



SYDNEY  
College of Divinity  
An Australian University College



**PBC**  
PERTH BIBLE COLLEGE

**Perth Bible College**

# B9291 Social Identity and the New Testament [ISS]

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**Trimester 1, 2024**

**Teaching Staff:**

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Consultation times: M-F 8:30am-4:30pm by appointment

# B9291 Social Identity and the New Testament [ISS]

## Trimester One, 2024

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<b>Credit value:</b>	9 credit points
<b>Mode of study:</b>	Delivery will be via lectures, research assignments, and extra content supplied on Moodle.
<b>Pre-requisite units:</b>	Nil
<b>Co-requisite units:</b>	Nil
<b>Units excluded:</b>	Nil

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**Scheduled times and Venues:** Tuesdays, 9:30am-12:00pm, PBC, Room 14 & via Zoom

<b>Teaching Staff:</b>	Name:	Dr. Steve Young
	Position & Qualifications:	Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies, PhD
	Phone:	08 9243 2000
	Email:	syoung@pbc.wa.edu.au
	Consultation times:	M-F 8:30am-4:30pm by appointment

**Learning Management System:** Moodle ([access here](#) – you must be logged in)

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<b>Workload:</b>	Total Workload for unit:	143 hours
	Allocation of Workload:	25 hours of lecture and discussion; 52 hours dedicated to assessment tasks; 68 hours of reading

## Background and Context

The New Testament documents have traditionally (and rightly) been read as sources of theology, guides to behaviour and worship, and portrayals of the history of the relationship between God and his people. More recently to all these has been added another important focus: the New Testament as a source for understanding who we are, our *identity* as Christians. The New Testament writers were as interested in shaping who we are as in telling us what to believe and do. Though this shaping will have implications for every Christian individual, it is concerned not primarily with individuals but with Christian communities as wholes, so not with personal identity but with *social* identity. The New Testament writers, each in their own way, invite their readers as a community to embody a shared social identity that challenges competing worldviews, and provides a source of unity and a basis for shared values and actions.

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## Curriculum Objectives

This graduate course unit provides students with an opportunity to focus at an advanced level on an area of study (the topic) within a discipline or subdiscipline that is not available

elsewhere in the curriculum. It is designed to stimulate focused analysis of a current or emergent issue that presents contemporary challenges to some area of Christian life or ministry. It differs in nature from X8191 (Introduction to Topic) in its more focused treatment of a designated challenging topic as distinct from a more general overview.

## Contribution to Graduate Attributes

Graduate attributes are the generic qualities expected to be attained by graduates of a course, regardless of content or area of specialisation. These attributes relate to both the general course level and the distinctives of the discipline in which the unit is located. This unit contributes to the attainment of the Course Outcomes in alignment with the distinctives of the Specific Discipline Outcomes, as follows:

This unit contributes to the attainment of the Course Outcomes in alignment with the distinctives of the Specific Discipline Outcomes, as follows:				
<b>Specific Discipline Outcomes</b>	<i>identify significant historical, cultural and religious contexts for theological and ministry concepts</i>	<i>discern and analyze major themes and issues that arise in relevant scholarly writings</i>	<i>engage with appropriate levels of scholarship in the critical reading of scholarly texts</i>	<i>apply lessons to ministry and/or other contemporary settings and issues</i>
<b>Course Outcomes</b>				
<i>understanding of classical and contemporary knowledge of biblical and theological concepts and ministry practices</i>	✓	✓	✓	
<i>mastery of theoretical knowledge and reflect critically on theory and ministry practice or scholarship</i>			✓	
<i>investigate, analyse and synthesise complex information, problems, concepts and theories at an abstract level</i>			✓	✓

## Contribution to Award

The unit forms part of the SCD awards at AQF Level 9.

The unit serves as an Advanced Elective unit in a specified Discipline (whose Discipline Code will be applied upon registration). It may form part of a Specialisation in the designated Discipline or stand as an Elective unit within the overall structure of the award.

The unit contributes to these awards by:

- introducing a focused body of specialised knowledge of the designated challenging issue or topic
- developing the skills of critical thinking, analysis and synthesis of information drawn from a variety of sources

providing opportunities to construct a coherent statement of reflection and problem solving in relation to the issue or topic.

## Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course unit, students should be able to:

1. Establish the major elements of challenge involved in social identity studies;
2. Analyse the interplay of intellectual/cultural and theological/religious factors that have shaped the use of social identity studies in biblical interpretation;
3. Review social identity studies from the perspective of a range of contemporary viewpoints represented in recent scholarship;
4. Evaluate the impact of social identity studies in its immediate context; and
5. Produce a recommendation for a theologically and culturally appropriate response to the challenges presented by the use of social identity studies to interpret the New Testament.

## Content and Learning Activities

This unit focuses on the various ways in which New Testament authors seek to shape the self-perception of their communities of readers, i.e., to shape their *social identity*. To speak of social identity is to step into a much-contested field of study, as it has been invented and continues to be reinvented across the social and behavioural sciences. This unit will address questions such as: what is the nature of identity? Is it essential to individuals from birth or is it constructed? What is the place of personality traits, physical characteristics, skills, and abilities in the shaping of identity? Is identity person-based, role based, discourse based, group based, collective in essence or something else altogether? What provides continuity of identity within changes in life? What place does narrative have in the building and maintaining of identity? What is the link between the identity of an individual and the social groups to which they belong? The answers provided by social identity theory to these questions (among others) will serve as a grid through which to read a selection of New Testament texts in order to identify how the writers seek to build the self-perception of their readers.

Assessment tasks are designed both to help students attain the unit outcomes and to enable teachers to assess student attainment. In this unit, assessment of student achievement with respect to the Unit Outcomes will be based on:

1. Review/s of literature representing various approaches to the issue [Outcomes 1, 2, 3]
2. Evaluation of the current and projected impact of the issue on Christian thought and/or practice [Outcomes 1, 2, 4]
3. A cogent response to the challenges presented within the issue [Outcomes 3, 4, 5]

## Learning Resources

### Essential Texts

- Baker, Coleman A. "Social Identity Theory and Biblical Interpretation." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 42.3 (2012): 129-38 (available via Moodle).
- Tucker, J. Brian and Coleman A. Baker, eds. *T&T Clark Handbook to Social Identity in the New Testament*. London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2014 (available at the PBC library in hard copy in the reserve section and electronically via The DTL 2 database).

### Recommended Texts

The following resources may also be referred to:

- Abrams, Dominic, and Michael A. Hogg. *Social Identifications : A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations and Group Processes*. London and New York: Routledge, 1990 (available in The DTL 2 database via the PBC library).
- Berg-Sørensen, Anders, Nils Holtug and Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen. "Essentialism vs. Constructivism: Introduction," *Distinktion: Journal of Social Theory* 11:1 (2010): 39-45 (available via Moodle)
- Brawley, Robert L. *Luke: A Social Identity Commentary*. London: T & T Clark, 2020 (available in The DTL 2 database via the PBC library).
- Brown, Ken, Alison L. Joseph, and Brennan Breed, eds. *Reading Other Peoples' Texts: Social Identity and the Reception of Authoritative Traditions*. Scriptural Traces. London: Bloomsbury, 2020 (available in The DTL 2 database via the PBC library).
- Campbel,, William S. *Romans: A Social Identity Commentary*. London: T&T Clark, 2023 (available in The DTL 2 database via the PBC library).
- Esler, Philip F. *2 Corinthians: A Social Identity Commentary*. London and New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2022 (available in The DTL 2 database via the PBC library).
- Hakola, Raimo. *Reconsidering Johannine Christianity: A Social Identity Approach*. London and New York: Routledge, 2015 (available in The DTL 2 database via the PBC library).
- Harré, Rom and Luk van Langenhove, eds. *Positioning Theory: Moral Contexts of Intentional Action*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999 (sections available via Moodle).
- Jenkins, Richard. *Social Identity*. 4th ed. Hoboken: Routledge, 2014 (available in The DTL 2 database via the PBC library).
- Marohl, Matthew J. *Faithfulness and the Purpose of Hebrews: A Social Identity Approach*. Cambridge, U.K.: James Clarke, 2010 (available in The DTL 2 database via the PBC library).
- Porter, Christopher A. *Johannine Social Identity Formation after the Fall of the Jerusalem Temple: Negotiating Identity in Crisis*. Biblical Interpretation Series 194. Leiden: Brill, 2022 (available in The DTL 2 database via the PBC library).
- Roth, Wendy D., Elena G. van Stee, and Alejandra Regla-Vargas. "Conceptualizations of Race: Essentialism and Constructivism." *Annual Review of Sociology* 49 (2023): 39-58 (available via Moodle).
- Schwartz, Seth J., Koen Luyckx, and Vivian L. Vignoles, eds. *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research*. New York, NY: Springer, 2011 (available in The DTL 2 database via the PBC library).
- Tucker, J. Brian, and Aaron Kuecker, eds. *T&T Clark Social Identity Commentary on the New Testament*. London and New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2020 (available in The DTL 2 database via the PBC library).
- Worchel, Stephen, Jonathan Iuzzini, Dawna Coutant, and Manuela Ivaldi. "A Multidimensional Model of Identity: Relating Individual and Group Identities to Intergroup Behaviour." Pages 15-32 in *Social Identity Processes: Trends in Theory and Research*. Edited by Dora Capozza and Rupert Brown. London: SAGE, 2000 (available via Moodle).
- Young, Stephen E. *Our Brother Beloved: Purpose and Community in Paul's Letter to Philemon*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2021 (available for download as a full book from Project Muse via The DTL 2 database at the PBC library).

## Assessment

All students must complete all assessment requirements as set, and conform with SCD Policy requirements.

### Assessment Schedule

Type of Assessment Task	Value (%)	Date due	Unit Learning Outcome(s) assessed
Report	25%	Week 5	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Article Review	30%	Week 8	2, 3, 4
Essay	45%	Week 11	2, 3, 4, 5

### Detailed information on assessment tasks and assessment standards:

<p><b>1. Report</b> (Carries 25% of total grade)</p> <p>Write a report on the Essentialism-Constructionism controversy regarding human identity.</p>	<p>The purpose of this assignment is that students wrestle fully with the theoretical underpinings and implications of the essentialist and constructionist views of human identity. Social Identity Theory rejects essentialism in favor of constructionism, and in order to move forward in applying this theory to NT interpretation students must become cognizant of the issues involved and why the controversy is important.</p> <p><b>General Description and Scope of Assessment Type:</b> A report is a valuable assessment tool that allows students to construct an informed, critical, logical, and coherent response to a particular problem or issue. It is beneficial in evaluating the student's research skills (both theoretical and practical theological). Reports can cover a wide range of Outcomes depending on the research task. The information supports students' knowledge development within the course and facilitates practical theological interaction with the context while also allowing for personal reflection. It can also function as a valuable ministry tool.</p> <p><b>Assessment Type Calibrated for AQF Level 9. References:</b> Students are expected to reference at least <b>twelve sources (including three journal articles)</b>. Students must write a coherent report that features a critical analysis of a complex topic. The topic should require cohesive, logical arguments to advance the theme and sub-themes of the topic. The student should take up a strong independent voice. The essay should contain a proper introduction and conclusion. It should develop critical arguments with scholars representing a range of different views for and against the position taken up by the student.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Word Count: <b>1,750 words</b></li> <li>● References: <b>12 sources (including 3 journal articles)</b></li> <li>● Due: <b>Week 5</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Article Review</b> (Carries 30% of total grade)</p> <p>Compare and contrast the use of Social Identity Theory to interpret a</p>	<p>Use this article review to compare and contrast Matthew J. Mahrol's use of Social Identity Theory to interpret a letter in his "Letter Writing and Social Identity" with its use by Coleman A. Baker to study a Gospel in his "A Narrative-Identity Model for Biblical Interpretation: The Role of Memory and Narrative in Social Identity Formation" (both available via Moodle).</p> <p>Social Identity Theory is not one single approach, but rather an umbrella under which a variety of approaches have been developed for use in</p>

<p>letter and a Gospel by reviewing two specified articles from the <i>T&amp;T Clark Handbook to Social Identity in the New Testament</i>.</p>	<p>various contexts. The purpose of this assignment is for students to note the particularities of two uses of Social Identity Theory for the interpretation of two different genres of literature.</p> <p><b>Specific Instructions: References:</b> there is no set expectation for number of references, though you will need to refer to other secondary sources to set the articles under review within the wider discussion of their subject matter. When <b>representing the articles' substance</b>, you are expected to set them within the context of the wider scholarly discussion of their topic, articulate clearly the articles' thesis, and summarize the contents of the articles, giving special attention to their fundamental aim(s) and method(s). As you <b>engage the articles</b>, you should do so both <b>(1) critically</b>, interacting with assumptions or claims essential to the articles' argument(s), and assessing the success of their argument and the overall significance of the articles in terms of their own stated purposes, and <b>(2) personally</b>, by indicating how the reading of the articles has shaped you, and in what way (if at all) your regard them as important (be sure to demonstrate theoretically grounded reasons for judgments of approval or disapproval). As for <b>presentation</b>, your review should be reasonably structured with a relevant introduction and conclusion, be characterized by transparent clarity in its argument, and its material well organized for the length of the paper. It should be presented in a professional manner in terms of spelling, sentence and paragraph construction, and acceptable form/style.</p> <p>Word Count: <b>1,500 words</b> Due: <b>Week 8</b></p>
<p><b>3. Interpretive-Research Essay</b></p> <p>(Carries 45% of total grade)</p> <p>Write an essay in which you apply Social Identity Theory to the interpretation of a NT text.</p>	<p>This essay constitutes the culmination of the unit's learning process, by providing the opportunity to apply everything learned during the trimester to the interpretation of a New Testament text. Though it is an interpretive essay, it should not provide results similar to "traditional" commentaries, but instead focus on a Social Identity reading of the text. .</p> <p><b>Assessment Type Calibrated for AQF Level 9: References:</b> Students are expected to reference at least <b>twelve sources (including three journal articles)</b>. Students must write a coherent essay that features a critical analysis of a complex topic. An essay demands a high degree of literacy, thinking and communication skills. The topic should require cohesive, logical arguments to advance the theme and sub-themes of the topic. The essay should contain a good introduction and conclusion. It should develop critical arguments with scholars representing a range of different views for and against the position taken up by the student.</p> <p><b>Specific Instructions:</b> choose a New Testament text for your essay that lends itself to a Social Identity Theory interpretation. Introduce your essay with a brief discussion of the value of Social Identity Theory for interpretation, and a description of the form of the theory that you will apply. Proceed to apply the theory to that text, taking care whenever possible to support your interpretation over against alternative views (for this you will be expected to reference secondary sources). Your interpretation does not need to be novel; you might choose to defend the interpretation of the text as offered by another scholar. But in every case the interpretation you offer—whether fully original to you or gained from the insights of others—should feature your strong independent voice in showing how insights specific to Social Identity Theory are rightly applied to the text (i.e., do not use the words of other scholars as "authorities,"</p>

	<p>but show how their application of Social Identity Theory is defensible and viable).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Word Count: <b>2,700 words</b></li> <li>● References: minimum <b>12 (including 3 journal articles)</b></li> <li>● Due: <b>Week 11</b></li> </ul>
<p>All assignments are to be submitted via Moodle <b>by 11:55pm on the day the class is scheduled, in the trimester week indicated above</b>, unless specified otherwise.</p>	

## Course Unit Revision

This unit was created in February 2024, so there has been as of yet no opportunity for revision.

## Extension Policy

Students must submit all assignments by the due dates set by the lecturer and published in the course unit profiles.

## Late Penalty

Late assignments without an approved extension will attract an automatic penalty deduction of 5% of the marks available for the item of assessment for every day (including weekends and holidays), or part thereof, beyond the date and time of submission (or any extension granted).

Assignments submitted without an approved extension beyond 10 days after the due date will receive a zero mark and NOT be annotated by the lecturer.

## Example:

*Student submits an assignment worth 50 marks 4 days late.*

*Total mark available=50*

*Penalty: 4 days late = 5% of 50x4 = 10 mark penalty*

*The student's original mark is 40.*

*Final mark =40-10=30*

## Grounds for Extension

An extension of an assignment's due date may be granted on the following grounds: medical illness (certified by Medical Certificate); extreme hardship; and compassionate grounds.

In such cases an extension of up to 28 days may be granted without penalty but only if requested before the assignment due date. The student should submit an "Application for Extension" including supporting documentation to the Member Institution for authorising and signing by the Lecturer / Registrar /Academic Secretary prior to the due date. The student will then be informed of the result of the request.

In extreme cases, extensions beyond 28 days may be granted. Such extensions must be applied for in writing, including supporting documentation, to the Teaching Body setting out the extreme circumstances. The Teaching Body's appropriate committee will consider such an unusual extension and notify the student of the outcome in writing.

If the unit assessment includes an examination and an extension is granted arrangements will be made for an alternative examination to be given to the student within the extension period.

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## **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the representation of another's works or ideas as one's own; it includes the unacknowledged word for word use or paraphrasing of another person's work, and the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas. For more information on plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct refer to the SCD Handbook.

SCD Academic Board has mandated that Studiosity is the only online study assistance permitted within the SCD. Studiosity is supplied free of charge to SCD students, and it can be accessed through [INSERT ACCESS, e.g. the MI Learning Management System.]

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## **Intellectual Property**

The Course Unit Outline from which this Course Unit Booklet is derived is the property of the Sydney College of Divinity. The particular interpretation, amplification, and extension of the Course Unit Outline that expresses the theological values of the Member Institution and meets the needs of its stakeholder are the property of the Member Institution.

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