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 or more class periods in which you distribute a “seminar paper” ahead of time and lead discussion of the material for that period
3. One presentation of your current work for the class during the workshop period
4. 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.

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 10** Introduction and course organization

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

**January 17** Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday

**January 24** 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


January 31  Art

First Half:


Second Half:


Febrary 7 Olav Velthuis, *Talking Prices: Symbolic Meanings of Prices on the Market for Contemporary Art*

February 14 Music and Literature

First Half:


Second Half:


Recommended:


February 21 Johnson, *Backstage at the Revolution: How the Royal Paris Opera Survived the End of the Old Regime*

February 28 Political culture

First Half:


February 7 Olav Velthuis, *Talking Prices: Symbolic Meanings of Prices on the Market for Contemporary Art*
• Ronald Jacobs, “Civil Society and Crisis: Culture, Discourse, and the Rodney King Beating,”  


**Second Half:**


**Recommended:**


• Walsh,  *Talking About Politics*

**March 7 Spring Break**

**March 14 Collective and Collected Memory**

**First Half:**


**Second Half:**

March 21 Robin Wagner-Pacifici, Discourse & Destruction: The City of Philadelphia vs. MOVE

March 28 Politics, Institutions, Deliberation

First Half:

Second Half:

April 4 Body and Brain

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

First Half:

Second Half:
April 11 Cross-Culture

First Half:


Second Half:


April 18 Tobin, Hsueh, Karasawa, “Preschool in Three Cultures Revisited: China, Japan, and the United States.”

April 25 Where do we go from here?
NOTE: Final papers due

First Half:


Second Half:


- Course evaluations