

Sociology 160: Sociology of Culture Fall 2015

INSTRUCTOR

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Drop-in Office Hours: Tuesdays 11am-12pm
Sign-up Office Hours: Tues & Thurs 1-2:30pm
Sign-up: <http://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/xjanb>

CLASS MEETING

Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:30-5:00pm
277 Cory/TBD

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Sociology of Culture is a broad field of study encompassing every aspect of our lives, not just those things we typically think of like music and art, but also our clothes, food, furniture, language, ideologies, rhetoric, technology, gestures, and symbols; culture is all things created by humans. Culture is what gives our lives shape, allows us to predict social action, informs our behavior and patterns of thought, and imbues our lives with meaning.

In this class we will be focusing on three major concepts within the sociology of culture: **cultural capital**, **symbolic boundaries**, and **authenticity**. We will explore the importance of these concepts in a few key areas:

- ❖ Cultural production
- ❖ The creation of symbolic distinctions
- ❖ Identity formation
- ❖ Issues of power, hegemony, and the reproduction of inequality

We will use this framework to answer questions like the following:

- * What is cultural capital and what role does it play in educational achievement?
- * How does cultural capital intersect with class and race?
- * How do symbolic boundaries help reinforce gender, racial, and class inequality?
- * How do we choose among the numerous cultural objects and creations available to us?
- * How is culture created both by culture industries and individuals?
- * What role does popular culture play in the reproduction of symbolic boundaries and inequality?
- * Why is authenticity so important?

Keep in mind this is a sociology course. Just to refresh your memory, sociology is the study of human social activity, organization, and interaction. Sociology is about the search for patterned behavior and social, rather than individual, explanations for this behavior. Sociologists look beyond the taken-for-granted notions of our social environment to examine the many layers of social meaning in the human experience. (If this doesn't sound familiar to you, or if you are unclear about the *sociological perspective*, please refer to an introductory sociology text for a refresher.)

This class will be **challenging** on a number of levels:

- ◆ You are expected to keep up with a number of readings for each class meeting.
- ◆ These readings will be challenging not only in terms of their length and number, but also in terms of the subject matter presented and the complex theories proposed.
- ◆ We will be speaking frankly about issues of gender, race, class and sexuality.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Bettie, Julie. 2014. *Women Without Class: Girls, Race, and Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (**2003 Edition is fine, but you will be missing the new introduction**)

Grindstaff, Laura. 2002. *The Money Shot: Trash, Class, and the Making of TV Talk Shows*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Hubbs, Nadine. 2014. *Rednecks, Queers, and Country Music*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Course Reader: Available at Copy Central (on Bancroft) and on bCourses.

ASSIGNMENTS

Reading Responses: Two 2-3 page response papers. Each is worth 20% of your final grade. Due dates are listed in the course outline. I will upload response paper prompts to bCourses one week prior to the due date. No late responses are accepted without prior approval.

These reading responses will test your comprehension of course readings as well as your ability to explain, synthesize, and make connections between the readings **in your own words**. Because you will not be able to rely on direct quotations of the material, you must focus on your own understanding and articulation of the texts.

Exams: Take-home midterm and final exam--both are in essay format. Each is worth 30% of your final grade. You will be responsible for course readings, lectures, and any media presented in the class.

GRADE BREAKDOWN:

Reading Responses (40%)

Exams (60%)

COURSE FORMAT AND POLICIES

Readings: Readings should be completed prior to class. You must keep up with the readings to participate in class discussions and complete assignments. Bring your reading materials to every class; you will likely need to refer to them in class discussions. All of your assigned readings (aside from the required book) are available on bCourses and as a reader from Copy Central on Bancroft. Be sure to download them early.

Participation: This class will incorporate the use of lecture, films, music, visuals, and group discussions. I expect you to be an active participant in the course. Bring your questions and comments to class and don't be shy about bringing them up.

You can also participate by posting links to news stories or videos, as well as any relevant thoughts on issues related to culture in the chat room on bCourses. Be sure to contextualize any posts by connecting them to issues in the class.

If you have a question about the readings, lecture, etc., please post your question to the chat room on bCourses where both your questions and my answers will be visible to other students, rather than e-mailing me. Feel free to answer each other's questions as well.

If you miss a class, do not ask me if you missed anything. Of course you did!--but don't expect me to fill you in. I suggest sharing contact information with a classmate early on in the semester and getting the notes you missed.

I use course slides which often incorporate media. I will post course slides after lecture, not before, but they will only contain the text. Keep in mind that these slides are meant to be a guide during lecture and are therefore not exhaustive or a substitute for attending class.

****ALL CELL PHONES MUST BE SILENCED AND PUT AWAY DURING CLASS**

Do not read, listen to music, browse the Internet, text, or sleep during class. If you want to do these things, don't bother coming to class.

You may not agree with everything we read and discuss, but I expect you to have an open mind and demonstrate your knowledge of the sociological perspective. Debates are expected and welcome in this class, however, I will not tolerate personal attacks.

Email: Clearly indicate to which class you are referring in your emails to me. I endeavor to respond to emails within 24 hours, but this is not always possible; please be patient.

GRADING POLICIES

For assignments turned in via bCourses, your feedback can be found in a file there. Be sure to download this file and carefully consider the feedback. This feedback is provided to help you improve on future assignments.

If you would like to request a re-grade or re-evaluation of an assignment, you must first, wait 24 hours after the assignment was returned and second, write up a statement detailing why you believe you deserve a higher grade. This statement should be about the substance of your work, not about effort. **You must request a re-grade within 7 days of the assignment being returned.** My assessment and grade of your work will be used, even if that means you get a lower score than originally given for that work.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

The University defines academic misconduct as “any action or attempted action that may result in creating an unfair academic advantage for oneself or an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for any other member or members of the academic community” (UC Berkeley Code of Student Conduct).

Academic dishonesty includes cheating and plagiarism. Cheating is collaboration with other students on exams or using notes during exams. Plagiarism includes turning in any work that is not your own as well as improper or missing citations of others' works. As a student of the University of California, you are bound by the Code of Academic Conduct. Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will result in a referral to The Center for Student Conduct and a zero for that assignment.

Plagiarism is most likely to occur because students are unaware of how to cite their sources or because they feel desperate. If you get to this point in your writing, contact me ASAP rather than doing something you'll very likely regret.

OFFICE HOURS

I will be holding **Sign-up** office hours from 1pm-2:30pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Sign-up: <http://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/xjanb>

I will be holding **Drop-in** office hours from 11am-noon on Tuesdays—no appointment necessary.

If you are having any difficulties with the material or assignments for the course or if you are having any personal problems that are affecting your ability to complete assignments on time, you should take advantage of office hours early in the semester. I will be much more amenable to granting extensions when I have been made aware of problems early on rather than at the last minute.

Remember that office hours are an important resource if for no other reason than getting to know your instructors could help you in the future when you may need letters of recommendation.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Disability Accommodations

Please let me know early in the semester if you qualify for any disability accommodations.

Student Learning Center

“The primary academic support service for students at Berkeley, the SLC helps students transition to Cal; navigate the academic terrain; create networks of resources; and achieve academic, personal and professional goals.” Located in The Cesar Chavez Student Center on Lower Sproul Plaza. Front desk phone: 510 642 7332

Course Outline Readings to be **completed** on day listed. Schedule subject to change.

WEEK ONE: INTRODUCTIONS

Thursday, 8/27 **Introductions**

Tuesday, 9/1 **What is the Sociology of Culture?**

Becker, Howard S. 1986. “Culture: A Sociological View.” Pp 11-24 in *Doing Things Together: Selected Papers*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

WEEKS TWO-THREE: DISTINCTION

Thursday, 9/3 **Cultural Capital and Symbolic Boundaries**

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1997. “The Forms of Capital” Pp 46-58 in *Education: Culture, Economy, Society* edited by A.H. Halsey et al. New York: Oxford University Press.

Lamont, Michele and Virag Molnar. 2002. “The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 28:167-195.

Tuesday, 9/8 **Cultural Capital and Symbolic Boundaries in Action**

Lareau, Annette. 2002. “Invisible Inequality: Social Class and Childrearing in Black Families and White Families.” *American Sociological Review* 67 (5):747-776.

Thorne, Barrie. 1994. “Creating a Sense of ‘Opposite Sides’.” Pp 63-88 in *Gender Play: Girls and Boys in School*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Thursday, 9/10 Creating Distinctions

Levine, Lawrence W. 1991. "William Shakespeare and the American People: A Study in Cultural Transformation." *The American Historical Review* 89 (1):34-66.

Tuesday, 9/15 Crossing Distinctions

Peterson, Richard A. and Roger M. Kern. 1996. "Changing Highbrow Taste: From Snob to Omnivore." *American Sociological Review* 61 (5):900-907.

Bryson, Bethany. 1996. "'Anything But Heavy Metal': Symbolic Exclusion and Musical Dislikes." *American Sociological Review* 61 (5):884-899.

WEEKS FOUR-SEVEN: WOMEN WITHOUT CLASS

Thursday, 9/17 Introducing Women Without Class

Bettie: "Introduction"

Bettie: "Chapter 1: Portraying Waretown High"

Tuesday, 9/22 Women and Class

Bettie: "Chapter 2: Women Without Class"

Thursday, 9/24 Reproducing Class and Race Inequality

Bettie: "Chapter 3: How Working-Class Chicas Get Working-Class Lives"

**Tuesday, 9/29 Cultural Capital, Habitus, and Borderwork
READING RESPONSE 1 DUE**

Bettie: "Chapter 4: Hard-Living Habitus, Settled-Living Resentment"

Bettie: "Chapter 5: Border Work Between Classes"

**Thursday, 10/1 NO CLASS-Decolonizing Foodways Conference
<http://food.berkeley.edu/decolonizing-foodways/>**

**Tuesday, 10/6 Shared Inequality
Film Screening: *The Graduates***

Bettie: "Chapter 6: Sameness, Difference, and Alliance"

Bettie: "Chapter 7: Conclusion"

**Thursday, 10/8 Gendered and Sexualized Distinction on Campus
Discussion of *The Graduates***

Armstrong, Elizabeth A. et al. 2014. "Good Girls': Gender, Social Class, and Slut Discourse on Campus." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 77 (2):100-122.

**WEEKS EIGHT-TEN: PRODUCTION OF CULTURE:
REPRODUCING CLASS HIERARCHIES**

Tuesday, 10/13 Production of Culture Perspective

Becker, Howard S. 1982. "Art Worlds and Collective Activity." Pp 1-39 in *Art Worlds*. Berkeley: University of California, Press.

Peterson, Richard A. and N. Anand. 2004. "The Production of Culture Perspective." *Annual Review of Sociology* 30:311-334.

Thursday, 10/15 TV Talk Shows and Cultural Hierarchies

Grindstaff: "Prologue. Setting the Stage"

Grindstaff: "Chapter One: Airing Dirty Laundry"

Tuesday, 10/20 Producing Trash

Grindstaff: "Chapter Two: The Genre Goes Hard-Core"

Grindstaff: "Chapter Three: Talk as Work: Routinizing the Production Process"

Thursday, 10/22 Producing Authentic Emotion

Grindstaff: "Chapter Four: Talk as Show (a Show of Emotion)"

Grindstaff: "Chapter Five: "The Other Side of the Camera: Motives and Misgivings"

Tuesday, 10/27 Grievances and Experts

Grindstaff: "Chapter Six: Inside the Fun House"

Grindstaff: "Chapter Seven: Will the Real Expert Please Stand Up?"

Thursday, 10/29 Trash, Class, and the Cultural Hierarchy

Grindstaff: "Chapter Eight: Trash, Class, and the Cultural Hierarchy"

WEEKS ELEVEN-TWELVE: CRAFTING AUTHENTICITY

Tuesday, 11/3

What is Authenticity?

****TAKE-HOME MIDTERM DUE****

Peterson, Richard A. 2005. "In Search of Authenticity." *Journal of Management Studies* 42:1083-1098.

Grazian, David. 2010. "Demystifying Authenticity in the Sociology of Culture." Pp 191-200 in *Handbook of Cultural Sociology* edited by John R. Hall, Laura Grindstaff, and Ming-Cheng Lo. New York: Routledge.

Thursday, 11/5

Film Screening: *Exit Through the Gift Shop*

Tuesday, 11/10

Crafting Racial Authenticity

Grazian, David. 2004. "The Symbolic Economy of Authenticity in the Chicago Blues Scene." Pp 31-47 in *Music Scenes* edited by Andy Bennett and Richard A. Peterson. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press.

Harkness, Geoff. 2012. "True School: Situational Authenticity in Chicago's Hip-Hop Underground." *Cultural Sociology* 6 (3):283-298.

Thursday, 11/12

Producing Authentic Country Music

Peterson, Richard A. 1997. "Introduction: Finding Country Authenticity." Pp 1-9 in *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

----- "Hank Williams as the Personification of Country Music." Pp 173-184 in *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

----- "Creating a Field Called 'Country'." Pp 185-201 in *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

WEEKS THIRTEEN-FIFTEEN: REDNECKS, QUEERS, COUNTRY MUSIC

Tuesday, 11/17

Situating Class in Country

Hubbs: "Intro"

Hubbs: "Chapter 1: Anything But Country"

Thursday, 11/19 **Country Music as Working-Class**

Hubbs: "Chapter 2: Sounding the Working-Class Subject"

Tuesday, 11/24 **Country Music as Rebellion**

Hubbs: "Chapter 3: Gender Deviance and Class Rebellion in 'Redneck Woman'"

Thursday, 11/26 **NO CLASS-Thanksgiving Holiday**

Tuesday, 12/1 **Country Music and Queer Politics**

****READING RESPONSE 2 DUE****

Hubbs: "Chapter 4: 'Fuck Aneta Briant' and the Queer Politics of Being Political"

Hubbs: "Outro"

Thursday, 12/3 **Catch-up/ Review**

WEEK SIXTEEN: READING, REVIEW, RECITATION WEEK

MONDAY, DECEMBER 7-FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11

TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM: Due on FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18 BY 7 PM