

# EMORY UNIVERSITY

## Sociology 221

### CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Fall 2014  
Monday / Wednesday  
2:30 - 3:45  
105 Tarbutton Hall

Dr. Timothy J. Dowd  
231 Tarbutton Hall (x6259)  
[tdowd@emory.edu](mailto:tdowd@emory.edu)  
Office Hours: 3:00-4:30 (W)

**Graduate Assistant:** Trent Ryan; [trent.ryan@emory.edu](mailto:trent.ryan@emory.edu)

---

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we survey major themes and questions in the sociology of culture. We do so in three broad sections. (1) We begin briefly by developing a “vocabulary” that is drawn from a variety of approaches. This new vocabulary allows us to address such questions as “What is culture and what does it do?” (2) We then examine the classic treatments of culture found in the respective works of Marx, Weber and Durkheim. This, in turn, allows us to see how issues that they each raised are treated today. Examples of these issues include the following: “How do media messages shape our view of reality?” and “How does religion fare in modern times?” (3) We finally focus on some issues that have commanded considerable attention among contemporary sociologists – particularly as they relate to cultural capital and social / symbolic boundaries. Thus, we will deal with such questions as “How can something as ephemeral as musical tastes matter for inequality?” and “How do people in one group define themselves as distinctive from others?”

---

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

You are strongly encouraged to attend class, especially because we use class time to integrate the assigned readings and to present additional information not found in the readings. Regular attendance, moreover, will raise your final grade. If you miss only one class during the semester, I will add two points to your final grade. If you miss only two classes, I will add one point.

You are required to complete four written assignments: one major paper and three short memos. The paper involves a research project that you will complete over the course of the semester. You may choose your paper topic from a list that I will circulate on *October 8<sup>th</sup>* or you may propose a topic of your own (subject to my approval) by *October 20<sup>th</sup>*. In either case, an outline of your paper is due on *November 5<sup>th</sup>* and the completed paper is due on *December 15<sup>th</sup>* (although it may be submitted before that date). This 8- to 10-page paper is worth 25% of your final grade. The memos will help you prepare for the examinations. In these 3-page assignments, you will synthesize the readings and the issues that emerge as the class progresses. The due dates for the memos, as well as the dates for when I distribute memo questions, are listed below. The memos will comprise 15% of your final grade (5% each). Note that I will distribute a total of four memo assignments, but you are required to complete only three.

You are also required to take two examinations – a midterm and a non-cumulative final. Both exams consist of short-answer and essay questions. Prior to each exam, I will distribute a handout that will help you prepare for the test. Each exam will be worth 30% of your final grade. The midterm examination occurs on *October 27<sup>th</sup>* during class time. The final examination occurs on *December 12<sup>th</sup>* from 8:00 to 10:30 am.

Students are expected to adhere to the Emory Honor Code when completing both assignments and examinations (see [http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policy/honor\\_code.html](http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policy/honor_code.html)).

---

## COURSE RESOURCES

As the semester progresses, class materials (e.g., syllabus, overheads) will be posted on the Blackboard site for SOC 221 (see <http://classes.emory.edu/>).

The assigned readings are drawn from many sources, so there is no textbook. Instead, the required readings will be available on our Blackboard site and at Woodruff Library's electronic reserves (see <https://ereserves.library.emory.edu/index.php>; click on “Reserves Direct”).

If you have any special needs, please contact me at the beginning of the semester and we will discuss the necessary arrangements (see <http://www.ods.emory.edu/>)

---

## COURSE SCHEDULE

*(subject to revision)*

### SECTION ONE: DEVELOPING A VOCABULARY

- August 27:* Introductions and Logistical Matters
- September 1:* **LABOR DAY (No Class)**
- September 3:* Wendy Griswold. 2008. *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press. Chapter One.
- September 8:* Allison J. Pugh. 2011. “Distinction, Boundaries or Bridge? Children, Inequality and the Uses of Consumer Culture.” *Poetics* 39: 1-18.

### SECTION TWO: CLASSIC ISSUES & CONTEMPORARY COUNTERPARTS

#### *Marxian Issues: Commodification, Ideology and Resistance*

- September 10:* Wendy Griswold. 2008. *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press. Pages 29-34.

*September 10 (cont.): MEMO QUESTION #1 DISTRIBUTED*

*September 15:* Viviana Zelizer. 1978. "Human Values and the Market: The Case of Life Insurance and Death in 19<sup>th</sup> Century America." *American Journal of Sociology* 84: 591-610.

*September 17:* Ashley Mears. 2010. "Size Zero High-End Ethnic: Cultural Production and the Reproduction of Culture in Fashion Modeling." *Poetics* 38: 21-46.

***MEMO QUESTION #1 DUE***

*September 22:* Matthew Oware. 2014. "(Un)conscious (Popular) Underground: Restricted Cultural Production and Underground Rap Music." *Poetics* 42: 60-81.

***Weberian Issues: Rationalization of the Economy, of Work, and of Evaluation***

*September 24:* Wendy Griswold. 2008. *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press. Pages 37-41.

*September 29:* Tracy Scott. 2002. "Choices and Constraints: Protestantism, Gender, and the Meaning of Work." *International Journal of Sociology & Social Policy* 22: 1-38.

***MEMO QUESTION #2 DISTRIBUTED***

*October 1:* Jason Rodriguez. 2011. "'It's a Dignity Thing': Nursing Home Care Workers' Use of Emotions." *Sociological Forum* 26: 265-286.

*October 6:* Wendy Nelson Espeland and Michael Sauder. 2007. "Rankings and Reactivity: How Public Measures Recreate Social Worlds." *American Journal of Sociology* 133: 1-40.

***MEMO QUESTION #2 DUE***

***Durkheimian Issues: Rituals, Boundaries and Community***

*October 8:* Wendy Griswold. 2008. *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press. Pages 51-55.

***RESEARCH TOPICS DISTRIBUTED***

*October 13:* **FALL BREAK (No Class)**

*October 15:* Caitlin Killian. 2003. "The Other Side of the Veil: North African Women in France Respond to the Headscarf Affair." *Gender & Society* 17: 567-90.

October 20: Carla D. Shirley. 2010. “‘You *Might* Be a Redneck *If...*’: Boundary Work among Rural, Southern Whites.” *Social Forces* 89: 35-62.

***ALTERNATIVE RESEARCH TOPIC DUE***

***TEST PREPARATION SHEET DISTRIBUTED***

October 22: Robin Wagner-Pacifici and Barry Schwartz. 1991. “The Vietnam Veteran’s Memorial: Commemorating a Difficult Past.” *American Journal of Sociology* 97: 376-420.

October 27: ***MIDTERM EXAMINATION***

**SECTION THREE: PROMINENT ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY SCHOLARSHIP**

***Cultural Consecration: Classification and Celebration***

October 29: Paul DiMaggio. 1991. “Cultural Entrepreneurship in Nineteenth-Century Boston: The Creation of an Organizational Base for High Culture in America.” Pages 374-397 in *Rethinking Popular Culture*, edited by Chandra Mukerji and Michael Schudson. Berkeley, CA, University of California Press.

November 3: Phillipa Chong. 2011. “Reading Difference: How Race and Ethnicity Function as Tools for Critical Appraisal.” *Poetics* 39: 64-84.

November 5: Video: *Thunder Soul*

***RESEARCH PAPER OUTLINE DUE***

November 10: Vaughn Schmutz. 2005. “Retrospective Cultural Consecration in Popular Music: *Rolling Stone’s* Greatest Albums of All Time.” *American Behavioral Scientist* 48: 1510-1532.

***MEMO QUESTION #3 DISTRIBUTED***

November 12: Timothy J. Dowd, Trent Ryan and Yun Tai. 2014. “Talk of Heritage: Critical Benchmarks and DIY Preservationism in Progressive Rock.” For a special issue of *Popular Music & Society*.

***Cultural Capital: Consuming and Embodying the Consecrated***

November 17: Karen Aschaffenburg and Ineke Maas. 1997. “Cultural and Educational Careers: The Dynamics of Social Reproduction.” *American Sociological Review* 62: 573-587.

*November 17 (cont.):* **MEMO QUESTION #3 DUE**

*November 19:* Annette Lareau. 2002. "Invisible Inequality: Social Class and Childrearing in Black Families and White Families." *American Sociological Review* 67: 747-776.

*November 24:* Video: *Spellbound*

**MEMO QUESTION #4 DISTRIBUTED**

*November 26:* **THANKSGIVING BREAK (NO CLASS MEETINGS)**

*December 1:* Natasha Kumar Warikoo. 2007. "Racial Authenticity among Second Generation Youth in Multiethnic New York and London." *Poetics* 35: 388-408.

**MEMO QUESTION #4 DUE**

*December 3:* Danielle Kane. 2011. "The Gendered Transition to College: The Role of Culture in Ego-Network Evolution." *Poetics* 39: 266-289.

**TEST PREPARATION SHEET DISTRIBUTED**

*December 8:* Sarah Cappeliez and Josée Johnston. 2013. "From Meat and Potatoes to 'Real-Deal' Rotis: Exploring Everyday Culinary Cosmopolitanism." *Poetics* 41: 433-435.

*December 12:* **FINAL EXAMINATION (8:00 to 10:30 am)**

*December 15:* **RESEARCH PAPER DUE**