

Sociology 160: Sociology of Culture

Fall 2020

INSTRUCTOR	Jill Bakehorn, Ph.D. E-mail: jabakehorn@berkeley.edu Drop-in Office Hours: Tuesdays + Thursdays 10-11am Sign-up Office Hours: Mondays + Wednesdays 2:30-4pm + additional times as needed Sign-up: https://calendly.com/bakehorn/office-hours
CLASS MEETING	Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 12:00-12:59pm (Zoom lectures will be recorded)

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

- ❖ Introduce you to fundamental concepts in cultural sociology
- ❖ Critically examine the role cultural capital plays in educational attainment throughout the life course
- ❖ Explore how gender, race, and sexuality intersect with cultural capital to affect outcomes in education
- ❖ Provide tools for understanding the role culture plays in structural inequality

Learning Outcomes

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.

These books and all other required and supplementary readings are available digitally on bCourses.

Assignments

Two Reading Responses: These reading responses test your comprehension of course readings as well as your ability to explain concepts **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 also be asked to make connections between the course materials and your experience of the social world.

Essay Exams: Midterm and final exam. You will be responsible for course readings, lectures, and any media presented in the class. These exams will focus on your ability to apply theories and to synthesize and make connections between various readings.

All work must be original (you cannot recycle work from other courses).

Participation: You can earn full participation points by completing homework and collaborative assignments, and contributing to online discussions. These assignments are designed to keep you motivated and engaged with the course, to provide opportunities for you to check your comprehension, and to receive feedback in preparation for your graded assignments.

Quizzes: Weekly short quizzes designed to motivate you to stay on top of the readings and lecture.

Grade Breakdown

Reading Responses (30%)

Midterm (20%)

Final Exam (30%)

Participation Assignments (15%)

Quizzes (5%)

GRADE SCALE

Grade Range		Grade
100%	97%	A+
96%	93%	A
92%	90%	A-
89%	87%	B+
86%	83%	B
82%	80%	B-
79%	77%	C+
76%	73%	C
72%	70%	C-
69%	67%	D+
66%	63%	D
62%	60%	D-
59%	50%	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.

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/ watching lecture.

Zoom Etiquette and Tips: Please refer to this [guide](#).

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.

Names and Pronouns: You have the right to be referred to by the name you prefer and with 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.

You can refer to me as Prof. Bakehorn, Dr. Bakehorn, or Jill. My pronouns are she/they.

Grading Policies

No late assignments will be accepted without prior approval.

All assignments will be checked by TurnItIn for plagiarism. Keep in mind, this program keeps a database of previously turned in papers as well as searching the internet.

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.

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 failing grade for that assignment.

Plagiarism is most likely to occur because students are unaware of how to cite 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

Please see Page 1 or [this link](#) for information about my 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!

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. You do not need to be struggling or have course-specific questions to go to office hours.

Student Support Services

Course Accessibility

This course is intended for all UC Berkeley students, including those with mental, emotional, physical, or cognitive disabilities, illnesses, injuries, impairments, or any other condition that can negatively impact equal access to education. If, at any point in the semester, you find yourself not able to fully access the space, content, and experience of this course, you are welcome (but not required) to contact me by email or during office hours to discuss your specific needs.

I also encourage you to contact the [Disabled Students' Program](#). If you have a diagnosis, DSP can help you document your needs and create an accommodation plan. By making a plan through DSP, you can ensure appropriate accommodations without disclosing your condition or diagnosis to course instructors.

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."

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; I am a mandated reporter.** You can speak to a [Confidential Care Advocate](#).

Economic, Food, and Housing Support

If you are in need of economic, food, or housing support, you can find help at [the Basic Needs Center](#). You may be eligible for money to buy groceries via [Calfresh](#) or our [Food Assistance Program](#). If you are in need of food immediately, please contact our UC Berkeley [Food Pantry](#). More information can be found [here](#).

Technology and Internet Support

Please see [this page](#) for the latest information on university-provided support.

We are all still adjusting to the profound changes caused by the pandemic. Please reach out if you need support. (Doesn't have to be related to the course). For an instant mood boost, [click here](#).

Course Outline

Complete readings on the day listed below. Course schedule is subject to change.

Week One: Introductions

Wednesday, 8/26 **Welcome**

Friday, 8/28 **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, 8/31 + **Cultural Capital**

Wednesday, 9/2

Bourdieu, Pierre. 2004. "The Forms of Capital" Pp 15-29 in *The RoutledgeFalmer Reader in Sociology of Education* edited by Stephen J. Ball. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

Friday, 9/4 **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.

Richards, Bedelia Nicola. 2020. "When Class is Colorblind: A Race-Conscious Model for Cultural Capital Research in Education." *Sociology Compass*. 14 (7):e12789.

Monday, 9/7 **HOLIDAY: NO CLASS**

Wednesday, 9/9 + **Symbolic and Social Boundaries**

Friday, 9/11

Castañeda, Ernesto. 2019. "Boundary Formation: Nationalism, Immigration, and Categorical Inequality between American and Mexicans." Pp 47-71 in *Building Walls: Excluding Latin People in the United States*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Monday, 9/14 + **Creating Distinctions**
Wednesday, 9/16

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

Friday, 9/18 **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 Five-Seven: Women Without Class

Monday, 9/21 **Introducing Women Without Class**

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

Julie Bettie: Chapter 1: Portraying Waretown High

Wednesday, 9/23 **Women and Class**

Julie Bettie: Chapter 2: Women Without Class

Friday, 9/25 **Catch-Up/Review**
READING RESPONSE 1 DUE

Monday, 9/28 **Reproducing Class and Race Inequality**

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

Wednesday, 9/30 + **Cultural Capital, Habitus, and Borderwork**
Friday, 10/2

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

Monday, 10/5 **Borderwork and Mobility**

Julie Bettie: Chapter 5: Border Work Between Classes

Wednesday, 10/7 **Shared Inequality, Concluding *Women Without Class***

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

Friday, 10/9 **Concluding *Women Without Class***

Julie Bettie: Chapter 7: Conclusion

Weeks Eight-Ten: Privilege

Monday, 10/12 + **Democratic Inequality and the New Elite**
Wednesday, 10/14

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

Shamus Rahman Khan: 1: The New Elite

Friday, 10/16 **Finding One's Place of Privilege**

Shamus Rahman Khan: 2: Finding One's Place

Monday, 10/19 **Making Privilege Easy**

Shamus Rahman Khan: 3: The Ease of Privilege

Wednesday, 10/21 **Review for Midterm**

Friday, 10/23 **NO CLASS**
MIDTERM DUE

Monday, 10/26 The Racial Politics of Cultural Capital

Wallace, Derron. 2019. "The Racial Politics of Cultural Capital: Perspectives from Black Middle-Class Pupils and Parents in a London Comprehensive." *Cultural Sociology* 13 (2):159-177.

Wednesday, 10/28 Gender and Performing Privilege

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

Friday, 10/30 Cultivating Omnivorousness and Conclusions

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

Shamus Rahman Khan: Conclusion

Weeks Eleven-Fifteen: Paying For The Party

Monday, 11/2 + Introducing Paying For the Party
Wednesday, 11/4

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

Friday, 11/6 Meeting the Women

Armstrong and Hamilton: Chapter 1: The Women

Monday, 11/9 The Party School

Armstrong and Hamilton: Chapter 2: The Party Pathway

Wednesday, 11/11 HOLIDAY: NO CLASS

Friday, 11/13 The Party Scene
READING RESPONSE 2 DUE

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

Monday, 11/16 **Social Status and Isolation**

Armstrong and Hamilton: Chapter 4: The Floor

Wednesday, 11/18 **The Party Pathway**

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

Friday, 11/20 **The Blocked Mobility Pathway**

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

Monday, 11/23 **The Blocked Mobility Pathway (Continued)**

[Jack, Anthony Abraham. 2019. "I Was a Low-Income Student. Classes Weren't the Hardest Part." The New York Times. September 10.](#)

Wednesday, 11/25 **HOLIDAY: NO CLASS**

Friday, 11/27 **HOLIDAY: NO CLASS**

Monday, 11/30 **The Professional Pathway**

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

Wednesday, 12/2 **Post-College Trajectories/Conclusions**

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

Armstrong and Hamilton: Chapter 9: Politics and Pathways

Friday, 12/4 **Catch-Up/Review**

Week Sixteen: Reading, Review, Recitation Week

Monday, December 7–Friday, December 11

FINAL EXAM: Due Friday, Dec 18 at 2:30pm