

Sociology 160: Sociology of Culture Fall 2019

Instructor Jill Bakehorn, PhD (Pronouns: she/her or they/them)
E-mail: jabakehorn@berkeley.edu
Office: 479 Barrows Hall
Drop-in Office Hours: Wednesdays 10:15-11:15am
Sign-up Office Hours: Mondays 10:30-11:30am
Sign-up: <http://www.wejoinin.com/JillBakehorn>

CLASS MEETING Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 2:00pm-2:59pm
160 Kroeber

COURSE DESCRIPTION

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, 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 two major concepts within the sociology of culture: **cultural capital** and **symbolic boundaries**. 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 be spending the bulk of the course focusing on the intersections of gender, race, and class with the educational system. We will examine two very different high school contexts—one a primarily working- and lower-middle class rural school and the other an elite college-preparatory boarding school—before moving on to exploring the college experience. We will look at how cultural knowledge, skills, and embodiment impact not only educational experiences but future prospects. Further, we will see how we can, both knowingly and unknowingly, reproduce inequality through our engagement with culture by how we define and distinguish ourselves through symbolic boundaries.

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 do educational institutions perpetuate inequality through institutional structures and interactional dynamics?
- How does cultural capital intersect with gender, class, and race?
- How do symbolic boundaries help reinforce gender, racial, and class inequality?

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, sexuality, and inequality.

This course challenges many taken-for-granted assumptions about the social world. Keep in mind that your personal experiences may not match the general sociological insights discussed in the course. This does not negate the insights. Ask yourself why this might be the case. 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. Disagreements and debates are expected and welcome in this class; however, I will not tolerate personal attacks.

COURSE GOALS

By the end of the semester you should be able to:

- Explain how cultural capital operates to perpetuate inequality
- Identify key aspects of cultural capital in your own experience
- Discuss symbolic boundaries and their role in shaping inequality
- Apply concepts to the workings of major social institutions
- Write succinct papers that effectively synthesize course materials and apply theory

REQUIRED TEXTS

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

Khan, Shamus Rahman. 2011. *Privilege: The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St. Paul's School*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Armstrong, Elizabeth A. and Laura T. Hamilton. 2013. *Paying for the Party: How College Maintains Inequality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Course Reader: Available at Central Copy (2411 Telegraph Ave) and on bCourses. Books are on reserve at Moffitt Library and may be available online—check library website.

ASSIGNMENTS

Reading Responses: Two 2-3 page response papers. Each is worth 20% of your final grade.

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. You will be asked to make connections between the course materials and your experience of the social world.

Exams: Take-home essay midterm and final exam. Each is worth 30% of your final grade. You will be responsible for course readings, lectures, and any media presented in the class. The essays will require you to use course content to explain a particular social problem or phenomenon.

Grade Breakdown:

Reading Responses (40%)

Exams (60%)

GRADE SCALE

Grade Range	Grade
97-100	A+
93-96	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
67-69	D+
63-66	D
60-62	D-
0-59	F

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 books) are available on bCourses and as a reader at Copy Central on Telegraph.

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 discussion board on bCourses. Be sure to contextualize any posts by connecting them to issues in the class. Provide content warnings where appropriate.

If you have a question about the readings, lecture, etc., please post your question to the discussion board on bCourses where both your questions and my answers will be visible to other students. Feel free to answer each other's questions as well.

Course Slides: I use course slides which often incorporate media. I will post course slides, 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.

Course Notes and Recordings: Course notes should not be disseminated. That means you are forbidden from posting them online on forums like Course Hero. You must obtain permission from me to record lectures.

Course Etiquette: I expect you to be engaged and focused during class time. That means you should avoid distractions—the biggest is typically our phones. All phones must be silenced and put away during class.

Laptop Policy: I strongly encourage you to take notes without a computer if you are able. If you need to use a computer during class, I ask that you **sit in the back four rows of the classroom** so that you do not distract and disturb other students.

Email: Clearly indicate to which course 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.

Names and Pronouns: You have the right to be referred to by the name you prefer and the correct gender pronouns. Because the name listed in University records may not correspond to your preferred name, please inform me of your name (and pronunciation) and your pronouns so that I can ensure you are properly recognized and respected.

GRADING POLICIES

No **late assignments** will be accepted without prior approval.

Turnitin: All of your assignments will be checked by TurnItIn for plagiarism. Keep in mind, this program keeps a database of previously submitted papers as well.

Be sure to carefully consider assignment feedback; it is provided to help you improve on future assignments. For in-text feedback, **click on the link “View Feedback”** which may not be visible if you are not in full-screen mode.

Re-Grade Policy: 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. Be sure to make specific reference to your work, don't simply say that you responded to the questions asked. Demonstrate how you did so.

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 response papers and 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; we can work something out.

OFFICE HOURS

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, please take advantage of office hours—I am here to help! Just keep in mind that 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.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

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. <https://slc.berkeley.edu>

Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Services

To learn more about these issues, how to support survivors, or how to file a report and receive support services, start here: <http://survivorsupport.berkeley.edu>. **Please note that I am not a confidential advocate.** To speak to a confidential care advocate: <http://sa.berkeley.edu/dean/confidential-care-advocate/>

Economic, Food, and Housing Support

If you are in need of economic, food, or housing support, you can find help at basicneeds.berkeley.edu. You may be eligible for money to buy groceries via calfresh.berkeley.edu or our [Food Assistance Program](#). If you are in need of food immediately, please visit our UC Berkeley Food Pantry at pantry.berkeley.edu/.

Course Outline: Readings are to be completed on the day listed below. Schedule is subject to change.

WEEK ONE: INTRODUCTIONS

Wednesday, 8/28 **Introductions**

Friday, 8/30 **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-FOUR: DISTINCTION

Monday, 9/2 **LABOR DAY: NO CLASS**

Wednesday, 9/4 + **Cultural Capital**
Friday, 9/6

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1986. "The Forms of Capital" Pp 241-258 in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* edited by J. Richardson. Westport, CT: Greenwood.

Monday, 9/9 **Symbolic Boundaries**

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

Wednesday, 9/11 **Cultural Capital in Action**

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

Friday, 9/13 **Symbolic Boundaries in Action**

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.

Monday, 9/16 + **Creating Distinctions**
Wednesday, 9/18

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

Friday, 9/20 **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.

WEKKS FIVE-SEVEN: WOMEN WITHOUT CLASS

Monday, 9/23 **Introducing Women Without Class**

Julie Bettie: Introduction—*Women Without Class: Girls, Race, and Identity*

Julie Bettie: Chapter 1: Portraying Waretown High

Wednesday, 9/25 **Women and Class**

Julie Bettie: Chapter 2: Women Without Class

Friday, 9/27 **Catch-Up/Review**

READING RESPONSE 1 DUE

Monday, 9/30 **Reproducing Class and Race Inequality**

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

Wednesday, 10/2 + **Cultural Capital, Habitus, and Borderwork**
Friday, 10/4

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

Monday, 10/7 **Borderwork and Mobility**

Julie Bettie: Chapter 5: Border Work Between Classes

Wednesday, 10/9 **Shared Inequality, Concluding *Women Without Class***

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

Friday, 10/11 + **Film Screening: *The Graduates***
Monday, 10/14

Julie Bettie: Chapter 7: Conclusion

WEEKS EIGHT-TEN: PRIVILEGE

Wednesday, 10/16 **Democratic Inequality and the New Elite**

Shamus Rahman Khan: Introduction—*Privilege: The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St. Paul's School*

Shamus Rahman Khan: 1: The New Elite

Friday, 10/18 + **Finding One's Place of Privilege +**
Monday, 10/21 **selected clips from *Class Divide***

Shamus Rahman Khan: 2: Finding One's Place

Wednesday, 10/23 **Making Privilege Easy**

Shamus Rahman Khan: 3: The Ease of Privilege

Friday, 10/25 **TAKE HOME MIDTERM DUE**
NO CLASS

Monday, 10/28 **Gender and Performing Privilege**

Shamus Rahman Khan: 4: Gender and the Performance of Privilege

Wednesday, 10/30 + **Cultivating Omnivorousness and Conclusions**
Friday, 11/1

Shamus Rahman Khan: 5: Learning *Beowulf* and *Jaws*

Shamus Rahman Khan: Conclusion

WEEKS ELEVEN-FIFTEEN: PAYING FOR THE PARTY

Monday, 11/4 + **Introducing Paying For the Party**
Wednesday, 11/6

Armstrong and Hamilton: Preface and Introduction—*Paying for the Party: How College Maintains Inequality*

Friday, 11/8 **Meeting the Women**

Armstrong and Hamilton: Chapter 1: The Women

Monday, 11/11 **VETERANS DAY: NO CLASS**

Wednesday, 11/13 **The Party School**

Armstrong and Hamilton: Chapter 2: The Party Pathway

Friday, 11/15 **The Party Scene**

Armstrong and Hamilton: Chapter 3: Rush and the Party Scene

Monday, 11/18 **Social Status and Isolation**

Armstrong and Hamilton: Chapter 4: The Floor

Wednesday, 11/20 **The Party Pathway**

Armstrong and Hamilton: Chapter 5: Socialites, Wannabes, and Fit with the Party Pathway

Friday, 11/22 **The Blocked Mobility Pathway**
READING RESPONSE 2 DUE

Armstrong and Hamilton: Chapter 6: Strivers, Creaming, and the Blocked Mobility Pathway

Monday, 11/25 **The Blocked Mobility Pathway**

Wednesday, 11/27—Friday, 11/29 **THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

Monday, 12/2 **The Professional Pathway**

Armstrong and Hamilton: Chapter 7: Achievers, Underachievers, and the Professional Pathway

Wednesday, 12/4 **Post-College Trajectories/Conclusions**

Armstrong and Hamilton: Chapter 8: College Pathways and Post-College Prospects

Armstrong and Hamilton: Chapter 9: Politics and Pathways

Friday, 12/6 **Catch-Up/Review**

WEEK SIXTEEN: READING, REVIEW, RECITATION WEEK

MONDAY, DECEMBER 9-FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13

TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM: Due THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19 AT 6PM