The first problem with essentialist conceptions of identity, according to critics, is the tendency to posit one aspect of identity (say, gender) as the sole cause or determinant constituting the social meanings of an individual’s experience. (Moya, 2000, p. 3)

SPN [scholarly personal narrative] scholars, however, ask a series of personal, narrative-grounded, contextual questions that are too often ignored by researchers who use the more established frameworks. This major departure from the usual research norms in professional preparation programs doesn’t make SPN scholarship better or worse, of course; it just makes it different. And difference can be threatening to many scholars who have been trained in the mindset that one research paradigm must fit all. (Nash, 2004, p. 5)

Course Overview
One of the primary responsibilities of student affairs educators is to promote inclusive learning environments in which students can thrive. Fulfilling this task entails understanding learners’ previous experiences, their cultural backgrounds, their identities, and the kinds of experiences that push them outside their comfort zones. Because each student has had different exposure to diversity in their upbringing and previous educational contexts, it is vital to explore the multiple identities of learners in order to advance their understanding of differences. For this course, we will focus on issues of race/ethnicity, class, and gender (RECG) in higher education and society.

The course, however, is not limited to a focus on college students. If we want learners to develop an appreciation of differences during their college tenures, we, as educators, must also focus on ourselves—our biases, assumptions, limitations, and challenges with diversity. Consequently, a complementary aim of the course is to reflect on how race/ethnicity, class, and gender influence our lives, our interactions with colleagues and students, and our abilities as educators.

In addition to the aforementioned topics, we will seek to learn effective ways to facilitate dialogues about these issues among students and colleagues. We will examine power and privilege and the different ways in which persons can be privileged and marginalized simultaneously. Furthermore, we will extend our in-class discussions beyond the postsecondary context and pay attention to racial/ethnic, class, and gender inequalities in politics, K-12 institutions, and society. We will accomplish this goal through analyzing, critiquing, and applying different readings on RECG.

Course Objective and Learning Outcomes
The primary objective of this course is to examine how RECG differentially impact people’s lives. My hope is that you will:
Understand your roles as student affairs educators in addressing RECG in higher education.

Reflect critically and deeply on yourself, including your RECG identities, your biases, the different ways in which you are privileged and marginalized, and what you need from others to enhance your learning about these issues.

Critically assess the strengths and limitations of various theories and perspectives on RECG.

Identify and evaluate the intersections between RECG as well as understand the uniqueness of and differences between these social identities.

Gauge the utility of historical and contemporary RECG theories and perspectives.

Think critically about the nature and purpose of facilitating dialogues about RECG among students and colleagues and the challenges involved in that process.

Gain experience in translating RECG theories and perspectives to practice.

**Required Texts and Readings**


Articles and book chapters on Enterprise Learning Management System / Enhancing Learning for Maryland Students (ELMS)—http://elms.umd.edu

**Course Expectations**

*Active Participation*—I expect active participation of all students. By active participation, I mean critically reading all articles and book chapters prior to each class, reflecting on the authors’ arguments, critiquing the authors’ ideas, thinking about the relationship of the readings to your life and work, asking questions, contributing in small work groups, and being engaged in class discussion. I am cognizant of the different ways in which students learn and will utilize a diverse array of pedagogical approaches—discussion, reading, writing, individual processing, presenting, collaborating, and reflecting. Although I expect that all students will participate, there are multiple and varied ways to demonstrate active engagement in the course. I expect that we strive to stretch ourselves beyond our preferred methods of learning and our comfort zones, as dissonance can promote new learning. The success of our mutual learning from each other depends upon preparation and active participation in all aspects of the course.

*Classroom Community for Learning*—At this point in your educational journeys, it is important that you begin to see yourselves as professionals. Even though the titles of “student” and “professor” can create power imbalances, my hope is that we strive to build a classroom community for learning. By this term, I mean we accept our individual and collective responsibilities for contributing to our own learning and the learning of others in meaningful ways. I am committed to learning and growing as a result of your experiences and the articulation of your perspectives. We will challenge and critique
each other’s ideas, but equally important is allowing class members the freedom to express their viewpoints and work through the material discussed throughout the semester.

**Attendance**—Your attendance is *very important* to the functioning of the entire class. If you must be absent from class for reasons of illness or other obligations, please send me an e-mail message or leave a voicemail message in **advance** of class. If you miss a class, you will be completely responsible for the material covered and any handouts distributed during that class session.

**Timeliness**—Please arrive on time for all class meetings. The success of this course necessitates the timely completion of required work. Work that is late, without documented medical excuse or extraordinary circumstances, will need to be negotiated with me to assess proper evaluation. In the absence of extenuating circumstances, late assignments will be docked one letter grade per day late. Similarly, incompletes will not be given except in cases of extraordinary circumstances.

**Civility**—All individuals participating in this course have a responsibility to create and maintain an environment conducive to learning. A learning-centered environment is one that is free of distractions, engages all participants in the learning process, and does not demean or dehumanize any individual or group. Participants, therefore, will:

- Arrive on time and remain for the duration of the class.
- Refrain from conducting private conversations in class.
- Refrain from using laptops for any other purpose than taking notes and accessing readings.
- Refrain from using cellular phones.
- Use appropriate language and behavior that does not demean or dehumanize any person or group of persons, whether or not such persons are present.
- Show respect of others in the course through listening effectively and responding thoughtfully and sensitively.
- Contribute to the learning of class members by being prepared for class and engaging in and contributing to the learning in the course.

*Adapted from statements on civility by Holley Belch and Michael C. Young*

**Demanding Nature of Course**—EDCP 789G is a demanding course. Please pace yourself carefully to meet the expectations of the course. Getting behind will seriously impact your ability to successfully complete the requirements of the course. I am expecting high standards from you as students because I know you can meet them. Part of my educational philosophy is that high expectations with sufficient support yield high outcomes. Consequently, please allow sufficient time each week to engage with the material and participate fully in the course.

**Course Plan**
This course is divided into three, interconnected parts. Part 1 focuses on understanding your own story, identities, and experiences with RECG. We will concentrate on our identities, assumptions, beliefs, and biases regarding RECG and how we make sense of these issues in our lives. In Part 2, we shift toward a focus on different theories and perspectives on RECG. We will analyze, critique, and formulate our opinions on these readings. Finally, in Part 3, we translate these theories and perspectives into practice in contemplating how to enable students and our colleagues to consider issues of RECG in their lives and decision-making processes. The goal of this section is to explore
how we, as student affairs educators, can utilize our own identity reflections and knowledge of RECG theories and perspectives to promote self-reflection and learning among ourselves and those with whom we work. Since these three parts are interrelated, we will continually revisit our identities, assumptions, biases, and viewpoints in extending and revising the arguments made in the readings.

Course Assignments
Below are the four assignments for the course. In all papers, please adhere to the guidelines outlined in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA), sixth edition. In addition, please submit all written assignments electronically using the “Assignments” feature on ELMS. Save all uploaded files in the following manner: lastname_assignment (e.g., quaye_case_study). Unless otherwise specified, all assignments are due by noon on the due date.

PART 1: UNDERSTANDING OUR IDENTITIES
In order to support students in addressing RECG issues, it is important that we reflect on and understand our identities. Contemplating the different ways in which we are privileged, the different facets of marginalization within our lives, and our beliefs about racism, sexism, classism, and oppression are critical to designing educational opportunities for students that address these issues in candid ways. In addition, reflecting on our challenges and limitations with RECG can enable us to develop empathy for those we ask to step outside their comfort zones. We cannot effectively wrestle with racism, sexism, and classism void of serious knowledge of the ways we inadvertently contribute to these conditions.

My Scholarly Personal Narrative
In Liberating Scholarly Writing, Nash (2004) wrote:

SPN is about giving yourself permission to express your own voice in your own language; your own take on your own story in your own inimitable manner. SPN is your grand opportunity to practice listening to the sound of your own voice. Find your special sound and style, and you will find your story. Lose these, and you will continue to be silenced. Writing will be impossible—if not now, then soon; and probably forever. (pp. 24-25)

In addition to finding your own special voice, Nash suggests that a guideline for successful SPNs is drawing larger implications from your personal stories. Strong SPNs focus on the inside but also extend those inside reflections to the outer world beyond one’s self. The purpose of this assignment is to write your own scholarly personal narrative. Focus specifically on issues of race/ethnicity, class, and gender in your past and current experiences. Consider the following questions:

- Who am I?
- What are the multiple identities (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, and gender) that make me who I am?
- How do other people’s perceptions influence my identity?
- How do I define race/ethnicity, class, and gender?
- What role do race/ethnicity, class, and gender play in my life?
- What are my assumptions and biases about race/ethnicity, class, and gender?
What are my biggest fears in addressing race/ethnicity, class, and gender in my own life and in the lives of students and colleagues?

What have my previous experiences with race/ethnicity, class, and gender been?

What do I see as the role of race/ethnicity, class, and gender in higher education settings?

Writing this SPN is your opportunity to take risks and be bold in your writing. Try a different writing style, stretch yourself, reach deep within, and focus deeply on your narratives about RECG. You may address other questions and topics, but the fundamental purpose of this assignment is to be vulnerable and write about your identity and how RECG influence who you are.

Due: October 4
Length: 7-10 pages

PART 2: EXPLORING THEORIES AND PERSPECTIVES ON RECG

Throughout the course, we will be reading, critiquing, and assessing the utility of different theories and perspectives about RECG in our work as educators. As you read the theories and perspectives, take note of their limitations, unique features, and strengths. Focus on the arguments the various authors are making, as well as the research, knowledge, and information they fail to include in their analyses. Take note of how their viewpoints resonate with your own and pay particular attention to your reactions and emotions when reading or listening. Part of the process of making sense of racial/ethnic, class, and gender beliefs is being able to summarize and synthesize different ideas and compare them to your own.

Blogs and On-Line Discussion Forums
In order to understand RECG, it is important that we pay attention to how persons in different settings — college students, family members, politicians, artists, musicians, news anchors, comedians, teachers, professors, and conservative, independent, and liberal commentators — write about, make sense of, discuss, and argue these issues. Consequently, we must peruse the different media outlets — blogs, television commentaries, responses to opposite-editorial (i.e., op-ed) articles in newspapers, and discussion boards — that serve as spaces for these varied ideas. Doing so will enable us to weigh the person’s arguments and assess how members of society treat RECG issues.

This assignment contains four (4) tasks:

- Identify two partners with whom to collaborate (i.e., each group will comprise three people).

- Throughout the semester, familiarize yourselves with how RECG is treated within the different media venues mentioned above. Each week, a different trio will find and post to ELMS a reading, video, music, or other media source from an on-line source that pertains to RECG in school or higher education, communities, politics, sports, and/or society in general. All class members are expected to view this media source prior to class.

- The trio will post a 1-2 page reaction via the Discussion Board feature on ELMS by making sense of the media source within the context of the various RECG readings for the week (or
prior weeks). If relevant, be sure to incorporate your own RECG identities in relation to the readings and media source. Class members should read this reaction prior to class.

- The trio will facilitate a discussion in class (45 to 60 minutes or longer) by analyzing and addressing the RECG issues in the media source. They should articulate their reaction to the media source, pose questions and issues for other class members to consider, and engage class members in a discussion about the RECG issues in the media source.

Below are some examples of relevant blogs and on-line discussion forums:

http://www.aol.com  http://nahopenotquite.wordpress.com/

Due: Media Source and Reaction on ELMS—Thursday by 1:00 p.m. on the following dates:

- October 14 / October 21 / October 28 / November 4 / November 11

Length: 1-2 pages

PART 3: TRANSLATING THEORIES AND PERSPECTIVES ON RECG INTO PRACTICE

One of the goals of this course is to gain knowledge about race/ethnicity, class, and gender in higher education. In order to do so, we must compare our own perspectives on these issues with those of others and apply them to our work as educators. By the time you reach this point in the semester, we will have read, critiqued, and discussed different theories and ideas about RECG. My hope is that we will utilize the readings and class discussions to influence our practice within the higher education institutions and other organizations in which we work.

Case Study Analysis
One of the longstanding values of the Student Affairs profession is the commitment to fostering inclusive campus environments in which students of different backgrounds can thrive. However, in our roles as student affairs educators, we are often confronted with situations that challenge this underlying goal. In order to enact this value of respecting differences, we must develop skills and comfort in responding to instances in which race/ethnicity, class, and/or gender are at the forefront.

For example, we might be asked to consider a student’s race/ethnicity in an admissions decision that is aligned with the institution’s affirmative action policy. We might be confronted by White students who are upset that the campus does not offer a White student organization. We might have to create a program that enables low-income, first-generation college students to academically achieve and successfully navigate the campus environment. We might work with a community organization who wants to challenge a policy or law that is seen as discriminatory. Or, we could work with men to understand the importance of their participation in Women's Studies courses and Women’s Centers. In these cases, it is important that we develop comfort with talking openly about RECG, collaborate
effectively with others to address these difficult issues, provide thoughtful analyses on these issues, and be able to facilitate dialogues among those with whom we are working.

Working within trios, for this assignment, choose a case to analyze. A “case” might be similar to the examples provided above or an issue relating to RECG within an organization in particular or society in general.

Submit a short description of the case you intend to analyze. If necessary, attach the reading about the case.

Due: November 1
Length: 2-3 paragraphs

Accomplish the following three (3) tasks in your case analysis paper:

- Identify and describe what you consider to be three (3) of the most salient and complex issues facing educators in responding to the case.

- Apply the theories and perspectives on race/ethnicity, class, and gender to the three issues identified in the case. In doing so, weigh the pros and cons of various theories and perspectives and their applicability to the case at hand.

- Propose recommendations for responding to the case based on your analysis above. Your implications for practice should be grounded in relevant RECG perspectives and theories. Be sure to note the limitations of your decisions and how they would affect relevant stakeholders.

In analyzing the case, you are welcome to use your experiences in student affairs or education. The premise of this assignment is for you to recognize RECG challenges within higher education and/or society and develop a reasonable approach for addressing RECG issues in the case grounded in your own knowledge and experiences and the various theories and perspectives on RECG.

Due: November 22
Length: 15-20 pages

Creative Expression of RECG
Throughout the semester, I have asked you to challenge your current assumptions about RECG, formulate your opinions on these issues, and develop strategies to facilitate the discussion of race/ethnicity, class, and gender among students and colleagues. We have witnessed the divergent and creative ways in which persons express their ideas about RECG. Some critique these issues through academic prose, while others prefer a more narrative format. There are artists who appreciate using videos and music to portray their constructions of RECG and politicians who creatively use the media to have their voices heard. In addition, we have read poetry on these issues. The point in exposing you to these various portrayals is to demonstrate the multifaceted ways to express the complicated nature of race/ethnicity, class, and gender in our lives.
For this assignment, revisit your “My Scholarly Personal Narrative.” Now that you have discussed RECG with others and listened to your peers’ perspectives on these issues, develop a creative way to express your reflections of RECG based on your scholarly personal narrative, the discussions, and readings throughout the class. Possible questions to consider include the following:

- What have you learned as a result of addressing RECG in this course?
- What do you hope to continue learning about RECG beyond this course?
- In what ways have you been challenged as a result of the readings and dialogues?
- How have you changed as a person?
- How do you make sense of and express RECG in your life?
- What do you hope others will learn from your creative expression?
- Will you take any actions as a result of exploring RECG? If so, what kinds of actions?
- How will you use the theories and perspectives on RECG in your student affairs practice?

Choose a format in which to express how you make sense of RECG. Below are some examples of ways to fulfill this task; however, the options are limitless!

- Paper
- Poetry
- Art
- Video
- Music
- Spoken Word
- Dance
- Presentation

We learn more about race/ethnicity, class, and gender when we watch, hear, and read others’ views on these issues. In order to enable students and colleagues to develop comfort with addressing RECG in their own lives, we must be willing to express the influence of RECG in our own lives.

After choosing a format, “present” your Creative Expression of RECG to other classroom community members. Your presentation can take any format you choose, so long as you carefully address the goals of this assignment in your sharing with others. The only parameter for this presentation is time—each presentation should be no longer than 12 minutes.

Due: November 29 / December 6
Format: Students’ Discretion
Length: 12 minutes

Evaluation and Grading
Throughout our educational experiences, we have been socialized by family members, teachers, professors, peers, and even ourselves to believe in the importance of grades. Although I do not trivialize the power of grades (you likely are at this point in your educational careers because you earned high marks), I believe they sometimes detract from the learning process, as the main focus becomes the score rather than how to improve what one learns. Consequently, I will make every effort to offer feedback on assignments through meaningful comments. Of course, I will assign grades to each assignment, but I hope that through providing constructive feedback, you will continue to improve.
**Assignment**  
My Scholarly Personal Narrative  
Blogs and On-Line Discussion Forums  
Case Study Analysis  
Creative Expression of RECG  

**Due Date**  
October 4  
Ongoing  
November 22  
November 29 / December 6

**Contribution to Grade**  
25%  
20%  
30%  
25%

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**Evaluation Criteria**
I will use a rubric to evaluate all final versions of written and presented work for this course. Specifically, I will evaluate your assignments using the following criteria:

- Ability to incorporate own ideas
- Soundness of arguments and use of evidence (i.e., theories, literature, examples, and empirical research) to justify claims
- Writing style (i.e., organization, coherence, transitions, clarity, engagingness, use of headers, logical flow, word choice, free from grammatical and spelling errors)

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**Grading Scale**
The scale I will use for determining final course grades is the following:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>3.7-4.0</td>
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<td>B</td>
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**Academic Integrity**
I expect that your work will be characterized by academic integrity and honesty. I encourage you to become familiar with the University of Maryland’s policy on academic dishonesty, as this policy applies to our class as well as to all others. One aspect of this expectation is that your work will be referenced and documented appropriately. If you have any questions about proper documentation, please speak with me. Any student who violates standards of academic honesty will be held accountable through University of Maryland procedures.

The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student, you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, visit the following website: [http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/whatis.html](http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/whatis.html).

The Code of Academic Integrity prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents, and forging signatures. The University Senate requires that students include the following signed statement on each examination or assignment: **“I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this**
Compliance with the Code is administered by a Student Honor Council, which strives to promote a “community of trust” on the College Park campus. Allegations of academic dishonesty can be reported directly to the Honor Council (301.314.9154) by any member of the campus community.

**Academic Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities**

In compliance with and in the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), I will work with students who have a disability that is relevant to their work in this course. If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact me as soon as possible.

**Religious Observances**

The University System of Maryland policy on religious observances provides that students *should not be penalized because of observances of their religious beliefs; students shall be given an opportunity, whenever feasible, to make up within a reasonable time any academic assignment that is missed due to individual participation in religious observances.* I will be happy to work with you if class meetings or assignments conflict with your religious practices.
## Course Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<td>August 30</td>
<td><strong>Introduction to RECG</strong></td>
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<td><strong>ELMS</strong></td>
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<td>Lutovsky</td>
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<td>September 6</td>
<td>Labor Day—No Class</td>
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<td>September 13</td>
<td><strong>A Beginning Interlude: Dialogue, Resistance, and Vulnerability</strong></td>
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<td>Applebaum</td>
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<td>September 20</td>
<td><strong>Understanding Our Identities: Voice, Privilege, Power, and Narratives</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Text</strong></td>
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<td>September 27</td>
<td><strong>Understanding Our Identities: Narratives about RECG</strong></td>
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<td>October 4</td>
<td>Exploring Theories and Perspectives on RECG: Key Terminologies</td>
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<td>October 11</td>
<td>Exploring Theories and Perspectives on RECG: Definitions and Theories</td>
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<td>Exploring Theories and Perspectives on RECG: Highlighting Gender</td>
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<td>Blogs and On-Line Discussion Forum Facilitation</td>
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<td>November 8</td>
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<td>Exploring Theories and Perspectives on RECG: Conclusion</td>
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<td>Blogs and On-Line Discussion Forum Facilitation</td>
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<td>November 22</td>
<td>Translating Theories and Perspectives on RECG into Practice</td>
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MacLeod  Chapter 14

ELMS
Quaye  Pursuing the Treasure of Tenure
Park  Research, Teaching, and Service
Zúñiga  Bridging Differences through Dialogue
Eichstedt  Problematic White Identities and a Search for Racial Justice

Due  Case Study Analysis

Thanksgiving Break—November 25-28

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>November 29</th>
<th>Presentations</th>
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Due  Creative Expression of RECG

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<tr>
<th>December 6</th>
<th>Presentations and Final Reflections</th>
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</table>

Due  Creative Expression of RECG

LBQ Arrives—Somewhere around December 8! 😊
References for ELMS Readings


