readings

An essay (1000 words)

* The *ontological status* of something is a question of what it is to be that thing, the conditions that define it, that enable or bring about its existence, or those things on which it depends in order to exist.

DUE DATES, THIS SECTION

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|---|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Section II: Self and Other Central Question: What is the relationship between the self and others? | | |
| | Jefferson (83-86) | |
| 9/12 | Friedman (64-72) | Menkiti (181-188) |
| 9/19 | Swimme (163-165) | Marx (174-180) |
| 9/26 | Myers (113-115) Cisneros (160) | Gilligan (138-151) |
| 10/3 | Writing Instruction | DuBois (116-120) |
| 10/10 | Loury (121-126) | <i>Essay II due</i> |
| Fall Break, 10/15-18 | | |

Essay II Due Friday, 10/14 in class and via Turnitin.com