Emory University

SOCIOMETRY OF THE ARTS

Soc 561; Spring 2015

Tuesdays, 5:00-8:00, 206 Tarbutton Hall

Dr. Timothy J. Dowd
231 Tarbutton
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 4:00 – 5:30
tdowd@emory.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Sociological consideration of the arts has a long history. It extends back to the works of such classical writers as Max Weber and Georg Simmel, and it has burgeoned in recent times with the contributions of such scholars as Pierre Bourdieu, Howard Becker, Wendy Griswold, Richard Peterson, Paul DiMaggio and Tia DeNora. In this advanced seminar, we seek a purchase on this sociological work by discussing these classic works in class and by reading contemporary works addressing themes that currently enliven the sociology of the arts. As a result, we will explore such topics as artistic careers, fields of artistic production, aesthetic boundaries, the audiences for artistic works, and the import and impact of critics. Besides providing students with grounding in the sociology of the arts, this advanced seminar will also prepare them for doing their own research in this area of scholarship. In particular, we will give special attention to methods and designs employed in current research, and each student will also embark upon their own empirical project. Thus, by the end of the semester, all will have a grasp of the field and an understanding of how to conduct research in the sociology of the arts.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This course is organized as a seminar, which entails the combination of a fair amount of reading, class discussion, and an empirical paper. Given this organization, you are expected to attend each class and to participate.

A) Attendance

If you must miss a class, please inform me ahead of time so that we can make arrangements. Note that unexcused absences will negatively affect your final grade.

B) Class Participation and Discussion

Active participation requires adequate preparation. You therefore must read the assigned material before class and develop your own assessment of this material. Such careful preparation will improve the quality of class discussion. Of course, class discussion should be both informed and respectful; moreover, it should be a forum wherein all can raise questions, explore ideas, and
express misgivings. Most of all, this discussion should be fun. Class participation comprises 30% of your final grade.

C) Weekly Memos

You will prepare a 3-page memo for each week's readings (typed and double-spaced). You should regard these memos as ideas in progress rather than as finished products. Use them to digest each week's readings and to respond with questions, criticisms, and new ideas. Please bring your memo to class and submit it at the end of the evening. The weekly memos comprise 35% of your final grade.

D) Final Paper

You will complete a theoretically informed paper with an empirical component. This paper will be at least 15-pages in length (typed and double-spaced), and it will likely represent the first step in your efforts to submit a work for conference presentation and/or journal review. While the paper topic is left to your discretion (subject to my approval), the default paper will consist of survey analysis – most likely involving one of the surveys located at the Cultural Policy and the Arts National Data Archive (see http://www.cpanda.org/cpanda/data) or at the National Archive of Data on Arts & Culture (see http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/NADAC/studies). Of course, you have the option of proposing an alternative to this default of survey-analysis.

I ask that you discuss your topic with me by February 17 and meet with me to discuss your outline by March 24. The final paper is due on May 5 and comprises 30% of your final grade.

COURSE RESOURCES

As the semester progresses, class materials will be posted on the Blackboard site for SOC 561 (see http://classes.emory.edu/). Each week, for example, I will post a “Questions to Ponder” document that addresses the current readings.

The assigned readings are drawn from many sources, so there is no textbook. Instead, the required readings are available at both our Blackboard site and at Woodruff electronic reserves (see https://ereserves.library.emory.edu/index.php).

Note that the readings for this class augment – but do not duplicate – those found in the Bureaucratic Organization (SOC 514), Sociology of Culture (SOC 560) and Sociology of Mass Media (SOC 562) graduate seminars. As a result, you may wish to peruse the SOC 514, 560 and SOC 561 syllabi for additional culture/arts readings on my faculty webpage (see http://www.sociology.emory.edu/home/people/faculty/dowd-tim.html).

If you have any special needs, please contact me at the beginning of the semester and we will discuss the necessary arrangements (for additional information, visit the Emory Office of Disability Services website; see http://www.ods.emory.edu/).
COURSE SCHEDULE
(Subject to Revision)

January 13: Introductions

January 20: Be(com)ing an Artistic Creator


January 27: Work and Careers in the Arts


February 3: Aesthetic Classification: Canons and “High Culture”


February 10: Aesthetic Classification: “De-Hierarchilization” and Other Challenges


February 17: Arts Organizations


**DUE DATE FOR MEETING RE: RESEARCH PAPER TOPIC (Feb 17th)**

**February 24:** *Fields of Artistic Production*


**March 3:** *Connecting Careers, Organizations and Fields, Pt. 1: Networks*


March 10:  NO CLASS (SPRING BREAK)

March 17:  Connecting Careers, Organizations and Fields, Pt. 2: Reputations


March 24:  Cultural Intermediaries, Part 1: Critics and Legitimation


DUE DATE FOR MEETING RE: RESEARCH PAPER OUTLINE (March 24th)

March 31:  Cultural Intermediaries, Part 2: From Production to Consumption


April 7: Bourdieu’s Theory of Taste: Some Recent Developments


April 14: Cultural Omnivorousness


April 21: 
Audiences in Action: The Creative Work of “Receivers”


May 5: DUE DATE FOR FINAL PAPERS