

**Emory University**

**SOCIOLOGY OF CULTURE**

**SOC 560; Fall 2024**

**Tuesdays, 4:00 pm – 6:45 pm, 206 Tarbutton Hall**

Dr. Timothy J. Dowd

231 Tarbutton Hall

Office Hours: Mondays, 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm

email: [tdowd@emory.edu](mailto:tdowd@emory.edu)

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The course (1) provides students with grounding in cultural sociology and (2) prepares students for doing their own cultural research. To facilitate the first objective, we survey major themes and issues in the sociology of culture. We begin this survey by considering the sociological approach to culture, which entails answering the following questions: “What is culture and what does it do?” and “How are we to study culture?” We get at these broad questions via the case of music, including the important contributions of Du Bois, and then via recent work on the concept of culture. We next turn to issues that Marx, Weber, and Durkheim respectively raised years ago. In particular, we inspect how current scholars (from a variety of theoretical perspectives) approach these enduring issues. Examples of issues that spring from the work of classical sociologists include the following: “Do corporations and media shape our view of reality? If so, how?” and “How do class and lifestyle intertwine to reproduce inequality?” Finally, we turn to substantive questions that have come to the fore in recent decades, including “How is market activity undergirded by cultural assumptions?” and “How does social context shape the production and consumption of expressive goods?” To facilitate the second objective (*i.e.*, doing research), we give special attention to methods and designs employed in current research, and we heed how theoretical ideas are translated into empirical projects. Thus, by the end of the semester, students will have a grasp of the field and an understanding of how to do cultural sociology.

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**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

This course is organized as a seminar, which entails the combination of a fair amount of reading, class discussion, and written assignments. 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 two absences will reduce your final grade by a half-a-letter (e.g., A to A-), with each absence thereafter reducing by another half-a-letter.

### **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. Class participation comprises **half of your final grade**.

### **C) Electronic Device Policy**

Electronic devices, such as laptops and tablets, can be very useful in terms of taking notes. However, when students use them in class to do other things (e.g., surf the Internet, order from online stores, check social media posts) that proves detrimental both to student participation and discussion. If your usage of social media, etc. becomes distracting, I will not hesitate to say so during class. Note that using devices in a non-curricular way will, most definitely, affect your final grade in a negative fashion.

### **D) Final Paper**

You will complete a 15-page paper (typed and double-spaced). The paper should deal with some aspect of cultural sociology, yet it should also relate to your own research interests. Consequently, this paper may take a variety of forms. For example, it can be a review of the literature, a research proposal, or the beginnings of an empirical project. I ask that you discuss your topic with me by *October 8* and submit an outline by *November 19*. The final paper is due on *December 16*. It comprises the **other half of your final grade**.

### **E) Final Grade**

My starting assumption is that you will earn an “A” in this seminar. If you do the work and contribute to the class, then all is fine. If you fall below expectations, I will let you know, so that you can adjust accordingly. Of course, if you are having difficulties, please contact me.

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## **COURSE RESOURCES**

Throughout the semester, course readings and explanatory slides will be posted on the Canvas site for SOC 560 (see <http://canvas.emory.edu>). I encourage you to make much use of that site.

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 Emory Department of Accessibility Services' website; see <http://equityandinclusion.emory.edu/access/index.html>).

Note that the readings for this class augment – but do not duplicate – those found in my other graduate seminars – such as Sociology of the Arts (SOC 561) and Sociology of Mass Media (SOC 562). As a result, you may wish to peruse my syllabi for additional readings, syllabi that are on my faculty page (<https://sociology.emory.edu/people/bios/Dowd-Timothy%20J..html>).

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### **A NOTE ABOUT THE READINGS**

Cultural sociology is a sprawling and ever-growing body of scholarship. As a result, there is no way to capture all of it in the readings for a single seminar. What you will see below, then, are a mixture of readings that should provide an informative entrée to cultural sociology while also touching upon classics, contemporary classics, and brand-new works.

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### **COURSE SCHEDULE** *(Subject to Revision)*

***September 3:***            ***Introductions***

***September 10:***        ***Approaching Cultural Sociology via the Case of Music***

Allen, Tennille Nicole and Antonia Randolph. 2020. “Listening for the Interior in Hip-Hop and R&B Music.” *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 6: 46-60.

Du Bois, W.E.B. 1905. *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches*. London: Archibald Constable & Co. Chapters 1 and 14.

O’Brien, John. 2013. “Muslim American Youth and Secular Hip Hop: Manifesting ‘Cool Piety’ through Musical Practices.” *Poetics* 41: 99-121.

Roy, William G. and Timothy J. Dowd. 2010. “What is Sociological about Music?” *Annual Review of Sociology* 36: 183-203.

***September 17:***        ***Approaching the Culture Concept***

Boutyline, Andrei and Laura K. Soter. 2021. “Cultural Schemas: What They Are, How to Find Them, and What to Do Once You’ve Caught One.” *American Sociological Review* 86: 728-758.

Kuipers, Giseline, Olga Sezneva, and Anastasiya Halauniova. 2022. “Culture Beyond Words: Using Visual Q-Methodology to Study Aesthetic Meaning-Making.” *Poetics* 91: 101655.

Lizardo, Omar. 2017. "Improving Cultural Analysis: Considering Personal Culture in Its Declarative and Nondeclarative Modes." *American Sociological Review* 82: 88-115.

Simko, Christina and Jeffrey K. Olick. 2021. "What We Talk About When We Talk About Culture: A Multi-Facet Approach." *American Journal of Cultural Sociology* 9:431-459.

**September 24:            *Capitalism, Class, and the Cultural Turn***

Browne, Irene. 2024. *Precarious Privilege: Race and the Middle-Class Immigrant Experience*. New York: The Russell Sage Foundation. Selections.

Marx, Karl. 1978. "The German Ideology: Part I." Pages 146-200 in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert C. Tucker. Second edition. New York: W. W. Norton.

Matlon, Jordanna. 2016. "Racial Capitalism and the Crisis of Black Masculinity." *American Sociological Review* 81: 1014-1038.

Mears, Ashley. 2015. "Working for Free in the VIP: Relational Work and the Production of Consent." *American Sociological Review* 80: 1099-1122.

**October 1:                *Platform Capitalism and the Cultural Turn***

Brayne, Sarah and Angèle Christen. 2021. "Technologies of Crime Prediction: The Reception of Algorithms in Policing and Criminal Courts." *Social Problems* 68: 608-624,

Cottom, Tressie McMillan. 2020. "Where Platform Capitalism and Racial Capitalism Meet: The Sociology of Race and Racism in the Digital Society." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 6: 441-449.

Fang, Jun. 2024. "The Culture of Censorship: State Intervention and Complicit Creativity in Global Film Production." *American Sociological Review* 488-517.

Lai, Aditya, David Hesmondhalgh, and Charles Umney. 2023. "The Changing Shape of the Indian Recorded Music Industry in the Age of Platformisation." *Contemporary South Asia* 31: 291-310.

**October 8:                *The Cultural Foundations of Capitalism***

Cao, Yang. 2024. "The Cultural Consequences of Market Transition: An Empirical Examination of Rising Materialism in Twenty-First Century China." *American Sociological Review* 89: 449-487.

Frost, Jacqui and Penny Edgell. 2022. "'I Believe in Taking Care of People': Pushing Back against Rationalized Institutions with a Logic of Care." *Poetics* 90: 101593.

Heller, Patrick, Ashutosh Varshney, and Siddharth Swaminathan. 2023. "The Rich Have Peers, the Poor Have Patrons: Engaging the State in a South Indian City." *American Journal of Sociology* 129: 76-122.

Weber, Max. 1992. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. London: Routledge. Chapters 1 and 5.

### **PAPER TOPIC DUE**

**October 15:**           **FALL BREAK (No Class)**

**October 22:**           ***The Cultural Foundations of Markets and Value***

Chan, Cheris Shun-Ching. 2009. "Creating a Market in the Presence of Cultural Resistance: The Case of Life Insurance in China." *Theory and Society* 38: 271-305.

Frye, Margaret and Anna Woźny. 2021. "Moralizing the Production and Sale of Student Papers in Uganda." *American Sociological Review* 86: 430-464.

Ranganathan, Aruna. 2018. "The Artisan and His Audience: Identification with Work and Price Setting in a Handicraft Cluster in Southern India." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 63: 637-667.

Zelizer, Viviana A. 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.

**October 29:**           ***Status Groups, Identity, and Inclusion/Exclusion***

Brown, Karida. 2018. *Gone Home: Race and Roots through Appalachia*. Raleigh, NC: University of North Carolina Press. Selections.

Friedman, Sam, Christoph Ellersgaard, Aaron Reeves, and Anton Grau Larsen. 2024. "The Meaning of Merit: Talent versus Hard Work Legitimacy." *Social Forces* 102: 861-879.

Kwon, Hyeyoung. 2022. "Inclusion Work: Children of Immigrants Claiming Membership in Everyday Life." *American Journal of Sociology* 127: 1818-1859.

Weber, Max. 1946. "Class, Status, Party." Pages 180-195 in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, translated and edited by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills. New York: Oxford University Press.

**November 5:**           ***Class, Cultural Capital, and Credentials***

Alvero, A.J. and Rebecca Pattichis. 2024. "Multilingualism and Mismatching: Spanish Language Usage in College Admissions Essays." *Poetics* 105: 101903.

Byun, Soo-yong, Evan Schofer and Kyung-keun Kim. 2012. "Revisiting the Role of Cultural Capital in East Asian Educational Systems: The Case of South Korea." *Sociology of Education* 85: 219-239.

Khan, Shamus. 2011. *Privilege: The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St. Paul's School*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Introduction, Chapters 3 and 4.

Jack, Anthony Abraham and Zennon Black. 2022. "Belonging and Boundaries at an Elite University." *Social Problems*.

**November 12:           Classification and Religion**

Durkheim, Emile. 1995. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. New York: Free Press. Translator's Introduction, Chapter 1, and Conclusion.

Killian, Caitlin. 2003. "The Other Side of the Veil: North African Women in France Respond to the Headscarf Affair." *Gender and Society* 17: 567-590.

Kucinkas, Jaime and Evan Stewart. 2022. "Selfish or Substituting Spirituality? Clarifying the Relationship between Spiritual Practice and Political Engagement." *American Sociological Review* 87: 564-617.

Madsen, Richard. 2009. "The Archipelago of Faith: Religious Individualism and Faith Community in America Today." *American Journal of Sociology* 114: 1263-1301.

**November 19:           Classification and Everyday Life**

Fine, Gary Alan and Ugo Corte. 2024. "Obscenity Factories: Profanity and Community in Workgroup Cultures." *Work and Occupations* 51: 299-234.

Gonsalves, Tara. 2024. "Elaborating Embodied Boundaries: Medical Expertise and (Trans)Gender Classification." *American Journal of Sociology* 129: 1311-1358.

Lamont, Michèle and Virág Molnár. 2002. "The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences." *Annual Review of Sociology* 28: 167-195.

Mora, G. Cristina, Reuben Perez, and Nicholas Vargas. 2022. "Who Identifies as 'Latinx'? The Generational Politics of Ethnoracial Labels." *Social Forces* 100: 1170-1194.

**PAPER OUTLINE DUE**

**November 26:           Classification and the Aesthetic Realm**

Braden, L.E.A., Ju Hyun Park, and Jay Lee. 2024. "Symbolic Association Networks: A Case Study of Orchestral Programming's Effect on the Reputation of Composers." *Social Networks* 79: 198-208.

Childress, Clayton, Jaishree Nayyar, and Ikee Gibson. 2024. "Tokenism and Its Long-Term Consequence: Evidence from the Literary Field." *American Sociological Review* 89: 31-59.

DiMaggio, Paul. 1987. "Classification in Art." *American Sociological Review* 52: 440-455.

Kim, Khwan and Noah Askin. 2024. "Feature-Based Structures of Opportunity: Genre Innovation in the American Popular Music Industry, 1958 to 2016." *American Sociological Review* 89: 542-583.

**December 3: Consumption, Reception, and Signaling**

Ariño Villarroya, Antonia and Ramon Llopis-Goig. 2021. "Elites and Culture: Social Profiles in the Cultivated Population." *Cultural Sociology* 15: 509-538.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Introduction and Chapter 1.

Friedman, Sam. 2012. "Cultural Omnivores or *Culturally Homeless*? Exploring the Shifting Cultural Identities of the Upwardly Mobile." *Poetics* 40: 467-489.

Rivera, Lauren. 2012. "Hiring as Cultural Matching: The Case of Elite Professional Service Firms." *American Sociological Review* 77: 999-1022.

**December 10: Consumption, Reception, and Identity**

Chakravarty, Devpriya and Andy Bennett. 2020. "Is There an Indian Way of Raving? Reading the Cultural Negotiations of Indian Youth in the Trans-Local EDM Scene." *Journal of Youth Studies* 27: 802-818.

Gao, Yang. 2024. "'Just Like Friends': Chinese Young Adults' Interpretation of Parent-Child Relationships on American TV Shows." *Poetics* 103: 101882.

Griswold, Wendy. 2000. *Bearing Witness: Readers, Writers, and the Novel in Nigeria*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Chapters 1, 2, and 4.

Schaap, Julian, Jeroen van der Waal, and Willem de Koster. 2022. "Black Rap, White Rock: Non-Declarative Culture and the Racialization of Cultural Categories." *Sociological Inquiry* 92: 1281-1305.

**December 16: FINAL PAPER DUE**