

## Psychology 475 American Film in the 1970s - Individualist versus Collectivist Identities

Spring 2024

January 23 – April 23

Tuesdays 1:00-3:30; PAIS 393

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Virtual Office Hours: Over zoom Thursdays @ 4 (please email me ahead of time to arrange)

Zoom link for Office Hours:

**Content:** Important psychological characteristics of individuals, and of the time and place that they live, are often reflected in and inspired by media such as literature, art, and film. In this course we will examine the tension between Individualist versus Collectivist identities in American films of the 1970s. This was a particularly fruitful period for such exploration given the vast societal changes and social upheaval that took place in American society at the time and the ways in which it motivated individuals to rethink the possibilities for the various aspects of their identities. Together we will view a selection of films that illustrate the tension between these aspects of individuals' identities, with a particular focus on Individualist versus Collectivist identities. We will also explore how these tensions between individualistic versus collectivist identities played out for non-European ancestry compared with European ancestry individuals and families, for women, and for LGBTQ+ individuals. In addition to looking back on the 1970s we will discuss the applicability of this tension to present-day American society and current events.

**Goals:** The primary goals for the course are to furnish students with an understanding of the ways in which important psychological characteristics of individuals, and of the time and place that they live, are often reflected in and inspired by media such as literature, art, and film. Students will be responsible for all of the following:

1. Watching all of the films on your own at a time that's convenient for you,
2. Discuss films and class readings together in class sessions,
3. Generate brief summaries of and 2 questions on the movies after viewing them (these can be informed by the film reviews you'll read),
4. Generate brief summaries of and generate 2 questions on the assigned research articles,
5. Participate actively in class discussions,
6. Give a Presentation on and lead discussion about one movie,
7. Write a Final essay on the movie you present on

In addition to the specific topics covered in each class, we will have more general discussions regarding the tension between various aspects of individuals' identities. Students are expected to complete assignments on time and to participate actively in the class discussions.

## GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS

There will be several assignments in this class on which your grades will be based. These are described below:

**Summaries of the films / Questions on the films and readings:** You will be required to read the assigned readings and view the assigned film(s) **before each class** and to prepare and submit a brief summary of and 2 questions on the assigned film and a brief summary of and 2 questions on the class readings **prior to** each class session at which they'll be discussed. Summaries and Questions will be submitted on Canvas **by 11:59 PM the Monday evening prior to class each week.**  
(worth 30% of grade)

**Class participation and demeanor:** Note that attending each class session and participating actively in class discussions is expected. You will get **no credit** for a class session if you miss it, fall asleep, text, email, take a phone call, make a phone call, **do not participate in the discussion or activity**, or otherwise act in an unprofessional manner in that class. **(20% of grade)**

**Presentation and leading discussion on one movie:** Students will present on the important details of, and the reviews of, their selected movie, as well as lead a discussion of the movie. These readings will be posted on CANVAS the week before the class during which each film will be discussed. A rubric for the presentation is posted under **Files** in CANVAS **(worth 25% of grade)**

**Final Essay:** Students will write an essay on their selected movie that will be **due on Friday April 26.** Essays should be 5-7 pages double-spaced, using 11-point font. A rubric for the final essay is posted under **Files** in CANVAS **(worth 25% of grade)**

**Final Grades:** Final grades will be based upon the following point system, with no curve.

Points Earned	Grade	Points Earned	Grade
93-100	A	70-72	C-
90-92	A-	67-69	D+
87-89	B+	60-66	D
83-86	B	Below 60	F
80-82	B-		
77-79	C+		
73-76	C		

**Grade Guidelines:** Representative grade guidelines are as follows:

**Excellent (90-100%):** This comprises attending all classes, reading all of the readings, viewing all of the films, submitting all assignments on time, well-written summaries and very thoughtful questions on the films and readings, active participation in classes including insightful comments on the films and readings, a comprehensive presentation on your chosen film (that includes, but is not limited to, basic info on the cast, director, screenwriter, and cinematographer) that integrates its material with the topic of the course, a well-written final essay that thoughtfully integrates the crucial aspects of the chosen film with the readings in the class and your own ideas around the topic of the class.

**Good (80-90%):** This comprises attending all classes, reading all of the readings, viewing all of the films, submitting all assignments on time, summaries that are fairly well-written and somewhat thoughtful questions on the films and readings, some participation in classes including comments on the films and readings, a fairly complete presentation on your chosen film (that includes basic info on the cast, director, screenwriter, and cinematographer) that integrates its material with the topic of the course to at least some extent, a fairly well-written final essay that integrates the crucial aspects of the chosen film with the readings in the class and your own ideas around the topic of the class to at least some extent.

**Adequate (70-80%):** This comprises attending almost all classes, reading most of the readings, viewing most of the films, submitting most assignments on time, summaries that are not very well-written and have only cursory questions on the films and readings, very little participation in classes with few comments on the films and readings, an incomplete presentation on your chosen film (that is missing even some basic info on the cast, director, screenwriter, and cinematographer) that does not really integrate its material with the topic of the course in any meaningful way, a not very well-written final essay that does not really integrate the crucial aspects of the chosen film with the readings in the class and does not include much of your own ideas around the topic of the class to any real extent.

**Your Safety and Well-being:**

Emory University cares greatly about the health and well-being of our students, staff, and faculty, and takes all sexual or gender-based violence and harassment very seriously. Emory University employees (including faculty and teaching assistants) are mandated reporters of any incidents of sexual or gender-based violence or harassment. Thus, any disclosures of sexual or gender-based violence or harassment on or off campus made to a faculty member or a TA must be forwarded to the Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Office will then contact you regarding your rights, your option to participate in the investigation, interim safety measures and/or academic accommodations, and the need to proceed with an investigation (even if none is requested). If you have experienced sexual assault, sexual harassment, intimate partner violence, and/or stalking and want a confidential place to obtain support and information, please contact The DeKalb County Day League (formerly DeKalb Rape Crisis Center): [404-377-1428](tel:404-377-1428) for 24-hour confidential crisis line | [404-377-1429](tel:404-377-1429) for free counseling service or Georgia's 24-hour Domestic Violence Hotline: [800-334-2836](tel:800-334-2836).

**Accommodations:**

Some students may require accommodations. In such cases, students must coordinate any accommodations at the start of the semester by contacting Emory's Office of Accessibility Services at 404-727-9877, or by email at [accessibility@emory.edu](mailto:accessibility@emory.edu).

**Honor Code:** Refer to the College Honor Code (which can be located on the Emory website): [http://college.emory.edu/home/academic/policy/honor\\_code.html](http://college.emory.edu/home/academic/policy/honor_code.html). Suspected violations of the honor code are to be referred to the Honor Council by the instructor for formal investigation. All graded work is to be completed independently unless otherwise noted by the instructor.

**Email & Canvas:** Students must check their Emory University email and the course Canvas page daily. Having not checked your email/Canvas is not an excuse for failing to bring the appropriate materials to class or missing an assignment

**Note:** Some of the topics shown in the films and that we will present and discuss in this course are controversial. I expect you to treat them with an open mind, and with sensitivity to ethical issues and consideration of others. An important part of a university education is open-mindedness and learning to take the perspective of others, even those with whom you might disagree. This will serve you well not only during your time at university, but also throughout your life after you graduate.

### Course Outline

Topics to be discussed will include the transition from conventional norms to individual freedom, reaping the benefits and upside of an individualistic identity, experiencing the downsides of an individualistic identity (loneliness, alienation, frustration, lack of a sense of purpose, craving community), enough of all this “maleness” and “whiteness” / how did an individualistic identity play out for women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and African- and Asian-Americans, an end to the 1970’s both literally and figuratively.

**A = Asynchronous, S = class session, R = Reading required for discussion in class on that date.**

**Films are available through the library – in the Class Reserves section in CANVAS. To view the films, you’ll need to login to your Emory account when prompted.**

#### Class sessions and Dates:

- 1/23    **A: What She Said: The Art of Pauline Kael**  
           **This film serves as background to reading and understanding film criticism in the course**
- A: Bonnie and Clyde**  
           **S: Organizational meeting:** Review course and syllabus, introductions and getting to know one another a bit; background discussion on the transition from conventional norms to individual freedoms in the 1960s and 1970s; Discuss documentary on Pauline Kael and the nature and role of film criticism; discuss Bonnie and Clyde.  
           **Discuss the movies and the film reviews of Bonnie and Clyde**
- 1/30    **A: Easy Rider**  
           **S:** The transition from conventional norms to individual freedoms in the 1960s and 1970s  
           **Discuss the movie and the Markus and Kitayama (1991) Culture and the Self paper**
- 2/6     **A: The Last Detail**  
           **S:** Reaping the benefits and upside of an individualistic identity  
           **Discuss the movie and the Sampson, E. E. (1977). Psychology and the American ideal**
- 2/13    **A: Midnight Cowboy**  
           **S:** Experiencing the downsides of an individualistic identity (loneliness, alienation, frustration, lack of a sense of purpose, craving community); portrayals of hetero- and homosexuality; how did an individualistic identity play out for LGBTQ+ individuals)
- 2/20    **A: Nashville**  
           **S:** Experiencing the downsides of an individualistic identity (loneliness, alienation, frustration, lack of a sense of purpose, craving community)  
           **Discuss Gorodnichenko & Roland (2011). Individualism, innovation, and long-run growth**
- 2/27    **A: The Conversation**  
           **S:** Experiencing the downsides of an individualistic identity (loneliness, alienation, frustration, questioning one’s sense of purpose, craving community)

- 3/5 **A: Klute**  
**S:** Experiencing the downsides of an individualistic identity (loneliness, alienation, frustration, lack of a sense of purpose, craving community); portrayals of women and sexuality
- 3/12 **Spring Break**
- 3/19 **A: A Woman Under the Influence**  
**S:** Experiencing the downsides of an individualistic identity (loneliness, alienation, frustration, lack of a sense of purpose, craving community) - How did an individualistic versus collectivist identity play out for women? For individuals experiencing psychological difficulties?
- 3/26 **A: Chinatown**  
**S:** Experiencing the downsides of an individualistic identity (loneliness, alienation, frustration, lack of a sense of purpose, craving community)  
**Discuss Li et al. (2021). Passion matters but not equally everywhere: Predicting achievement from interest, enjoyment, and efficacy in 59 societies**
- 4/2 **A: Taxi Driver**  
**S:** Experiencing the downsides of an individualistic identity (loneliness, alienation, frustration, lack of a sense of purpose, craving community)
- 4/9 **A: Killer of Sheep**  
**S:** Experiencing the tensions between an independent and interdependent identity; portrayals of non-European ancestry families - How did an individualistic versus collectivist identity play out for African-Americans?
- 4/16 **A: Chan is Missing**  
**S:** Experiencing the tensions between an independent and interdependent identity; portrayals of non-European ancestry families - How did an individualistic versus collectivist identity play out for Asian-Americans?
- 4/23 **A: One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest**  
**S:** Experiencing the downsides of an individualistic identity (loneliness, alienation, frustration, lack of a sense of purpose, craving community) - How did an individualistic versus collectivist identity play out for individuals experiencing psychological difficulties?  
**Discuss Sampson (1988). The debate on individualism: Indigenous psychologies of the individual and their role in personal and societal functioning**

## Readings

Readings will include papers by E.E. Sampson, Hazel Markus, Shinobu Kitayama and others on individualist versus collectivist mindsets, identities, and priorities; journal articles on secular trends from the 1950s to the present on traits like narcissism, conformity, religiosity, conservative versus liberal views and attitudes toward social issues such as abortion, racial integration, sexual orientation, etc; film reviews by Pauline Kael in the New Yorker, by Janet Maslin, Vincent Canby et al in the NYTimes, and by Roger Ebert in the Chicago Tribune (at [www.rogerebert.com](http://www.rogerebert.com)); and film critiques published in Film Comment, Sight and Sound, and other film journals.

Articles will be assigned and available in the Readings folder under Files on Canvas. Please be sure to complete all assigned readings, and to submit your summaries and questions to Canvas, **by 11:59 PM the Monday evening prior to class each week**. Please also submit your summaries and questions on the movies to Canvas by that same time. **These should be submitted online through CANVAS in a single Word doc (no exceptions!).**

**A = Asynchronous film to view on your own, R = Reading required for discussion in class on that date.**

### Class sessions and Dates:

- 1/23    **A: What She Said: The Art of Pauline Kael**  
           **A: Bonnie and Clyde**
  
- 1/30    **A: Easy Rider**  
           **R:** Markus, H.R. & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the Self: Implications for Cognition, Emotion, and Motivation. *Psychological Review*, 98, 224-253. **Available in Files on CANVAS**
  
- 2/6     **A: The Last Detail**  
           **R:** Sampson, E. E. (1977). Psychology and the American ideal. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 35(11), 767–782. **Available in Files on CANVAS**
  
- 2/13    **A: Midnight Cowboy**
  
- 2/20    **A: Nashville**  
           **R:** Gorodnichenko, Y. & Roland, G. (2011). Individualism, innovation, and long-run growth, *PNAS*, 108, 21316–21319. **Available in Files on CANVAS**
  
- 2/27    **A: The Conversation**
  
- 3/5     **A: Klute**
  
- 3/12    **Spring Break**
  
- 3/19    **A: A Woman Under the Influence**
  
- 3/26    **A: Chinatown**  
           **R:** Li et al. (2021). Passion matters but not equally everywhere: Predicting achievement from interest, enjoyment, and efficacy in 59 societies. *PNAS*, 118, 1-10.

4/2     **A: Taxi Driver**

4/9     **A: Killer of Sheep**

4/16    **A: Chan is Missing**

4/23    **A: One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest**

**R:** Sampson, E. E. (1988). The debate on individualism: Indigenous psychologies of the individual and their role in personal and societal functioning. *American Psychologist*, 43(1), 15–22.