

# Soc 508: Sociology of Culture

Fall 2004, Tues/Thurs 12:30pm–1:45pm.

Social Sciences 415.

Kieran Healy.

Email: [kjhealy@arizona.edu](mailto:kjhealy@arizona.edu).

Homepage: <http://www.u.arizona.edu/~kjhealy>.

Office: 404 Social Sciences Building.

Phone: 621-3480

## Course Description and Objectives

This is a survey course in the sociology of culture. It will introduce you to the major themes of a field that has grown rapidly in the U.S. over the past 25 years. It overlaps significantly (though not entirely) with the Culture Reading List for Prelim Exams.

The sociology of culture is a difficult topic to organize into a manageable course for several reasons. Unlike the family, religion or politics, it is not a distinct institution or social process that can be treated more or less separately from others. Unlike networks, stratification or micro-interaction, it does not have as well-developed a set of methods that can provide an initial focus for study. The bias of this course is towards empirical studies of the production of culture, particularly in its more organizationally and institutionally durable forms. But this is still a very wide net, and we will read micro-level studies of small groups to comparative macro-sociologies of cultural change across nations. The classical roots of the subject are explored in the first few weeks. We return to broad questions about where the field should be going in the last week or two.

I have tried to ensure that the readings overlap as little as possible with material from other courses offered by the department — notably Social Movements & Collective Action, Religion, Gender, and Race & Ethnicity.

## Requirements

The course is a seminar. It should go without saying that students are expected to attend each meeting, do the reading thoroughly and in advance, and participate actively in class and online discussions. The emphasis is on mastering the material and responding to it constructively and creatively, with an eye toward your own research interests.

In addition to attendance, reading and participation, two other kinds of work are required:

a) For each week after the first, two students will prepare brief, informal presentations. One student will prepare a “lead memo” (of about 1,000 words), to be posted to the [class weblog](#) by lunchtime on **Monday** afternoon, responding to the week’s readings. Participants are expected to read the memo and contribute their own thoughts, questions and comments about it. A second student will prepare a “research memo” (of about 1,000 words), by lunchtime **Wednesday**. This might be a brief account of an outstanding problem from the readings and a preliminary design of a study to solve it; or a memo introducing and describing an existing data set relevant to the week’s readings and suggesting some possible uses. Participants should be prepared to discuss these memos as well, both online and in class.

b) Each student will prepare memoranda of 1,000 to 1,500 words on the readings *prior to* at least four of the weekly meetings. Hand them in to me in class or post them on the [class weblog](#). These memos should be regarded as writing and thinking exercises, not as finished products. Use them to engage each week’s materials and respond with questions, criticisms and new ideas that they suggest. Memos should be used to develop ideas informally over time and to put into words impressions that seem worth developing. Because I will read them each week, they also provide an opportunity for you to receive individualized feedback.

No final paper is required.

The course is open to any graduate student in Sociology. Students from other departments should meet with me before enrolling.

## Readings

All other required readings will either be available for copying in the graduate student sociology library, on electronic reserve at the main library, or available via J-STOR or other online source. This syllabus is available online via the POLIS page for the course and by following the “Teaching” link on my [homepage](#). The links in the online version will take you to the J-STOR (or equivalent) copies of the readings, wherever available. Let me know if you’re not familiar with J-STOR or PDF files, and we’ll set about welcoming you to the 1990s.

## Course Schedule

The following two anthologies are available from the bookstore and will be useful to you, but are not required:

Jeffrey Alexander and Steven Seidman, editors, *Culture and Society: Contemporary Debates* (Cambridge University Press, 1991).

Lynn Spillman, editor, *Cultural Sociology* (Malden: Blackwell, 2002)

## Preliminaries: Housekeeping and Orientation

### Week 1: Aug 24/26

Raymond Williams, “Culture.” In Raymond Williams, *Keywords: a vocabulary of culture and society* Expanded edition. (London: Fontana, 1988).

Horace Miner, “Body Ritual Amongst the Nacrerima,” *American Anthropologist*, 58 (1956), pp. 503–507. [JSTOR link](#).

Bruce McCall, “In the New Canada, Living is a Way of Life,” in *Fierce Pajamas: An Anthology of Humor Writing from The New Yorker* Edited by David Remnick and Henry Finder. (New York: Random House, 2001).

## Part I: Lineages of Classical Theory

### Week 2: Culture and Social Structure. Aug 31/Sep 2

Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary forms of Religious Life* (Free Press, 1997). “Introduction”; “Origins of these Beliefs”; “The Negative Cult and its Functions”; “Conclusion.”

Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss, *Primitive Classification* (University of Chicago Press, 1960). “The Problem” (3-10), “China” (67-80), “Conclusions” (81-88).

Mary Douglas, *How Institutions Think* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986).

Mary Douglas, “Jokes,” in *Implicit Meanings* (London: Routledge, 1975), pp. 90–114.

### Week 3: Culture and Class. Sep 7/9

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. “The German Ideology.” In Robert C. Tucker, editor, *The Marx-Engels Reader* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978). Preface and Part I. [Online version](#).

Raymond Williams, “Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory,” in *Rethinking Popular Culture: Contemporary Perspectives in Cultural Studies* Edited by Chandra Mukerji and Michael Schudson. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 407–23.

Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception,” in *Mass Communication and Society* Edited by J. Curran, M. Gurevitch and J. Wollacott. (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), pp. 349–383.

Antonio Gramsci, “Culture and Ideological Hegemony,” in: Alexander and Seidman, *Culture and Society: Contemporary Debates*, pp. 47–54.

Paul Willis, “Masculinity and Factory Labor,” in: Alexander and Seidman, *Culture and Society: Contemporary Debates*, pp. 183–95.

Basil Bernstein, “Elaborated and Restricted Codes: Their social origins and some consequences,” *American Anthropologist*, 6 (1964), pp. 55–69. [JSTOR link](#).

#### **Week 4: Culture as Signification. Sep 14/16**

Ferdinand de Saussure, "Signs and Language," in: Alexander and Seidman, *Culture and Society: Contemporary Debates*, pp. 55–63.

Roland Barthes, "The World of Wrestling," in *Mythologies* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1990), pp. 115–125.

John Levi Martin, "What do Animals do all day? The division of labor, class bodies and totemic thinking in the popular imagination," *Poetics*, 27 (2000), pp. 195–231. [Journal link](#).

Dick Hebdidge, "Object as Image: The Italian Scooter Cycle," in *The Consumer Society Reader* Edited by Juliet B. Schor and Douglas B. Holt. (New York: The New Press, 2000), pp. 117–154.

#### **Week 5: Culture Enacted. Sep 21/23**

Donald Levine, editor, *Georg Simmel on Individuality and Social Forms* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1972). "Subjective Culture" (227-34), "Fashion" (294-323), "The Metropolis and Mental Life" (324-29), and "The Conflict in Modern Culture" (375-93).

Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process Volume 1: The History of Manners* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1994), pp.95-105, 117-138.

Howard Becker, "Becoming a Marihuana User," *American Journal of Sociology*, 59 (1953), pp. 235–242. [JSTOR link](#).

Arlie Hochschild, "Emotion Work, Feeling Rules and Social Structure," *American Journal of Sociology*, 85 (1979), pp. 551–75. [JSTOR link](#).

Karin Martin, "Becoming a Gendered Body: Practices of Preschools," *American Sociological Review*, 63 (1998), pp. 494–511. [JSTOR link](#)

## Part II: The Production of Culture

### Week 6: Theories of Practice. Sep 28/30

Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward and Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pp. 3–33.

Pierre Bourdieu, "Structures, Habitus, Practices," in *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), pp. 52–65.

Richard Biernacki, "Labor as an Imagined Commodity," *Politics and Society*, 29 (2001), pp. 173–206.

Ronald L. Breiger, "A Tool-kit for Practice Theory," *Poetics*, 27 (2000), pp. 91–115.  
[Journal link.](#)

Ann Swidler, *Talk of Love* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003). Pp.135-159, "Ties that do not bind."

### Week 7: Organizations. Oct 5/7

Gideon Kunda, "Engineering Culture: Control and Commitment in a High-Tech Corporation," in: Spillman, *Cultural Sociology*, pp. 88–97.

Viviana Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), "From Mobs to Memorials," pp.22-55.

John Mohr, "Soldiers, Mothers, Tramps and Others: Discourse roles in the 1907 New York Charity Directory," *Poetics*, 22 (1994), pp. 327–58. [Journal link.](#)

Frank Dobbin, "Cultural Models of Organization: The social construction of rational organizing principles," in *The Sociology of Culture: Emerging Theoretical Perspectives* Edited by Diana Crane. (Blackwell, 1994), pp. 117–42.

### Week 8: Institutional Fields. Oct 12/14

Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993). Pp.29-73.

Yves Dezalay and Bryant Garth, *Dealing in Virtue: International Commercial Arbitration and the Construction of a Transnational Legal Order* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998). Excerpt TBA.

Paul DiMaggio, "Constructing and Organizational Field as a Professional Project: U.S. Art Museums, 1920–1940," in *The New Institutionalism and Organizational Analysis* Edited by Walter W. Powell and Paul J. DiMaggio. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 267–92.

Richard Peterson and David Berger, "Cycles in Symbol Production: The case of popular music," *American Sociological Review*, 40 (1975), pp. 158–73. [JSTOR link](#).

Bruno Latour, *The Pasteurization of France* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993). Excerpt TBA.

### **Part III: Current Topics and Debates**

#### **Week 9: Comparative Macro-Sociology. Oct 19/21**

John W. Meyer et al., "World Society and the Nation State," *American Journal of Sociology*, 103 (1997), pp. 144–81. [JSTOR link](#).

Robert Wuthnow, *Communities of Discourse: Ideologies and Social Structure in the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and European Socialism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989). Excerpt TBA.

Marion Fourcade-Gourinchas, "Politics, Institutional Structures and the Rise of Economics: A Comparative Study," *Theory and Society*, 30 (2001), pp. 397–447. [Link](#).

Frank Dobbin, *Forging Industrial Policy: The United States, Britain and France in the Railway Age* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994). Chapter 1.

### **Week 10: Cultural Consumption and Reception. Oct 26/28**

Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984). Chapters 5 and 7.

Bethany Bryson, “‘Anything But Heavy Metal’: Symbolic Exclusion and Musical Dislikes,” *American Sociological Review*, 61 (1996), pp. 884–899. [JSTOR link](#).

Noah Mark, “Birds of a Feather Sing Together,” *Social Forces*, 77 (1998), pp. 453–85.

Wendy Griswold, “The Fabrication of Meaning: Literary interpretation in the United States, Great Britain and the West Indies,” *American Journal of Sociology*, 92 (1987), pp. 1077–1117. [JSTOR link](#).

James L. Watson, “Transnationalism, Localization, and Fast Foods in East Asia,” in *Golden Arches East: McDonald’s In East Asia* Edited by James Watson. (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 1–38.

### **Week 11: Boundaries and Identities. Nov 2/4**

Michele Lamont, “Symbolic Boundaries and Status,” in: Spillman, *Cultural Sociology*, pp. 98–107.

Steven Seidman, “From Identity to Queer Politics: Shifts in Normative Heterosexuality,” (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 353–60.

Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, “Beyond Identity,” *Theory and Society*, 29 (2000), pp. 1–47. [Journal link](#).

N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999). Excerpt TBA.

### **Week 12: Markets and Culture Nov 9/11**

William T. Bielby and Denise D. Bielby, “All Hits are Flukes: Institutionalized Decision Making and the Rhetoric of Prime-Time Program Development,” *American Journal of Sociology*, 99 (1994), pp. 1287–1313. [JSTOR link](#).



Tyler Cowen, *Creative Destruction: How Globalization is Changing the World's Cultures* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002). Excerpt TBA.

Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Waquant, "The Cunning of Imperialist Reason," *Theory, Culture and Society*, 16 (1999), pp. 41–58.

James Boyle, "Cruel, Mean or Lavish? Economic analysis, price discrimination and digital intellectual property," *Vanderbilt Law Review*, 53 (2000), pp. 2006–2039.

David Throsby, "The Production and Consumption of the Arts: A View of Cultural Economics," *Journal of Economic Literature*, 32 (1994):1, pp. 1–29. [JSTOR link](#).

**Thursday 11th: Veterans' Day. No class.**

## **Part IV: Programmatic and Prescriptive Statements**

### **Week 13: Nov 16/18**

Ann Swidler, "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies," *American Sociological Review*, 51 (1986), pp. 273–286. [JSTOR link](#).

John Mohr, "Measuring Meaning Structures," *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24 (1998), pp. 345–70. [JSTOR link](#).

William H. Sewell, "The Concept(s) of Culture," in *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture* Edited by Victoria Bonnell and Lynn E. Hunt. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 35–61.

John Levi Martin, "What is Field Theory?," *American Journal of Sociology*, 109 (2003), pp. 1–49. [AJS link](#).

### **Week 14: Nov 23/25**

**Thanksgiving. No class.**

### **Week 15: Nov 30/Dec 2**

## References

- Adorno, Theodor and Horkheimer, Max, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," in *Mass Communication and Society* Edited by Curran, J., Gurevitch, M. and Wollacott, J.. (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), pp. 349–383.
- Alexander, Jeffrey and Seidman, Steven, editors, *Culture and Society: Contemporary Debates* (Cambridge University Press, 1991).
- Barthes, Roland, "The World of Wrestling," in *Mythologies* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1990), pp. 115–125.
- Becker, Howard, "Becoming a Marihuana User," *American Journal of Sociology*, 59 (1953), pp. 235–242.
- Bernstein, Basil, "Elaborated and Restricted Codes: Their social origins and some consequences," *American Anthropologist*, 6 (1964), pp. 55–69.
- Bielby, William T. and Bielby, Denise D., "All Hits are Flukes: Institutionalized Decision Making and the Rhetoric of Prime-Time Program Development," *American Journal of Sociology*, 99 (1994), pp. 1287–1313.
- Biernacki, Richard, "Labor as an Imagined Commodity," *Politics and Society*, 29 (2001), pp. 173–206.
- Bourdieu, Pierre, *Distinction* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).
- "Structures, Habitus, Practices," in *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), pp. 52–65.
- *The Field of Cultural Production* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).
- and Waquant, Loïc, "The Cunning of Imperialist Reason," *Theory, Culture and Society*, 16 (1999), pp. 41–58.
- Boyle, James, "Cruel, Mean or Lavish? Economic analysis, price discrimination and digital intellectual property," *Vanderbilt Law Review*, 53 (2000), pp. 2006–2039.

- Breiger, Ronald L., "A Tool-kit for Practice Theory," *Poetics*, 27 (2000), pp. 91–115.
- Brubaker, Rogers and Cooper, Frederick, "Beyond Identity," *Theory and Society*, 29 (2000), pp. 1–47.
- Bryson, Bethany, "Anything But Heavy Metal': Symbolic Exclusion and Musical Dislikes," *American Sociological Review*, 61 (1996), pp. 884–899.
- Cowen, Tyler, *Creative Destruction: How Globalization is Changing the World's Cultures* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).
- Dezalay, Yves and Garth, Bryant, *Dealing in Virtue: International Commercial Arbitration and the Construction of a Transnational Legal Order* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).
- DiMaggio, Paul, "Constructing and Organizational Field as a Professional Project: U.S. Art Museums, 1920–1940," in *The New Institutionalism and Organizational Analysis* Edited by Powell, Walter W. and DiMaggio, Paul J.. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 267–92.
- Dobbin, Frank, "Cultural Models of Organization: The social construction of rational organizing principles," in *The Sociology of Culture: Emerging Theoretical Perspectives* Edited by Crane, Diana. (Blackwell, 1994), pp. 117–42.
- *Forging Industrial Policy: The United States, Britain and France in the Railway Age* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
- Douglas, Mary, "Jokes," in *Implicit Meanings* (London: Routledge, 1975), pp. 90–114.
- *How Institutions Think* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986).
- Durkheim, Émile, *The Elementary forms of Religious Life* (Free Press, 1997), Karen Fields, Translator.
- Durkheim, Emile and Mauss, Marcel, *Primitive Classification* (University of Chicago Press, 1960).
- Elias, Norbert, *The Civilizing Process Volume 1: The History of Manners* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1994).

- Fourcade-Gourinchas, Marion, "Politics, Institutional Structures and the Rise of Economics: A Comparative Study," *Theory and Society*, 30 (2001), pp. 397–447.
- Geertz, Clifford, "Thick Description: Toward and Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pp. 3–33.
- Gramsci, Antonio, "Culture and Ideological Hegemony," in: Alexander and Seidman, *Culture and Society: Contemporary Debates*, pp. 47–54.
- Griswold, Wendy, "The Fabrication of Meaning: Literary interpretation in the United States, Great Britain and the West Indies," *American Journal of Sociology*, 92 (1987), pp. 1077–1117.
- Hayles, N. Katherine, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).
- Hebdidge, Dick, "Object as Image: The Italian Scooter Cycle," in *The Consumer Society Reader* Edited by Schor, Juliet B. and Holt, Douglas B.. (New York: The New Press, 2000), pp. 117–154.
- Hochschild, Arlie, "Emotion Work, Feeling Rules and Social Structure," *American Journal of Sociology*, 85 (1979), pp. 551–75.
- Kunda, Gideon, "Engineering Culture: Control and Commitment in a High-Tech Corporation," in: Spillman, *Cultural Sociology*, pp. 88–97.
- Lamont, Michele, "Symbolic Boundaries and Status," in: Spillman, *Cultural Sociology*, pp. 98–107.
- Latour, Bruno, *The Pasteurization of France* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).
- Levine, Donald, editor, *Georg Simmel on Individuality and Social Forms* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1972).
- Mark, Noah, "Birds of a Feather Sing Together," *Social Forces*, 77 (1998), pp. 453–85.

- Martin, John Levi, "What do Animals do all day? The division of labor, class bodies and totemic thinking in the popular imagination," *Poetics*, 27 (2000), pp. 195–231.
- "What is Field Theory?," *American Journal of Sociology*, 109 (2003), pp. 1–49.
- Martin, Karin, "Becoming a Gendered Body: Practices of Preschools," *American Sociological Review*, 63 (1998), pp. 494–511.
- McCall, Bruce, "In the New Canada, Living is a Way of Life," in *Fierce Pajamas: An Anthology of Humor Writing from The New Yorker* Edited by Remnick, David and Finder, Henry. (New York: Random House, 2001).
- Meyer, John W. et al., "World Society and the Nation State," *American Journal of Sociology*, 103 (1997), pp. 144–81.
- Miner, Horace, "Body Ritual Amongst the Nacerima," *American Anthropologist*, 58 (1956), pp. 503–507.
- Mohr, John, "Soldiers, Mothers, Tramps and Others: Discourse roles in the 1907 New York Charity Directory," *Poetics*, 22 (1994), pp. 327–58.
- "Measuring Meaning Structures," *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24 (1998), pp. 345–70.
- Peterson, Richard and Berger, David, "Cycles in Symbol Production: The case of popular music," *American Sociological Review*, 40 (1975), pp. 158–73.
- Saussure, Ferdinand de, "Signs and Language," in: Alexander and Seidman, *Culture and Society: Contemporary Debates*, pp. 55–63.
- Seidman, Steven, "From Identity to Queer Politics: Shifts in Normative Heterosexuality," (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 353–60.
- Sewell, William H., "The Concept(s) of Culture," in *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture* Edited by Bonnell, Victoria and Hunt, Lynn E.. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 35–61.
- Spillman, Lynn, editor, *Cultural Sociology* (Malden: Blackwell, 2002).

- Swidler, Ann, "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies," *American Sociological Review*, 51 (1986), pp. 273–286.
- *Talk of Love* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).
- Throsby, David, "The Production and Consumption of the Arts: A View of Cultural Economics," *Journal of Economic Literature*, 32 (1994):1, pp. 1–29.
- Tucker, Robert C., editor, *The Marx-Engels Reader* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978).
- Watson, James L., "Transnationalism, Localization, and Fast Foods in East Asia," in *Golden Arches East: McDonald's In East Asia* Edited by Watson, James. (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 1–38.
- Williams, Raymond, *Keywords: a vocabulary of culture and society* Expanded edition. (London: Fontana, 1988).
- "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory," in *Rethinking Popular Culture: Contemporary Perspectives in Cultural Studies* Edited by Mukerji, Chandra and Schudson, Michael. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 407–23.
- Willis, Paul, "Masculinity and Factory Labor," in: Alexander and Seidman, *Culture and Society: Contemporary Debates*, pp. 183–95.
- Wuthnow, Robert, *Communities of Discourse: Ideologies and Social Structure in the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and European Socialism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).
- Zelizer, Viviana, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (New York: Basic Books, 1985).