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 via Blackboard 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

Beginning with the February 5 class, 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

There will be a site for this course created at http://blackboard.unc.edu. We will use this course to post documents and seminar papers as well as for general discussion.

Students taking this class may also be interested in joining the ongoing Cultural and Political Sociology Workshop at UNC. I will be happy to provide information. Also, students may be interested in joining the ASA Section on the Sociology of Culture, a vibrant intellectual home for a wide variety of cultural sociologists.

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, or via Blackboard. You will need a username and password to access the readings 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

January 22 Introduction and course organization

- Lecture: A history of, and agenda for, cultural sociology
January 29 Contemporary Debates in Theory and Method

First half:


Recommended:

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

Second half:


February 5 Art, Music, and Literature I


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

**February 12** Long, Elizabeth. *Book Clubs.*

**February 19** Art, Music, and Literature II


**February 26** Culture, Cognition, Narrative, Memory

- Olick, “What Does it Mean to Normalize the Past?: Official Memory in German Politics since 1989” Social Science History 22, 4 (1998): 547-571
Recommended:


March 5 Boundaries and Distinctions


Recommended:

- 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


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

March 19 Culture and Institutions

March 26 Guillen, The Taylorized Beauty of the Mechanical

April 2 Bryson, Making Multiculturalism
Note: This session may need to be rescheduled

April 9 Political culture

Recommended:
• Paul Lichterman, The Search for Political Community (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1996)

• Walsh

**April 16** Discourse and Political Culture

• Robin Wagner-Pacifici, *Discourse and Destruction*

Recommended:

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

**April 23** Grindstaff, *The Money Shot*