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. One presentation of your current work for the class during the workshop period
3. An in-depth writing project related to cultural sociology

Course Format

Readings and Discussion

Course meetings will generally alternate between “book weeks” and “article weeks.” On book weeks we will read a single book in its entirety and spend the first half of class discussing it. On article weeks we will read several related articles and spend the entire class discussing them.

Because of the sheer volume of great work in cultural sociology, it will be impossible to cover the field comprehensively or even talk about each reading separately at each class meeting. As you do the reading for the week, consider which pieces you think will be most fruitful for us to discuss in depth.

Snack Break

Each week, a student will be assigned to bring a small snack to help keep the class lively for the second half. I will provide snacks for the first class.

Workshop
During the second half of book-week classes, we will discuss the research work being carried out by two or three students in the class. Each student will present informally once 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.

Sociology 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 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 12  Introduction and course organization

- Lecture: A history of, and agenda for, cultural sociology

January 19  Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday

January 26  Contemporary Debates in Theory and Method

First half:


Second half:


Recommended:


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


February 2 Grazian, *On the Make*

February 9 Authenticity, Taste, and Genre

First Half:


Second Half:


February 16 Griswold, Regionalism and the Reading Class

February 23 Art, Music, and Literature

First Half:


Second Half:


Recommended:


March 2 Baumann, Hollywood Highbrow

March 9 Spring Break

March 16 Memory and Narrative
First Half:


Second Half:


March 23 Hanser, *Service Encounters*

March 30 Political culture

First Half:


Second Half:


**Recommended:**


• Walsh, *Talking About Politics*

**April 6 Wagner-Pacifici, *Discourse & Destruction***

**Note:** Prof. Perrin will be out of town so we will need to reschedule this meeting.

**April 13 Cross-Culture**

**First Half:**


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


**Second Half:**


April 20 Swidler, *Talk of Love: How Culture Matters*

April 27 Where do we go from here?

**NOTE:** Final papers due

**First Half:**


**Second Half:**

- Course evaluations