

CULTURAL SOCIOLOGY
SYP 4610
FALL 2015

LOCATION:

Classroom: Social Science Building 170

Time: Tuesdays and Thursday, 11:00 – 12:20pm

Credit Hours: 3.0 credits

Prerequisites: 3 sociology courses at the 1000, 2000 or 3000 level or permission of the instructor.

This course can be counted towards the sociology major or minor.

CONTACT:

Instructor: Philip Lewin, PhD

Office: Culture and Society Building, Rm. 260

Email: lewinp@fau.edu (this is the preferred method of contact)

Phone: 678-770-8425

Website: <https://blackboard.fau.edu/>

Office Hours: TR 5:00 – 6:30pm, W 2:00 – 5:00pm, and by appointment

COURSE OVERVIEW and OBJECTIVES:

This upper-level seminar will provide students with a working knowledge of the prevailing approaches to the conceptualization, analysis and interpretation of culture. Over the semester, we will explore how culture arises, how it influences social life, and how it reproduces and transforms patterned arrangements within human societies. It is my hope that the course will have both intellectual and practical value for you.

Because cultural sociology is an expansive and ill-codified field, my instruction will exclude more material than it covers. Recognizing that it would take decades to master cultural sociology, I will pass a magnet along the many scraps that compose the field, collecting for scrutiny and analysis only those largest pieces that serve as the field's hallmarks and guideposts. We will thus focus on the origins of cultural studies; the distinctions between humanist and social scientific approaches to culture; sociological methods for studying the production, distribution and reception of culture; and the major theorists (especially Marx, Weber, Durkheim, and Bourdieu) and theories (particularly culturalism, critical theory, symbolic interactionism, and postmodernism) of culture.

Our class will also pursue depth in a few key areas of culture, however. While much of the field revolves around aesthetics, organizations, institutions, and small groups, this course will give more attention to the political dimensions of culture. By the end of the course, you will thus be well-acquainted with major statements on the relationship between culture and poverty, culture and social conflict, culture and social reproduction, and the production of hegemony and mobilization of symbolic resistance against it.

I will use a variety of techniques to help you learn the course material, including lectures, group activities and films. I will devote the lion's share of class time, however, to group discussion. You should come to class prepared to discuss the assigned reading and actively participate in your own learning, not to passively absorb knowledge. We will work through the material as a class—all teaching and learning from one another.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

Griswold, Wendy. 2013. *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World*, 4th Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Supplementary readings will be available to download on our course blackboard page.

CLASSROOM POLICIES and ETIQUETTE:

1. You should arrive to class on time and remain focused until it ends (i.e. you should not disrupt instruction by packing up your belongings early).
2. Be sure to bring the assigned readings to class.
3. You may not use a laptop computer in this class.
4. You may not use your cellphone, sleep, work on crossword puzzles, or engage in anything unrelated to the course during class time.
5. You must be respectful to both me and your peers during class discussions.
6. If you violate any of the above policies, I will ask you to leave the classroom. Repeated violations will result in administrative withdrawal.
7. Please allow 24 hours for a response to emails. If you have a serious concern regarding your progress in the course, please plan to meet with me in person.

ASSESSMENT and GRADING:

1. **PARTICIPATION:** You are expected to prepare for, attend and participate in each class session. This does not mean simply showing up to class; it means completing the required course readings prior to the session, dutifully taking notes, asking unsolicited questions in class, actively contributing to class discussions, and visiting my office hours in order to review course material. I will assess participation by keeping a daily attendance log, keeping track of your contributions to class discussions, distributing unannounced reading quizzes, and periodically evaluating the quality (and presence) of your notes. I will assign two participation grades—one at the midpoint (10/8) and one at the end of the semester (12/3)—based on your overall performance on these metrics. I will aggregate the two grades in order to determine your final participation score.
2. **ESSAYS:** You will write two five page (double-spaced, 1" margins, 12-point font) essays during the semester. I will announce each paper topic approximately one month prior to its due date (9/24 and 11/24, respectively). Each essay will require you to compare, contrast and apply the cultural theories that we discuss in class. I will provide additional information about how to structure your essays and how I will evaluate them throughout the semester and during an in-class writing workshop on 9/17.

3. **EXAMS:** I will administer a midterm exam (10/1) and a final exam (12/8). The exams will cover assigned readings, lectures, and the films that we view. The exams will have a hybrid format but will mostly consist of multiple choice and short answer questions. While the final exam will emphasize material from the last unit of the course, it will also probe your knowledge of material that recurs throughout the semester. Each exam will count two count 20 points toward your final grade.

SUMMARY of GRADING and ASSESSMENT:

Assessment Component	Point Value
Participation	100 points
Observation assignment	100 points
Film analysis	100 points
Exam one	100 points
Exam two	100 points
Final exam	100 points
Total	600 points

Letter Grade	Points
A	93 - 100
A-	90 - 92
B+	87 - 89
B	83 - 86
B-	80 - 82
C+	77 - 79
C	73 - 76
C-	70 - 72
D	60 - 69
F	0 - 59

ABSENCES, LATE WORK, MISSED ASSIGNMENTS, and MAKE-UP EXAMS:

1. Make-up exams, paper extensions, accommodations for missed class/participation, etc. will be administered only in the case of excused absences. Absences are considered excused if they result from religious observance, military duty, a medical or childcare emergency, a funeral, jury duty, or participation in an officially sanctioned university event (e.g. a sports meet). If you have missed or suspect you will miss a class for one of these reasons, it is your responsibility to notify me ASAP in order arrange for accommodations. Please note that I reserve the right to request verifying documentation for your absence, that I do not post powerpoint notes to Blackboard nor distribute them via email (you should plan to see me during office hours in order to get caught up if you have missed class), and that make-up exams may be administered in a different format relative to the original.
2. If you miss class for a reason that is not listed above (e.g. oversleeping, going on a vacation, going to work, broken down vehicle, etc.), accommodations will be made only at my discretion.

3. Your essays are due at the beginning of class on the dates listed in hard-copy form. I will not accept your papers by email nor after the class period ends. Late papers will be penalized 10% per day late, beginning after the start of class. Please note that I will not make exceptions for printer issues, lacking money for printing on your FAU card, etc.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

I will not tolerate cheating or dishonesty in any form. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, looking at other students' papers during quizzes and exams, submitting plagiarized assignments, using unauthorized notes during exams, and fabricating the attendance of absent classmates. All students should understand University policies regarding dishonesty and its consequences, and all academic work must meet the standards contained within FAU's Code of Academic Integrity:

http://www.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/4.001_Code_of_Academic_Integrity.pdf.

Please note that ignorance is not an acceptable excuse for dishonesty.

DISABILITY and HEALTH-RELATED ISSUES:

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), students who require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) -- in Boca Raton, SU 133 (561-297-3880); in Davie, LA 240 (954-236-1222); in Jupiter, SR 110 (561-799-8010); or at the Treasure Coast, CO 117 (772-873-3441) – and follow all OSD procedures.

TIMETABLE

Depending on how the course develops, modifications to the syllabus might be needed. I will announce any deviations in class and/or through email. You should complete the reading listed in each box before that particular meeting.

****Please note that “WG” denotes our course textbook: *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World***

Getting Started: Humanist Approaches to Culture

- 8/18: Welcome! Introduction to course. Lecture on the three meanings of culture.
- 8/20: Culture and Civilization and Cultural Diamond. Read WG, chapter 1; “Arnold, “Culture and Anarchy”
- 8/25: Mass society/mass culture debates. Film: *Century of the Self, Episodes 1 & 2*
- 8/27: Mass society/mass culture debates. Read Macdonald, “Theory of Mass Culture”

Critical Theory and the Frankfurt School

- 9/1: Introduction to the critical theory: Freud. Read Mills, “The Mass Society”
- 9/3: Critical theory continued: Marx. Read and WG, pp.19-30 Marx, “Ruling Class and Ruling Ideas;” “Base and Superstructure;”
- 9/8: Synthesizing Marx and Freud. Read Benjamin, “Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction;” Horkheimer and Adorno, “The Culture Industry Reconsidered;” Marcuse, “One Dimensional Man”

Classical Theory and Cultural Meaning

- 9/10: Lecture on Weber and Durkheim. Read WG, pp. 32-45
- 9/15: Focus on Weber. Read “The Protestant Ethic;” Swidler, “Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies.”
- 9/17: Writing instruction: organization, sources, citation, academic honesty, etc. Film.
- 9/22: Focus on Durkheim. Read WG, pp. 47-55; Kidder, “Bicycle Messengers and the Really Real”
- 9/24: Symbolic Interactionism. Read Becker, “Culture: A Sociological View” **Essay #1 due**
- 9/29: Cultural groups: subcultures, social worlds and idiocultures. Read WG, pp. 55-69; Fine, “Small Groups and Culture Creation”
- 10/1: **Exam #1.**

The Culture of Poverty Thesis

- 10/6: Culture and poverty. Read Harrington, “The Other America”
- 10/8: The culture of poverty thesis. Read Lewis, “Culture of Poverty” and Bourgois, “Culture of Poverty”
- 10/13: Revised views of culture and poverty. Read Lamont and Small, “How Culture Matters: Enriching Our Understanding of Poverty”

Socialization and Cultural Reproduction

- 10/15: Introduction. Film, *People Like Us*.
- 10/20: Culture and socialization. Read Lareau, “Invisible Inequality: Social Class and Childrearing in Black Families and White Families.”
- 10/22: Culture and socialization. Read Desmond, “Becoming a Firefighter.” *Ethnography* 7(4): 387-421.

Cultural Capital, Symbolic Resistance and Social Reproduction

- 10/27: Pierre Bourdieu: cultural capital and habitus. Read Applerouth and Edles, pp. 651-665, 676-684
- 10/29: Film: “American Tongues.”
- 11/3: Resistance to urban marginality. Read Bourgois, “Understanding Inner-City Poverty: Resistance and Self-Destruction under U.S. Apartheid;” Anderson, “The Code of the Streets”
- 11/5: Culture and power: summing up. Read WG, chapter 8.

Culture, Politics, Voting, and Social Movements in the United States

- 11/10: Lecture on culture war and clash of civilizations. Read Frank, pp. 1-13, pp. 28-66
- 11/12: Culture war continued. Read Frank, pp. 89-112; Brooks, “One Nation, Slightly Divisible”
- 11/17: Identities, problems and movements. Read WG, chapter 5
- 11/19: Culture and hegemony. Lewin, “‘Coal is not just a Job: It’s a Way of Life’: The Cultural Politics of Coal Production in Central Appalachia.”

Wrapping Up: Culture in the Age of Globalization

11/24: Culture and connection; postmodern culture. Read WG, chapter 7 **Essay #2 due.**

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, December 8th, 10:30am – 1:30pm