

SOCIOLOGY 221-2: CULTURE AND SOCIETY



T/Th 8:00-9:15 am (Eastern Time)
Department of Sociology
Emory University
Spring Semester 2021

Instructor: Weirong Guo
Email: weirong.guo@emory.edu
Virtual Office Hours: T/Th 9:30-10:30 am
(Eastern Time) & by appointment
Zoom Link:
<https://emory.zoom.us/j/9089042777>

COURSE OVERVIEW

What do people mean by culture? How does culture come into play in different life stages and influence individuals' life chances? In this course, we explore the various ways in which culture both constrains and enables by examining and situating culture in social spheres that affect individuals profoundly, including education, markets and workplaces, and the political arena. We will first examine some classical works in cultural sociology and contemporary illustrations of them. Then, we will delve into the special topics listed above and learn how scholars apply and develop theories of culture. By the end of the semester, each student will have a grasp of the field and an understanding of how to do cultural sociology. Note that this course differs from the conventional Culture and Society course in that, rather than focuses predominantly on the capital C (Culture) itself, it views the meaning-making and boundary creation process in everyday interaction as a way of doing culture.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand the major concepts, theories, and debates in cultural sociology:
 - a) different conceptualizations of culture
 - b) the relationship between culture and society
 - c) the roles of culture in relation to social inequality
 - d) the ways in which individuals use and are constrained by cultural beliefs, meanings, symbols, discourses, and rituals.
 - Critically apply what you have learned to making sense of your own experiences and larger social issues. Extend the theories produced in one particular social context to other contexts.
 - Practice and improve both oral and written communication skills.
-

COURSE MATERIALS

1. Textbook

Wendy Griswold. 2012. *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World*. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage (abbreviated *CSCW* in syllabus below). Available at Emory Bookstore.

2. Other Required Readings

Other required readings, mostly empirical journal articles and book chapters, will be available as PDF files on our Canvas site.

COURSE STRUCTURE & REQUIREMENTS

Synchronous Live Sessions and Asynchronous (Recorded) Lectures

For almost every class session, we will have a synchronous live session on the Zoom platform. However, for certain class meetings, we will not have a Zoom session, and I will be uploading recorded lectures to Canvas. I will send announcements a day ahead if we will have recorded lectures. While you are strongly encouraged to attend every Zoom session, you might be sick or will need to go into isolation or quarantine due to the pandemic. If you are sick, understand that I will be flexible about attendance. Please make sure to email me so that we can discuss your individual circumstances.

- **Zoom Meeting ID:** 940 3084 6034
- **Passcode:** CultureSoc
- Please familiarize yourself with Zoom using the following tutorials:
<http://college.emory.edu/oisp/remoteteaching/documents/learning-with-zoom1>

1. Participation and Discussion Leading 10%

Active participation requires adequate preparation. You therefore must read the assigned material before class and develop your own assessment of this material. Such careful preparation will improve the quality of class discussion. At the beginning of the semester, each student **must** sign up as a discussion facilitator for at least one session (discussion sessions highlighted in the course schedule). The student will lead the discussion for 30 minutes in that session. Class discussion should be both informed and respectful; moreover, it should be a forum wherein all can raise questions, explore ideas, and express misgivings. Most of all, this discussion should be fun!

2. Two Exams 30% (15% each)

There will be two in-class exams. The exam will be a combination of multiple-choice, short-answer, and essay questions, and will cover both the readings and lecture materials. None of the exam is cumulative.

3. Two Memos 40% (20% each)

Over the course of the semester, you will write two short memos. In each memo: First, summarize and compare at least two readings covered in each of the sections. Second, apply the theories and

empirical studies to analyze your own life experiences or observations in a reflective and critical way. Submit your memos via Canvas. The memos should be three-to-four pages in length, double spaced, in 12-point font, and include one-inch margins. More instructions will be posted on Canvas.

4. Project Presentation

20%

Towards the latter portion of the semester, you will conduct a class presentation asynchronously on our Canvas site. You can choose a form you like for presentation: slides, a poster, or a video. For this assignment: First, pick a film, a documentary, or an episode of a TV series and interpret it with a cultural sociological perspective. Second, connect said aspects to the major themes, theories, and concepts discussed in class. The presentation should be 5-8 minutes in length. More instructions will be posted on Canvas.

POLICIES & RESOURCES

Missed Classes

I will record each Zoom live sessions. If you are unable to attend, please watch the recording. If you still have questions after watching the recording, you may come to my office hours.

Late Work

Assignments submitted after their official due dates will be considered late. You will have a one-day grace period for each writing assignment without a legitimate excuse. After that, the equivalent of a half grade point will be deducted each day. Late assignments without penalty will be accepted in cases of serious illness or other extenuating circumstances supported by proper documentation.

Make-Up Policy

Makeup exams will only be allowed in a situation of an excused absence (e.g., illness, family emergency, university activities allowed by the administrations).

Academic Integrity

Students who are admitted to Emory College of Arts and Sciences agree to abide by the provisions of the Honor Code:

<http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policies-regulations/honor-code.html>

Special Accommodations

Your success in this class is important to me. We will all need accommodations because we all learn differently. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we will develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. I encourage you to visit the Department of Accessibility Services (DAS) to determine how you could improve your learning as well. If you need official accommodations, you have a right to have these met. For additional information, visit the website: <https://accessibility.emory.edu/students/>, or contact the DAS at (404) 727-9877

or accessibility@emory.edu.

Peer Tutoring Writing Support

I also encourage you to use the resources on campus to support your writing and learning. Tutors in the Emory Writing Center and the ESL Program are available to support you as you work on any type of writing assignment, at any stage of the composing process. Please review tutoring policies before your visit. To make an appointment, go to <http://writingcenter.emory.edu/> (the Emory Writing Center), or https://collegeconnect.emory.edu/portal/esl_tutoring (the ESL tutoring).

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Introduction to Cultural Sociology

Introduction

1/26 Course Overview

What is Culture?

1/28 CSCW: Chapter 1

How Do Sociologists Study Culture?: The Case of Art

2/2 Fine, Gary Alan. *Talking Art: The Culture of Practice and the Practice of Culture*. Prologue & Chapter 1.

Logistics: Sign-up for discussion leading

Classical Accounts and Their Contemporary Counterparts

Culture in Marxian Theory

2/4 CSCW: pages 19-32

2/9 **[Discussion]** Burawoy, Michael. *Manufacturing Consent: Changes in the Labor Process under Monopoly Capitalism*. Chapter 5.

Weberian Theory and Status Groups

2/11 CSCW: pages 35-44

2/16 **[Discussion]** Lamont, Michèle. *Money, Morals, and Manners: The Culture of the French and American Upper-Middle Class*. Prologue & Chapter 1.

Memo #1 Question Distributed

Durkheimian Theory and Social Solidarity

2/18 CSCW: pages 47-62

2/23 Wagner-Pacifci, Robin and Barry Schwartz. "The Vietnam Veteran's Memorial: Commemorating a Difficult Past."

[Discussion] Maya Lin. "Making the Memorial."

<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2000/11/02/making-the-memorial/>

Memo #1 Due

Goffmanian Theory and Symbolic Interactionsim

2/25 Goffman, Erving. *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-face Behavior*. Chapter 2.

3/2 [Discussion] Lee, Jooyoung. "Escaping Embarrassment: Face-work in the Rap Cipher."

3/4 **Exam #1**

Culture in the Field of Education

Cultural Capital and the Cultivation of Elites

3/9 Bourdieu, Pierre. *The State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power*. Prologue & Chapter 1.

3/11 (Skim) Lareau, Annette. "Social Class Differences in Family-School Relationships: The Importance of Cultural Capital."

[Discussion] Richards, Bedelia Nicola. "Help-Seeking Behaviors as Cultural Capital: Cultural Guides and the Transition from High School to College among LowIncome First Generation Students."

Before College

3/16 [Discussion] Khan, Shamus Rahman. *Privilege: The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St. Paul's School*. Introduction & Chapter 3.

- 3/18 [Discussion] Fang, Jun. “Tensions in Aesthetic Socialization: Negotiating Competence and Differentiation in Chinese Art Test Prep Schools.”

Memo #2 Question Distributed

During College

- 3/23 [Discussion] Jack, Anthony Abraham. *The Privileged Poor: How Elite Colleges Are Failing Disadvantaged Students*. Chapter 1.

From College to Work

- 3/25 [Discussion] Rivera, Lauren A. “Hiring as Cultural Matching: The Case of Elite Professional Service Firms.”

Memo #2 Due

Culture, Work, and Markets

Culture and Market

- 3/30 Chan, Cheris Shun-Ching. “Creating a Market in the Presence of Cultural Resistance: The Case of Life Insurance in China.”
- 4/1 [Discussion] Guo, Weirong, and Bin Xu. “Dignity in Red Envelopes: Social Exchange and Cultural Reproduction of Inequality in Informal Medical Payments.”

The Art Market

- 4/6 [Discussion] Velthuis, Olav. “Symbolic Meanings of Prices: Constructing the Value of Contemporary Art in Amsterdam and New York Galleries.”

Class and Work

- 4/8 Willis, Paul. *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*. Introduction & Chapter 3.
- 4/13 Exam #2
-

Culture and Politics

Culture and the Nation-state

4/15 CSCW: Chapter 8

Hobsbawm, Eric, and Terence Ranger. *The Invention of Tradition*. Chapter 1 (Skim Chapter 7).

Political Avoidance

4/20 [Discussion] Eliasoph, Nina. “‘Everyday Racism’ in a Culture of Political Avoidance: Civil Society, Speech, and Taboo.”

Political Culture on Campus

4/22 [Discussion] Binder, Amy J., and Kate Wood. *Becoming Right: How Campuses Shape Young Conservatives*. Chapter 1 (Skim Chapter 5).

Presentation Outline Due

Political Polarization

4/27 [Discussion] Hochschild, Arlie Russell. *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*. Chapter 1 & 9.

(Optional) Watch documentary *America's Great Divide*:

Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SnMBYMOTwEs>

Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l5vyDPN19ww>

4/29 Project Presentation