

## Living and learning in a diverse environment

Fall 2007 Online class

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**ASU 101**  
THE ASU EXPERIENCE

## Welcome

- This module will introduce you to the concept of diversity, the relevance of diversity in your academic life and three essential elements of diversity such as personal and social identity, and world view.
- It will take you approximately 30 minutes to complete.
- You will need a piece of paper and something to write with, to complete some of the exercises included in the module.

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## Today's focus: Who are we?

- A. Self-reflection exercise
- B. Unique and shared attributes
- C. Worldview

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## Today's learning objectives

Become aware of your own identity

Distinguish between personal identity and social identity

Learn about similarity/distinctiveness relative to classmates

Understand how one's identity affects one's world view

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## Self awareness

**Self-reflection: Who are you?**

**Personal and social identity**

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## Who are you?



• If I gave you a piece of paper, how would you answer the question at the top of the page?

• Think about the first 6 descriptors—either words or phrases—that would come to your mind immediately in answering this very simple question.

• Write them down

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## Who Am I?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

Go to the next slide after you have completed your list

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## Who are you?

What are some of the descriptors that you listed?

Psychological /  
physical traits

Attractive  
Intelligent  
Tall

Group  
Categories

Woman  
Republican  
Chicana

Social roles

Mother  
Friend  
Wife

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## Self = many things

In fact, most of us have a sense of self that incorporates elements of what is known as '**personal identity**,' that is, information about the self as a unique entity, like a specific type of trait.

Often when we think about elements of personal identity, we really are focused on attributes that describe us as an individual.

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## Personal Identity

Self-defining information that focuses on the self as a **unique** and **independent** entity;

May include **individual level traits** such as intelligent, extraverted, attractive, etc.

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## Self = many things

In addition, for some of us, the self also incorporates elements of what is known as '**social identity**,' or aspects of the self that derive from our membership in groups.

For example, you might think have listed Sun Devil. Or you might have listed woman. A social identity includes the given category that you use to describe yourself as well as attributes you associate with it.

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## Social Identity

Aspects of the self that derive from our **membership in groups**;

May include **category memberships** such as 'woman' or 'Sun Devil' and/or **attributes associated with those memberships** like 'nurturing' or 'influential.'

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## Internal and external functions of identity

These self-definitions, personal and social identities, are very powerful forces.

Internally, they anchor us, they serve to shape our attitudes, behaviors, and values.

Externally, they define who we are to others.

Other people respond to us on the basis of our characteristics, especially those characteristics that are visually salient.

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## Internal and external functions of identity

How do we identify others' identities?

How do they identify ours?

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## Internal and external functions of identity

How do we identify others' identities?  
**external cues**

How do they identify ours?  
**external cues**

Unless identities are linked to visible cues, we often fail to recognize others' identities, and our shared attributes.

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## Your Identities Exercise



- Let's do an exercise to review different components of your identity

- In a blank piece of paper write down the numbers 1 to 14.

- Go to the next slide whenever you are ready.

- You'll find a list of statements. If a statement applies, or is descriptive of you, answer true. If it doesn't apply, answer false

- This exercise will give you a sense the dimensions of your identity.

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## List of statements

1. I am a US citizen
2. I play a musical instrument
3. I am Hispanic
4. I am an introvert
5. I am attractive
6. I am a person of color
7. I am a Republican
8. I speak more than one language
9. I am a humanities major
10. I am an Arizona native
11. I was a spelling bee champ
12. I am a Christian

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## The exercise: Public identities of multiple types

Which of the statements in the exercise were related to social identities?

Which were personal identities?

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## Public identities of multiple types

Which of the statements in the exercise were related to social identities?

US citizen; Hispanic; person of color; Republican;  
humanities major; Arizona native; Christian

Which were personal identities?

Introvert; attractive; play a musical instrument

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## Social identities impact our lives

Our social identities affect:

- how we think of ourselves
- how we view others
- how we interpret events

Generally, social identities affect how we view the world.



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## Worldview Exercise

- Let's do an exercise on world view

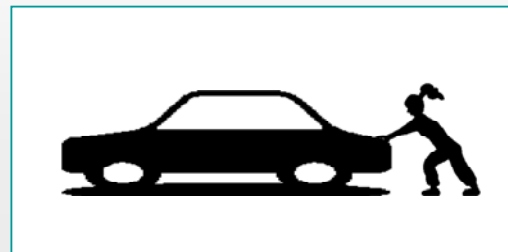


- In the next slide you'll find an image to observe
- Take a couple of minutes to analyze the image and move to the next slide
- This exercise will give you a sense of how diverse our perspectives can be.

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## What is this person doing?



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## What is this person doing?

Write down your statement and go to the next slide whenever you are ready



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## Looking at the same picture

Some responses that have been generated in response to the picture are as follows:

- woman stretching prior to jogging
- man with a pony tail pushing the car
- person exercising
- someone closing the trunk
- a person trying to stop the car from rolling
- a person assuming the search stance talking to someone in the back seat

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## The picture in our head

Why are there different interpretations for the same picture?

We all see the same image, yet we come up with different interpretations/impressions

How might our individual histories and backgrounds lead to our interpretations?

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## The picture in our head

Why are there different interpretations for the same picture?

One's history as a runner; as someone who has been searched; as a man with long hair or knowing one

How might our individual histories and backgrounds lead to our interpretations?

Our histories, experiences, identities provide us with a range of examples, schemas, and viewpoints.

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## Worldview Definition

Worldview is the filter of perception and interpretation.

Worldview determines how we think about our social world; both personal and social identities influence our worldview.

Worldview determines:

- how we interpret events,
- how we perceive others, and
- how we view ourselves.

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## Worldview: Our filter to the world

- We do not all see the same social reality.
- We use our cognitive frameworks (also known as schemas) to understand the world around us.
- Some of our most significant frameworks derive from our social identities—our cultural group, our gender, our age cohort, our religion.
- Each social identity provides a lens through which to view the world and see other people/groups.

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## Worldviews abound

Just as we hold a worldview that is affected by our social identities, so too, do other people.

The diversity of the human experience is often highlighted when we encounter others with dissimilar thoughts, ideas, traditions and values.

Diversity provides the window to many worldviews.

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## So, how do you see diversity?



- Difference
- The spice of life
- Part of nature
- Recognition of complementarity
  - (we each have different strengths)
- A cause for concern
- A stretching of one's boundaries

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## Engaging diversity in your life

Most of us have a certain way of approaching life, of interpreting information, and of communication, and we also like to think of ourselves as good persons.



So if we are good persons, then it make sense that we think we're doing things right: the way we see things, the ways we act, the conclusions that we draw are good.

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## Diversity and your life

We tend to surround ourselves with people who are like us because they often share our:

- approach to life
- interpretations of information
- communication style

They reinforce our worldview.

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## However, diversity is beneficial

- Provides exposure to new knowledge  
You get to learn information about people and places different from you and your background
- Contributes to the learning process  
You begin to understand different points of view
- Enhances the educational experience  
You begin to get a taste of future work environments
- Improves the university climate  
You experience the benefits of inclusion
- Supports the university mission  
ASU promotes excellence, access, and impact!
- Improves society  
Democracy is enriched by richness of ideas

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## Don't miss the opportunity

- Remember that the world, nation and this campus reflect diversity in many ways.



- Consider the many dimensions of diversity: race/ethnicity, age, gender, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, ableness, class, etc. This richness reflects your community.

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## Grab the opportunity

- Understanding the village increases your
- awareness of difference and your effectiveness in communicating and collaborating across difference.



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## Embracing diversity at ASU

President Michael Crow:

*"We have to learn how to communicate and teach between all ethnic and cultural perspectives. Not with a dominant cultural perspective and marginal alternative cultural perspectives, but across all of these."*

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## Embracing inclusive excellence

President Michael Crow:

*"We must find ways to reach into all our communities with warmth and openness."*

*"We need to embrace cultural diversification in America and change the culture of the university as a critical first step."*

(remarks delivered at the 2004 *Educating for a Diverse America: A Summit and Symposium*, Austin, TX)

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## Welcome to ASU

A University where diversity is valued....



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