Sociology of Culture
(SOCI 266)

Friday, 9:00–11:30 Hamilton 151

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Course Overview

Course Goals

1. To survey the literature in the sociology of culture, with an emphasis on current approaches to culture
2. To stimulate ideas for empirical work in cultural sociology
3. To offer cultural tools for application to empirical research

Requirements

1. Attendance and active participation in class discussions
2. Two team-based presentations of readings and discussion leadership
3. An in-depth writing project related to cultural sociology

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Grade percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Team presentations</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing Project</td>
<td>50%</td>
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Course Format

Readings and Discussion

Each week, we will read a selection of works in a particular area of cultural sociology. A team of students will be charged with organizing and leading discussion of the readings. Each week’s team is responsible for:

- Preparing a “seminar paper,” to be distributed by e-mail to the rest of the class no later than 12:00 noon the day before class. The seminar paper need not be a polished product; it should raise ideas, issues, concerns, and opportunities presented by the readings, and thereby form the basis for the class discussion; and
Organizing and directing class discussion of the readings for the first half of class.

Snack Break

Each week, the team that presented the previous week should arrange to bring a small snack to keep the class lively for the second half. I will provide snacks for the first two classes.

Workshop

The second half of each class will be structured around discussion of students’ research work in progress. Please come to every class prepared to give at least a brief summary of the topic(s) you are working on and the status of your research. This will underscore the class’s workshop character and also provide a smooth transition from course to final paper to further work.

Readings and Resources

I have put many of the required and recommended books on reserve in the Sociology and Political Science Library, 271 Hamilton Hall. Many of the articles and chapters from other sources are available there as well.

Most required readings that are not in the books listed below are available for download from the course readings site, http://perrin.socsci.unc.edu/readings. You will need a username and password to access this site; these will be provided in class.

The recommended readings listed under many class sessions are suggestions for further reading in the field. Students presenting on those dates, and those with particular interests in the areas, may find them useful.

There will be a course e-mail list set up to facilitate out-of-class discussion of readings and other issues. The course list e-mail address will be soc266fall02@listserv.unc.edu.

Required Books


Recommended


Course Schedule

August 23 Introduction and course organization

August 30 History and classical theory of “culture”
• Durkheim & Mauss, *Primitive Classification*, pp. 3–27, 81–88
• Malinowski, “What is Culture?,” in *A Scientific Theory of Culture and Other Essays* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1944)
• Marx, from *Capital*: Part 1, Chapter 1, Section 1 (pp. 302–308 in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed.)
• Geertz, “Thick Description,” in Spillman.

Recommended:
• The remainder of Durkheim & Mauss, *Primitive Classification*

**September 6** “High” and “Popular” culture

• Bourdieu, *Distinction*:
  – Introduction (1–8)
  – Chapter 5 (260–317)
  – Chapter 7 (372–396)
  – Conclusion (466–484)

Recommended:
• Stephen Dubin, *Displays of Power*
• Judith Blau, *The Shape of Culture*
• Bourdieu, *Distinction*, remainder, esp. 397–465

**September 13** Multiculturalism

• Darnell Hunt, “Raced Ways of Seeing,” in Spillman.

Recommended:
• Anything by bell hooks
• Patricia Hill Collins, *Fighting Words: Black Women and the Search for Justice*

**September 20** Cross-culture
• Michèle Lamont and Laurent Thévenot, “Introduction: Toward a Renewed Comparative Cultural Sociology,” in Lamont and Thévenot

• Michèle Lamont, “The Rhetorics of Racism and Anti-Racism in France and the United States” in Lamont and Thévenot

• Abigail Saguy, “Sexual Harassment in France and the United States” in Lamont and Thévenot

• Barry Schwartz and MiKyoung Kim, “Honor, Dignity, and Collective Memory: Judging the Past in Korea and the United States,” in Cerulo


Recommended:

• Adam Gopnik, “Like a King: How to have a baby in France.” The New Yorker January 31, 2000.

• Paul A. Silverstein, Review of Lamont & Thévenot. AJS 107:2 (September, 2001). http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/resolve?AJS107215PDF


• Lamont, The Dignity of Working Men: Morality and the Boundaries of Race, Class, and Imagination

September 27 Religion


October 4 What is culture? Contemporary Theory and Method

• David Altheide, “Tracking Discourse,” in Cerulo


• Michael Schudson, “How Culture Works,” in Spillman


October 11 Contemporary Studies in Culture
October 18 No class (October break)

October 25 Political culture i: Theory

- Jeffrey Alexander and Philip Smith, “The Discourse of American Civil Society,” in Spillman

Recommended:


November 1 Political culture ii: Empirical studies

- Nina Eliasoph, “Close to Home,” in Spillman
- Andrew Perrin, “Political Microcultures” (manuscript)

Recommended:


November 8 Discourse and Political Culture
• Robin Wagner-Pacifici, *Discourse and Destruction* (entire)

**Recommended:**

• George Lakoff, *Moral Politics*
• Robin Tolmach Lakoff, *The Language War*

**November 15** Culture and Economy

• Viviana Zelizer, *The Social Meaning of Money*, Chapters 1, 4, 5, 6, and 7

**November 22** Culture, Cognition, Narrative, Memory

• Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz, “The Vietnam Veterans Memorial: Commemorating a Difficult Past,” in Spillman
• Gamson, “How Storytelling Can Be Empowering,” in Cerulo
• Belsey, *Critical Practice* (Routledge, 1980), pp. 67-75

**November 29** No class (Thanksgiving break)