HON-H 226 25255 Soul, Psyche, Self
Fritz Lieber
MW 11:15 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
HU 111

The idea of personal identity has undergone an interdisciplinary migration and transformation from classical Greece to modern America, with stops along the way in philosophy, psychology, religion, art, and literature. How has the idea of self-evolved? In what ways have culture and human science shaped the way we think of the self today?

The first part of the course covers origins of the self in Homer (compared to Virginia Woolf and James Joyce), the Old and New Testaments, Aristotle, Augustine, Montaigne, Descartes, Defoe, Hume, Wordsworth, Whitman and Thoreau, Darwin, Marx, and Camus. The rest of the semester considers the self in William James, John Dewey, Charles Cooley, Mary Calkins, the painter Thomas Eakins, Freud, George H. Mead, behaviorism, Borges, Erik Erikson, gay and black power, humanist psychology, and Clifford Geertz. We contrast Western ideas of the self with Eastern traditions.

The course is taught as a seminar. We rely heavily on class discussion. Students write four 5-page papers. Each student presents a paper to the class.