

The Production, Consumption, & Symbolic Power of Culture

Sociology 570

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Thursdays – 1:00 to 4:00pm
(In person meetings in the Seminar Room- DAVISON Hall 128)
We will move to zoom if conditions change

Office: Davison Hall, 132B

Zoom Office:

<https://rutgers.zoom.us/j/6117486535?pwd=Q3U2Y1d4eHYyREhVc3gzZkFUSHVIZz09>

Email: arc249@sociology.rutgers.edu

Office Hours: Mondays 2pm to 3pm (zoom) or by appointment.

COURSE OVERVIEW

While cultural sociology covers a diverse array of substantive topics and themes, there is a collective interest in meanings and meaning-making processes underlying cultural production, consumption, discourses, narratives, and micro-level interactions. Given the vastness of the subfield, it would be challenging to cover everything in one semester. As a result, this course engages with a collection of sociological readings focusing on the production, consumption, and sociological significance of culture. This course prioritizes empirical scholarship pertaining to the systematic study of popular culture, including music, visual/performance arts, film/television, and advertising, to name a few. The course readings draw primarily on U.S., British, and European sociologists and some articles from parallel disciplines including anthropology, media studies, and advertising/marketing. There is no prerequisite per say. However, familiarity with 20th century sociological theory related to culture (e.g. Berger and Luckman, Goffman, Bourdieu, Said, Hall, etc.) may be advantageous for deeper engagement and discussion of the course readings. We begin with some reflections on definitions and sociological understanding of culture before revisiting some classic works on the role of culture as ideology and hegemony. We then shift to analyses of tastes, consumption, and cultural production processes with a critical emphasis on the ways in which culture/cultural processes can challenge as well as reproduces social inequalities, ethnoracial and gender boundaries, and collective understandings of the “nation” and one’s community. We conclude by considering the role of material objects in everyday life and how the systematic study of objects, material culture, and nonhumans in sociology is spawning new trans-disciplinary bridges between the social sciences and the humanities.

LEARNING GOALS

- Think theoretically and critically about the use of the concept of culture in sociological explanations
- Assess the usefulness and validity of different theoretical and methodological approaches to the sociological study of culture
- Develop opinions on the approach to culture you find most compelling and useful
- Learn about the subfield of cultural sociology/sociology of culture and its intersections with other sociological subfields and other academic disciplines
- Identify significant and novel research questions related to the cultural sociology/sociology of culture.

ACHIEVING THE LEARNING GOALS

There are several requirements for the course:

- 1) Read the works assigned for each class. **All readings must be completed prior to class.** Our classes revolve around discussion. So, familiarity with the material is essential.
- 2) You are expected to attend every class and fully participate in class discussions of the readings. If you are taking the course for credit, **this portion of the course will account for 10% of your grade.**
- 3) Before each class, you'll submit a 600-800 word memo on the readings. Please discuss at least three of the readings in your memos. The memos are a chance for you to consolidate your thoughts on the readings, so please don't use the space for summaries. Instead, make connections between readings or themes, point out conflicts or convergences, discuss implications for research, try out theoretical arguments. You'll submit these via Sakai. **You can choose which weeks you skip, but please complete 10 memos during the semester.** Your memos must be emailed to me (arc249@sociology.rutgers.edu) **by 9AM** on the Thursday of the course meeting. **Please do not send me emails through canvass—email me directly at (arc249@sociology.rutgers.edu)**
This portion of the course will account for 40% of your grade.
- 4) Each class will follow the same format where I will provide 15 to 20 minutes of opening remarks/comments on the assigned readings. We will then transition to group discussion and interpretation, which will be facilitated by one of you. Over the course of the semester, each student will lead 2 class discussions (It depends on the size of the course.) **Don't let this scare you.** You'll simply use your weekly reaction papers to guide you.
This portion of the course will account for 20% of your grade.
- 5) Each student must propose a research topic and write a research proposal. The topic may be in any substantive area, but the project must utilize cultural sociology theories/concepts from the course as part of the analytic lens for the proposal topic.

The proposal should follow this structure—use it as a rough guide:

- a) State your topic/problem/question/puzzle—however you like to think about it. (This section should be 1 to 1 ½ pages in length)
- b) Explain how a cultural sociology frame will enhance the project—how will cultural sociology help you address your topic/problem/question/puzzle? What contemporary themes does your question address ... what gaps in the literature does it fill ... what puzzles does it solve? (This section should be about 2-4 pages in length)
- c) Discuss 6-10 relevant articles or books that inform your topic of inquiry. You may use readings we have covered in class or create a list of readings on your own. But culture readings must play a major role here. (This section of your proposal should be about 5-10 pages in length.)
- d) Explain the method you will use to study your topic—i.e. interviews, focus groups, survey method, content analysis, ethnography, etc. Explain how you will execute the project. I will be especially impressed if you can identify a viable funding source for your project. (This section should be about 2-4 pages in length)
- e) Provide a reference list at the end of your proposal. (This section should be about 1-2 pages in length)

This proposal will account for 30% of your grade.

BREAKDOWN OF GRADE

Attendance	10%
Leading Discussion	20%
10 Memos	40%
<u>Research Proposal/Analytic Lit. Review</u>	<u>30%</u>
Total	100%

ACCESSING READINGS

All readings for this course will be posted on Canvas or available on the web (link included in the syllabus). To access Canvas readings:

- Go to <https://canvas.rutgers.edu/> and log in.
- On the left side of the page, click on “Courses.” Our course site, identified by name and course number, should immediately pop up as one of your courses.
- Look at the bar on the left side of the screen and click on “Modules.”

- The syllabus is organized by modules and each module will contain the readings (and any other materials relevant for a specified week.

Note: If you have trouble accessing the Canvas site, please contact the Canvas Help Desk help@canvas.rutgers.edu They are very helpful.

CLASS ENVIRONMENT

The Rutgers Sociology Department strives to create an environment that supports and affirms diversity in all manifestations, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, social class, disability status, region/country of origin, and political orientation. We also celebrate diversity of theoretical and methodological perspectives among our faculty and students and seek to create an atmosphere of respect and mutual dialogue. We have zero tolerance for violations of these principles and have instituted clear and respectful procedures for responding to such grievances. Knowing this, our classroom should be considered a “safe place” for everyone. Students are encouraged to engage in discussion and debate related to the readings and topics scheduled for the class provided that one’s views are not intended to provoke, insult, or damage another member of the class or the instructor. To facilitate such an environment, all of us (students and instructor) must act with mutual respect and common courtesy.

WEEKLY MODULES – SCHEDULE OF READINGS

Module 1 – First day business and Introductions (1/20)

Introductions, going over syllabus and course requirements.
Assigning group discussion leaders for the semester.

Module 2 - Cultural Sociology and Cultural Studies (1/27)

Mohr, John W., Christopher A. Bail, Margaret Frye, Jennifer C. Lena, Omar Lizardo, Terence E. McDonnell, Ann Mische, Iddo Tavory, and Frederick F. Wherry. 2020. “Introduction” in *Measuring Culture*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Spillman (2019) “What Is Cultural Sociology?”

Cruz (2019) “Sociologies of Culture and Cultural Studies”

Alexander (2008) “Geertz and the Strong Program”

Grindstaff 2004. “Culture and Popular Culture: A Case for Sociology”

Recommended for Further Reading/Reflection:

Nancy Weiss Hanrahan and Sarah S. Amsler “Critique and possibility in cultural sociology”

Module 3 – Ideology and Hegemony (2/3)

Gramsci, Antonio. 1990. "Culture and Ideological Hegemony." Pp. 47-54 in *Culture and Society: Contemporary Debates*, edited by Jeffrey Alexander and Steven Seidman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Adorno and Horkheimer (1943) "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception"

Hall, Stuart. 1996. "Cultural Studies and its Theoretical Legacies"

Lewin PG. 2019. "Coal is not just a job, it's a way of life": The cultural politics of coal production in central Appalachia. *Social problems* (Berkeley, Calif). 2019;66(1):51-68. doi:10.1093/socpro/spx030

Kwet M. 2019. "Digital colonialism: US empire and the new imperialism in the Global South". *Race & class*. 2019;60(4):3-26. doi:10.1177/0306396818823172

Recommended for Further Reading/Reflection:

Herman, Edward S. 2018. "The Propaganda Model Revisited." *Monthly Review: An Independent Socialist Magazine* 69 (8): 1–12. doi:10.14452/MR-069-08-2018-01_4.

Bagchi, Amiya Kumar. "Marx, the Digital Divide, and Hegemony." *Social Scientist* 47, no. 5/6 (2019): 31–44. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26786186>

Module 4 – Tastes, Boundaries, and Stratification (2/10)

Pierre Bourdieu. 1987 [1979]. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Selections: Introduction, pp. 1-7; Habitus and the Space of Life-Styles, pp. 165-222)

Paul DiMaggio and Toqir Mukhtar. 2004. "Arts Participation as Cultural Capital in the United States, 1982-2002: Signs of Decline?" *Poetics* 32: 169-94.

Peterson, Richard A., and Roger M. Kern. 1996. "Changing Highbrow Taste: From Snob to Omnivore." *American Sociological Review* 61, no. 5 (1996): 900–907. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2096460>.

Omar Lizardo and Sara Skiles 2012. "Reconceptualizing and Theorizing "Omnivorousness": Genetic and Relational Mechanisms" *Sociological Theory* 30(4) 263-282.

Omar Lizardo and Sara Skiles 2015 "Musical Taste and Patterns of Symbolic Exclusion in the United States 1993-2012: Generational Dynamics and Differentiation and Continuity" *Poetics* 53:9-21.

Recommended for Further Reading/Reflection:

Lamont and Molnar 2002. "The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences" *Annual Review of Sociology*.

Module 5 – Consumption (2/17)

Veblen, T. 1899. "Conspicuous Consumption"

Warde, Alan. "The sociology of consumption: Its recent development." *Annual Review of Sociology* 41 (2015):

Zukin S. 2008. "CONSUMING AUTHENTICITY: From outposts of difference to means of exclusion" *Cultural studies*. 2008;22(5):724-748.

Huddart Kennedy, Emily, Shyon Baumann, and Josée Johnston. "Eating for taste and eating for change: Ethical consumption as a high-status practice." *Social Forces* 98, no. 1 (2019): 381-402.

Recommended for Further Reading/Reflection/Discussion:

MacKendrick, Norah. "Foodscape." *Contexts* 13, no. 3 (2014): 16-18.

Zukin, Sharon, and Jennifer Smith Maguire. "Consumers and consumption." *Annu. Rev. Sociol.* 30 (2004): 173-197.

Module 6 - Production of Culture and Cultural Production (2/24)

Peterson and Anand. 2010. "The Production of Culture Perspective" *Annual Review of Sociology*. Vol. 30:311-334.

DiMaggio (2000) "Production of Scientific Change..." *Poetics*. Vol. (28): 107-136.

Peterson, R. (1990). Why 1955? Explaining the advent of rock music. *Popular Music*, 9(1), 97-116. doi:10.1017/

Lena. 2006. "Social Context and Musical Content of Rap Music, 1979-1995. *Social Forces*. 85(1):479-495.

Mears. 2010. "Size zero high-end ethnic: Cultural production and the reproduction of culture in fashion modeling" *Poetics* Vol.38(1):21-46

Hesmondhalgh, David, and Anamik Saha. 2013. "Race, Ethnicity, and Cultural Production." *Popular Communication* 11 (3): 179-95

Recommend for Further Reading and Reflection:

Dowd. 2004 "Production perspectives in the sociology of music" *Poetics*. Vol (32):235-246.

Peterson (1974) "The Production of Culture"

Module 7 – Classifications and Genres (3/3)

DiMaggio. 1987. "Classification in Art" *American Sociological Review*. 52(4):440-455.

Roy. 2004. "Race Records and Hillbilly Music..." *Poetics*. Vol.32(3-4):265-279.

Lena JC, Peterson RA. 2008. Classification as Culture: Types and Trajectories of Music Genres. *American sociological review*. 2008;73(5):697-718.

Alacova 2017. "Gendering Power of Genres: How female Scandinavian crime fiction writers experience professional authorship..." *Organization*. Vol.24(3):377-396.

Recommend for Further Reading and Reflection:

Alacovska and O'Brien. 2021. "Genres and Inequality in the Creative Industries" *European Journal of Cultural Studies*.

Module 8 – Sociology of Art and Artworlds (3/10)

Hall (1964) *the Popular Arts*

Becker. 1974. "Art as Collective Action" *American Sociological Review* (39(6):767-776.

Becker 1990. "Art Worlds Revisited" *Sociological Forum*. Vol. 5(3).

Lopes. 2000. "Introduction" *Rise of a Jazz Art World* & Chapter 4.

DiMaggio. 1987. "Classification in Art" *American Sociological Review*. 52(4):440-455.

Recommend for Further Reading and Reflection:

Eyerman and Ring. 1998. "Towards a New Sociology of Art Worlds: Bringing Meaning Back In" *Acta Sociologica*. Vol.41(3):277-283

Module 9 – Work and Creative Industries (3/24)

Caves, Richard E. "Contracts between art and commerce." *Journal of economic Perspectives* 17, no. 2 (2003): 73-83.

Swedberg, Richard. "The cultural entrepreneur and the creative industries: beginning in Vienna." *Journal of cultural economics* 30, no. 4 (2006): 243-261.

Casey E, and O'Brien D. 2020. "Sociology and the Cultural and Creative Industries". *Sociology*. 2020;54(3):443-459.

Mears, Ashley. "Aesthetic labor for the sociologies of work, gender, and beauty." *Sociology Compass* 8, no. 12 (2014): 1330-1343.

Alacovska A. 'Keep hoping, keep going': Towards a hopeful sociology of creative work. *The Sociological Review*. 2019;67(5):1118-1136.

Recommend for Further Reading and Reflection:

Entwistle J, Wissinger E. Keeping up Appearances: Aesthetic Labour in the Fashion Modelling Industries of London and New York. *The Sociological Review*. 2006;54(4):774-794.

Cutcher L, Achtel P. "Doing the brand": aesthetic labour as situated, relational performance in fashion retail. *Work, employment and society*. 2017;31(4):675-691. doi:10.1177/0950017016688610

Module 10 – Performance, Rituals, and Authenticity (3/31)

Grindstaff L and West E. 2006. Cheerleading and the Gendered Politics of Sport. *Social problems (Berkeley, Calif)*. 2006;53(4):500-518. doi:10.1525/sp.2006.53.4.500

McCormick L. 2014. "Tuning in or turning off: performing emotion and building cosmopolitan solidarity in international music competitions". *Ethnic and racial studies*. 2014;37(12):2261-2280. doi:10.1080/01419870.2014.934262

Entwistle J and Mears A. Gender on Display: Performativity in Fashion Modelling. *Cultural Sociology*. 2013;7(3):320-335.

Peterson RA. 2005. "In Search of Authenticity". *Journal of management studies*. 2005;42(5):1083-1098. doi:10.1111/j.1467-6486.2005.00533.x

Grazien. 2004. "Symbolic Economy of Authenticity in the Chicago Blues Scene"

Recommended for Background and Further Reading:

Faulkner RR and Becker H. 2009. "Do You Know...?": The Jazz Repertoire in Action . University of Chicago Press,; 2009.

Grazian, D. 2010. "Demystifying authenticity in the sociology of culture". In: *Handbook of Cultural Sociology*. Routledge; 2010:215-224. doi:10.4324/9780203891377-28

Module 11 – Migration, Nationalism, and Identity (4/7)

Cerulo, Karen A. "Symbols and the World System: National Anthems and Flags." *Sociological Forum* 8, no. 2 (1993): 243–71. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/684637>.

Cohen, Robin. 2007. "Creolization and Cultural Globalization: The Soft Sounds of Fugitive Power" *Globalizations*. Vol. 4(3): 369-384.

Paul DiMaggio & Patricia Fernández-Kelly (2015) Immigration and the arts: a theoretical inquiry, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 38:8, 1236-1244, DOI: 10.1080/01419870.2015.101608

Levitt and Cali. 2016. "Using the Local to Tell a Global Story: How the Peabody Essex Museum Became a World Class Museum" *Museum & Society* 14(1):146-159

Recommended for Background and Further Reading:

Kasinitz and Martiniello. 2019. "Music, Migration and the City" in *Ethnic and Racial Studie*. Vol.42:857-864.

Cerulo, Karen A. "Identity Construction: New Issues, New Directions." *Annual Review of Sociology* 23 (1997): 385–409. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2952557>.

Module 12 – Ascriptive and Cultural Representation in Media (4/14)

Hall, Stuart. 2013. "Introduction & The Work of Representation"

Gray, Herman. "Black Masculinity and Visual Culture." *Callaloo* 18, no. 2 (1995): 401–5. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3299086>.

Gray, Herman. 2013. "Subject(Ed) to Recognition." *American Quarterly* 65, no. 4 (2013): 771–98. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43822990>.

Matthew W. Hughey, 2009. "Cinethetic Racism: White Redemption and Black Stereotypes in "Magical Negro" Films", *Social Problems*, Volume 56, Issue 3, 1 August 2009, Pages 543–577,

Erigha, M. (2015), Race, Gender, Hollywood: Representation in Cultural Production and Digital Media's Potential for Change, *Sociology Compass*, 9, 78– 89, doi: 10.1111/soc4.12237

Recommended for Background and Further Reading:

Erigha M. Do African Americans Direct Science Fiction or Blockbuster Franchise Movies? Race, Genre, and Contemporary Hollywood. *Journal of Black Studies*. 2016;47(6):550-569.

Module 13 - Advertising & Marketing as Boundary-Making (4/21)

Rosa-Salas, Marcel. 2019. "Making the Mass White: How Racial Segregation Shaped Consumer Segmentation." In Guillaume D. Johnson, Thomas D. Kevin, Harrison K. Anthony, and Sonya A. Grier (eds.) *Race in the Marketplace: Crossing Critical Boundaries*, pp. 21–38. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.

Davis, Judy Foster. 2018. "Selling Whiteness? – A Critical Review of the Literature on Marketing and Racism." *Journal of Marketing Management* 34 (1–2): 134–77.

Paek, HJ., Nelson, M.R. & Vilela, A.M. Examination of Gender-role Portrayals in Television Advertising across Seven Countries. *Sex Roles* 64, 192–207 (2011). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-010-9850-y>

Harrison, Anthony Kwame. 2013. "Black Skiing, Everyday Racism, and the Racial Spatiality of Whiteness." *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 37 (4): 315–39.

Recommend for Further Reading and Reflection:

Chaudhary, Ali. R. (2022) "Paint it White: Segregationist Logics in Advertising and the Electric Guitar" *Sociological Forum*.

Spino, Ashton Gerding, and Jennifer Stevens Aubrey. 2018. "Sexualization, Youthification, and Adultification: A Content Analysis of Images of Girls and Women in Popular Magazines." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 95 (3): 625–46.

Module 14 - Cultural Objects (4/28)

Mohr, John W., Christopher A. Bail, Margaret Frye, Jennifer C. Lena, Omar Lizardo, Terence E. McDonnell, Ann Mische, Iddo Tavory, and Frederick F. Wherry. 2020. "Objects" in *Measuring Culture*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press

McDonnell, Terence E. 2010. "Cultural Objects as Objects: Materiality, Urban Space, and the Interpretation of AIDS Campaigns in Accra, Ghana." *American Journal of Sociology* 115: 6: 1800–1852.

Griswold, Wendy, Gemma Mangione, and Terence E. McDonnell. 2013. "Objects, Words, and Bodies in Space: Bringing Materiality Into Cultural Analysis." *Qualitative Sociology* 36: 4: 343–364.

Rawlings, Craig M. and Clayton Childress. 2021. "Schemas, Interactions, and Objects in Meaning Making." *Sociological Forum* 36: SI: 1446–1477

Recommend for Further Reading and Reflection

Cerulo, Karen A. "Nonhumans in social interaction." *Annual Review of Sociology* 35 (2009): 531-552

Sweet, Elizabeth. 2014. "Toys Are More Divided by Gender Now Than They Were 50 Years Ago." *The Atlantic*, December 9, 2014, accessed June 15, 2019. <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/12/toys-are-more-divided-by-gender-now-than-they-were-50-years-ago/3835>

