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 in social science and beyond

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. An in-depth writing project related to cultural sociology

Auditors must attend and participate actively in class discussions and must do a seminar paper and discussion leadership one or more times, but do not need to write the final paper.

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 class discussing it and its implications. 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.
Readings and Resources

There will be a site for this course created at http://sakai.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.socscl.unc.edu/readings, or via Sakai. 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


**Marion Fourcade.** *Economists and Societies: Discipline and Profession in the United States, Britain, and France, 1890s to 1990s* (Princeton University Press, 2010).


Course Schedule

January 12  Introduction and course organization

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

January 19  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 26 DeSoucey, *Contested Tastes*

February 2 Art and Taste

First Half:


Second Half:

• Lena, Jennifer C., and Danielle J. Lindemann. “Who is an Artist? New Data for an Old Question.” Poetics 2014


Recommended:


February 9 Music

First Half:


Second Half:


Recommended:


February 16 Fourcade, Economists and Societies

February 23 Political culture

First Half:


Second Half:


Recommended:


• Paul Lichterman, The Search for Political Community (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1996)
March 2 - SPECIAL TIME 2:00-4:30 PM  Collective and Collected Memory

**First Half:**


**Second Half:**


March 9  Identity, Boundaries, Multiculturalism

*We will meet together with Prof. Anna Bardone-Cone’s graduate seminar in Multiculturalism in Psychology.*

**First Half:**


**Second Half:**

- Materials to be determined by Dr. Bardone-Cone

**Recommended:**

March 16 Spring Break

March 23 Nelson, *The Social Life of DNA*

March 30 CLASS RESCHEDULED

April 4 (Special Session) Schemata, Brain, Culture

First Half:

Second Half:
• John Levi Martin. “Life’s a beach but you’re an ant, and other unwelcome news for the sociology of culture.” *Poetics* 38:2 (April 2010), 229–244. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2009.11.004](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2009.11.004)

April 6 McDonnell, *Best Laid Plans*

April 13 Culture and Health

First Half:
• Iddo Tavory and Ann Swidler. “Condom Semiotics: Meaning and Condom Use in Rural Malawi.” *ASR* 74 (April, 2009): 171–189. [http://asr.sagepub.com/content/74/2/171](http://asr.sagepub.com/content/74/2/171)

Second Half:


**April 20** Cross-Culture

**First Half:**


**Second Half:**


**April 27** Where do we go from here?

**NOTE:** Final papers due

**First Half:**


**Second Half:**


• Course evaluations