

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, CHAPEL HILL  
Fall, 2004

# Sociology of Culture

(SOCI 266)

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Monday, 2:45 – 5:15    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

## 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.

Because of the sheer volume of great work in cultural sociology, it will be impossible to talk about each reading separately at each class meeting. The team, and to a lesser extent the rest of the class, should decide how best to structure discussion about the selections as a whole.

### *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. Each student will present informally twice during the course of the semester, and the rest of the class will provide insight and advice. This will underscore the class's workshop character.

## READINGS AND RESOURCES

I will set up a listserv for the course: [soc266fall04@listserv.unc.edu](mailto:soc266fall04@listserv.unc.edu). If everything goes right, you should be subscribed automatically. You may manage your own subscription to the list by visiting <http://listserv.unc.edu>.

Anyone taking this course is welcome to take SOCI 326.3, "Advanced Topics in Cultural Analysis," a one-credit course meeting for lunch on alternate Fridays.

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.

### *Required Books*

**Émile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss.** *Primitive Classification* (University of Chicago Press, 1963).

**Karen A. Cerulo, ed..** *Culture in Mind: Toward a Sociology of Culture and Cognition* (Routledge, 2002).

**Michèle Lamont and Laurent Thévenot, eds..** *Rethinking Comparative Cultural Sociology: Repertoires of Evaluation in France and the United States* (Cambridge University Press, 2000).

**Robin Wagner-Pacifici.** *Theorizing the Standoff: Contingency in Action* (Cambridge University Press, 2000).

**Ann Swidler.** *Talk of Love: How Culture Matters* (University of Chicago Press, 2001).

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### **August 30** Introduction and course organization

- Adam Kuper, "Introduction: Culture Wars." pp. 1–20 in *Culture: The Anthropologists' Account*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999)
- Philip Smith, "Introduction: What is Culture? What is Cultural Theory?" pp. 1–5 in *Cultural Theory: An Introduction*. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001)

### **September 13** A Background for Culture

- Émile Durkheim & Marcel Mauss, *Primitive Classification*, pp. 3–27, 81–88
- Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description," in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973)
- Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," pp. 217–252 in *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken, 1968)

- Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception,” from *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Stanford University Press, 2001)

Recommended:

- Marx, from *Capital*: Part I, Chapter I, Section 1 (pp. 302–308 in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed.)
- Turner, “Social Dramas and Stories About Them” *Critical Inquiry* Autumn, 1980 NX1.C64
- The remainder of Durkheim & Mauss, *Primitive Classification*
- Saussure, from *Course in General Linguistics*, pp. 718–726 in Adams, ed. *Critical Theory Since Plato* (Fort Worth: HBJ, 1992).
- Burke, “Literature as Equipment for Living,” pp. 921–924 in Adams, ed. *Critical Theory Since Plato* (Fort Worth: HBJ, 1992)

### September 20 What is culture? Contemporary Theory

- Ann Swidler, “Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies.” *ASR* 51(April 1986): 273-286 <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-1224%28198604%2951%3A2%3C273%3ACIASAS%3E2.O.CO%3B2-B>
- Michael Schudson, “How Culture Works: Perspectives from Media Studies on the Efficacy of Symbols.” *Theory and Society* 18:2 (Mar., 1989), pp. 153-180. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0304-2421%28198903%2918%3A2%3C153%3AHCWPFM%3E2.O.CO%3B2-G>
- Ron Jepperson and Ann Swidler, “What Properties of Culture Should We Measure?” *Poetics* 22 (1994): 359–371 [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0304-422X\(94\)90014-0](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0304-422X(94)90014-0)
- Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot, “The Sociology of Critical Capacity.” *European Journal of Social Theory* 2:3 (1999): 359–377
- Nina Eliasoph and Paul Lichterman. “Culture in Interaction.” *American Journal of Sociology* 108:4 (Jan2003), p735, 60p <http://search.epnet.com/direct.asp?an=10375843&db=afh>
- Lisa Wedeen, “Conceptualizing Culture: Possibilities for Political Science.” *American Political Science Review* 96:4 (December 2002): 713–728. [http://www.journals.cambridge.org/issue\\_AmericanPoliticalScienceReview/Vol96No04](http://www.journals.cambridge.org/issue_AmericanPoliticalScienceReview/Vol96No04)

Recommended:

- Ronald Breiger, “A Tool Kit for Practice Theory.” *Poetics* 27 (2000); 91-115.
- William H. Sewell, Jr. “A Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency, and Transformation,” *AJS* 98:1 (July, 1992): 1–29 <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-9602%28199207%2998%3A1%3C1%3AATOSDA%3E2.O.CO%3B2-9>
- Peter Wagner, “Power, Uncertainty, and Institution in Recent French Debates.” *Journal of Political Philosophy* 2(3): 270-289
- John Levi Martin, “What Is Field Theory?” *American Journal of Sociology* 109:1 (Jul2003). <http://search.epnet.com/direct.asp?an=11652039&db=afh>

### September 27 How do we find culture? Contemporary Method

- Wendy Griswold, “A Methodological Framework for the Sociology of Culture.” *Sociological Methodology* 17(1987): 1–35. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0081-1750%281987%2917%3C1%3AAMFFTS%3E2.O.CO%3B2-6>
- Robin Wagner-Pacifi, “A Framework for Articulating Horror”, pp. 1–10 in *Discourse and Destruction: The City of Philadelphia versus MOVE* (University of Chicago Press, 1994).
- John W. Mohr, “Measuring Meaning Structures.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 345–370. <http://arjournals.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev.soc.24.1.345>
- David Altheide, “Tracking Discourse,” in Cerulo
- John Levi Martin, “Power, Authority, and the Constraint of Belief Systems.” *American Journal of Sociology* 107:4 (January, 2002). <http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/resolve?AJS050270PDF>

- Andrew Perrin, “Who’s Afraid of Linear Regression?” *Culture* 18:3 (Spring, 2004) <http://www.ibiblio.org/culture/newsletter/cult183.pdf>

#### October 4 Contemporary Studies in Culture I

- Ann Swidler, *Talk of Love* (entire).

Recommended:

- Author meets critics session on *Talk of Love*. *Culture* 18:2 (Winter, 2004). <http://www.ibiblio.org/culture/newsletter/cult182.pdf>

#### October 11 Cross-culture

- Wendy Griswold, “The Fabrication of Meaning: Literary Interpretation in the United States, Great Britain, and the West Indies.” *The American Journal of Sociology* 92:5 (Mar., 1987), pp. 1077-1117. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-9602%28198703%2992%3A5%3C1077%3ATFOMLI%3E2.0.CO%3B2-G>
- 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
- Myra Marx Ferree, “Resonance and Radicalism: Feminist Framing in the Abortion Debates of the United States and Germany.” *American Journal of Sociology* 109:2 (September, 2003): 304–344. <http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/AJS/journal/issues/v109n2/070143/070143.web.pdf>

Recommended:

- Rick Fantasia. “Fast Food in France.” *Theory and Society* 24:2 (Apr., 1995), pp. 201-243. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0304-2421%28199504%2924%3A2%3C201%3AFFIF%3E2.0.CO%3B2-B>
- 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>
- Stephenson, “Going to McDonald’s in Leiden: Reflections on the Concept of Self and Society in the Netherlands,” *Ethos* 17 (June 1989), pp. 226–247
- Lamont, *The Dignity of Working Men: Morality and the Boundaries of Race, Class, and Imagination*
- Abby Saguy, *What is Sexual Harassment? From Capitol Hill to the Sorbonne*. University of California Press, 2003.

#### October 18 Culture, Cognition, Narrative, Memory

- Robin Wagner-Pacifici and Barry Schwartz. “The Vietnam Veterans Memorial: Commemorating a Difficult Past.” *The American Journal of Sociology* 97:2 (Sep., 1991), pp. 376-420. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-9602%28199109%2997%3A2%3C376%3ATVVMCA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-1>
- Gary Alan Fine. “Reputational Entrepreneurs and the Memory of Incompetence: Melting Supporters, Partisan Warriors, and Images of President Harding.” *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 101, No. 5. (Mar., 1996), pp. 1159-1193. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-9602%28199603%29101%3A5%3C1159%3AREATMO%3E2.0.CO%3B2-I>
- Paul DiMaggio, “Culture and Cognition.” *Annual Review of Sociology* Aug 1997, Vol. 23: 263-287. <http://arjournals.annualreviews.org/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev.soc.23.1.263>
- Jeffrey K. Olick and Daniel Levy. “Collective Memory and Cultural Constraint: Holocaust Myth and Rationality in German Politics.” *American Sociological Review* 62:6 (Dec., 1997), pp.921-936. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-1224%28199712%2962%3A6%3C921%3ACMACCH%3E2.0.CO%3B2-7>

- Olick & Robbins, "Social Memory Studies: From 'Collective Memory' to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices." *Annual Review of Sociology* 24(1998): 105–140. <http://soc.annualreviews.org/cgi/reprint/24/1/105.pdf>
- Gary Alan Fine, "Thinking About Evil: Adolf Hitler and the Dilemma of the Social Construction of Reputation," in Cerulo

Recommended:

- Patricia Ewick and Susan Silbey, "Narrating Social Structure: Stories of Resistance to Legal Authority." *American Journal of Sociology* 108:6 (May, 2003): 1328–1372.
- Maurice Halbwachs, "Language and Memory" and "The Reconstruction of the Past," pp. 43–51 in *Maurice Halbwachs on Collective Memory* (Lewis Coser, ed. and trans.; University of Chicago Press, 1992)
- Eviatar Zerubavel, *Social Mindscapes: An Invitation to Cognitive Sociology* (Harvard University Press, 1997).

### October 25 Boundaries and Distinctions

- Jeffrey C. Alexander and Philip Smith. "The Discourse of American Civil Society: A New Proposal for Cultural Studies." *Theory and Society* 22:2 (Apr., 1993), pp. 151-207. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0304-2421%28199304%2922%3A2%3C151%3ATDOACS%3E2.0.CO%3B2-L>
- Nicola Beisel, "Morals Versus Art: Censorship, The Politics of Interpretation, and the Victorian Nude." *American Sociological Review* 58:2 (Apr., 1993), pp. 145-162. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-1224%28199304%2958%3A2%3C145%3AMVACTP%3E2.0.CO%3B2-9>
- Marc W. Steinberg, "The Dialogue of Struggle: The Contest over Ideological Boundaries in the Case of London Silk Weavers in the Early Nineteenth Century." *Social Science History* 18:4 (Winter, 1994): 505–541.
- Michèle Lamont and Virag Molnar, "The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences." *Annual Review of Sociology* 2002. <http://soc.annualreviews.org/cgi/reprint/28/1/167.pdf>

Recommended:

- William H. Sewell, Jr., "Ideologies and Social Revolutions: Reflections on the French Case." *Journal of Modern History* 57:1 (1985): 57–85. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-2801%28198503%2957%3A1%3C57%3AIASRR0%3E2.0.CO%3B2-9>
- Theda Skocpol, "Cultural Idioms and Political Ideologies in the Revolutionary Reconstruction of State Power: A Rejoinder to Sewell." *Journal of Modern History* 57:1 (1985): 86–96. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-2801%28198503%2957%3A1%3C86%3ACIAPII%3E2.0.CO%3B2-Y>

### November 1 Political culture

- Karen Cerulo, "Deciphering Violence," in Spillman
- Ronald Jacobs, "Civil Society and Crisis: Culture, Discourse, and the Rodney King Beating," *AJS* 101:5 (March, 1996), 1238–1272. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-9602%28199603%29101%3A5%3C1238%3ACSACCD%3E2.0.CO%3B2-H>
- Nina Eliasoph, "'Close to Home': The Work of Avoiding Politics." *Theory and Society* 26:5 (Oct., 1997), pp. 605-647. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0304-2421%28199710%2926%3A5%3C605%3A%22THTWO%3E2.0.CO%3B2-H>
- Richard Biernacki, "Labor As an Imagined Commodity." *Politics & Society* 29:2 (June, 2001): 173–206

Recommended:

- Andrew Perrin, "Political Microcultures" (manuscript)
- Lisa Weeden, *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1999)

- Nina Eliasoph, *Avoiding Politics: How Americans Produce Apathy in Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1998)
- Paul Lichterman, *The Search for Political Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1996)
- Myra Marx Ferree, William Anthony Gamson, Jürgen Gerhards, and Dieter Rucht. *Shaping Abortion Discourse: Democracy and the Public Sphere in Germany and the United States*. (Cambridge University Press, 2002)

#### November 8 Discourse and Political Culture

- Robin Wagner-Pacifici, *Theorizing the Standoff: Contingency in Action*

Recommended:

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

#### November 15 “High” and “Popular” culture

- Howard S. Becker, “Art As Collective Action.” *American Sociological Review* 39:6 (Dec., 1974), pp. 767-776. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-1224%28197412%2939%3A6%3C767%3AAACA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-Z>
- Bourdieu, “The Sense of Distinction,” chapter 5 in *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984)
- Bryson, “‘Anything But Heavy Metal’: Symbolic Exclusion and Musical Dislikes.” *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 61, No. 5. (Oct., 1996), pp. 884-899. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-1224%28199610%2961%3A5%3C884%3A%22BHMSE%3E2.0.CO%3B2-0>
- Shyon Baumann, “Intellectualization and Art World Development: Film in the United States.” *American Sociological Review* 66:3 (Jun., 2001), pp. 404-426. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-1224%28200106%2966%3A3%3C404%3AIAAWDF%3E2.0.CO%3B2-V>

Recommended:

- Bourdieu, *Distinction*, ch. 7 (“The Choice of the Necessary”)
- Stephen Dubin, *Displays of Power*
- Judith Blau, *The Shape of Culture*

#### November 22 Contemporary Studies in Culture

- Wendy Griswold, “American Character and the American Novel: An Expansion of Reflection Theory in the Sociology of Literature.” *The American Journal of Sociology* 86:4 (Jan., 1981), pp. 740-765. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-9602%28198101%2986%3A4%3C740%3AACATAN%3E2.0.CO%3B2-4>
- Wendy Griswold, “The Writing on the Mud Wall: Nigerian Novels and the Imaginary Village.” *American Sociological Review* 57:6 (Dec., 1992), pp. 709-724. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-1224%28199212%2957%3A6%3C709%3ATWOTMW%3E2.0.CO%3B2-1>
- Richard Peterson and Roger Kern, “Changing Highbrow Taste: From Snob to Omnivore.” *ASR* 61:5 (October, 1996): 900–907. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-1224%28199610%2961%3A5%3C900%3ACHTFST%3E2.0.CO%3B2-Y>
- Hayagreeva Rao, Philippe Monin, and Rodolphe Durand. “Institutional Change in Toque Ville: Nouvelle Cuisine as an Identity Movement in French Gastronomy.” *American Journal of Sociology*, 108:4 (Jan2003), p795, 49p, 7 charts. <http://search.epnet.com/direct.asp?an=10375850&db=afh>
- Donald MacKenzie and Yuval Millo. “Constructing a Market, Performing Theory: The Historical Sociology of a Financial Derivatives Exchange.” *American Journal of Sociology* 109:1, ( Jul2003). p107, 39p. <http://search.epnet.com/direct.asp?an=11652037&db=afh>

Recommended:

- Peter Bearman and Katherine Stovel, "Becoming a Nazi: A Model for Narrative Networks." *Poetics* 27 (2000): 69–90

#### November 29 Multiculturalism

- JoEllen Shively, "Cowboys and Indians: Perceptions of Western Films Among American Indians and Anglos." *American Sociological Review* 57:6 (Dec., 1992), pp. 725-734. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-1224%28199212%2957%3A6%3C725%3ACAIPOW%3E2.0.CO%3B2-0>
- Amy Binder, "Constructing Racial Rhetoric: Media Depictions of Harm in Heavy Metal and Rap Music." *American Sociological Review* 58:6 (Dec., 1993), pp. 753-767. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-1224%28199312%2958%3A6%3C753%3ACRRMD0%3E2.0.CO%3B2-Y>
- Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, "The Language of African Literature," pp. 4–33 in *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (London, Nairobi, Portsmouth: James Currey Heinemann, 1986)
- Pamela Perry, "White Means Never Having to Say You're Ethnic: White Youth and the Construction of 'Cultureless' Identities." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 30:1 (February, 2001): 56–91
- Sarah M. Corse and Sandra Davis Westervelt. "Gender and Literary Valorization: The Awakening of a Canonical Novel." *Sociological Perspectives* 45:2, (2002), pp. 139–161. <http://thesius.ingentaselect.com/vl=1673007/cl=45/nw=1/rpsv/catchword/ucp/07311214/v45n2/s2/p139>

Recommended:

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

#### December 6 Religion, Morality and Culture

- Robert Wuthnow, "Ritual and Moral Order." Ch. 4 in *Meaning and Moral Order* (University of California Press, 1997).
- Christian Smith, *Moral, Believing Animals* (2003)

Recommended:

- Nancy Ammerman, "Telling Congregational Stories" *Review of Religious Research* 35:4 (1994):289-301
- Greeley, Andrew, and Michael Hout. "Americans' Increasing Belief in Life After Death: Competition and Assimilation." *ASR* 65 (December, 1999): 813–836
- Michael Hout and Claude S. Fischer, "Why More Americans Have No Religious Preference: Politics and Generations." *ASR* 67 (2002) 165–90