

	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Sociology of Culture</h2> <p>Sociology 410</p> <p>T/R 12-1:20, 125 LLCN</p> <p>Spring 2019</p> <p>Ryan Light</p> <p>Office Hours: F 2:30-4 & W 2:30-3:00 632 PLC and by appointment</p> <p>Email: light@uoregon.edu</p>
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Course Description

Culture consists of those symbols central to our individual and collective efforts to make sense of the world. Debate follows culture in an everyday sense as we engage in conversation with each other about the value of a particular cultural object – “That movie is so good!” – but also in an academic sense as the discussion and interpretation of cultural objects are rarely as simple as they seem and can often benefit from the kind of scholarly work that universities are built to accomplish. This class will emphasize this latter sense teasing apart different approaches to thinking about culture from approaches focused on the symbolic systems that help structure our social world to approaches focused on how culture is produced and consumed. Of course, these approaches often intersect. In attending to theoretical motivations, we will also think through how a sociological understanding of culture contributes to a more complete understanding of other core sociological topics, such as power, inequality, race, and so forth. We will develop our analytic tools through conversation – the class leans heavily on in-class discussion – and through writing. The course culminates with a research project where you are tasked with performing an act of cultural sociology.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

- *Analyze sociological approaches to understanding culture
- *Thoughtfully engage and discuss challenging theory
- *Build a project that asks sociologically relevant questions
- *Write a sociologically meaningful analysis

Estimated Student Workload

This course will require approximately 12 hours of work per week with most of that work (about 9 hours) occurring outside of class. A typical week will include 6 hours of reading and 3 hours of in-class time. The three response essays will take approximately 3 hours of dedicated time to complete (e.g. if you complete without “multitasking”). The final project will take a substantial amount of time that will likely vary substantially, but will not take any longer than one would take to prepare for a difficult exam (and hopefully will be more enjoyable and useful!).

Graduate students should expect to work about 1/3 more on this class than the above description.

How Grades Will Be Determined

In-Class Participation and In-class Quizzes: In-class participation is essential for this course. By this time in your academic career, you have the skills and knowledge to contribute and should be confident in this fact. Any PowerPoint slides or notes will be made available after class. My hope is that this will facilitate more thoughtful note-taking and more creative engagement in the course. Attendance is required and you should be prepared in at least two ways: Please read the course materials prior to the class and bring the necessary course materials for each class.

Expect frequent reading quizzes/in-class assignments to keep us all on our toes.

Reader Response Essays: Reader response essays are short (1-2 pages, single-spaced) opportunities to put cultural sociology to work. For each response, you will read the assigned piece of creative non-fiction. These essays are explicitly not sociological research, but certainly have sociological implications. Your task will be to build an argument illustrating the value (or not) of a specific concept (or two) from the course. Each response should pertain to a different concept, but you may mention concepts multiple times.

Final Project: The final project is an original essay that consists of three parts: A proposal, the essay, and a reflection based on course material. The final essay, on the topic of your choice, should take the form of a creative work of nonfiction. Like the examples from class, you can write a personal narrative, a more journalistic or historical essay, or any good bit of work that isn't fiction – meaning it should be “true” in the loose sense. You can include interviews with relevant subjects and it can be entirely academic, but it need not be. You can include historical research and where you do you should include appropriate citation, but the inclusion of historical material is also not necessary. The essay should have a point and the point should be clear. You should write well. You should try to write in advance of the night before the project is due, so that you can write well. You can write about something that has happened to you or someone else, someone you are fond of or who you detest, you can write about food or movies or music, or a place that you've been to or a place that no longer exists. People like to write about sports and tv shows and that can sometimes work. If you care about what you are writing and you take the time to write well, you will probably get a good grade.

Final Proposal: The proposal (1/2 to 1-page, single-spaced) will help lay the foundation for your final project. It should include an overview of your project and a brief anticipation of how it connects to course material.

Final Project: The final project (about 3,000 words) will consist of your essay and a reflection much like the response papers you have written. You can adjust the length of either part of the final project, but the essay should be no less than 1,000 words and the reflection should be no less than 1,000 words. The whole thing should be about 3,000 words. The reflection should include references to at least 5 works from the syllabus.

Note: If you are a graduate student, you will likely want to develop an alternative assignment that corresponds with your graduate work. I am amenable to and encouraging of this. Graduate students will also be required to write a more substantial final project (about 5,000 words), present an 8 minute overview of your project. Graduate students will also read four additional readings that correspond with your interests and we will meet to discuss those readings twice in my office at a mutually agreed upon time.

Late work and Attendance Policies

Assignments are due on Canvas and physically at the start of class on their assigned dates. Late assignments will receive a 5% deduction for every day that they are late including weekends.

Attendance is required in order to be successful in this class. I encourage students to attend every course with an attendance bonus, but absences will also have a negative effect on your participation grade. If special circumstances may affect your participation, attendance, or your ability to turn work in on time, please contact me as soon as those circumstances arise. If possible and fair, I will attempt to work with students in these situations.

Grade Summary

Must Load Every Written Assignment on Canvas AND Turn in Physical Copy

20% In-Class Participation and In-Class Quizzes

30% 3 Reader Response Essays (1-2 pages, single-spaced)

10% Proposal (1 page, single-spaced)

40% Final Paper (12-14 pages, double-spaced)

Attendance Bonus: 2% for Missing 1 or fewer classes

My grading policy is consistent with the policy on the Anthropology – a social science with similar standards and objectives – website: <https://anthropology.uoregon.edu/undergrad-program/grade-culture/>.

These standards are available under “Grade Culture” below.

Grade ranges:

A	93+	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	<60

An A+ will only be offered for coursework that significantly exceeds A-level performance, which generally applies to work that earns above 100% for the course.

Course Schedule (Subject to change with appropriate notice in class or through email):

Note that reading assignments listed as CV will be available through Canvas and see the reference list below for exact page numbers for each reading assignment.

INTRODUCING THE SOCIOLOGY OF CULTURE

April 2, 2019

Introduction(s)

April 4, 2019

CV: (Griswold 2012: Chapter 1)
CV:(Wagner-Pacifici & Schwartz, 1991)

CULTURE AS MEANING

April 9, 2019

CV: (Geertz, 1973)
CV: (Polletta and Callahan, 2017)

April 11, 2019

CV: (Alexander, 2018)
CV: (Norton, 2011)

April 16, 2019

CV: (Smith, 2013)
CV: (Abdurraqib, 2017)

CULTURE AS TOOLKITS

April 18, 2019

CV: (Kellogg, 2011)
CV: (Lamont & Fleming, 2005)

April 23, 2019

READER RESPONSE 1

CV: (Aviv, 2017)

PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION OF CULTURE

April 25, 2019

CV: (Veblen 2005[1899], pages 187-196) (major points)
CV: (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1977)

April 30, 2019

CV: (Hallinan and Striplas, 2016)

May 2, 2019

CV: (Bourdieu, 1998)

May 7, 2019

READER RESPONSE 2

CV: (Tolentino, 2019)

CULTURE, COMMUNITY, AND CONNECTION

May 9, 2019

CV: (Harrison, 2017)
CV: (Armstrong and Cragg 2006)

May 14, 2019

CV: (Jerolmack, 2007)
CV: (Fine & Van den Scott, 2011)

AUTHENTICITY AND ECONOMICS

May 16, 2019
PROPOSAL

CV: (Grazian, 2012)
CV: (Gibson, 2014)

May 21, 2019

CV: (Rivera, 2012)
CV: (Silva, 2012)

May 23, 2019
READER RESPONSE 3

CV: (Sullivan, 2012)

CULTURE, MOVEMENTS, AND POWER
May 28, 2019

CV: (Swidler, 2000)

June 4, 2019

CV: (Benford and Hunt, 1992)
CV: (McDonnell et al., 2017)

CONCLUSIONS
June 6, 2019

CV: (Jamison, 2018)

FINAL PAPER DUE 11am, JUNE 14th to My Office (632 PLC) and on Canvas

Additional University and Course Policies

Encouraging Inclusive Learning Environments: The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 346-1155 or uoac@uoregon.edu.

Academic Misconduct: The University Student Conduct Code (available at conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at www.libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students.

Being A Good Academic Citizen: What it means to be a good academic citizen is changing at a rapid pace. Classroom norms differ between departments and professors. Technology and our relationship to it have much to do with these ambiguities. So, being a good academic citizen means following traditional norms of good academic behavior: don't plagiarize, including non-appropriated paraphrasing and quotation (see full statement below), be respectful of others ideas, and so forth. But, it is also worth considering newer norms. For my class your phones should be put away. It is distracting to others to have people fidgeting with their text messages. You *can* use a laptop, but you should stay on task and respectful of others around you. If someone is being distracting, please contact me or a GTF. Last, you may NOT sell material for this class (notes, study guides, etc.). Any student who needs help with note-taking should talk to me.

Grade Culture

(from <https://anthropology.uoregon.edu/undergrad-program/grade-culture/>.)

Department of Anthropology (January 2013) Statement on Grades

A+ Quality of student's performance significantly exceeds all requirements and expectations required for an A grade. Very few, if any, students receive this grade in a given course.

A: Quality of performance is outstanding relative to that required to meet course requirements; demonstrates mastery of course content at the highest level.

B: Quality of performance is significantly above that required to meet course requirements; demonstrates mastery of course content at a high level.

C: Quality of performance meets the course requirements in every respect; demonstrates adequate understanding of course content.

D: Quality of performance is at the minimal level necessary to pass the course, but does not fully meet the course requirements; demonstrates a marginal understanding of course content.

F: Quality of performance in the course is unacceptable and does not meet the course requirements; demonstrates an inadequate understanding of course content.

References

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