

**SOCIOLOGY 6041  
CULTURAL SOCIOLOGY  
University of Colorado Boulder**

**Semester:** Fall 2015

**Seminar:** Mondays 3:00 – 5:30 pm

**Email:** [Rachel.Rinaldo@colorado.edu](mailto:Rachel.Rinaldo@colorado.edu)

**Office Hours:** Weds 2-4 or by appointment

**Professor:** Rachel Rinaldo

**Location:**

**Office Address:** Fleming 313

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course is intended to familiarize graduate students with cultural sociology. Cultural sociology is a vast field, which overlaps with other social sciences and at times with humanities. It comprises the sociology of cultural objects and forms of cultural expression, the study of cultural life broadly understood, as well as an approach to sociological investigation that emphasizes meaning and interpretation. The sociology of culture is also methodologically diverse, ranging from classic qualitative approaches such as interviews and ethnography, to discourse analysis, historical, and quantitative and mixed methods approaches.

In this course, we will start by surveying many (but not all) of the main theoretical orientations as well as major concepts, problems, and themes in the literature. We will then move on to look at how the cultural sociology approaches particular elements of culture and topics in the discipline, including the production of cultural work, emotions, modernity, agency, inequality, economic life, media, and much more. I have included a mix of more theoretical and more empirical work, both classics and recent work. Although I have tried to cast the net widely as well as make sure you are familiar with canonical scholarship, it is simply not possible to cover all of cultural sociology in one class. If you are interested in issues or topics not reflected in this syllabus, I encourage you to ask me for suggestions for further reading.

There are no prerequisites for this class, but it will be helpful to have some familiarity with Marx, Durkheim, and Weber.

**TEXTS FOR THIS CLASS:**

**Journal articles and working papers will be on D2L.**

**For chapters from books, you should either plan to purchase the book or find a copy at the library. Amazon has used copies of many of these books for fairly low prices. I have listed below books that I recommend purchasing.**

John Storey. *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*. 5<sup>th</sup> Edition (2009). Routledge.  
(Although I have not assigned many chapters from this book, it is extremely helpful background reading and I strongly encourage you to buy it).

David Harvey. 1989. *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Anthony Giddens. 1991. *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

Erving Goffman. 1974. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*.

Arlie Hochschild. 1983 (2012 edition). *The Managed Heart: The Commercialization of Human Feeling*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Pierre Bourdieu. 1986. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*.

Michele Lamont. 2002. *The Dignity of Working Men: Morality and the Boundaries of Race, Class, and Immigration*. Harvard University Press. Chapters TBD.

David Grazian. 2005. *Blue Chicago: The Search for Authenticity in Urban Blues Clubs*. University of Chicago Press.

Ashley Mears. 2011. *Pricing Beauty: The Making of a Fashion Model*. University of California Press.

Arjun Appadurai. 1996. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. University of Minnesota Press.

Nikki Jones. 2010. *Between Good and Ghetto: African American Girls and Inner City Violence*. Rutgers University Press.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

1. Class participation: 10%  
This seminar is largely discussion based. I may lecture for the first 10-15 minutes, particularly in the first few weeks. You are expected to participate actively in class discussions, both by asking questions and making comments. Discussions will be based on the readings for that week.
2. Reading Reflection Papers: 30%  
You are required to prepare two short essays that reflect on a particular theme in the readings. Each essay should clearly identify a particular theme you found interesting in the preceding three weeks of the course, develop a coherent argument about that theme, and build your argument by using material covered in the preceding weeks of the course. Essays should be 4-5 double spaced pages, and should have an additional page for citations. Each essay will be worth 15% of your final grade. The papers should be submitted in your Dropbox on D2L.

3. Discussion Leading: 10%

Each student will help to lead one class discussion during the semester. This will consist of coming to class with at least three discussion questions prepared. You should bring a handout with these questions for the class. You should plan to give the class a short introduction to the readings first. The discussion questions can focus on particular readings, but at least one should be more synthetic, incorporating at least two readings. You will sign up for discussion leading on the first day of class.

4. Final Paper: 50%

You will submit a final paper that engages with one or more themes/topics from this course. This assignment can be tailored to your needs and interests. You could use it to write responses to one or more possible questions for an upcoming comprehensive exam; a literature review for a dissertation proposal; an article for publication; or a thought piece. However, I will not accept a paper that has been written for another class unless it has been substantially revised to be appropriate for this class. You must situate your analysis within the sociology of culture, make use of concepts, themes, and theories from the class, and critically reflect on the subfield. You are also welcome to discuss outside readings. I expect that your paper will be 10-20 pages double spaced, but the length is flexible (content and analysis are more important). **You must submit a one paragraph proposal for your final paper by October 19 in hard copy.** You are encouraged to meet with me before this date to discuss your final paper ideas and you can submit your proposal whenever you are ready. If you do not submit the proposal I will deduct 5 points from your paper grade. **The final paper is due December 13 at 5 pm.** You should upload it to your Dropbox on D2L. You are welcome to submit it earlier, if you prefer.

## COURSE POLICIES:

1. You are permitted to use a laptop to take notes during class. However, I expect you to be actively participating in discussions, not checking your email or reading websites.
2. Arrive on time. It is unprofessional and disruptive to arrive after we have begun.
3. I will not take attendance, but in a small seminar, it is evident to me who is absent. I expect that you will not have more than 1-2 absences during the semester. If you must be absent, it is your responsibility to get notes from a classmate. If you have more than two absences with no valid excuse, I will assume that you are not a serious student and grade accordingly.
4. Hand in your work on time. Late assignments will lose 10 points for every 24 hours late (ie, 90 will be the highest possible grade if it is 24 hours late). I will give extensions in extraordinary circumstances, but you must discuss it with me at least 24 hours before the deadline. Extensions on the final paper are likely to result in an incomplete for the class.
5. I may make changes to the syllabus. These will either be announced in class or via email. Make sure to check your email regularly for such announcements. If you miss a class, you should also make sure to check with your classmates to see if you missed an announcement.

## **GRADING POLICIES:**

This course uses the regular grading scale for CU (94-100 = A, 90-93 = A-, 87-89 = B+, etc.)

The following grading rubric is endorsed by the Sociology Department for its graduate program, and it explains how final grades in graduate seminars should be interpreted:

A: Consistently performs well above expectations for the course

A-: Performs above expectations for the course

B+: Meets expectations for the course

B: Occasionally performs below expectations for the course

B-: Consistently performs below expectations for the course

C range: Unsatisfactory work for a PhD student. Serious concerns regarding student progression toward degree.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE:**

### **WEEK 1 (August 24): Introduction and class logistics**

Come to class with an example of the word “culture” from a newspaper or magazine (digital or print) and be prepared to discuss the definition of culture implied in your example.

In-class reading. Section on “Culture” in Raymond Williams. 1976. *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. Pages 76-82.

### **WEEK 2 (August 31): Foundations 1**

William Sewell, Jr. 1999. “The Concept(s) of Culture” in Victoria Bonnell and Lynn Hunt, eds. *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Karl Marx. Excerpt from *The German Ideology*. Pages 146-155 in Robert C. Tucker, ed. *The Marx-Engels Reader*.

Emile Durkheim. 1912(1995). Introduction and Chapter 1 in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. New York: Free Press.

### **WEEK 3 (September 7)**

Labor Day – No class

### **WEEK 4 (September 14): Foundations 2**

Max Weber. 1976. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. New York: Scribner. Read “Religious Affiliation and Stratification” and “Calvinism.”

Clifford Geertz. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books. Read “Thick Description” and “Deep Play.”

John Storey. 2015 (7<sup>th</sup> edition). *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*. Skim Chapter 1, Read chapter on Gramsci and hegemony

### **WEEK 5 (September 21): Culture and Modernity**

Max Horkheimer and Theodore W. Adorno. 1946. "The culture industry: Enlightenment as mass deception." Pp. 71-101 in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.

David Harvey. 1989. *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Oxford: Blackwell. Chapters TBD.

Anthony Giddens. 1991. *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press. Chapters TBD.

### **WEEK 6 (September 28): Culture, Self, and Interaction**

#### **READING REFLECTION ESSAY #1 DUE**

Erving Goffman. 1974. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Chapters TBD.

Howard Becker. 1953. “Becoming a Marijuana User.” *American Journal of Sociology* 59/3: 235-242.

Arlie Hochschild. 1983 (2012 edition). *The Managed Heart: The Commercialization of Human Feeling*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Chapters TBD.

### **WEEK 7 (October 5): Culture, Inequality, and Systems of Classification**

Pierre Bourdieu. 1986. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Chapters TBD.

Michele Lamont. 2002. *The Dignity of Working Men: Morality and the Boundaries of Race, Class, and Immigration*. Harvard University Press. Chapters TBD.

Richard A. Peterson and Roger M. Kern. 1996. "Changing highbrow taste: from snob to omnivore." *American Sociological Review*: 900-907.

### **WEEK 8 (October 12): The Creation of Expressive Culture**

Richard A. Peterson and Narasimhan Anand. 2004. "The production of culture perspective." *Annual Review of Sociology* (2004): 311-334.

David Grazian. 2005. *Blue Chicago: The Search for Authenticity in Urban Blues Clubs*. University of Chicago Press.

## **WEEK 9 (October 19): Culture, Agency, and Action 1**

### **FINAL PAPER PROPOSAL DUE**

Ann Swidler. 1986. "Culture in action: Symbols and strategies." *American Sociological Review*: 273-286.

William Sewell, Jr. 1992. "A theory of structure: Duality, agency, and transformation." *American Journal of Sociology* 1-29.

Mustafa Emirbayer and Ann Mische. 1998. "What is agency?" *American Journal of Sociology* 103/4: 962-1023.

## **WEEK 10 (October 26): Culture and Economic Life**

Viviana Zelizer. 1996. "Payments and social ties." *Sociological Forum* 11/3: 481-495.

Ashley Mears. 2011. *Pricing Beauty: The Making of a Fashion Model*. University of California Press. Chapters TBD.

## **WEEK 11 (November 2): Debates in the Sociology of Culture**

Wendy Griswold. 1992. "Recent Developments in the Sociology of Culture: Four Good Arguments (And One Bad One)." *Acta Sociologica*: 323-328.

Jeffrey Alexander and Philip Smith. 2001. "The strong program in cultural sociology." *Center for Cultural Sociology*.

Cook, James W. 2012. "The Kids Are All Right: On the "Turning" of Cultural History." *The American Historical Review* 117.3: 746-771.

## **WEEK 12 (November 9): Culture and Religion**

### **READING REFLECTION ESSAY #2 DUE**

Saba Mahmood. 2005. *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*. Princeton University Press. Chapters TBD.

Rachel Rinaldo. 2014. "Pious and Critical: Muslim Women's Activism and the Question of Agency." *Gender & Society* 28/6: 824-846.

David Smilde. 2012. "Beyond the Strong Program in the Sociology of Religion," in *Religion on the Edge: Decentering and Recentering the Sociology of Religion*. Courtney Bender, Wendy Cadge, Peggy Levitt, and David Smilde (eds.). New York: Oxford UP

**WEEK 13 (November 16): Culture and Globalization**

Uma Narayan. 1997. *Dislocating Cultures: Identity, Tradition, and Third World Feminism*. Routledge. Chapters TBD.

Arjun Appadurai. 1996. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. University of Minnesota Press. Chapters TBD.

**WEEK 14 (November 23): Thanksgiving Break – no class****WEEK 15 (November 30): The Intersections of Culture, Race, and Gender**

Nikki Jones. 2010. *Between Good and Ghetto: African American Girls and Inner City Violence*. Rutgers University Press. Chapters TBD.

Small, Mario Luis, David J. Harding, and Michèle Lamont. 2010. "Reconsidering culture and poverty." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 629/1: 6-27.

Herbert J. Gans. 2012. "Against culture versus structure." *Identities* 19/2: 125-134.

**WEEK 16: (December 7): Culture, Agency, and Action – Recent Debates**

Steve Vaisey. 2009. "Motivation and Justification: A Dual-Process Model of Culture in Action." *American Journal of Sociology* 114/6:1675-1715.

Pugh, Allison. 2013. "What good are interviews for thinking about culture? Demystifying interpretive analysis." *American Journal of Cultural Sociology* 1/1: 42-68.

Colin Jerolmack and Shamus Khan. 2014. "Talk is Cheap: Ethnography and the Attitudinal Fallacy." *Sociological Methods and Research* 43: 178-209. (Also read response from Vaisey and Jerolmack and Khan's reply in the same volume.)