Sociology of Culture
(SOCI 266)

Monday, 2:45 – 5:15 Hamilton 151

Andrew Perrin
Office: Hamilton 269
Office hours: Wednesday, 1:00–3:00, or by appointment
Phone: 962-6876
E-mail: andrew_perrin@unc.edu • http://www.unc.edu/~aperrin

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. 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_


_Course Schedule_

_August 30_ Introduction and course organization


_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)

Recommended:
• Marx, from Capital: Part 1, Chapter 1, Section 1 (pp. 302–308 in The Marx-Engels Reader, 2nd ed.)
• The remainder of Durkheim & Mauss, Primitive Classification

September 20 What is culture? Contemporary Theory

Recommended:
• Peter Wagner, “Power, Uncertainty, and Institution in Recent French Debates.” Journal of Political Philosophy 2(3): 270-289

September 27 How do we find culture? Contemporary Method
• David Altheide, “Tracking Discourse,” in Cerulo
October 4  Contemporary Studies in Culture 1


**October 11  Cross-culture**


  Recommended:


**October 18  Culture, Cognition, Narrative, Memory**


- 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


  Recommended:


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


**October 18  Culture, Cognition, Narrative, Memory**


Recommended:


**October 25** Boundaries and Distinctions


Recommended:


**November 1** Political culture

• Karen Cerulo, “Deciphering Violence,” in Spellman


Recommended:

• Andrew Perrin, “Political Microcultures” (manuscript)

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


Recommended:

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

November 22 Contemporary Studies in Culture

Recommended:


**November 29 Multiculturalism**


Recommended:

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

**December 6 Religion, Morality and Culture**


Recommended:

