COURSE OVERVIEW

Course Description
In this course, we survey major themes and questions in the sociology of culture (the influence of culture on cultural formations) and cultural sociology (the influence of culture on social processes). We pay particular attention to the role of culture in explaining persistent inequality in the distribution of resources and power. We do so in three ways: First, we explore theoretical tools and vocabulary, including exploration of culture in classical theory, to ask a fundamental question: “What is culture and what is the relationship between culture and society?” Second, we consider the role of culture in relation to class, race, and gender inequality. Throughout the course, students will be asked to apply conceptual tools and texts to make sense of their own experiences and local and global issues.

This course is a continuing writing (WRT) course, therefore we pay particular attention to the importance of writing, the writing process, and the use of evidence in sociology as a discipline. Through a semester-long writing and revision process, including peer editing, you will learn how to use different types of evidence and build a sociological argument as you learn principles of the discipline.

Working Definition of Evidence
Evidence: basis for belief; something that supports or challenges a claim, theory, or argument. (Adapted and synthesized from the Oxford English Dictionary and Merriam-Webster Dictionary.)

Learning Objectives
1. Understand classical theories of culture and apply them to contemporary issues concerning race, class, and gender.
2. Distinguish the types of evidence used in sociology as compared to the types of evidence used in personal decisions or in journalistic writings.
   o Distinguish between primary and secondary sources in sociology.
   o Demonstrate an understanding of different types of empirical evidence, such as survey data, interview data, and document analysis data.
   o Demonstrate an understanding of a broader definition of evidence and how non-empirical information is often used as evidence in other realms.
3. Locate, assess, and analyze different types of evidence.
   o Locate and analyze evidence about the relationship between culture & society from diverse sources.
   o Locate sociological research articles (secondary source of evidence) in Library databases.
   o Gather and analyze primary evidence through a semester-long research project.
4. Evaluate evidence.
   - Evaluate the quality, credibility, and validity of the different types of evidence.
   - Determine the usefulness of evidence for different purposes.

5. Build strong written arguments based on primary and secondary evidence.
   - Construct a clear thesis and develop a sociological research paper based on the different types of evidence you gather over the course of the semester.

6. Assess others’ arguments and articulate how to make stronger arguments based on evidence.
   - Evaluate peers’ draft research papers and explain how they can construct stronger arguments using primary and secondary evidence gathered over the course semester.

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**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. **Staged Project (70% of grade): Perspective on the Relationship Between Culture & Society**

   Over the semester, you will be introduced to various perspectives on the relationship between culture and society. You will choose one perspective among these and argue for that perspective based on primary and secondary evidence. You will build to this by engaging with various arguments and forms of evidence:

   1. **Personal Reflection 1 (5%) – DUE: Thursday, Sept. 6 – Submit to Canvas & Bring to Class**
      - Write one 2-page (double spaced) reflection on how you define culture and how you view the relationship between culture and society—be sure to state the basis of your belief (i.e., what evidence you draw from to support that perspective). Further instructions will be provided.

   2. **Theories of Culture Analysis Paper (10%) – DUE: Sunday, Sept 30 – Submit to Canvas by 6pm**
      - Write one 4-page (double spaced) paper that compares and contrasts the four theories of culture you read in class (Marx, Weber, Durkheim, and toolkit model)
      - Type of evidence you will use: Course readings, including secondary theoretical and empirical sociological research.
      - Summarize what the theoretical sources say about the relationship between culture & society
      - Analyze how the empirical studies support or contradict the theories
      - Also include a 3 sentence reflection on how these theories might connect to your semester project at the end of the paper (not included in the 4 pages). Further instructions will be provided.

   3. **Research Proposal (20%) PROPOSAL DRAFT DUE: Sunday, Oct 7 – Send to partner by 6pm; FINAL PROPOSAL DUE: Sunday, Oct 14 – Submit to Canvas by 6pm**
      - Write one 4-page (double spaced) research proposal that describes what you will do for your semester project.
      - Type of evidence you will use: Course readings, including secondary theoretical and empirical sociological research.
      - Identify secondary (sociological) sources related to your chosen cultural object.
      - Summarize what secondary sources say about your cultural object and why it is important/what part of culture it can tell you about.
      - Analyze what is missing in past sociological research about your cultural object related to the overall course question, “What is the relationship between culture & society?”
      - Pose a research question you will try to answer based on what is missing in past research.
      - Summarize what you think you may find based on secondary sources (hypotheses).
      - Use evidence (methods sources) to justify what you will do to gather primary source evidence about your cultural object to answer your research questions (methods).
4. Final Research Paper (30% total - 10% draft; 20% final) – METHODS & FINDINGS DRAFT DUE: Sunday, Nov 18 – Send to partner by 6pm; FULL PAPER DRAFT DUE: Wednesday, Nov 28 – Submit to Google Docs & Canvas by 6pm; FINAL DUE: Tuesday, Dec 18 – Submit to Canvas by 6pm
   o Research paper on your perspective on the relationship between culture & society incorporating all of your evidence and research analyses from previous stages, focusing on race, class, or gender.
   o Use readings secondary sources from theory weeks and one focus topic week (race, class, or gender) to support your perspective.
   o Identify additional evidence to support your perspective (at least three additional readings; suggestions under focus topic weeks in syllabus).
   o Evaluate the Evidence: Compare & contrast the various types of evidence & the knowledge you have gained about perspectives on the relationship between culture & society.
   o Build an argument about the relationship between culture & society based on your strongest evidence.
   o Final paper should be a 20-page (double spaced) paper and incorporate all of the above papers. Further instructions will be provided.

5. Personal Reflection 2 (5%) – DUE: Thursday, Dec 20 – Submit to Canvas by 6pm
   o Look back to your first reflection and write a 2-page (double spaced) reflection on how your definition of culture and your perspective on the relationship between culture & society has changed, if at all. Explain the basis of your current belief (i.e., what evidence you draw from to support that perspective).
   o Also reflect on how you think this perspective will inform your experiences at Emory and beyond.
   o You are encouraged to write this early and incorporate it into your final paper, but that is not required. Further instructions will be provided.

II. Class Participation (30% of grade):

Class participation is very important. Each person in the class must contribute to our learning community. This includes:

- Attending all class sessions and attending office hours once during the semester (5%).
  o Absences with official letters (e.g., doctor’s note, dean’s note) are the only excused absences. I have scheduled assignments so they should not interfere with religious holidays (but do let me know if you see a conflict). More than 3 unexcused absences take 5 points off overall grade.
  o Office hours serve not only as a way to engage more deeply in the course and receive detailed feedback, they are also a space to talk about your interests, concerns, and goals—and to make connections with faculty. I invite you to come to my office to talk about anything—including my favorite topics: all things tech-y, culture, education, inequality, shiba inus, and ice cream.
- Class discussions and activities (5%). Note that I assess participation based on quality not quantity.
- Three 1-page peer editing memos & paper comments (15% - 5% each) and peer editing presentations in class (5%). You will be assigned a peer-editing group and you are expected to provide feedback on group members’ papers in three 1-page memos and comments on papers and in a presentation at the end of the semester. DUE Oct 7 at 6pm, Nov 20 at 9am, and Dec 4 at 9am – Submit memos to your partner and Canvas (See Class Schedule). Further instructions will be provided.
COURSE RESOURCES

This course offers an introductory survey of the sociology of culture. Consequently, the class will cover a wide range of literature. To assist in this introduction, we have ordered the following required text – which is available at the Emory University Bookstore, online retailers, and Emory Library Reserves:


Remaining course materials will be provided on Canvas: https://canvas.emory.edu

Log in, then click on Sociology 221W – Section 1. This site will include most of the readings, assignments, and lecture slides. Any important announcements will also be posted on this site.

SOME GROUND RULES

General Communication
I provide very detailed information and instructions in all of the course documents. I will also send periodic Canvas announcements and/or emails about any further course information.

- Please read all of the written Course communications thoroughly!
- If you have questions after you have read everything in a particular course document (syllabus, paper instructions, study guide), then feel free to ask me.
- Do NOT ask/email me questions that I have already answered in a course document or via posted announcement/emails. I will not respond to these questions.

Email Communication:
I try to respond to emails as soon as possible (i.e., within 24 hours). However, I generally do not answer emails outside of normal business hours (i.e., on weekends or after 6pm at night).

General Conduct:
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.

- Please do not arrive late to class.

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• Once in class, please refrain from carrying on private conversations with your neighbor(s). This is distracting for everyone else in the room.
• Please refrain from texting, checking Facebook, or any other non-class activities during all class meetings. If you are found to be engaging in these activities, you will be asked to leave the classroom for the remainder of the class.

*The use of cell phones is not permitted. Please turn OFF your phones before entering the classroom.*

**Missed Classes:** As noted above, the only excused absences are ones with official letters. If you have an excused absence, you are responsible for missed material. Please get notes from one of your classmates. After you have read all of the missed material, if you still have questions, please come to my office hours. (Do not email me to ask about missed class material.) **As noted above, if you have more than three unexcused absences, you will receive 5 points off of your overall grade.**

**Late Assignments:** No late assignments will be accepted.

**Extra Credit:** There are no extra credit assignments available in this course.

**Video/Audio:** You may not video or audiotape lectures without my express consent.

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**OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

**Writing Center and ESL Program Support for Emory College Students:**
All students in the course are highly encouraged to use Emory’s writing resources. Tutors in the Emory Writing Center and the ESL Program are available to support Emory College students as they work on any type of writing assignment, at any stage of the composing process. Tutors can assist with a range of projects, from traditional papers and presentations to websites and other multimedia projects. Writing Center and ESL tutors take a similar approach as they work with students on concerns including idea development, structure, use of sources, grammar, and word choice. They do not proofread for students. Instead, they discuss strategies and resources students can use as they write, revise, and edit their own work. Students who are non-native speakers of English are welcome to visit either the Writing Center tutors or the ESL tutors. All other students in the college should see Writing Center tutors. **Ask for their help early & often—it will greatly improve your writing!** Learn more and make an appointment by visiting the websites of the ESL Program and the Writing Center. Please review tutoring policies before your visit. [http://writingcenter.emory.edu/](http://writingcenter.emory.edu/)

**Accommodating Disabilities:**
If you have or acquire any sort of condition that may require special accommodation(s), you MUST register with ADSR; please see the instructions at [http://equityandinclusion.emory.edu/access/students/index.html](http://equityandinclusion.emory.edu/access/students/index.html)

Then, please follow all of ADSR’s steps for your accommodations, and notify me as soon as possible so that we may make the appropriate arrangements. Proper documentation from the Office of Access, Disability Services and Resources (ADSR) will be required.

**Academic Conduct:**
Emory College has established an Honor Code outlining an appropriate code of conduct with respect to academic honesty and plagiarism. Information on Emory’s Honor code can be accessed at: [http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policies-regulations/honor-code.html](http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policies-regulations/honor-code.html)
See more specific code on plagiarism here: [http://www.english.emory.edu/home/undergraduate/plagiarism.html](http://www.english.emory.edu/home/undergraduate/plagiarism.html)

It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the policies and procedures of the university, and violation of these policies will result in referral to the Honor Council. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. You must ensure that you cite references appropriately in your written work. When you paraphrase from others, cite their work in the text, and reference the citation in your bibliography. When you use direct quotes, be sure to insert quotation marks around the borrowed text and cite appropriately.

**Honor Code Statement:** I pledge to pursue all academic endeavors with honor and integrity. I understand the principles of the Emory College Honor System, and I promise to uphold these standards by adhering to the Honor Code in order to preserve the integrity of Emory College and its individual members.

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**TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE** (subject to change)

**I. CULTURE & SOCIETY – WHAT’S THE EVIDENCE?**

**Week 1:**

*Aug 30 (Th):* Introductions

**Week 2:**

*Sept 4 (T):* Course Projects & The Nature of Evidence

**Your group will read one of the following final paper examples and present it in class. However, you may wish to consult other papers to guide your own project this semester.**

**Race & Culture Final Paper Examples:**

- **Flowers, Nakiyah.** 2016. “Gospel In-choir-ries: Asking (and Answering!) Questions About the Formation of Gospel Choirs on College Campuses.” (Interviews, Archives; Qualitative; SEUSS Award Winner)

- **Rubin, Matt.** 2017. “Serena Williams and the Post-Racial Era” (Document Analysis; Quantitative)

**Class & Culture Final Paper Examples:**

- **Fan, Yiming.** 2017. “Music Festivals: Inclusion and Exclusion Among College Students.” (Interviews; Qualitative)

- **Rubin, Emily.** 2017. “Music and Symbolic Boundaries.” (Survey; Quantitative)
Gender & Culture Final Paper Examples:

Sutton, Amari. 2017. “LGBTQ Safe Spaces” (Interviews; Qualitative; SEUSS Award Winner)

Tran, Le My. 2016. “Makeup Advertisements and Symbolic Boundaries.” (Content Analysis; Quantitative)

Guiding Questions:

- What is the “cultural object” and what do the authors say about its importance?
- What types of evidence do the authors use and how do they use it in different parts of the paper?
- What do the authors find and what do they say this means about the relationship between culture & society?

Research Proposal guidelines, example proposals, and human subjects form handed out Sept 6 (Th):

What is Culture? What is a Cultural Object?


Reading Questions:

- Based on the readings, what cultural object would you like to study? Why?
- Which course topics (culture & race, class, or gender) might your object connect to?

DUE: Thurs, Sept. 6 - Personal Reflection 1 – Submit to Canvas & Bring to Class

II. THREE VIEWS ON CULTURE & SOCIETY – CLASSICAL THEORY & CONTEMPORARY EVIDENCE

Week 3:

Sept 11 (T): Marx—Domination and Resistance


Reading Questions:

- How does Marx define culture and view the relationship between culture & society?

Theories of Culture Analysis Paper guidelines handed out

Sept 13 (Th): **Your group will read one of the following readings and present it in class. However, you may use other articles for your project.**


**Reading Questions:**
- How do the readings connect to Marx’s theory of culture?
- How might your cultural object connect to Marx’s theory of culture?
- How might course topics (race, class, and gender) connect to Marx’s theory of culture?

**Week 4:** Weber—Status and Exclusion


**Reading Questions:**
- How does Weber define culture and view the relationship between culture & society?
- How is Weber’s theory of culture similar to or different from Marx?
- How does the reading connect to Weber’s theory of culture?

*Sept 20 (Th):** **Your group will read one of the following readings and present it in class. However, you may use other articles for your project.**


**Reading Questions:**
- How do the readings connect to Weber’s theory of culture?
- How might your cultural object connect to Weber’s theory of culture?
- How might course topics (race, class, and gender) connect to Weber’s theory of culture?

**Week 5:** Durkheim & Symbolic Interaction – Solidarity

*Sept 25 (T):* Griswold, Wendy. 2013. CSCW, Chapter 3, p. 49-54.

Reading Questions:
• How does Durkheim define culture & view the relationship between culture & society?
• How is this similar to or different from Marx & Weber?
• How does the reading connect to Durkheim’s theories of culture?
• How might your cultural object connect to Durkheim’s theory of culture?
• How might course topics (race, class, and gender) connect to Durkheim’s theory of culture?

Recommended:


Reading Questions:
• How does Swidler define culture & view the relationship between culture & society?
• How is this similar to or different from other theories?
• How does the reading connect to the toolkit model of culture?
• How might your cultural object connect to the toolkit model of culture?
• How might course topics (race, class, and gender) connect to the toolkit model of culture?

Recommended:
• (Gender) Swidler, Ann. 2001. “Love and Marriage” Pp. 111-134 in Talk of Love. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (This is about how the institution of marriage shapes how we think about love and gender relationships).

DUE: Sun, Sept 30 – Theories of Culture Analysis Paper - Submit to Canvas by 6pm

III. RESEARCH PROJECTS

Week 6: Past Research, Research Questions, and Methods

Oct 2 (T): Visit from Sociology Librarian, Melissa Hackman, melissa.joy.hackman@emory.edu

IN CLASS: FIND ONE REVIEW ARTICLE RELATED TO YOUR CULTURAL OBJECT TO MOTIVATE YOUR RESEARCH QUESTIONS.
Oct 4 (Th): Visit to the library – MEET AT WOODRUFF LIBRARY


**Your group will also read one of the following methods readings and discuss it in class. However, you may wish to consult other readings to guide your project.**


**Reading Questions:**
- What are key take-aways from the readings?
- How might the method(s) you read about help you answer your research question?
- Which method(s) will you use in your research project?

**Recommended (how-to readings for your chosen method):**

**IN CLASS: DECIDE ON METHODS TO ANSWER RESEARCH QUESTION, WORK ON PROPOSAL**

DUE: Fri, Oct 5 – Research Proposal Draft – SUBMIT TO PARTNER by 6pm

DUE: Sun, Oct 7 - Peer Editing Memo 1 – SUBMIT TO PARTNER & CANVAS by 6pm
Week 7:

Oct 9 (T): Fall Break – ENJOY!

Oct 11 (Th): No class – WORK ON PROPOSAL

DUE: Sun, Oct. 14 – Research Proposal – Submit to Canvas by 6pm

V. FOCUS TOPICS (CLASS, RACE, GENDER)

Reading Questions for all Focus Topic Weeks:

- What do the readings tell us about the relationship between culture & society?
- How do the readings connect to the theories of culture?
- How do the readings connect to your cultural object?

Week 8: Culture & Class

Oct 16 (T): Griswold, Wendy. 2013. CSCW, Chapter 4, p. 83-87. Read Griswold’s description of Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital from the subtitle “Reception” to end of paragraph before the subtitle “Horizon of Expectations.”


Recommended:


Paper Draft and Final guidelines handed out

START DATA COLLECTION IF YOUR PROPOSAL HAS BEEN APPROVED!
**Week 9: Culture & Race**

**Oct 23 (T)**


**Oct 25 (Th)**


**Recommended:**

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**Week 10: Culture & Gender**

**Nov 6 (T):**


**Nov 8 (Th):**


Also skim Wikipedia entry on “Google’s Ideological Echo Chamber” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google%27s_Ideological_Echo_Chamber](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google%27s_Ideological_Echo_Chamber)
Recommended:


VI. PEER EDITING

Week 11:

Nov 13 (T):  In class (do not read before class):


NO READINGS OUTSIDE OF CLASS – WORK ON DATA ANALYSIS & WRITING

Nov 15 (Th):  In class (do not read before class):

Puckett, Cassidy. In preparation. “How Organizations Shape Medical Technology Allocation: Insulin Pumps and Pediatric Patients with Type 1 Diabetes.”

NO READINGS OUTSIDE OF CLASS – WORK ON DATA ANALYSIS & WRITING

*DUE: Sun, Nov. 18 – Methods & Findings Draft – SUBMIT TO PARTNER by 6pm (READ & COMMENT FOR WORKSHOP TUESDAY)*

Week 12:

Nov 20 (T):  NO READINGS – WORK ON FEEDBACK

IN CLASS: Editing workshop

*DUE: Tues, Nov 20 - Peer Editing Memo 2 – SUBMIT TO PARTNER & CANVAS by 9am*

Nov 22 (Th):  THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS

Week 13:

Nov 27 (T):  NO READINGS – WORK ON PAPER DRAFT, INCORPORATE FEEDBACK

IN CLASS: Writing workshop
**DUE: Wed, Nov 28 – Full Draft of Paper – Submit to Canvas and Google Docs by 6pm**

**Nov 29 (Th):** NO READINGS – WORK ON PEER EDITING

IN CLASS: Editing workshop

**Week 14:**

**Dec 4 (T):** PEER EDITING PRESENTATIONS

*DUE: Tues, Dec 4 - Peer Editing Memo 3 – SUBMIT TO PARTNER & CANVAS by 9am*

**Dec 6 (Th):** PEER EDITING PRESENTATIONS

**Week 15:**

**Dec 11 (T):** OPTIONAL: MEET WITH GROUP TO WORK ON FINAL PAPER

**Dec 18 (T):** Final Paper - Submit to Canvas by 6pm

**Dec 20 (Th):** Personal Reflection 2 - Submit to Canvas by 6pm

Congrats on all of your hard work this semester!