

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Department of Sociology

The Sociology of Culture

Sociology 927
Wed 4:30-7:10 Fall 2007
AND on the D2L site
email: jajordan@uwm.edu

Instructor: Dr. Jennifer Jordan
Office: Bolton 732
Office Phone: 229-5074
Office Hours: TBA

What is culture? How do sociologists define it, and study it? Why do certain foods taste good, why are certain paintings beautiful, why is some music just noise? How does culture shape action? How does culture (in its various forms) contribute to or combat inequality? This course will introduce students to a range of approaches to the sociology of culture. Culture as high art, culture as unspoken practice, popular culture, culture as a toolkit or interpretive framework—each approach will offer a window into the centrality of culture for broader sociological questions, and the methodological approaches with which to pose such questions. We will address a range of issues, including theories of culture, culture and inequality, culture in the city, popular culture, art, music, and food. We will read classical approaches, as well as a range of contemporary approaches (including Bourdieu's analysis of taste, and Lareau and Lamont's investigations of education inequality). Students will develop sound foundations in the key areas of the sociology of culture, combining theoretical and empirical analysis and developing the tools necessary to integrate cultural questions into their own research agendas.

This course will be taught with extensive online activity, and is thus a hybrid course. The D2L site is an ESSENTIAL element of this course, and there will be extensive online teaching, discussion, and presentations. In September and October in particular the course will be very much oriented toward the D2L site.

In addition to mastery of the content of this course, students will also strengthen their understanding of how sociologists go about doing their research, respond to ongoing conversations in the literature, and draw (and write up) conclusions in order to join that conversation. In addition, this course provides opportunities for students to hone the skills they will need as teaching assistants, instructors, or for other settings where they will need to convey their ideas to others in clear and powerful ways.

READINGS:

Books:

Howard Becker. *Art Worlds*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

Wendy Griswold. *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World*. (Thousand Oaks, California: Pine Forge Press, 2003).

Pierre Bourdieu. *Distinction*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987).
[Please note that this book is **OPTIONAL**, although portions of it are required and will be available on the D2L site]

Michele Lamont. *The Dignity of Working Men*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002)

[Please note that this book is **OPTIONAL**, although portions of it are required and will be available on the D2L site]

The required articles and book chapters available online (through e-reserves, library databases, and the D2L site) are listed below in their relevant weeks.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Weekly Assignments and Discussion	20% (200 points)
Paper Proposal	10% (100 points)
Final Paper	60% (600 points)
Off-Campus Assignment	10% (100 points)

Weekly Assignments and Discussion:

It is an absolute requirement of this course that you participate actively in each class meeting and that you are prepared to discuss that week's readings in a thoughtful manner. Attendance at on-campus course meetings (see course schedule) is mandatory, and more than one absence will seriously impact this portion of your grade. Active participation in online discussion will also be a vital component of this part of your grade—you must participate in discussion each week, in a thoughtful and engaged way. Please check the D2L site to see what the expectations are for each week's discussion—generally speaking, you'll submit a brief summary of the week's readings, and then participate actively in discussion. Note that the assignments listed below do NOT add up to 200 points, the remaining points will be determined by the assessment of your participation in online and in-person discussion.

Paper Proposal:

Relatively early in the semester you will need to write a proposal for your final paper. I will offer more detailed guidelines in the first few weeks of the semester. The proposal will include an in-depth abstract, outline, and preliminary bibliography.

Final Paper

This will be the most significant portion of your grade, and will give you the opportunity to write a literature review, demonstrating your mastery of one of the areas of the sociology of culture. It is essential to develop these skills, and I will work closely with you (albeit digitally for the time being) to do so.

This paper must also be as well-written as possible. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of good writing—it is simply unacceptable to turn in a paper with incorrect grammar, typographical errors, or poor organization. It is your responsibility to be sure that the paper represents your best writing efforts. Above all, good writing allows your ideas and conclusions to shine through, and everything from spelling to overall organization can help you achieve this goal. I will provide more detailed instructions for the final paper later in the semester as well.

Off-Campus Assignment

I am working on setting up opportunities for you to attend a conference, workshop, symposium, etc. at Madison, Northwestern, or the University of Chicago sometime this semester. I absolutely understand that due to work, family, etc. some of you will simply not be able to travel to such events, and if attending an event in Madison or Chicago presents itself as a real hardship to you, please contact me once we have a more concrete list of events and we will work out an alternative.

SCHEDULE:

(Please note that this schedule is definitely subject to change! This schedule should give you a general sense of the plan for the semester, but updates on the D2L site will ALWAYS supercede the schedule listed here. It is possible that additional guest speakers will be arranged, and also that specific reading assignments may change later in the semester. ALWAYS CHECK D2L to be sure what to read, where to be, what to hand in, etc.)

Week 1: September 5

ON CAMPUS

Introduction

Guest Speaker: Prof. Nancy Mathiowetz (Sociology Department Chair)

No readings.

Assignment #1 (Will be done in-class) (5 points)

AND

Online Discussion Week 1 (5 points)

Week 2: September 12

ON CAMPUS

Culture in General

Guest Speaker: Ozgur Avci, Urban Studies Program Ph.D. student

READINGS (BOOK):

Wendy Griswold. *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World*. (Thousand Oaks, California: Pine Forge Press, 2003).

Online Summary Week 2 (Due online by 11:59 pm on Sept. 11). (5 Points)

Week 3: September 19
OFF CAMPUS
Definitions of Culture

READINGS (D2L):

1. Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp 87-93.
2. Clifford Geertz, "Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).
3. Diana Crane, "The Sociology of Culture."

Online Discussion Week 3 (Due online by 11:59 pm September 18) (10 points)

Week 4: September 26
OFF CAMPUS
Music: Examples of Cultural Analysis

READINGS (ONLINE LIBRARY DATABASE)

Please note that ALL of these readings are available through the library's online databases. If you have any trouble accessing them, please contact me or a librarian:

1. DeNora, Tia. 1991. "Musical Patronage and Social Change in Beethoven's Vienna." *American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 97, No. 2, pp 310-346.
2. Sullivan, Rachel. "Rap and Race: It's Got a Nice Beat, but What about the Message?" *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 5 (May 2003), pp. 605-622.
3. Richard Peterson and Roger Kern, "Changing Highbrow Taste: From Snob to Omnivore," *American Sociological Review* 61: 900-907.
4. Bryson, Bethany. 1996. "'Anything But Heavy Metal': Symbolic Exclusion and Musical Dislikes." *American Sociological Review* 61: 884-899.

Online Summary Week 4 (Due online by 11:59 pm Sept. 25) (10 points)

Week 5: October 3
ON CAMPUS
Library Research Seminar

This class session will meet from 4:30 PM - 5:30 PM in room E159 on the first floor East wing of the Golda Meir Library building. This class is scheduled to be instructed by Kristin Woodward (kristinw@uwm.edu or 229-6828). Please note that this seminar is MANDATORY: Even if you have had a library orientation before, you must attend this session.

I STRONGLY encourage you to contact me individually beforehand to discuss possible paper topics. Of course at this point your final paper topic does not have to be set in stone (and it is fine to be considering several different topics this early in the semester) but please do be in touch with me.

Assignment #2: Brainstorming about Final Paper, Due in the D2L Dropbox by Midnight October 2 (5 points)

AND Online Discussion Week 5 (5 points)

PLEASE NOTE! Despite the library orientation, there will also be an online lecture and online discussion this week on the following reading:

READING (Online library database):

Mary Pattillo-McCoy, "Church Culture as a Strategy of Action in the Black Community." *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 63, No. 6 (Dec., 1998), 767-784.

Week 6: October 10
ON CAMPUS
Topic TBA (Related to art, museums, and/or memory)

Guest Speaker: Professor Jasmine Alinder, UWM History Department

READINGS TBA (Will be made available through the D2L site)

Assignment #3 (Will be done in-class) (5 points)

AND

Online Discussion Week 6 (5 points)

Week 7: October 17
OFF CAMPUS
Food and Culture

READINGS (All except Jordan are available through Online Library Databases, the Jordan article will be posted on D2L):

1. Rick Fantasia, "Fast Food in France," *Theory and Society* 24:2 (April 1995), 201-243.
2. Jennifer Jordan, "The Heirloom Tomato as Cultural Object: Investigating Taste and Space." *Sociologia Ruralis* 47:1 (January 2007), 20-41.
3. Gary Allan Fine, "Wittgenstein's Kitchen: Sharing Meaning in Restaurant Work," *Theory and Society*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Apr. 1995), pp. 245-269.
4. Priscilla Ferguson and Sharon Zukin, "What's Cooking?" *Theory and Society*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Apr. 1995), pp. 193-199.

Online Discussion Week 7 Due online by 11:59 pm on October 16 (10 points)

Week 8: October 24

ON CAMPUS

Culture and Globalization OR Culture and the City

GUEST SPEAKER TBA

Readings TBA (Available on D2L)

Assignment #3 (Due In-Class) (5 points)

AND

Online Discussion Week 8 (5 points)

Week 9: October 31

OFF CAMPUS

Popular Culture and Film

READINGS (Online Library Databases):

1. Chandra Mukerji and Michael Schudson, "Popular Culture," *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vo. 12 (1986), 47-66.
2. Shively, JoEllen. 1992. "Cowboys and Indians: Perceptions of Western Films among American Indians." *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 57, No. 6 (Dec., 1992), pp. 725-734.
3. Bauman, Shyon. 2001. "Intellectualization and Art World Development: Film in the United States." *American Sociological Review* 66: 404-426
4. Bielby, William T. and Denise D. Bielby. 1999. "Organizational Mediation of Project-Based Labor Markets: Talent Agencies and the Careers of Screenwriters." *American Sociological Review* 64: 64-85.

Online Discussion Week 9 (Due by 11:59 on October 30 online) (10 points)

Week 10: November 7
LOCATION To be Announced
(if my leg cooperates, we will meet on campus, and I will be present!)
Sociology of Art

READINGS (BOOK):

Howard Becker, *Art Worlds*

Assignment #5: Please bring 4 discussion questions to class (5 points)

Week 11: November 14
ON CAMPUS
Culture, Race, and Class

READINGS (D2L):

Michel Lamont, *The Dignity of Working Men: Morality and the Boundaries of Race, Class and Immigration*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000). Intro, Chaps 1, 3 and 6.

Week 12: November 21
LOCATION To be Announced
(but will let you know well in advance so you can make Thanksgiving plans)
Culture and Globalization OR Culture and the City

Readings TBA (will be on D2L)

PAPER PROPOSAL DUE ONLINE by 11:59 November 20!!!

Week 13: November 28
ON CAMPUS
Culture and Inequality: Bourdieu

READINGS (D2L):

Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction*. Pp1-8, 169-225,. [These page numbers are tentative, so please do not yet print them out!!]

Week 14: December 5
ON CAMPUS
Bourdieu, Continued

READINGS (D2L)

1. Bourdieu 466-484

2. Douglas Holt. 1997. "Distinction in America? Recovering Bourdieu's Theory of Taste from its Critics." *Poetics* 25: 931-1020.

3. Michele Lamont and Annette Lareau. 1988. "Cultural Capital: Allusions, Gaps and Glissandos in Recent Theoretical Developments," *Sociological Theory* 6: 153-68.

OFF CAMPUS ASSIGNMENT DUE ONLINE by 11:59 PM December 4

Week 15: December 12
ON CAMPUS
Culture and Inequality, continued

READINGS (D2L):

1. Michele Lamont and Marcel Fournier, ed. *Cultivating Differences: Symbolic Boundaries and the Making of Inequality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993. 1-20, 50-74.
2. Annette Lareau and Erin Horvat. "Moments of Social Inclusion and Exclusion: Race, Class, and Cultural Capital in Family-School Relationships." *Sociology of Education*, Vol. 72, No. 1 (Jan. 1999), 37-53.

FINAL PAPER DUE DECEMBER 19 VIA EMAIL