



**Jindal School of
Psychology & Counselling**
India's First Transdisciplinary Psychology School



**JSPC - B.A./BSc.
Course Manual
PCCU-04-BAP-PIFC4051
Subjects of Power: Identity Formation in Context
Fall Semester 2026
School Elective**

Course Duration: 15 weeks
Credit Hours: 60 hours
Credits :4

Course Instructor	Dr. Harleen Kaur
Biography	Dr. Kaur is a qualitative researcher whose work explores identity, vulnerability, and well-being within diverse social contexts. Situated at the intersection of cross-cultural, health, and social psychology, she brings a strong human rights perspective to her work. She has authored several high-impact publications and a sole-authored academic book.
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Course Description

This course introduces students to critical perspectives on how identities are shaped through systems of power, knowledge, and social context. Moving beyond traditional psychological models, it explores how discursive practices, institutions, and cultural frameworks influence the formation of the self across diverse social identities. Drawing on the work of Michel Foucault, Edward Said, and Jacques Derrida, along with intersectional feminist scholars Kimberlé Crenshaw and Judith Butler, the course examines how identities are constructed, represented, and contested, while also engaging with critiques of these perspectives. The course is particularly suited for students interested in transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches to understanding identity.

Pre-requisites

The course is particularly suited for students interested in transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches to understanding identity-20 students.

Course Intended Learning Objectives (Aim of the elective)

Course Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching and Learning Activities	Assessments / Activities
Explain key concepts of identity, power, and discourse; critically engage with theoretical frameworks	Lectures, guided discussions, readings	Classroom participation and discussions
Analyze representations of identity in media and cultural texts; apply concepts of power and discourse to real-world contexts	Film screenings, case study discussions, workshops, guided analysis exercises	Assignment 1: Film Analysis (30 marks)
Develop structured critical arguments on identity and power and synthesize theoretical perspectives into coherent written analysis	Writing workshops, peer discussions, independent research, drafting exercises	Assignment 2: Critical Essay (30 marks)
Practice reflexivity and ethical thinking in engaging with identity	Reflection exercises, debates	Class participation & reflective engagement (10 marks)

Scheme of Evaluation and Grading: Evaluation breakup

This course will use continuous assessment throughout the semester. The semester-long continuous assessment will lead to the term-end evaluation.

Here is a breakdown of grading:

Parameter	%	Points
Class Participation	10	10
Assessment 1(Media Analysis-In class assessment)	30	30
Assessment 2 (Critical Essay-In class assessment)	30	30
Academic Writing Sit in Exam (End-Term Evaluation)	30	30
Total	100	100

Internal Assessment: Worth 70 points

Assessment 1: It will be conducted in class after Week 4. Students will analyze a short film using concepts of power/knowledge and discourse (Foucault) and representation (Said, Hall) to examine how identities are constructed. Students will write a structured response in class based on guiding questions. The response should apply theoretical concepts to the film, with clear examples, and demonstrate critical understanding beyond mere description.

Assessment 2: The students will write a critical essay based on a prompt provided in class, drawing on theoretical perspectives covered in the course from Weeks 5–9, including Derrida, Crenshaw, Butler, and feminist scholarship. Students are expected to develop a clear, structured argument applying relevant concepts such as deconstruction, intersectionality, and gender performativity to critically engage with issues of identity and power, supported by appropriate theoretical insights.

External Assessment (End-Term Evaluation, *Sit in Exam*): worth 30 points

The Subjects of Power: Identity Formation in Context end-of-term assessment will provide a comprehensive evaluation of the key concepts and competencies covered in the course. The purpose of this assessment is to measure each student’s understanding of critical theories of identity, including power, discourse, and intersectionality, as well as their ability to apply these frameworks to contemporary social and cultural contexts. The assessment will require students to demonstrate their capacity to analyze identity formation through theoretical lenses and intersectional feminist scholars, while also engaging with critiques of these approaches. Students will be expected to construct coherent arguments, apply concepts to relevant examples, and reflect critically on the limitations of theoretical frameworks. The pattern will primarily consist of an in-class essay component, designed to assess analytical depth, conceptual clarity, and critical thinking under time constraints. This will be a closed-book examination.

Grade Definition

Grade	Percent age of Marks	Grade Value	Grade Description
O	80% and above	8	Outstanding: Exceptional knowledge of the subject matter, thorough understanding of issues; ability to synthesize ideas, rules, and principles; and extraordinary critical and analytical ability.
A+	75 - 79.75%	7.5	Excellent: Sound knowledge of the subject matter, thorough understanding of issues; ability to synthesize ideas, rules, and principles; and critical and analytical ability.
A	70 - 74.75%	7	Very Good: Sound knowledge of the subject matter, organizational capacity; ability to synthesize ideas, rules, and principles; critically analyze existing material and originality in thinking.
A-	65 - 69.75%	6	Good: Good understanding of the subject matter, ability to identify issues and provide balanced solutions to problems; good critical and analytical skills.
B+	60 - 64.75%	5	Fair: Average understanding of the subject matter, limited ability to identify issues and provide solutions to problems; reasonable critical and analytical skills.
B	55 - 59.75%	4	Acceptable: Adequate knowledge of the subject matter to go to the next level of the study; passable critical and analytical skills.
B-	50 - 54.75%	3	Marginal: Limited knowledge of the subject matter and irrelevant use of materials; poor critical and analytical skills.
P1	45 - 49.75%	2	Pass 1: Pass with a passable understanding of the subject matter; lacking in critical and analytical skills.
P2	40 - 44.75%	1	Pass 2: Pass with a rudimentary understanding of the subject matter; lacking in critical and analytical skills.
F	Below 40%	0	Fail: Poor comprehension of the subject matter; poor critical and analytical skills and marginal use of the relevant materials. Requires the student to repeat the course.
P/F	Pass / Fail		Pass or Fail: Pass is awarded with a final grade of 40% or above. Fail reserved for the final grade below 40%. This option (selected at the start of the semester) is only available for semesters taught online during Covid.
I	Incomplete		Incomplete: Issued due to extenuating circumstances that prevent the student from completing internal or external marks. If an 'I' grade is assigned, the JSPC Academic Committee will suggest a schedule for the completion of work or a supplementary examination.

Academic Integrity

Classroom Punctuality and Conduct

JSPC conducts all classes on a foundation of professionalism. It is expected that students will be present in class and seated within five minutes of the class start time. Students arriving after a ten-minute window from the designated start time will be refused entry/attendance. A classroom is a place for free expression and critical thinking. Students must respect the opinions expressed and actively participate in classroom discussions.

Participation and Attendance Policy

This course covers a lot of detailed information. There is no way to get a good grade without attending class. Students with less than 75% attendance will not pass this course.

Cell Phone Usage

Cell phones are not allowed during classroom hours. The use of phones by students may result in their removal by the course instructor. Repeated violations may result in academic discipline.

Plagiarism

In line with JGU policy, JSPC operates a zero-tolerance approach to plagiarism. The unacknowledged use of material by others within your work is a violation of academic integrity and all reported cases will be investigated for potential disciplinary action.

AI Policy

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) for tasks such as manuscript generation (or sections) and paraphrasing is strictly prohibited. This course will maintain zero tolerance for AI-generated material.

Disability Support and Accommodation Requirements

JGU endeavours to make all its courses accessible to students. The Disability Support Committee (DSC) has identified conditions that could hinder a student's overall well-being. These include physical and mobility-related difficulties, visual impairment, hearing impairment, mental health conditions, and intellectual/learning difficulties, e.g., dyslexia and dyscalculia. Students with any known disability needing academic and other support are required to register with the Disability Support Committee (DSC) by following the procedure specified at <https://jgu.edu.in/disability-support-committee/>

Students who need support may register any time during the semester up until a month before the end-of-semester exam begins. Those students who wish to continue receiving support from the previous semester must re-register within the first month of the semester. Last-minute registrations and support might not be possible, as sufficient time is required to make the arrangements for support.

The DSC maintains strict confidentiality about the identity of the student and the nature of their disability, and the same is requested from faculty members and staff as well. The DSC takes a strong stance against in-class and out-of-class references made about a student's disability without their consent and disrespectful comments referring to a student's disability.

All general queries are to be addressed to disabilitysupportcommittee@jgu.edu.in

Safe Space Pledge

This course may discuss a range of issues and events that might result in distress or provoke strong emotional responses in some students. To make sure that all students collectively benefit from the course, it is incumbent everyone maintains respect toward one another. This does not mean that you must feel restrained about what you feel and say—rather, it is about creating a safe space where everyone can speak and learn without inhibitions and fear. This responsibility lies not only with students but also with the instructor.

Mental Health Services

Sukoon offers a mental health program on the JGU campus, aiming to address the mental well-being of students. This initiative provides free and confidential counseling, screening services, and workshops focused on mental health support and resilience building. Sukoon offers professional support, confidential counseling, mental health screening services, empowering workshops, and active community engagement. Contact: 8826996393.

JGU's collaboration with YourDOST aims to act as an enabler in fulfilling academic, social and personal potential of the JGU Community. YourDOST offers a range of services that includes stress management, time management, confidence building, career coaching, relationship management, sexual wellness and much more. Students can sign up using their JGU email address which ensures access to 24 x 7 x 365 unlimited access to mental health professionals.

Online: yourdost.com.

Keyword Syllabus

1. Power and knowledge (Foucault)
2. Discourse and the construction of identity
3. Representation and cultural narratives (Said, Hall)
4. Intersectionality (Crenshaw)
5. Gender and performativity (Butler)
6. Identity across social categories: caste, class, gender, sexuality
7. Institutions and identity formation (media, law, education)
8. Reflexivity and ethics in studying identity

Course Material

Textbook

Hall, S., Evans, J., & Nixon, S. (2013). *Representation* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Jenkins, R. (2014). *Social Identity* (4th ed.). Routledge.

Sarup, M. (1993). *An introductory guide to post-structuralism and postmodernism*. University of Georgia Press.

Disch, L., & Hawkesworth, M. (Eds.). (2020). *The Oxford handbook of feminist theory*. Oxford University Press.

References

Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*. Pantheon.

Said, E. W. (1978). *Orientalism*. Pantheon Books.

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 139–167.

Butler, J. (1990). *Gender Trouble*. Routledge.

Hall, S. (1996). Who Needs ‘Identity’? In *Questions of Cultural Identity*. Sage.

Related references are also listed in the session plan below.

Session Plan

Session	General Topic	Readings	Approach/Pedagogy
Week 1	Introduction: Knowing each other & course components and Familiarizing with the course syllabus	<i>Course Syllabus</i> <i>Course manual</i>	To understand the course Requirements, course objectives and the assessments. Individual activity on listing the following: 1. Welcome note, 2. Expectations from the course, 3. How will this course help me? 4. Activity time: Introduce yourself with an identity that shapes who you are researcher. 5. Discussing with the course instructor any concerns or queries.
Week 2	Power and Knowledge	<i>Foucault, M. (1977). Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison. New York: Pantheon Books.</i> <i>Foucault, M. (1980). Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings.</i>	Lecture + discussion

		<i>New York: Pantheon.</i>	
Week 3	Discourse & Construction of Self	<i>Foucault, M. (1972). The Archaeology of Knowledge. New York: Pantheon.</i> <i>Hall, S. (1997). The Work of Representation. In Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices. Sage.</i>	Text analysis + group discussion
Week 4	Representation & Culture	<i>Said, E. W. (1978). Orientalism. New York: Pantheon Books.</i> <i>Said, E. W. (1993). Culture and Imperialism. New York: Knopf.</i>	Case study + discussion
<i>Assignment 1</i>			
Week 5	Deconstruction	<i>Derrida, J. (1976). Of Grammatology. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.</i> <i>Derrida, J. (1981). Positions. University of Chicago Press.</i>	Concept mapping activity
Week 6	Intersectionality	<i>Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex. University of</i>	Lecture + real-world case analysis

		<p><i>Chicago Legal Forum, 1989(1), 139–167.</i></p> <p><i>Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the Margins. Stanford Law Review, 43(6), 1241–1299.</i></p>	
Week 7	Gender Performativity	<p><i>Butler, J. (1990). Gender Trouble. Routledge.</i></p> <p><i>Butler, J. (1993). Bodies That Matter. Routledge.</i></p>	Debate + reflective exercise
Week 8	Identity Across Social Locations	<p><i>Collins, P. H. (2000). Black Feminist Thought. Routledge.</i></p> <p><i>Hooks, b. (1984). Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center. South End Press.</i></p>	Group presentations
Week 9	Critiques of Poststructuralism & Intersectionality	<p><i>Fraser, N. (1995). From Redistribution to Recognition? New Left Review.</i></p> <p><i>McNay, L. (2000). Gender and Agency: Reconfiguring the Subject in Feminist and Social Theory. Polity.</i></p>	Structured debate
<i>Assignment 2</i>			
Week 10	Institutions & Identity	<p><i>Althusser, L. (1971). Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses. In Lenin and Philosophy.</i></p>	Case discussion

		<p><i>Bourdieu, P. (1984). Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste. Harvard University Press.</i></p>	
Week 11	Lived Experience & Identity Narratives	<p><i>Bruner, J. (1990). Acts of Meaning. Harvard University Press.</i> <i>McAdams, D. P. (2001). The Psychology of Life Stories. Review of General Psychology, 5(2), 100–122.</i></p>	Narrative exercise
Week 12	Reflexivity & Ethics	<p><i>Finlay, L. (2002). “Outing” the Researcher. Qualitative Health Research, 12(4), 531–545.</i> <i>Guillemin, M., & Gillam, L. (2004). Ethics in Qualitative Research. Qualitative Inquiry, 10(2), 261–280.</i></p>	Reflective writing + discussion
Week 13	Creative Representations of Identity	<p><i>Leavy, P. (2015). Method Meets Art: Arts-Based Research Practice. Guilford Press.</i> <i>Barone, T., & Eisner, E. (2012). Arts Based Research. Sage.</i></p>	Poster / media workshop

Week 14	Review & Critical Integration	<p><i>Hall, S. (1996). Who Needs 'Identity'? In Questions of Cultural Identity. Sage.</i></p> <p><i>Jenkins, R. (2014). Social Identity (4th ed.). Routledge.</i></p>	Class debate and discussions
<i>Week 15</i>		<i>Revision</i>	