

## [Sociology 221-1: Culture and Society] Fall 2021

Tuesday & Thursday 10:00-11:15am, White Hall 101  
Department of Sociology  
Emory University

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### **Course Overview**

This is a survey course in the sociology of culture. It is quite difficult to provide a precise definition of culture because it means different things for different people. Nevertheless, culture has become an essential concept in sociology and is one of the most vibrant fields of the discipline. Throughout the course, we will examine theoretical and empirical work to understand what culture is from a sociological perspective and why it matters. The class is organized into three broad sections:

- 1) **Developing a Vocabulary:** We will first develop a “vocabulary” drawn from various sociological approaches to culture. This will allow us to address such questions as “What is culture and what does it do?”
- 2) **Classical Treatments and Contemporary Counterparts:** We will then look at the classical perspectives on culture found in the works of Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Émile Durkheim. We will also examine empirical research conducted by contemporary scholars working to preserve and consolidate the three sociologists’ ideas. Examples of current issues include the following: “How do media messages shape our view of reality?” “How do people in one group exclude those from another group?” “What holds groups together?”
- 3) **Prominent Issues in Contemporary Scholarship:** We will finally discuss some of the prominent issues in contemporary scholarship. Here we will address such questions as “How does social context matter for creativity?” “Why do some cultural products (e.g., music, books, films, etc.) become popular while others do not?” “What are the cultural impacts of technology?”

By the end of the course, students will be familiar with the concepts and theories sociologists have developed to examine culture and understand how culture affects individuals and society as a whole.

### **Course Materials**

1. Griswold, Wendy. 2013. *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World*. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Available at the Emory University Bookstore.
2. There are also additional required readings, which are comprised of empirical journal articles and book chapters. These will be available as PDF files on our Canvas site.

## Course Requirements

### 1. Class Participation (5% Total)

- **Attendance is strongly encouraged.** I will use lectures to give you additional information not found in the readings, and I will also provide frameworks for understanding and integrating the readings with the lecture material. We will also have discussion in class to help clarify all the material. *As an incentive, regular attendance (missing 2 or fewer classes) will be used to “improve” on very close grades (borderline).*
- This semester, due to the pandemic, some students might be sick or will need to go into isolation or quarantine. If you are sick, understand that **I will be flexible about attendance.**
- You are required to complete all assigned readings before the class date listed on the syllabus below and actively participate in class. Responding to my questions about the lecture material, as well as speaking up during class discussions and interacting with your fellow students are all important. Class lecture and discussion will be more interesting if you have completed the readings!

### 2. VoiceThread Posts (10% Total)

- You will be required to post a VoiceThread comment on the assigned reading before the class date listed on the syllabus below. These are relatively short and easy tasks in which you post your own “tidbits” from the readings. You may use text, audio, or video comments for this assignment. There will be eight pairs of VoiceThread posts due in total. **You must complete EIGHT VoiceThread assignments, one from each pair.** I will hand out instructions for these assignments during the semester.

### 3. Two Exams (40% Total)

- You are also required to take two examinations—a midterm and a non-cumulative final exam. The midterm will be taken during class time, and the final exam will be on the date scheduled by the registrar. The exams will consist of multiple-choice, true/false, and short answer/essay questions, and they will cover both the readings and lecture material.

**Midterm: Tuesday, October 26**

**Final Exam: Tuesday, December 14, 8:00-10:30am**

### 4. Three Short Writing Assignments (45% Total)

- You are required to submit three short writing assignments. In these papers, you will critically synthesize the readings and lecture material and use them to make sense your own experiences and / or contemporary social issues. All papers should be submitted over Canvas (Do NOT send me your assignment by email). I will hand out instructions for these papers during the semester.

**Writing Assignment 1 due: Tuesday, September 28**

**Writing Assignment 2 due: Thursday, November 4**

**Writing Assignment 3 due: Thursday, December 2**

## Course Policies

### Canvas

- There is a Canvas course site (<https://classes.emory.edu>) that you will want to check on a regular basis. The Canvas site serves as a distribution center for course materials, including

readings, lecture slides, study guides for exams, and miscellaneous messages from me to the class.

### **In-Person Class Rules**

- **Wear your mask at all times!** Coming into the room, during class, leaving class—and yes, even when you ask a question.
- NO eating or drinking in class (unless emergency—dehydration, etc.).
- If you need to leave for a bathroom break, please try to move past anyone else in your row quickly and with no contact.
- **Please turn OFF your phones.**

### **General Conduct**

- **No disrespect or hate speech.** Please be mindful of the general code of conduct that you would use in any classroom setting. **I expect us all to be respectful of one another.**

### **Laptop Policy**

- Laptops and tablets are allowed in class for educational purposes only (e.g., accessing readings, taking notes). Use of laptops for purposes unrelated to the course (online shopping, checking social media, instant messaging, playing games, working on homework for other classes, watching videos etc.) will result in being asked to leave the classroom for the remainder of the class. **I reserve the right to revisit this policy if distraction becomes an issue.**

### **Make-Up Policy / Late Assignments / Extra Credit**

- Makeup exams and/or late assignments will only be allowed in a situation of an excused absence (e.g., illness, family emergency). If you are going to miss an exam, please make every effort to notify me before the missed class. A mutually convenient time will be arranged for you to make up the exam.
- Due dates for every assignment are provided on the course schedule. Unless otherwise stated, all assignments are due on those days. I will accept late assignments, but with a 10% per day penalty. Besides, you can only submit an assignment up to two days late. **I will NOT accept assignments submitted more than two days after the due date.**
- There are no extra credit assignments available in this course.

### **Email Communication**

- I generally try to respond to emails within 24 hours, but I do not guarantee a response within 24 hours. If you do not get a response after 48 hours, please email to remind me.

### **Course Resources & Other Important Information**

#### **Software and Technical Requirements**

- Please note that there are video tutorials on Canvas for each of the software packages (Zoom; Canvas). If you run into technical problems, you should contact Emory's IT services. They can provide you with guidance on everything from Canvas to email to OPUS. Here is their website: <https://it.emory.edu/catalog/index.html>.

#### **Special Accommodation(s)**

- If you need any special accommodation(s), please inform me as soon as possible so that we could make the appropriate arrangements. The Department of Accessibility Services (DAS)

works with students who have disabilities to provide reasonable accommodations. It is your responsibility to request accommodations. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must register with the DAS at <https://accessibility.emory.edu/students/>.

- Accommodations cannot be retroactively applied so you need to contact DAS as early as possible and contact me as early as possible in the semester to discuss the plan for implementation of your accommodations.
- For additional information about accessibility and accommodations, please contact the Department of Accessibility Services at (404) 727-9877 or [accessibility@emory.edu](mailto:accessibility@emory.edu).

### Health Considerations

- At the very first sign of not feeling well, *stay at home* and reach out for a health consultation. [Please consult the campus FAQ for how to get the health consultation](#). As you know, Emory does contact tracing if someone has been diagnosed with COVID-19. A close contact is defined as someone you spend more than 15 minutes with, at a distance less than 6 feet, not wearing facial coverings. This typically means your roommates, for example. However, your classmates are *not* close contacts as long as we are following the personal protective equipment protocols in the classroom: wearing facial coverings, staying six feet apart.
- **If you are sick or in quarantine, please make sure to email me so that we can discuss your individual circumstances.** For students in quarantine who are well, we have provided ways that you can keep up with your schoolwork, whether our class is delivered online or in person.

### Student Support Resources

- Many students face personal and environmental challenges that can interfere with their academic success and overall wellbeing. If you are struggling with this class, please visit me during office hours or contact me. If you are feeling overwhelmed and think you might benefit from additional support, please know that there are people who care and offices here at Emory to support you. These services—including confidential resources—are provided by staff who are respectful of students' diverse backgrounds. For an extensive list of wellbeing resources on campus, please go to: <http://campuslife.emory.edu/support/index.html>. And keep in mind that Emory offers free, 24/7 emotional, mental health, and medical support resources on the *Emory Anytime Student Health* resource page: <http://campuslife.emory.edu/anytimehealth.html>.

### Emory Honor Code

- The Emory Honor Code applies fully to this course. All students are expected to adhere to the Honor Code when you sign an exam or submit your assignments. For reference, please consult: <http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policies-regulations/honor-code.html>.

## **Course Schedule** (*subject to revision*)

### **SECTION 1: DEVELOPING A VOCABULARY**

August 26 (Th)            Course Introductions

#### **Defining Culture**

August 31 (Tu)            Griswold, Wendy. 2013. "Chapter 1: Culture and the Cultural Diamond." pp. 1-18.

Film: *Barbie Nation: An Unauthorized Tour*

#### **Locating Culture**

September 2 (Th)        Swidler, Ann. 2001. "Chapter 6: Love and Marriage." pp. 111-134 in *Talk of Love: How Culture Matters*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

September 7 (Tu)        Cerulo, Karen A. 2018. "Scents and Sensibility: Olfaction, Sense-Making, and Meaning Attribution." *American Sociological Review* 83 (2): 361–89.

### **SECTION 2: CLASSICAL TREATMENTS & CONTEMPORARY COUNTERPARTS**

#### **Marxian Approaches to Culture**

##### ***Introduction to Marx***

September 9 (Th)        Griswold, Wendy. 2013. "Chapter 2: Cultural Meaning." pp. 19-32.

##### ***Current Notions of Ideology: Focus on Media***

September 14 (Tu)        Saguy, Abigail C. and Rene Almeling. 2008. "Fat in the Fire? Science, the News Media, and the 'Obesity Epidemic.'" *Sociological Forum* 23: 53-83.

VoiceThread Post #1A

\*Writing Assignment #1 Question Distributed

September 16 (Th)        Mears, Ashley. 2010. "Size Zero High-End Ethnic: Cultural Production and the Reproduction of Culture in Fashion Modeling." *Poetics* 38: 21-46.

VoiceThread Post #1B

#### **Weberian Approaches to Culture**

##### ***Introduction to Weber***

September 21 (Tu)        Griswold, Wendy. 2013. "Chapter 2: Cultural Meaning." pp. 35-44.

### ***Religion and the Meaning of Work***

September 23 (Th)      Scott, Tracy. 2002. "Choices, Constraints, and Calling: Conservative Protestant Women and the Meaning of Work in the U.S." *International Journal of Sociology & Social Policy* 22: 1-38.

### ***Class and Status Revisited (1): Cultural Capital, Tastes, and Symbolic Boundaries***

September 28 (Tu)      Nault, Jean-François, Shyon Baumann, Clayton Childress, and Craig M. Rawlings. 2021. "The Social Positions of Taste Between and Within Music Genres: From Omnivore to Snob." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 24(3): 717-740

VoiceThread Post #2A

#### **\*Writing Assignment #1 Due**

September 30 (Th)      Kennedy, Emily H., Shyon Baumann, and Josée Johnston. 2019. "Eating for Taste and Eating for Change: Ethical Consumption as a High-Status Practice." *Social Forces* 98(1): 381-402.

VoiceThread Post #2B

### ***Class and Status Revisited (2): Cultural Capital, Education, and Family***

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

VoiceThread Post #3A

October 7 (Th)      Lu, Wei-Ting. 2013. "Confucius or Mozart? Community Cultural Wealth and Upward Mobility among Children of Chinese Immigrants." *Qualitative Sociology* 36: 303-321.

VoiceThread Post #3B

October 12 (Tu)      **Fall Break (No Class)**

### **Durkheimian Approaches to Culture**

#### ***Introduction to Durkheim***

October 14 (Th)      Griswold, Wendy. 2013. "Chapter 3: Culture as a Social Creation." pp. 47-62.

\*Writing Assignment #2 Question Distributed

### ***Community, Solidarity, and Commemoration***

October 19 (Tu) Collins, Randall. 2020. "Social Distancing as a Critical Test of the Micro-Sociology of Solidarity." *American Journal of Cultural Sociology* 8: 477-497.

VoiceThread Post #4A

October 21 (Th) Wagner-Pacifi, Robin and Barry Schwartz. 1991. "The Vietnam Veteran's Memorial: Commemorating a Difficult Past." *American Journal of Sociology* 97: 376-420.

VoiceThread Post #4B

October 26 (Tu) **Midterm Exam**

## **SECTION 3: PROMINENT ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY SCHOLARSHIP**

### **Culture and Legitimacy**

#### ***Social Context of Creativity***

October 28 (Th) Becker, Howard S. 1974. "Art as Collective Action." *American Sociological Review* 39 (6): 767-776.

Film: *20 Feet from Stardom*

November 2 (Tu) Pinheiro, Diogo L. and Timothy J. Dowd. 2009. "All That Jazz: The Success of Jazz Musicians in Three Metropolitan Areas." *Poetics* 37: 490-506.

VoiceThread Post #5A

November 4 (Th) TBD

VoiceThread Post #5B

**\*Writing Assignment #2 Due**

#### ***Cultural Intermediaries and Consecration***

November 9 (Tu) Lane, Christel. 2013. "Taste Makers in the 'Fine-Dining' Restaurant Industry: The Attribution of Aesthetic and Economic Value by Gastronomic Guides." *Poetics* 41: 342-365.

VoiceThread Post #6A

November 11 (Th) Zukin, Sharon, Scarlett Lindeman, and Laurie Hurson. 2017. "The Omnivore's Neighborhood? Online Restaurant Reviews, Race, and Gentrification." *Journal of Consumer Culture* 17(3): 459-479.

VoiceThread Post #6B

### **Culture in Organizations**

November 16 (Tu) Griswold, Wendy. 2013. "Chapter 6: Organizations in a Multicultural World." Pp. 117-128.

Fine, Gary Alan. 2006. "Shopfloor Cultures: The Ideoculture of Production in Operational Meteorology." *The Sociological Quarterly* 47: 1-19.

VoiceThread Post #7A

November 18 (Th) Rivera, Lauren A. 2012. "Hiring as Cultural Matching: The Case of Elite Professional Service Firms." *American Sociological Review* 77(6): 999-1022.

VoiceThread Post #7B

\*Writing Assignment #3 Question Distributed

### **Technology and Cultural Change**

November 23 (Tu) Griswold, Wendy. 2013. "Chapter 7: Culture and Connection." Pp. 141-155.

Jelani Ince, Fabio Rojas, and Clayton Davis. 2017. The Social Media Response to Black Lives Matter: How Twitter Users Interact with Black Lives Matter through Hashtag Use." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40: 1814-1830

VoiceThread Post #8A

November 25 (Th) **Thanksgiving Recess (No Class)**

November 30 (Tu) Rafalow, Matthew A. 2018. "Disciplining Play: Digital Youth Culture as Capital at School." *American Journal of Sociology* 123(5): 1416-1452.

VoiceThread Post #8B



December 2 (Th)

Mark Wong. 2020. "Hidden Youth? A New Perspective on the Sociality of Young People in the Bedroom in the Digital Age." *New Media & Society* 22: 1227-1244.

**\*Writing Assignment #3 Due**

December 7 (Tu)

**Course Wrap Up**

**Final Exam: Tuesday, December 14, 8:00-10:30am**