

Sociology of Culture
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In this course you will gain a very broad introduction to both the theoretical and empirical literature on the sociology of culture. I provide no strong argument for cultural sociology as a coherent realm of study. Instead we explore how cultural approaches think through the disparate areas of sociology. We will see these approaches deployed to make sense of race, class, gender, education, history, politics, networks, psychology, religion, the economy, organizations, colonialism, etc. You will read a wide range of theoretical approaches that often take quite contradictory stances: Elias, Bourdieu, Durkheim, Marx, Weber, Geertz, Parsons, Simmel, Luhmann, the Frankfurt School, and others.

There is a lot of theory and a lot of empirical work in this class. I have selected readings on the basis of things you should read in graduate school. Not every week has a coherent theme. This diversity of approaches will provide you with a wide range of knowledge upon leaving the course. But you will not have any thorough or systematic understanding of any one area. The challenge of this course is to ensure that this diversity does not breed a haphazard approach, obscuring more than it illuminates. I will attempt to meet this challenge in my introductions. Though this is not a lecture course, I will begin each class with a mini-lecture on the authors and readings.

Assignments

I demand that you read a lot. To compensate for this the evaluations will be straightforward and simple. You must present on 3 papers we read. You must hand in 7 reading memos. And you must attend class. Provided you do this work I will award you an A- for the course. On rare but exceptional occasions I may award an A for outstanding work. If you do not do the work your grade will decline rapidly. Reading memos are not reading summaries. They should be a critical interrogation of the readings for a class. I expect reading memos to be around 750 words. They are due the day before class. I will not accept any late memos.

In rare cases I will accept a seminar paper. This paper may integrate some of the course readings into an existing project. In order to write a seminar paper you must have an existing project, not an idea for an existing project.

Academic Dishonesty will not be tolerated. It will result in failure in this course and my recommendation that you be removed from your graduate program.

There are no texts for this course. All readings will be available on-line.

January 27: Marx and Engles, Bernstein, Bell, Willis, & Biernacki

- Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology* (entire)
- Bernstein, Basil, "Elaborated and Restricted Codes: Their social origins and some consequences," *American Anthropologist*, (Dec., 1964), pp. 55-69.
- Biernacki, Richard, 2001, "Labor as an Imagined Commodity," *Politics & Society*, Vol. 29, 173-206.
- Paul Willis, "Foot Soldiers of Modernity: The Dialectics of Cultural Consumption and the 21st-Century School," 2003, *Harvard Educational Review*, Vol. 73, No. 3: 390-415.
- Daniel Bell, "The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism," *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Vol. 6, No. 1/2, (Jan. - Apr., 1972), pp. 11-38.

February 3: Weber, Gorski, & DiMaggio and Powell

- *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. "Religious Affiliation and Stratification," pp. 35-46; and "Calvinism," 98-128.
- "Class, Status and Party." Pp. 926-39; "Ethnic Groups," pp. 385-98; "Bureaucracy and Education," pp. 998-1002; *all in Economy and Society*
- "The Chinese Literati," selection, pp. 416-38. In *From Max Weber*
- DiMaggio, Paul, and Walter W. Powell. 1983. "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields." *American Sociological Review* 48 (2): 147-60.
- Philip Gorski, "Calvinism and State-Formation in Early Modern Europe," in, *State/Culture* G. Steinmetz, ed., Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999, pp. 147-181.

February 10: Durkheim, Hochschild, & Gieryn

- *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (selections)
- *Division of Labor in Society* (selections)
- Hochschild, Arlie. 1979. "Emotion Work, Feeling Rules and Social Structure." *American Journal of Sociology* 85: 551-75.
- Gieryn, Thomas F. 1983. "Boundary-Work and the Demarcation of Science from Non-Science: Strains and Interests in Professional Ideologies of Scientists." *American Sociological Review* 48: 781-95

February 17: Simmel, Zelizer, Becker, & Bearman

- "The Web of Group Affiliations." Trans., Reinhard Bendix. Selection: Pp. 127-43 in *Conflict and The Web of Group Affiliations*. N.Y.: Free Press, 1955.
- "Group Expansion and the Development of Individuality." Pp. 251-93 in *Georg Simmel on Individuality and Social Forms*, ed. Donald N. Levine Chicago: *University of Chicago Press*, 1971.
- Becker, "Becoming a Marijuana User" *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 59, No. 3 (Nov., 1953), pp. 235-242.
- Bearman, Peter S., and Katherine Stovel. 2000, "[Becoming a Nazi: Models for Narrative Networks.](#)" *Poetics*. 27:69-90
- Viviana Zelizer. 1981. "The Price and Value of Children: The Case of Children's Insurance." *American Journal of Sociology* 86: 1036-56.

February 24: Bourdieu, Bryson & Griswold

- *Field of Cultural Production* (selections)
- *Distinction* (selections)
- Bethany Bryson, "Anything But Heavy Metal?: Symbolic Exclusion and Musical Dislikes," *American Sociological Review*, 61 (1996), pp. 884-899.
- Griswold, Wendy, "The Fabrication of Meaning: Literary interpretation in the United States, Great Britain and the West Indies," *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 92, No. 5 (1987), pp. 1077-1117.

March 3: Elias, Sewell, & Beisel

- *The Civilizing Process* (selections)
- Sewell, William H., Jr. 1992. "A Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency, and Transformation." *American Journal of Sociology* 98:1-29.
- Nicola Beisel and Tamara Kay, "Abortion, Race, and Gender in Nineteenth-Century America" *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 69, (Aug, 2004), pp. 498-518

March 10: Parsons, Lamont, & Alexander

- Talcott Parsons, Introduction to Culture section in *Theories of Society*

- Alexander, “Strong Program”
- Michele Lamont, “How to Become a Dominant French Philosopher: The Case of Jacques Derrida,” *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 93, No. 3 (Nov., 1987), pp. 584-622

March 24: Luhmann, DiMaggio, Boltanski and Thevenot, & Becker

- *Art as a Social System* (selections)
- Becker, Howard. 1978. “Arts and Crafts.” *American Journal of Sociology* 83: 862-89.
- DiMaggio, Paul. 1987. “Classification in Art.” *American Sociological Review*.
- Boltanski, Luc, and Laurent Thevenot. 1999. “The Sociology of Critical Capacity.” *European Journal of Social Theory* 2 (3): 359–77.

April 7: Mills, Karabel, & DiMaggio

- “The Cultural Apparatus”
- “Language, Logic and Culture”
- “Culture and Politics”
- Jerome Karabel. 1984. “Status-Group Struggle, Organizational Interests and the Limits of Institutional Autonomy: The Transformation of Harvard, Yale and Princeton 1918-1940.” *Theory and Society* 13: 1-40.
- DiMaggio, Paul and John Mohr. 1985. “Cultural capital, educational attainment, and marital selection.” *American Journal of Sociology* 90, 1231-61.

April 14: Geertz, Swidler, Mills, Vaisey, & Khan and Jerolmack

- Geertz, *Interpretations of Culture* (selections)
- Mills, C. Wright. 1940. “Situating Actions and Vocabularies of Motive.” *American Sociological Review* 5 (6): 904–13.
- Swidler, Ann. 1986. “Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies.” *American Sociological Review* 51 (2): 273–86.
- Steven Vaisey, “Motivation and Justification: A Dual-Process Model of Culture in Action,” *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 114, No 6, 2009: 1675-1715.
- Khan and Jerolmack, response to Vaisey
- Vaisey, Response to Khan and Jerolmack

April 21: Adorno and Horkheimer, Peterson, Hall, & Schudson

- Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception,” from *Dialectic of Enlightenment*
- Schudson, Michael. 1989. “How Culture Works: Perspectives from Media Studies on the Efficacy of Symbols.” *Theory and Society* 18: 153-180.
- Richard A. Peterson and Roger M. Kern. 1996. “Changing Highbrow Taste: From Snob to Omnivore.” *American Sociological Review* 61: 900-907.
- Stuart Hall, “Encoding/DeCoding”

April 28: Douglas & Levi-Strauss

- *Purity and Danger* (selections)
- *How Institutions Think* (selections)
- *Myth and Meaning* (selections)
- *The Savage Mind* (selections)