

# Constructing Identity

A 5-week Unit for Seniors

Lj Reinders

LLED 7408

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## Rationale

With each bell marks the countdown for graduation. The seniors are undoubtedly excited, high school is coming to an end and “real life” will begin. They are soon to be fresh adults in an ever-growing world. New challenges, responsibilities, and choices are hanging before their eyes. Regardless of what they choose to do post-graduation- be it college, work, armed forces, etc. – these students will for the most part no longer have the shelter that high school afforded them. That is to say, who they were then might not necessarily cross over into their adult life. They will find that the things they believed or didn’t believe will be challenged as new information and experiences occur.

It is my hope that these students will continue to have support as they emerge into their adult life, but that is not always the case. . The reality is that once they leave, these students will be in a world riddled with discrimination, cultural and political tension no to mention the rapid growth of media and its integration into our daily lives. These new adults will be constantly bombarded with ads, shows, celebrities, politicians, and articles telling them how to live, who to be, and what it means to be an adult. As so, these seniors on the cusp of “adulthood” will have to readapt and decide who they are and what they believe- without the daily support often found in school. It is my hope and driving goal of this unit to equip my students with the tools necessary to rationally make such critical and introspective decisions. Though he wrote in an older time, I believe Soren Kierkegaard’s (2008) words still ring true today, perhaps even more than they did before. He wrote, “The greatest hazard of all, losing one’s self, can occur very quietly in the world, as if it were nothing at all” (p. 26). In a world where you can be easily caught in the current, I hope that after this unit my students will be able stand autonomous.

The principle texts for this unit are *Notes from Underground* by Fyodor Dostoyevsky, several pieces by Jorge Luis Borges including “The Other” and “Borges and I”, and Book 1 parts 1-4 and 7 of David Hume’s *A Treatise on Human Nature*. Through examining these texts my students will be exposed to varying narratives of the self. Each author presents a separate account of the idea of the self – its origin, authenticity, complications, and meanings – yet together they offer a strong basis from which the students may learn. I acknowledge that these texts are not only difficult but also limited in terms of diversity. They are existential texts written by male authors, the most recent of which passed away in 1986. However, these texts were chosen because they provide readers with the basis from which they can critically examine their own culture and those around them. The aim here is not to teach the students what composes the self according to various cultures. Rather, it is my intention to expose them to fundamental philosophical thought from which, via critical and introspective examination, they will glean their own beliefs about the self in their own cultures and those around them. In essence, I am striving to teach them how to think and handle complex ideas- not what to think.

Still, some may find these heavily philosophical texts impractical for a high school education. Harry Reinert (1967) notes that some hesitation may stem from society’s orientation “toward training rather than educating its young” (p. 236). I believe this is evident from the constant pressure for students to perform well on high-risk assessments- tests that value transmitted knowledge over discussion derived meaning. Matthew Lipman (1998) takes this further, arguing that those opposed to philosophical texts in the classroom believe “Thinking is supposed to take place only within individuals, not among them...as if conferring together about some problem were a form of immorality?” (p. 277). This claim certainly fits the model in which teachers are the sole source of knowledge and the students are merely there to receive it.

However, this lack of critical thinking and inability to deal with difficult abstract ideas is part of the reason Reinert believes college freshmen drop out so often (p. 236). They have not learned how to think for themselves let alone abstractly. What will happen to these students when they're on their own, left to grapple with events outside of their control, experience, and comfort? Some might do well while others fail. Yet, I am not teaching so only a few do well. This course is designed so that all my students will be able to deal with the diverse and difficult experiences that may come their way after high school.

Reading strictly philosophical texts, however, can only go so far. While *Notes From Underground* and the works by Borges are fictitious they are still heavily laden with existential thought. There is certainly room for my students to relate to these works, but more likely than not they'll read them with a partially detached understanding. To remedy this disjunction, I plan on having the students also read a few chapters from Roger Hock's *Forty Studies That Changed Psychology*. The chapters, specifically Phillip Zimbardo's Stanford prison experiment and Stanley Milgram's obedience experiment, give real life examples of how humans perceive identity. These experiments are not graphic but rather deal with the cognitive aspects of human nature. By having my students read through these selections, they will be able to see what they have learned in action-it gives them a concrete example of abstract ideas.

Starting with Borges, the students will be first exposed to a more condensed and easier to read fiction on the self. The short stories I have chosen are merely a few pages long but offer an excellent introduction for abstract thought. Before reading this text, however, I will have my students write for a few minutes about who they are. I expect that a majority of them will respond by writing about things they like or enjoy. Afterward we will have a discussion on why they believe their answers represents their identity. These quick writes and response is designed

so students may begin seeing their public persona as separate from the concept of the self – an idea central in Borges work. These stories will serve as the springboard from which the students will dive into the more complex works of the course.

Once my students understand the concept of knowledge of Self by description, its shortcomings and meanings, the class will progress into the more complicated Bundle Theory presented by Hume. Through examining his works, my students will be exposed to the notion that the self is nothing more than a bundle of experiences linked by cause, effect and resemblance. This theory is quite different from the one presented by Borges, but that is the point. Through exposure to a variety of beliefs concerning the nature of the self, my students will be able to make rational claims and gain understandings concerning their own personal identity as well as that of other cultures. Critical unbiased analysis and introspection will be the tools with which they accomplish such a feat.

Following Hume, students will read *Notes From Underground*. In this text they will see Dostoyevsky's character struggle with his identity, almost totally crippled by that which is out of his control. This text brings to light issues of identity in a modern world where so much occurs outside of one's control. Students will also be able to analyze this text in a literary fashion, critically examining the techniques Dostoyevsky uses to make his point. An important part of this literary exploration will be learning how to analyze a narrator, gaining the tools necessary to determine for themselves if the narrator is trustworthy or not. In doing so, students will be able to apply this knowledge outside of the classroom. Narratives have been integrated into our daily life – journalists, politicians, even screenwriters constantly produce texts that attempt to sway you one way or another. These soon to graduate students need to know not only how to analyze these texts but also that they can make their own decision concerning what's before them. Without this

life tool, these graduates will merely be another cog in the system of production and consumption.

These seniors are on the cusp of a very new and different life. It is my hope that by the end of the unit they will be able to engage in critical yet distinctly introspective thought. With the flurry of new experiences, greater exposure to political agendas, and the constant flow of media students will often be in a position that challenges their sense of self. I hope that after the course of this unit my students will be able to reflect on aspects of their lives as well as those around them – making their own decisions, forming their own beliefs, and standing autonomous with the tools they have gained.

## Goals and Rubrics

### Consent Form

This unit is designed to encourage students in the critical examination of their identity and on a broader scale the idea of the self. As so, much of our class time will revolve around introspective discussion which may involve talking about personal experiences. There are also some assignments, mainly the Character Journal, which will ask you to incorporate your personal thoughts and experiences. If you or your guardian(s) are uncomfortable with this practice, I will be more than happy to meet with you and discuss possible alternatives. Please review the following assignments with your guardian(s). If they sign this consent form, then you will be expected to complete all work as outlined below. If at anytime you become uncomfortable do not hesitate to tell me and we can make appropriate changes.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, acknowledge that my student is expected to take part in reflective and introspective work as part of Mr. Reinders' 12<sup>th</sup> Grade English course. If at anytime an objection to these expectations arises, I will contact Mr. Reinders.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

### Grade Distribution

The assignments for this unit carry the following values in your total unit grade:

- In Class Writing/ Participation 15%
- Author Response Journal 20%
- Presentation 20%
- Creative Writing Project 45%

### Goal 1: Author Dialogue Journal

For each text we read, you will be required to log at least two entries in your journal, totaling to 8 entries. These journals are designed to help you discover and generate meanings and responses to the texts. They are to be done at home, though I will have a few classes set aside for you to work on them, and will be collected at two points during the course of the unit to ensure the work is being done. However, it will not be graded until the end of the unit.

- Entries must be legible if handwritten
- If typed, please print out your entries and keep them together (Preferably in a folder of sorts)



- I want you to write as if you were talking to the author/character, “discussing” with them what aspects of the texts you found compelling, biased, weak, wrong and etc. I expect you to support your claims and explain why you arrived at your conclusions.
- I will not be grading you on grammar. However, I need to be able to understand what you’re trying to say.
- You are welcome to incorporate your own personal experiences that you find to be related, though keep in mind that I am obligated to share any thoughts or suggestions of violence, suicide, substance abuse, family abuse or other harmful behavior with the school counselors.

Author Dialogue Journal Rubric

	A	B	C	D	F
Quality	Entries address the texts respectfully and critically while producing well thought out inferences	Usually addresses the texts critically while producing decently thought out inferences	Sometimes addresses the texts critically and occasionally produces good inferences	Rarely addresses the texts critically and hardly produces any inferences	Not turned in at all
Technicalities	Contains the minimum number of entries, is legible, and turned in on time	Contains the minimum number of entries, is legible, and turned in on time	Missed no more than 2 entries, is legible and turned in on time	Missed more than 2 entries, is ineligible and turned in late	Not turned in at all

Goal 2: Presentation

Drawing from what you have learned in the first part of the unit, I want you to prepare a brief 10 to 15 minute presentation in groups of 2-4. These presentations will give you a chance to extrapolate what you have learned to a topic that interests you. For instance, your topic could be utilitarianism and so you could analyze how the self is perceived or constructed within such a doctrine. You could also discuss if it would even allow for an authentic self to exist. The main idea here is that you think critically about the idea of the self, how it exists, from where it comes,

if it’s authentic, etc. in relation to a topic that interests you. It is vital for you to learn how to apply what you’ve generated in the classroom to your life outside school.

- You must be in groups of 2-4
- You have to run your topic by me for approval
- Try your best not to simply retell what you’ve learned in a different light but rather synthesize it in order to create new understanding
- It must be between 10-15 minutes
- Practicing beforehand always makes it easier so the class before you present will be set aside for practice.

Presentation Rubric

	A	B	C	D	F
Quality/ Relevance	Students masterfully synthesized what they learned with their topic, constructing new meaning.	Students adequately synthesized what they learned with their topic, arriving at some new meaning.	Students somewhat synthesized what they learned, though they did not achieve new meaning.	Students failed to incorporate what they learned with their topic and showed no signs of new meaning.	The group didn’t do the assignment.
Delivery	Signs of practice are evident. Students show genuine interest and the delivery was well organized.	Delivery is less organized but still smooth. Members contributed less evenly.	Delivery is choppy, showing signs of little practice. Members do not contribute equally.	Group clearly did not practice. One member does most of the work.	The group didn’t do the assignment.

### Goal 3: Creative Writing Project

Your final project for this unit, and notably 45% of your grade, is a text *no longer than 10 pages* that explores your idea of the self. Either option must be in *Times New Roman, 12pt font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins and a title page*. I will not be explicitly grading you on grammar. However, if I have trouble reading your paper because of grammatical and mechanical errors then I will mark points off.

#### Option 1:

- Write a narrative in which, referring to the texts and drawing from your experiences, you construct and defend what you consider to be the self.
- Focus on a few key beliefs you have concerning identity.
- Discuss on what foundation your beliefs exist, how they might be influenced and what meaning it produces in relation to the construction of identity.
- First person is acceptable and expected.
- Keep in mind there is always another viewpoint so try your best to acknowledge it without deprecation.

#### Option 2:

- Create a fiction in which you explore what you have learned and now believe about the construction of identity.
- You can use any literary form or genre, but let me know in advance.
- I'm not expecting you to be the next Borges or Dostoevsky, but I am expecting you to make insightful, well thought out claims that are evident in your work and not merely superficial. You can't have your characters simply say "Identity is this this and this"

### Creative Writing Rubric

#### Option 1

Narratives deserving a grade of "A"

- Incorporate what the student believes, supported with textual and experiential evidence.

- Synthesize what was learned in class and what the student believes, generating new meaning.
- Are organized in a manner that is logical and provides smooth transitions.
- Acknowledge other possibilities/beliefs

Narratives deserving a grade of “B”

- Show that the student put forth a good effort to synthesize what was learned in class with their own experiences, generating some new meaning.
- Are organized well and have few problems with transition.
- Have claims that are mostly supported.
- Acknowledge other possibilities/beliefs less than that of an “A” paper.

Narratives deserving a grade of “C”

- Touched on some key beliefs but with little support and synthesis.
- Are not well organized and have problems with transitions.
- Fail to acknowledge other beliefs/possibilities.

Narratives deserving a grade of “D”

- Fail to discuss key beliefs in detail.
- Offer little if any support for claims.
- Are completely unorganized.
- Fail to acknowledge other possibilities/beliefs.

Narratives deserving a grade of “F”

- Were not turned in or were not on the assigned topic

Option 2

Fictions deserving a grade of “A”

- Are well thought out and clearly incorporate some literary genre or form.
- Expertly explore the idea of the self.
- Put forth some claim about identity and the self.
- Show that the student had a good grasp of what was learned during the course of the unit.

Fictions deserving a grade of “B”

- Adequately explore the idea of the self.
- Put forth a good claim but could have been developed further.
- Adequately use some literary genre or form.

- Show the student has a decent understanding of what was learned during the course of the unit.

Fictions deserving a grade of “C”

- Somewhat explore the idea of the self.
- Put forth a superficial claim about identity and the self.
- Don’t quite adhere to the selected genre or literary form.
- Show the student has a limited understanding of what was discussed in class.

Fictions deserving a grade of “D”

- Do not explore the idea of the self.
- Put forth no noticeable claim about identity and the self.
- Do not adhere to any literary genre or form.
- Show the student has little if any understanding of the concepts discussed in class

Fictions deserving a grade of “F”

- Were not turned in
- Were not on the assigned topic

#### Goal 4: In Class Writing/ Participation

Participation, while vital, is a difficult aspect to grade. Not everyone participates in the same way. My alternative then is to have you write in class on a weekly basis. A couple of times a week I’ll have you write for about 15 minutes on a prompt of my devising. These prompts are designed to get you thinking critically about the texts we are exploring. They will almost always be based off the reading that was assigned the previous day. They are not graded per se, but rather I use them as a guide to see what understandings and meanings you draw from the texts. I will also use them as discussion starters during class, though I will not name the author.

## Introductory Activity

### Day 1

I will distribute copies of the following two-sided prompt and tell the class that their work may be used as an example in the following class, though the authors will remain anonymous. Students will spend approximately 15 minutes answering side A and 20 minutes answering side B. One class is over I will collect the prompts and the activity will continue the next day.

#### **SIDE A**

Directions: Take a few moments to think about who you are. What defines you? Why does it define you? Is that the same thing as your identity? Then take about 15 minutes to write in response to these questions. Don't worry about spelling, grammar, etc. I'm only interested in what you have to say about the nature of your self.

#### **SIDE B**

Directions: Why did you choose to write what you did? Why do you believe the things you believe? Do you believe these things and define yourself in certain ways on your own accord? Or is who you are a product of the ideas around you? After considering these questions, I want you to go back and look at what you wrote previously. Did you just tell me things you liked or beliefs you had heard elsewhere? Or perhaps you discussed morals, skills, etc. that you find represent yourself. But is that who you are or just something you believe or can do? Take another 20 minutes to write in response to my last question. I want you to justify your response to the first prompt or having thought about it more, modify it with these new questions in light.

### Day 2

Students will form small groups with 4-5 members. I will try to have the seating prearranged to fit the small group format, but if I am unable to do so I will direct the students in rearranging the room. Once settled, I will pass out anonymized excerpts from the previous day's introductory activity.

Small-group discussion: Students will review the excerpts and use them as a basis for discussing conceptions of the self. I will ask the groups to specifically focus on why they believe their peers choose to identify themselves as they did and what that might imply about our understanding of identity. Each group must come up with at least one belief, derived from analyzing the excerpts, about the nature of how we view ourselves.

Whole class discussion: The small groups will each present what they have gleaned from their discussions. I will write each group's main belief on the board and once each group has presented, we will use the beliefs as a basis to explore the difference between a public persona and the concept of the self – an idea central to what they will be reading in the following days.

## Lesson Plans

This unit was designed for a 55-minute senior college prep course. Since the texts used in this course are fairly difficult, I have set aside time during class for students to read. Setting aside time for reading allows me to work with my students if they have any difficulty in understanding the texts. It also ensures that the reading gets done.

I have set aside time for students to work on the presentations and final papers. I know that students will procrastinate or forget to work on assignments and I do not wish to see them do poorly because of it. Combined, these two projects make up 65% of their grade. Having classes dedicated to working on said projects gives them several opportunities to make sure they do well.

### **Day 1 (Monday) – Intro Activity**

10 minutes    Enter, attendance, quick course overview,

5 minutes    Distribute the following two-sided prompt and tell the class that their work may be used as an example in the following class, though the authors will remain anonymous.

#### **SIDE A**

Directions: Take a few moments to think about who you are. What defines you? Why does it define you? Is that the same thing as your identity? Then take about 15 minutes to write in response to these questions. Don't worry about spelling, grammar, etc. I'm only interested in what you have to say about the nature of your self.

#### **SIDE B**

Directions: Why did you choose to write what you did? Why do you believe the things you believe? Do you believe these things and define yourself in certain ways on your own accord? Or is who you are a product of the ideas around you? After considering these questions, I want you to go back and look at what you wrote previously. Did you just tell me things you liked or beliefs you had heard elsewhere? Or perhaps you discussed morals, skills, etc. that you find represent yourself. But is that who you are or just something you believe or can do? Take another 20 minutes to write in response to my



last question. I want you to justify your response to the first prompt or having thought about it more, modify it with these new questions in light.

- 15 minutes    Written response side A
- 20 minutes    Written response side B
- 5 minutes     Collect written responses and dismissal

## **Day 2 (Tuesday)**

- 5 minutes     Attendance, house keeping
- 10 minutes    Students will form small groups with 4-5 members. I will try to have the seating prearranged to fit the small group format, but if I am unable to do so I will direct the students in rearranging the room. Once settled, I will pass out anonymized excerpts from the previous day's introductory activity.
- 15 minutes    Small-group discussion: Students will review the excerpts and use them as a basis for discussing conceptions of the self. I will ask the groups to specifically focus on why they believe their peers choose to identify themselves as they did and what that might imply about our understanding of identity. Each group must come up with at least one belief, derived from analyzing the excerpts, about the nature of how we view ourselves.
- 25 minutes    Whole class discussion: The small groups will each present what they have gleaned from their discussions. I will write each group's main belief on the board and once each group has presented, we will use the beliefs as a basis to explore the difference between a public persona and the concept of the self – an idea central to what they will be reading in the following days.

## **Day 3 (Wednesday)**

- 5 minutes     Attendance, house keeping, pass out Borges packet which includes “The Captive”, “Everything and Nothing”, “Borges and I”, “The Other”, “The Witness,” and “A Dialog About a Dialog.”
- 5 minutes     Students will form 6 small groups after which I will assign each group one of the stories.
- 15 minutes    Small-group discussion: The members of each group will read their assigned story, having been instructed to read over it several times. I will ask the students to underline parts of the story that stick out to them in some way. After each member has had time to read, the groups will discuss how identity is portrayed in

their story. I want them to think about what implications can be derived from these portrayals and how it fits in with their own perception of the self.

- 30 minutes      Moving back to a whole class discussion, I will ask the students to share their ideas and thoughts about the distinction between a public persona and the nature of the self presented by in readings. Prompting questions: What implications if any were found in the readings? Do these stories conflict with how we typically view identity? Do they conflict with your personal idea of the self? Which is more authentic? I'll remind students at the end of class to bring in their journals for tomorrow.

### **Day 4 (Thursday)**

- 5 minutes      Attendance, house keeping
- 15 minutes      Chalk Talk: I will write "The Self" and "Public Persona" on the board. After telling the students the ground rules, that only one person may write on the board at a time, there is no talking and the responses must be appropriate, I will ask them to start responding. I will ask students to keep in mind what they have read so far and the discussions we have had over the past couple of days.
- 25 minutes      Whole class discussion: We will discuss the chalk talk. The discussion will depend on what answers or ideas emerged from it. I will try to guide them into discussing what possible definitions we might use when referring to the self and public persona. I want to know what opinions and meanings my students have gained from examining Borges' separation of self and public persona.
- 10 minutes      I will explain the Author Dialogue Journals and if anytime is left, students will record responses in their journal.

### **Day 5 (Friday)**

- 5 minutes      Attendance, house keeping
- 20 minutes      Reading: Students will read the rest of the stories that they did not read in their groups on Wednesday.
- 25 minutes      Collaborative text: Students will work in pairs to produce a short piece that imitates the themes and beliefs concerning identity found in Borges' work. They can choose to do a parody or their own original work. In either case, the students should write in a way that produces a synthesis of their understanding of Borges and their own beliefs concerning identity. I want to be able to read these texts and clearly see where their own meanings come into play.

5 minutes Collect texts, pack up

### **Day 6 (Monday)**

5 minutes Attendance, house keeping, let students know I'll be collecting journals on Friday

15 minutes Sticky note description: I will pass out several sticky notes to each student. On the board I will have the image of a tree, orange, and cat. I will ask my students to write whatever comes to their minds when viewing these images on the sticky notes, so long as it's appropriate, and then to place the note around the image.

15 minutes Small group discussion: I will split the class into 3 groups, each will be assigned one of the images on the board and the notes that go with it. The groups are to discuss how the notes relate to the image. I want them to discuss if it's possible to think of the image without the descriptions or associations given on the notes and if not what that may imply about

20 minutes Whole class discussion: I will lead off by asking, "Are the descriptions offered central to our conception of these images? If so, then what does that imply about how we view things?" The goal is to have my students arrive at the basic principle of Bundle Theory, Hume's take on identity, without explicitly defining it for them. Hume is not an easy read so by having my students arrive at a basic understanding of his concepts on their own accord I hope that they will have an easier time with the readings.

### **Day 7 (Tuesday)**

5 minutes Distribute Hume packet, which contains Book 1, Section 1, parts 1-4 and 7 of *A Treatise of Human Nature*

40 minutes Read Sections 1 through 3 and ask students to highlight any passages they have difficulty in understanding.

10 minutes Pass out and review the following rubric for their presentation, answer any questions, pack up

Presentation: Due next Friday

Drawing from what you have learned in the first part of the unit, I want you to prepare a brief 10 to 15 minute presentation in groups of 2-4. These presentations will give you a chance to extrapolate what you have learned to a topic that interests you. For instance, your topic could be utilitarianism and so you could analyze how the self is perceived or constructed within such a doctrine. You could also discuss if it would even allow for an authentic self to exist. The main idea here is that you think critically about the idea of the self, how it exists, from where it comes,

if it's authentic, etc. in relation to a topic that interests you. It is vital for you to learn how to apply what you've generated in the classroom to your life outside school.

- You must be in groups of 2-4
- You have to run your topic by me for approval
- Try your best not to simply retell what you've learned in a different light but rather synthesize it in order to create new understanding
- It must be between 5-10 minutes
- The class prior to the presentation, next Thursday, will be set aside for you to practice

	A	B	C	D	F
Quality/ Relevance	Students masterfully synthesized what they learned with their topic, constructing new meaning.	Students adequately synthesized what they learned with their topic, arriving at some new meaning.	Students somewhat synthesized what they learned, though they did not achieve new meaning.	Students failed to incorporate what they learned with their topic and showed no signs of new meaning.	The group didn't do the assignment.
Delivery	Signs of practice are evident. Students show genuine interest and the delivery was well organized.	Delivery is less organized but still smooth. Members contributed less evenly.	Delivery is choppy, showing signs of little practice. Members do not contribute equally.	Group clearly did not practice. One member does most of the work.	The group didn't do the assignment.

### **Day 8 (Wednesday)**

5 minutes      Attendance, house keeping

30 minutes      Digesting the text: The classroom will be set up in a circular format. I will ask students to volunteer what passages or parts of the reading they had difficulty in

understanding. I will be more of a moderator, only speaking up when it seems necessary to clarify. The main goal is to get my students to work with each other in an attempt to collaboratively generate a better understanding of the text and its meanings.

- 15 minutes Quick write: With the previous discussion in mind, I will have my students respond to the following prompt written on the board: “How might Hume’s theory on the origin of our ideas apply to the construction of an identity?”
- 5 minutes Collect responses, pack up

### **Day 9 (Thursday)**

- 2 minutes Attendance, house keeping
- 15 minutes Anticipation Guide: I will pass out copies of the following guide (though it will be page length), using the previous day’s quick write responses as the statements students will be responding to. Students will fill in the Agree/Disagree column then explain why they chose their answer with a few sentences in the rationale column.

Statements	Agree/Disagree	Rationale	Reflection
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- 20 minutes Read section 4 and 7 from the Hume packet. I will clarify questions as needed.
- 15 minutes Anticipation guide: Having read the rest of the Hume packet, I will ask students to return to their anticipation guides and write a reflection that indicates how and why their opinions of the statements have changed. If they have not changed then I will have them reflect on which passages helped confirm their opinions.
- 3 minutes Collect guides, pack up

### **Day 10 (Friday)**

- 5 minutes Attendance, collect journals

- 15 minutes      Small group discussion: Students will form groups with 4-5 members. I will pass back their anticipation guides from yesterday and ask them to share their responses with their group. Taking the individual responses into consideration, I want each group to come up with a definition of identity that will be shared with the whole class.
- 30 minutes      Whole class discussion: Each group will offer their definition of identity. I will ask students to discuss the similarities and differences between the definitions. I also want them to discuss how these definitions compare to the nature of identity found in Borges work and given what we have discussed up to this point, if we can have an authentic identity.
- 5 minutes      Reminder that the presentation is due next Friday, pack up

### **Day 11 (Monday)**

- 3 minutes      Attendance, house keeping
- 5 minutes      Distribute copies of *Notes from Underground* and assign pages 1-41
- 45 minutes      Read assigned pages and I will clarify questions when needed.
- 2 minutes      Pack up

### **Day 12 (Tuesday)**

- 2 minutes      Attendance, house keeping
- 15 minutes      Quick Write: Students will look back over pages 28-31 and briefly explain their understanding of how the underground man presents identity. Please provide quotes that support your ideas.
- 15 minutes      Partner discussion: Students will pair up and discuss the validity of the narrator and the claims he makes, using the quick write as a reference. Write on the board: “What does he claim concerning identity. Does he offer good evidence for his claims? Is his understanding of identity rational? What makes you trust or distrust him as a narrator?” Instruct students to jot down some notes from their discussions so they can use them as reference when we come together as a whole class.
- 20 minutes      Whole class discussion: I will ask students to volunteer the conclusions they came to in their pairs and how they arrived at them. I will ask them how their trust or distrust of the narrator affects their understanding of identity as presented in the novel so far.
- 3 minutes      Collect quick writes, pack up

**Day 13 (Wednesday)**

- 10 minutes Attendance, pass back journals, assign pages 42-70
- 35 minutes Read assigned pages and I will clarify questions when needed.
- 10 minutes Once finished with reading, students will have the rest of the class to make an entry into their journal. Remind them to bring materials to work on their presentation tomorrow.

**Day 14 (Thursday)**

- 3 minutes Attendance, house keeping
- 50 minutes Presentation Work Shop: Students will use this time to finish up and practice their presentations. I will be available to answer any questions.
- 2 minutes Pack up

**Day 15 (Friday)**

- 2 minutes Attendance
- 50 minutes Presentations: Students will give their presentations. If there is not enough time for each group to go I will set aside time for them to be finished the following Monday.
- 3 minutes Pack up

**Day 16 (Monday)**

Schedule if presentations weren't finished:

- 2 minutes Attendance
- 15 minutes Finish presentations
- 30 minutes Read pages 71-87 and I will clarify any questions when needed.
- 8 minutes Hand out the rubric below for the final paper and pack up.

Creative Project  
Due next friday

Your final project for this unit, and notably 45% of your grade, is a creative text ***no longer than 10 pages*** that explores your idea of the self. Either option must be in ***Times New Roman, 12pt font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins and a title page.*** I will not be explicitly grading you on grammar. However, if I have trouble reading your paper because of grammatical and mechanical errors then I will mark points off.

Option 1:

- Write a narrative in which, referring to the texts and drawing from your experiences, you construct and defend what you consider to be the self.
- Focus on a few key beliefs you have concerning identity.
- Discuss on what foundation your beliefs exist, how they might be influenced and what meaning it produces in relation to the construction of identity.
- First person is acceptable and expected.
- Keep in mind there is always another viewpoint so try your best to acknowledge it without deprecation.

Option 2:

- Create a fiction in which you explore what you have learned and now believe about the construction of identity.
- You can use any literary form or genre, but let me know in advance.
- I'm not expecting you to be the next Borges or Dostoevsky, but I am expecting you to make insightful, well thought out claims that are evident in your work and not merely superficial. You can't have your characters simply say "Identity is this, this and this"

Creative Writing Rubric

Option 1

Narratives deserving a grade of "A"



- Incorporate what the student believes, supported with textual and experiential evidence.
- Synthesize what was learned in class and what the student believes, generating new meaning.
- Are organized in a manner that is logical and provides smooth transitions.
- Acknowledge other possibilities/beliefs

Narratives deserving a grade of “B”

- Show that the student put forth a good effort to synthesize what was learned in class with their own experiences, generating some new meaning.
- Are organized well and have few problems with transition.
- Have claims that are mostly supported.
- Acknowledge other possibilities/beliefs less than that of an “A” paper.

Narratives deserving a grade of “C”

- Touched on some key beliefs but with little support and synthesis.
- Are not well organized and have problems with transitions.
- Fail to acknowledge other beliefs/possibilities.

Narratives deserving a grade of “D”

- Fail to discuss key beliefs in detail.
- Offer little if any support for claims.
- Are completely unorganized.
- Fail to acknowledge other possibilities/beliefs.

Narratives deserving a grade of “F”

- Were not turned in or were not on the assigned topic

Option 2

Fictions deserving a grade of “A”

- Are well thought out and clearly incorporate some literary genre or form.
- Expertly explore the idea of the self.
- Put forth some claim about identity and the self.
- Show that the student had a good grasp of what was learned during the course of the unit.

Fictions deserving a grade of “B”

- Adequately explore the idea of the self.

- Put forth a good claim but could have been developed further.
- Adequately use some literary genre or form.
- Show the student has a decent understanding of what was learned during the course of the unit.

Fictions deserving a grade of “C”

- Somewhat explore the idea of the self.
- Put forth a superficial claim about identity and the self.
- Don’t quite adhere to the selected genre or literary form.
- Show the student has a limited understanding of what was discussed in class.

Fictions deserving a grade of “D”

- Do not explore the idea of the self.
- Put forth no noticeable claim about identity and the self.
- Do not adhere to any literary genre or form.
- Show the student has little if any understanding of the concepts discussed in class

Fictions deserving a grade of “F”

- Were not turned in
- Were not on the assigned topic

Schedule if presentations were finished:

5 minutes      Attendance, assign pages 71-98

40 minutes      Read assigned pages and I will clarify questions when needed.

10 minutes      Hand out the rubric above and answer any questions, pack up

## **Day 17 (Tuesday)**

3 minutes      Attendance, house keeping, ask students to bring in journals tomorrow

15 minutes      Chalk Talk: All ready familiar with how this activity works, students will respond to the following prompts on the board: “An authentic identity is...” I will

ask them to reflect on everything they have learned and discussed so far. The goal here is to help them flesh out meanings and understandings they might be able to use for their final paper.

- 20 minutes Whole class discussion: We will discuss the chalk talk. The discussion will depend on what sort of ideas, answers or questions emerged from it. Though I will be mainly acting as a moderator, I want my students to arrive at a definition of what authenticity means in relation to identity.
- 15 minutes Quick Write: Students will respond to the following prompt on the board: “The underground man certainly seems masochistic, reveling in his ‘wickedness’ yet altogether ashamed of it at the same time. Is this construction of identity, affirmation though pain, authentic?” Use examples from the book to support your argument.
- 2 minutes Collect quick writes, pack up

### **Day 18 (Wednesday)**

- 5 minutes Attendance, assign the rest of *Notes from Underground*
- 40 minutes Read the rest of the novel and I will clarify any questions when needed.
- 10 minutes Journal entry, pack up

### **Day 19 (Thursday)**

- 5 minutes Attendance, house keeping
- 50 minutes Fishbowl: I will assign each student a number 1-4. Each number group will have about 12 minutes in the fishbowl to discuss any of their assigned prompts. Those outside the bowl will be instructed to stay passively involved, taking notes of points made during the discussion. If at any time the discussion seems to be halting I will provide more prompting questions. The room will all ready be arranged accordingly. These questions are geared toward the sort of ideas I want my students to explore in their final papers.

Group 1: What does it mean to be authentic? Can you have a distinct identity without being authentic? Is it possible to apply such a term to identity when there are so many different and clashing views?

Group 2: Which view of identity that we’ve seen so far seems most cohesive? Is there any overlap between the different views? If so, then what does that imply about identity?

Group 3: What are some concepts of identity seen in your culture or others? How do they compare with those we have covered?

Group 4: Why do we have so many different concepts of identity? What does that imply about human nature? Or can we imply anything from it at all?

### **Day 20 (Friday)**

- 3 minutes      Attendance
- 50 minutes      Talk Show: I will have the classroom prearranged to meet the needs of this activity. The class will split into four groups, 3 of which will be “guests” and the other the “host”. Group 1 will be the Underground man, Group 2 will serve as Borges, Group 3 will act as Hume and the final group will be the show host. The guest groups will take 15 minutes to come up with a brief biography and a few questions they want to ask of the other guest, all from the perspective of their assigned author/character. At the same time the host group will be thinking of a few questions to ask each of the guests and the order in which they will talk to them. After 15 minutes, the host group will announce the name of the show and begin introducing the guests who in turn will give their biography. From there on the host group should be able to moderate the discussion, asking questions of each guest and encouraging them to ask their own questions. I will remain passively active, speaking up only to ensure the discussion stays on track or to make sure everyone participates. This activity serves as a final review of the texts we have covered up to this point.
- 2 minutes      Remind students that their final is due next Friday and pack up.

### **Day 21 (Monday)**

- 3 minutes      Attendance, house keeping
- 5 minutes      Pass out selections from *Forty Studies that Changed Psychology*, which includes “A Prison by Any Other Name” and “Obey at Any Cost?”
- 15 minutes      Students will read “A Prison by Any Other Name”
- 10 minutes      Watch an [interview](#) with Philip Zimbardo. We will watch it from start to the 5:20 mark and then 8:38-9:42.
- 20 minutes      Whole class discussion: I will briefly review the Abu Graib prison incident. From there I will ask my students if they have any other modern examples of this ‘loss’ of identity. What does this study imply about our conception of identity? Is it possible to have an authentic identity when man is so easily influenced?
- 2 minutes      Pack up

**Day 22 (Tuesday)**

- 3 minutes Attendance, house keeping
- 15 minutes Students will read “Obey at Any Cost?”
- 10 minutes Watch Zimbardo’s [discussion](#) on Milgram’s Experiment.
- 20 minutes Whole class discussion: Is obeying an innate part of identity? If we are capable of rationalizing actions because they are fragmented, meaning you were merely a small part in the whole scheme of things, then what does that imply about our identity? Is it more malleable than you previously thought?
- 2 minutes Ask students to bring in a passage from their paper for peer conferencing

**Day 23 (Wednesday)**

- 3 minutes Attendance, house keeping
- 50 minutes Peer Conference: Students will form groups with 4-5 members. One student will start off by asking their fellow members to do one of the following, which will be written on the board:  
 Bless – A request by writers to have their work praised. Responders give specific feedback on what they liked.  
 Express – Writers ask to have the content of their work responded to. Focus on the meaning not how it is written.  
 Address – Writers will ask to have a specific part of their paper responded to, focusing on things like detail, sentence structure, tone, etc. keeping comments directed to the specific passage.  
 Press- Writers will ask to have their work critiqued positively or with constructive suggestions.  
 After each member has responded to the first student’s passage, they will then have the same done for them.
- 2 minutes Pack up, remind students to bring their journals and materials to work on their paper

**Day 24 (Thursday)**

- 3 minutes Attendance, house keeping
- 50 minutes Students will have this time to finish up their papers and make final entries into their journals. I will be available to answer any questions.

2 minutes Pack up

**Day 25 (Friday)**

5 minutes Attendance, collect papers and journals

15 minutes Book Grades: On a piece of paper, I want my students to assign a letter grade to each of the texts we read. I want them to then write a few sentences explaining their reasoning behind the grade selection.

30 minutes Text Discussion: I will go through each text and ask the students what grades they gave them. I will ask the class why they graded them so and if they would recommend using the text again. Which text did they like the most and why? Which did they like the least and why?

5 minutes Collect responses, pack up

## References

### Rationale

Kierkegaard, Soren. (2008) *Sickness Unto Death*. VA: Wilder Publications.

Lipman, Matthew. (1998). Teaching students to think reasonably: Some findings of the  
Philosophy for Children program. *Clearing House*, 71, 277

Reinert, Harry. (1967). Teaching philosophy in high school. *Educational Theory*, 17(3), 236-240.

### Goals and Rubrics

Consent form adapted from Kelly Galloway's [unit](#) on firing the canon.

Creative writing rubric adapted from Megan Lewis' [unit](#) on identity.

### Lesson Plans

BEAP adapted from Bob Fecho's LLED 7420 class resource page.