

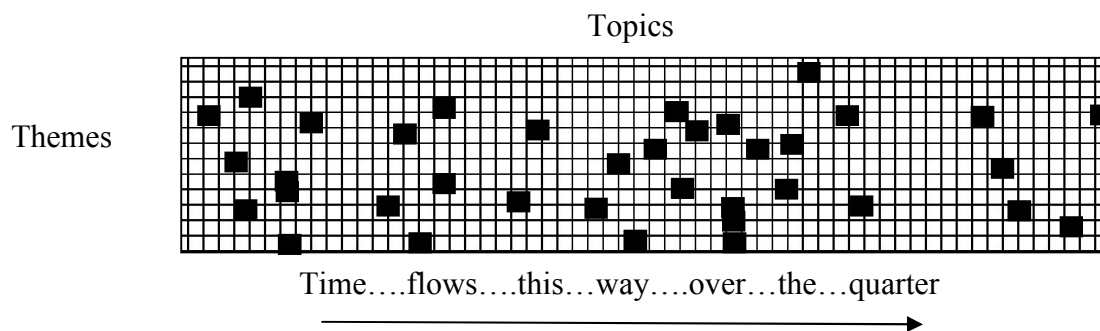
The Sociology of Culture
 Fall 2013
 University of Chicago
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NOTE

The official name of the course is “Topics in The Sociology of Culture,” because the words “The Sociology of Culture” are tied to an undergraduate course number. But this class is a survey, not a smorgasbord.

OBJECT

This course is an attempt to survey, question and perhaps synthesize the major streams that empty into the brackish bay known as the sociology of culture. Synchronically, we preserve a number of questions that we pursue as the topic changes; diachronically, we walk through what would be understood as major themes or schools in the sociology of culture. Thus one may imagine a matrix



with some black-outs where a theme is not relevant to a topic. Our themes generally pertain to the *way* in which culture is being considered.

THEMES

- 1) Is culture seen as **embedded** in other aspects of social life, or treated as analytically **isolated**, a separate sphere?
 - 2) Are the arguments made **contextualized**, or are they universal and **abstract**?
 - 3) Is the analysis **wholistic** or does it attempt to **dissect** aspects of actors?
 - 4) Is culture seen as **external** to the actors, or **internal**?
 - 5) Is culture seen as a **driver** of action or **tools** for the actor? Do we own culture or does *it* own *us*?
 - 6) Are production and consumption seen as **distinct** or **identical**?
 - 7) If the former, is the focus on **production** or **consumption**?
 - 8) Are actors being seen as fundamentally **active** or **passive** in their relation to culture?
 - 9) Are we looking at **masses** or **elites**?
 - 10) Is culture seen as fundamentally **hierarchical** or fundamentally **flat**?
 - 11) Is culture seen as **inside** us, or **outside**?
- And perhaps most important....
- 12) What is the relation between culture and Culture?

As you can imagine, there are interrelations here—studies of mass consumption may tend to focus on passivity (though not always!); those that see culture as internal to the actor maybe contextualized and emphasize culture as a drive of action (though not always!).

TOPICS

We group our topics into four major headings. Were this a eighteenth century painting (or Mount Rushmore), we might portray them as Durkheim, Weber, Marx and Simmel. The first involves a fundamentally cognitive approach to culture, usually drawing upon cultural anthropology. The second looks at the social organization of cultural production, whether this is understood in terms of worlds, scenes, fields, or what have you. The third looks at production, consumption and reception, seeing culture as a directed relationship. The final sees culture in terms of meaning, and hence as a fundamental aspect of all action theories.

REQUIREMENTS

Class Structure (as it were)

Class meets one afternoon a week; regular and cheerful attendance is expected (and, along with regular and constructive participation, factored into any evaluations you receive). No auditors (aka spies) are allowed. For every class, we will have two sections, before and after a short break. For each of the two units, Terry or John will start with a five minute overview of context (one of us will lead one half each day, but we'll both participate, especially when we start yelling at each other). We'll then have everyone give their two cents on the topic-for-the-day and see how this leads to a rip-roaring discussion. At some points, we may have videos to show. Student performances may also be allowed if the fire marshal gives permission. Please, no circus animals. Use your words, and your inside voice.

Readings

For each of the two portions, we will have a single (okay, maybe sometimes two) focal readings, and then supporting readings. Our idea is that if you are new to this topic, maybe you should concentrate on the focal reading. We think the supporting ones are perhaps just as important so if you have some familiarity with the focal reading, or find this area of special interest, we urge you to also examine the supporting readings. Finally, we will also list a few things that we individually or together bring to our thoughts on the focal readings or this subject as “other” readings, and in some cases, you might want to examine these. It is great to bring in the “other” readings to discussion, if they establish something other than “look, I read more stuff!”

Writings

We will end each class by revealing (and posting on Chalk) the topic questions that we expect you to mull over for the next time. By 7:59 PM the Sunday before class, you need to post a brief paragraph on CHALK for each of the units, containing the outcome of your mulling. Finally, a paper of some sort at the end is required. This could be linking an empirical interest you have to themes of the course, pursuing a topic in the sociology of culture, or making an argument for the importance of an approach or body of literature that we did not include in the syllabus. The normal length is about 20 pages, but if it is part of a bigger study, you can submit more. If you are submitting a major empirical work, you still probably want to flag the most key 20 pages or so for the course. We will discuss ideas for papers as we proceed throughout the course, and encourage you to bring in your tentative ideas. The chalk "discussion board" for the course is open for posting all sorts of things from the first day onward.

BOOKS

Selections will be Xeroxed and put on Chalk and all that; articles that are on JSTOR we'll leave up to you unless someone in class is having trouble getting a hold of them. Anything with a '*' by it is scanned and available either on Chalk in the Documents section, or on electronic reserve, also accessible via Chalk. Then there are some books that we're going to recommend that you buy, because one of the following is true (1) we're reading a lot of them; (2) you can find them cheap used; (3) you should really own them if you want to call yourself a sociologist. So here are the required texts, with asterisks by those that we aren't ordering but suggest you dig up for \$1.00 + \$3.99. Those with two asterisks are down as "supporting readings," so get them if you've already done the main reading for the day.

Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger*
 Michele Lamont, *Money, Morals and Manners*
 Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction*
 Howard Becker, *Art Worlds*
 Richard Peterson, *Creating Country Music*
 Ann Swidler, *Talk of Love*
 E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft and Magic Among the Azande*
 Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked**
 William Julius Wilson, *More than Just Race*
 Richard Lloyd, *Neo-Bohemia***
 Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis*
 Jefferey Alexander, *The Meaning of Social Life*
 Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth century England*
 Judy Blau, *The Shape of Culture**
 Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword**
 Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life**
 Durkheim and Mauss, *Primitive Classification.***
 White and White, *Canvasses and Careers.***

Culture, Codes and Cognition

This approach to culture tends to focus on small-c culture (see below), and to be in dialogue with work in anthropology. We'll join with those who connect also with cognitive science (as do cognitive anthropologists and many cultural anthropologists), but not those who connect it with social theory in the café/cocktail party tradition. Sorry to be blunt, but there it is.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

1. First Intro, what is Culture and how is it different from culture? That is, we distinguish between the broad and narrow uses of the term culture, as well as the related distinction between “the sociology of culture” and “cultural sociology.” We will use Big C culture to refer to the *narrower* conception (which we shall also call the “narrow vehicle”), and small c to mean the broader one. It's been common for sociologists to distinguish these, but to treat them as totally separable. One of our interests, especially in the second of our four major sections (“Weber”), will be seeing to what extent we can, or indeed *must*, connect the two.

Note—because we need to get moving, we will use these assumed readings to begin our discussion of the topics most suitably associated with next week's readings. We're going to want to be clear on Weber's approach to culture, the connection of culture with rationalization (and reactions to rationalization), possibly the relation of cultural goods and historical change; we're going to want to be clear on Durkheim's ideas about collective representations and ritual, as well as the centrality of religion. We probably would like to have a basic (even if somewhat distorted) idea of Simmel's formal approach to sociology, and Marx's theory of history.

Assumed Readings: Assume familiarity with basic Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Simmel, espec. Marx, *Capital* Vol 1, first few chapters where he shows that in capitalism, production:consumption :: unfreedom:freedom :: domination:equality. Emile Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 1-18, 207-241, 355-373, 433-448. Max Weber on Aesthetics, *Economy and Society*, Roth and Wittich, eds, pp. 607-610. Georg Simmel, perhaps “Metropolis” is a good starting point; the first sections of the Levine reader on what he means by “form” are also good.

Further Readings: Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology* is the place to get Marx on the role of culture in history, and the theory of history more generally, though *The Communist Manifesto* can work in a pinch. If you haven't read Weber's *The Protestant Ethic*, you should, using the Parsons translation; if you have read the Parsons translation, which is beautiful but distorts Weber on this issue of culture, read the Kallberg translation. Emile Durkheim: “When a civilization displays an excessive concern with aesthetics, its days are numbered.”

MONDAY, OCTOBER 7

2. Anthropologism

Much of the sociology of culture springs from anthropological concerns over how (if) to understand the minds of those from very different cultures. This got totally out of hand, but it started in a good place. You want to know your Durkheim, if you didn't get your act together here last week.

Focal Reading: E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft among the Azande*, especially (assuming you are using the abridged edition from the 1970s) Ch1 (Witchcraft is Organic...), Ch 2 (Notion of...), Ch 3, §viii, Ch 8 (Poison Oracle...), Ch 9 (Problems...).

Supporting Readings: Benjamin Whorf's *Language, Thought and Reality*: "An American Indian Model of the Universe," 57-64 and "Science and Linguistics," 207-219*; Ruth Benedict, *The Sword and the Chrysanthemum*, Chaps 3 and 6 (7 and 8 recommended, but not on Chalk).*

Other Readings: Peter Worsley, *Knowledges*, selections. In our own yard (or quadrangle), John Lucy and Ric Shweder have done some of the most rigorous work continuing to explore these issues. Levy-Bruhl's *How Natives Think* was an influential work that was for a while treated as if it were obviously stupid (which it wasn't) by those who actually remained under its spell. The "Zande are just like scientists" stuff was most often associated with British thinkers, including the great Barry Barnes, and some Wittgensteinian types. And by the way, Evans-Pritchard's *Nuer Religion* is also stunning.

3. Structuralism

The most important school for the sociology of culture to emerge from anthropology was what is called "structuralism," the clearest proponent of whom was Lévi-Strauss. Today we may listen to some Wagner!

Focal Readings: Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked*, Overture and Sonata (1-32, 81-133)*; *From Honey to Ashes*, "Towards Harmony," pp. 17-47.*

Supporting Readings: Ferdinand DeSaussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, 1-23, 65-70, 79-100.*

Other Readings: John tends to start with the *Elementary Structures of Kinship* when thinking about Lévi-Strauss, and from there, Weil's and Harrison White's mathematical approaches. More popular is Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, and you might also want to see "The Structural Study of Myth" in *Structural Anthropology*.

If you get excited by structuralism because of the linguistic aspect, do make sure that you balance this with the important works on linguistics stemming from the pragmatist tradition. Here John would draw your attention to C. S. Peirce, “How to Make our Ideas Clear,” “What Pragmatism Is,” “The Doctrine of Necessity Examined”; J. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 1-15; Michael Silverstein, “Shifters, Linguistic Categories, and Cultural Description”; Labov, *Sociolinguistic Pattern*, 110-142; John Gumperz, *Discourse Strategies*, selections.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 14

4. A Cultural Sociology of the West

One post Lévi-Straussian approach that was to be important for sociology (and especially for sections 5 and 6 below, but also 10) came from Mary Douglas, who took the anthropological vision and applied it to Western culture.

Focal Readings: Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, Chapters 1-3, 6 and 7 recommended too.

Supporting Readings: Thomson, Ellis and Wildavsky, *Cultural Theory* (Boulder: Westview, 1990, pp. 21-23, 103-108, 207-209, 215-220).*

Other Readings: Douglas went on not only to exaggerate her claims to the point of implausibility in *How Institutions Think*, but to propose a 2-dimensional analytic space (*Natural Symbols*) of “grid” and “group” that was, for a time, used all over the place.

5. Cognition

Those generally following along the post-Douglasian lines were increasingly interested in linking culture to cognition. Here we look at a few classics and recent work too.

Focal Reading: Paul DiMaggio, “Culture and Cognition,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 23(1997):263-287].

Supporting Readings: Eleanor Rosch, “Principles of Categorization” from *Cognition and Categorization*;* Zerubavel, *The Fine Line*, 1-32;* Stephen Vaisey, “Motivation and Justification: A Dual-Process Model of Culture in Action,” *American Journal of Sociology* 114(2009):1675-1715.

Other Readings: Roy D'Andrade really was an important focus of effort on cognition in anthropology for a long time; other significant general theoretical approaches to cognition include Herbert Simon, *Sciences of the Artificial*, 51-83; Howard Margolis, *Patterns, Thinking and Cognition*, 1-23, 73-86, 141-156. Allison Pugh ("What Good Are Interviews for Thinking About Culture?" *American Journal of Cultural Sociology*. 1 (2013): 42-68) has a nice critique of some of the claims associated mostly with Vaisey. Omar Lizardo has been doing some of the most exciting work on cognition from within sociology, largely in birdshot form; one of the more recent was "Skills, toolkits, contexts and institutions: Clarifying the relationship between different approaches to cognition in cultural sociology" with Michael Strand (*Poetics* 38 [2010]: 204-22). Write that book and make it easier to put a syllabus together!

MONDAY, OCTOBER 21

6. Boundaries and Schema and all that stuff

A different stream of work in culture pursues interiority, but with less explicit dialogue with theories of cognition. Much of this pursues the "schema" schema, with its Durkheimian basis.

Focal Reading: Lamont, *Money, Manners, Morals*, read all, but especially xix-54, 88-110, 174-192.

Supporting Readings: Durkheim and Mauss, *Primitive Classification* [this is a short, and cheap, book easily available].

Other readings: The idea of schema, though in the air from Kant, really enters psychology from the work of Frederic Bartlett (*Remembering*), which is truly great. In more recent work, Lamont has gone on to focus on *valuation* as opposed to boundaries, for reasons we'll probably uncover.

Art Worlds, Fields, Scenes

We now move to our second major chunk, which sits nicely under the aegis of Weber, as it deals with a more differentiated realm of Culture in some way. A question is, what has to be true about culture for there to be Culture? Does every culture have Culture? We don't assign it because it is rather tough going, but Niklas Luhmann's *Art as a Social System* is a serious and sophisticated attempt to answer these questions.

7. Bourdieu (Fields)

Happy is the sociologist who becomes his own topic heading! Much of what happens in the sociology of culture in the US is still, directly or indirectly, prompted by the work of Pierre Bourdieu. We're going to read from his most relevant work for the inspiration of themes in the sociology of culture; fortunately it's a wonderful forest to wander around in.

Focal Readings: Bourdieu, *Distinction*, preface to English edition, pp.11-17, 114-134, 169-179, 226-244, 250-259, and 456-457. All the rest is strongly recommended, but hard to pick.

Supporting Readings: Bourdieu's actual field theoretic approach to culture is better laid out in his *Rules of Art* and some of the essays in *The Field of Cultural Production*. If you are completely new to Bourdieu, you might read *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, co-written with Loïc Wacquant.

Other Readings: Some interesting work has done specifically on the culinary field; see Priscilla Ferguson, "A Cultural Field in the Making: Gastronomy in 19th-Century France" (AJS 1998); Vanina Leschziner, "Cooking Logics Cognition and Reflexivity in the Culinary Field" in James Farrer, ed., *Globalization, Food and Social Identities*, and of course, Gary Alan Fine, *Kitchens* (from a different perspective, one getting to the production focus we'll examine in unit 11).

MONDAY, OCTOBER 28

8. Art Worlds and Fields

Another way of grasping the context of the production of culture goes back to Chicago and involves *worlds*; a related perspective focuses on careers.

Focal Readings: Howard Becker, *Art Worlds*, espec. 1-39.

Supporting Readings: White and White, *Canvasses and Careers*, Chapter 3.*

Other Readings: Paul DiMaggio. 1982 "Cultural Entrepreneurship in Nineteenth Century Boston" Part I.

9. Place, Patronage, Periods

A more local way of thinking might point to the importance of *place* as the organizing principle of a sociological approach. Finally, one might also emphasize patronage as a different local basis for the organization of intellectual production. One of the things the Bourdieuians might be saddened to learn, but that comes up in our historical explorations, is that autonomous art develops only *with* a market, not in opposition to it.

Focal Readings: Judith Blau, *The Shape of Culture*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989, chaps. 2 and 8, pp. 10-30, 143-174.*

Supporting Readings: Jeffrey Sallaz, "Politics of Organizational Adornment," *American Sociological Review*, 2012; Richard Lloyd, *Neo-Bohemia*, Chs 1, 3, and 10 for overview; also 8 and 9 are fun. We've tried to avoid this but it's hard to get an acceptable reading on the development of patronage in place of Priscilla P. Clark and Terry N. Clark, "Patrons, Publishers and Prizes," in *Culture and its Creators*, pp. 197-225.*

Other Readings: Jane Jacobs' *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* is still the place to start for thinking through place and culture. The key work in the examination of patronage relations and intellectual production in English is (John talking here) Terry N. Clark, *Prophets and Patrons*, as well as his article with Priscilla P. Clark in *Culture and its Creators*. There's some good work on patronage and science in France too. Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth century England*, is a key work (we're reading a bit later for something different). A good example of the ferment that comes from an artistic community is the Harlem Renaissance; we don't know of a good sociological treatment; the classic account is Nathan Irvin Huggins, *Harlem Renaissance*. Claudio Benzecry, *Opera Fanatic*, belongs somewhere, even if not here. Gary Alan Fine has produced a series of books (and recently a summary theoretical statement) on specifically local cultures, and Cultures as well.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 4

10. Institutions

With institutions, we come to a topic as broad as culture itself, yet there is an understanding of the relation between the two

Focal Reading: Ann Swidler, *Talk of Love*, p. 3-6, 11-34, 114-124, 160-180, 187-206.

Supporting Readings: Swidler's classic 1986 *American Sociological Review* article on "Culture as Tool-Kit" is often taken as synonymous with the sociology of culture. Other ways of investigating institutions that are particularly congenial have been explored by the formalist school (see #20 below): John Mohr and Vincent Duquenne, "The Duality of Culture and Practice: Poverty Relief in New York City, 1888-1917," *Theory and Society* 26:305-356; King-To Yeung, "What does Love Mean?," *Social Forces* 84 (2005): 391-420. We want to oppose this to Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, which we first picked up in unit #2.*

Other Readings: Paul Starr, "Social Categories and Claims in the Liberal State" in Hull and Douglas and David Laitin, *Ideology and Hegemony*, have crisp arguments relating institutional practices to cultural frameworks; historical arguments with related ways of thinking will be found in Mary Fullbrook, *Piety and Politics*; David Zaret, *The Heavenly Contract*.

11. Production

One key focus on culture, most associated with the Vanderbilt school, has been the production of culture. Of course, we've been looking at that all up to this point. But now we zoom in a tad and focus on the nuts and bolts of what gets made.... We also need to recognize that the "industrial" production model doesn't fit all culture; sometimes joint visibility of producers in a "salon" is key for productive vitality. We generally assume that this was a historically limited form of cultural production. But is FacebookTM like a salon?

Focal Readings: Richard Peterson, *Creating Country Music*.

Supporting Readings: Jennifer Lena, *Banding Together*, Chapter 2.*

Other Readings: Lopes, Paul D., “Innovation and Diversity in the Popular Music Industry,” *American Sociological Review* 57 (February 1992): 56-71, and his *The Rise of a Jazz Art World*. One thing that often gets left out in the split between “culture” and “Culture” is (or are) folk art producers and also amateurs—even though that’s where most Cultural production still takes place. One might start with Gary Alan Fine’s *Everyday Genius*.

Reception, Demand, Class and Needs

Now Karl Marx didn’t write much about culture, but it isn’t because he didn’t like it. In fact, there is some reason to think that he was hoping that he’d live to get to a book on aesthetics. Most of what we call “Marxist” in approaches to culture doesn’t have much to do with his own ideas (and we might imagine that Marx could be linked to production), but rather, with *class*-based understandings of the reception of culture, and often a critical (if not whiny) view of the suitability of that slop which capitalism ladles out to us.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11

12. Reception and Demand

Of course, reception logically is joined with production as an inherent relation, yet in focus and theoretical approaches, the two have often sheared into separate clusters. One takes for granted that art is good, and culture is good enough to spend your time studying precisely how it is made... while the other has asked, maybe this shit is all a scam? Well, not all of that is very interesting, but some other parts about demand are compatible with a serious and comparative approach.

Focal Reading: Jo Ellen Shivley. 1992. “Perceptions of Western Films Among American Indians and Anglos.” *American Sociological Review* 57: 725-734.

Supporting Readings: Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth century England*, esp. 86-108, 147-153* (on what viewers brought to their experience of painting); Stanley Lieberson, *A Matter of Taste*, Chapters 1 and 5 (1-30, 112-142).*

Other Readings: Wendy Griswold’s work is one of the most influential approaches to making strong sociological arguments about reception; see her 1987. “The Fabrication of Meaning: Literary Interpretation in the United States, Great Britain, and West Indies.” *American Journal of Sociology* 92: 1077-1117 (her books also explore production).

13. Rich and Poor; Cultures of and in Poverty

Here we look at two intertwined issues that bring culture and poverty together. One is the issue of culture as an explanation of poverty. The second is the relation between culture and poor neighborhoods, often understood in terms of “gentrification.” We have a focal reading for each.

Focal Reading: William Julius Wilson, *More than Just Race?*, especially Chapters 1 and 5, also check out chap 4; Frederick Wherry, *The Philadelphia Barrio*, Chaps 1 and 2.*

Supporting Readings: Stephen Vaisey, “What People Want: Rethinking Poverty, Culture, and Educational Attainment,” *ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 629 (2010);* Orlando Patterson. 2000. “Taking culture seriously: A framework and Afro-American illustration.” Pp. 202-18 in *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress*, ed. L. E. Harrison and S. P. Huntington New York: Basic Books.*

Other Readings: Some recent work on these lines is David J. Harding, 2007. “Cultural content, sexual behavior, and romantic relationships in disadvantaged neighborhoods.” *American Sociological Review* 72:341-64; And of course Michèle Lamont, and Mario Luis Small. 2008, “How culture matters: Enriching our understanding of poverty” (pp. 76-102 in *The Colors of Poverty: Why Racial and Ethnic Disparities Persist*, ed. A. Chih Lin and D. R. Harris. New York: Russell Sage Foundation). The classic work on the culture of poverty are the excellent interview based studies of Oscar Lewis, *Children of Sanchez* and *La Vida*. Don’t dismiss these because you’ve heard someone else dismiss them—s/he hasn’t read them either. The idea that this is all about “blaming the victim” comes from the furor over the Moynihan report (see Rainwater and Yancey’s *The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy*).

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18

14. The Frankfurt School

Here we look at what was perhaps the most influential school of social thought to make a strong argument connecting social formations and cultural particularities, the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory. Yes, there was some grouchiness here, but grouches often see things that the rest of us ignore.

Focal Reading: Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer. “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception,” Excerpt in Simon During, ed., *The Cultural Studies Reader*. London and NY: Routledge, 1993, pp. 29-43, excerpted from Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.*

Supporting Readings: Benjamin, Walter. “Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century,” in *The Arcades Project*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999, pp.14-26;* for a close commentary on Benjamin see Rolf Tiedemann, “Dialectics at a Standstill,” pp.929-945 in the same work.* Shils, Edward. “Daydreams and Nightmares: Reflections on the Criticisms of Mass Culture,” in Shils, *The Intellectuals and the Powers*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972, pp. 248-264.*

Other Readings: Lukacs, Georg. “Realism in the Balance,” in Ernst Bloch et al, *Aesthetics and Politics*. London and New York: Verso, 1977, pp 28-36. Other chapters of this book contain interesting debates and exchanges among Brecht, Benjamin, and Adorno. A bridge to the next reading would be Habermas’s work on the *Public Sphere* which shows how social movements can bring cultural change, in turn (and this gets to next week) changing political culture.

15. Class, Culture, and Counter-Culture

Although Rich and Poor come to the fore when we consider urban areas and housing, the same groups of people, differently labeled, may come to our attention in other ways. Some of the most important theoretical insights still guiding the sociology of culture come from the Birmingham school of the 1970s; here investigations of youth culture and class culture dovetailed in the examination of working class oppositional youth cultures. The idea of class-cultures clearly fits with Bourdieu's emphases, but right now, probably the single debate solidly within the sociology culture that takes up the most journal pages has to do with the thesis of omnivorousness, often (wrongly) understood to be a rejection of Bourdieu's ideas.

Focal Reading: Richard A. Peterson and Roger M. Kern, "Changing Highbrow Taste: From Snob to Omnivore" *American Sociological Review* 61(1996): 900–907.

Supporting Readings: Basil Bernstein, *Class, Codes and Control, Volume I*, chapters 5-6;* Omar Lizardo and Sara Skiles. "Highbrow omnivorousness on the small screen? Cultural industry systems and patterns of cultural choice in Europe." *Poetics Arts* 37: 1-23.

Other Readings: The Birmingham school is well represented by the compilation *Resistance Through Rituals*, edited by Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson. And can John say here that this work retains its *signal awesomeness* and *must not be overlooked*...even if we're not quite sure what to make of it? Anyway, Paul Willis's *Learning to Labor* is probably the most influential formulation these days (the crucial evidence for Anthony Giddens's theory of structuration in *The Constitution of Society*). And regarding omnivorousness: this is a big chunk of current work in the sociology of culture. We'll have to get back to you on this. More conventional Marxist approaches are generally represented by Raymond Williams (see his *Marxism and Literature* and "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory," in *Problems in Materialism and Culture*).

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25

16. Political Culture

One of the most important applications of ideas of culture to sociology has been the idea of "political cultures," which has recently been revived.

Focal Reading: Daniel J. Elazar, "The American Cultural Matrix," in *The Ecology of American Political Culture*, eds. Daniel J. Elazar and Joseph Ziskmund II. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1975, pp. 13-42.*

Supporting Readings: Paul McLean, "A Frame Analysis of Favor Seeking in the Renaissance: Agency, Networks, and Political Culture," *American Journal of Sociology* 104 (1998): 51-91.

Other Readings: S. M. Lipset's *American Exceptionalism* is one of the most influential (to the mainstream) of sociological efforts at political culture. Chicago's Edward Shils also can be understood as providing a theory of political culture, as did Clifford Geertz. Another would be David Laitin's *Ideology and Hegemony*. Finally, there is a way in which Elisabeth Clemens's *The People's Lobby* is the state of the art in terms of an understanding of political culture that makes use of the breakthroughs in institutional theory.

Culture, Action and Meaning

We'll give this fourth section to Simmel, since he more than anyone else had a sense of sociology that turned on meaning as such, even though most of the folks here aren't Simmelian, but tend to identify themselves with Durkheim or Weber. We also see here those who try to work out culture as an intrinsic aspect of all sociology.

17. Culture and Action

How does culture play into our theory of action? The answer can be too good—culture is everywhere and everything. But that is no excuse for not raising the question. Further, there's one way of looking at culture which is to focus on *influence*. In fact, it's related to a key approach to sociological theory most associated with Tarde. But it turns out that the most rigorous sociological study shows that influence, as we (not Tarde) currently understand it, is a lot weaker than you probably expect.

Focal Reading: Goffman, *Frame Analysis*, pp. 1- 39.

Supporting Readings: Robert Merton, "The Social Structure of Anomie."* Why this? Well, it's a neat culturalist argument. On influence: Kevin Lewis, Marco Gonzalez, and Jason Kaufman, "Social Selection And Peer Influence In An Online Social Network." *PNAS* 109 (2012): 68-72.

Other Readings: Traditionally on our prelim list were Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*; Karl Mannheim, *the Problem of Generations*. The great culturalist argument was really that of Talcott Parsons, even back to the *Structure of Social Action*, but ever since too. Perhaps the two Prentice-Hall volumes are good places to start to see his top-down, culturally-focused, social theory of action. There was a day when everything was divided into personality/social structure/culture. We'll look at Alexander's related work later. For Tarde, why not start with the reader Terry put together? But the crucial work is *The Laws of Imitation*. Where is new work coming from? Look at Ann Mische's *Partisan Publics*, for one.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 2

18. Cultural Sociology

One particular approach to integrating culture with a general sociological theory is often called "cultural sociology," and is now associated with the Yale School.

Focal Reading: Jeffrey Alexander, *The Meanings of Social Life: A Cultural Sociology*, espec. Chapters 1-3.

Supporting Readings: Jeffrey Alexander, “Analytic Debates: Understanding the Relative Autonomy of Culture,” pp. 1-27 in *Culture and Society: Contemporary Debates*.* Geertz, “Religion as Cultural System,” and “Ideology as Cultural System,” in *The Interpretation of Cultures*.* (as some *stupid* e-book...).

Other Readings: Philip Smith and Isaac Reed are other interesting members of the cultural sociology school; you might see the former’s *Punishment and Culture* and the latter’s *Interpretation and Social Explanation*, though John is partial to the former’s work on war and the latter’s on witches. And the way Ozzy puts them together: “generals gathered in their masses...just like witches at black masses!”

19. Material culture and externalization

Focal Reading: Georg Simmel, “Culture in Crisis,” in the Levine Simmel reader.

Supporting Readings: Bruno Latour et al 2012 “The Whole is Always Smaller Than It’s Parts: A Digital Test of Gabriel Tarde’s Monads” *British Journal of Sociology*.* Chandra Mukerji, *Graven Images*, selection;* Bruno Latour, “Visualization and Cognition;”* Jack Goody, *Domestication of the Savage Mind*, Chapter 4.*

Other Readings: Karen Cerulo, *Identity Designs: Sights and Sounds of a Nation*, 1-9, 35-54, 75-89, 117-135. Much of Simmel’s work deals with this fundamental dialectic of culture; in the Levine reader, the piece on the Metropolis is the most famous. There’s a Frisby and Featherstone edited volume of *Simmel on Culture*, but be warned that it is often hard to tell the original source of the re-arranged pieces. Latour is famous for his involving all sorts of stuff in social theory, under the name of “actor network theory,” in a big old bunch of books that Terry’s read. But we’re sticking with these two lovely pieces. And then there’s a way in which material stuff changes the rest of culture. As John Reed and Dale Volberg Reed say in *1001 Things Everyone Should Know About The South*, Southern culture was fundamentally reoriented by the invention of the air-conditioner.... Finally, one part of material culture that has achieved periodic interest has to do with the industrial design that supplies most of our day-to-day aesthetic experience, and has been understudied in sociology. Harvey Molotch, *Where Things Come From* is the place to start....

HAVE A GOOD WINTER! PAPERS ARE DUE MONDAY, DECEMBER 9, 12:00 NOON.

20. That which cannot be said.

There isn't a class for this. We're not reading this. But.... One of the current issues in the sociology of culture is the new *Methodenstreit*. A formal approach to culture, using medium-to-big-N type analytic techniques, emerged from Princeton (vid., Wuthnow and DiMaggio) in the 1980s, spread to Berkeley (vid., Swidler), Rutgers (vid., Cerulo), Santa Barbara (vid., John Mohr), and elsewhere. The "central cite" piece here is John Mohr's "Meaning and Measurement." Recently, Richard Biernacki published a fierce critique of these approaches (*Reinventing Evidence in Social Inquiry*), using as his exemplars three influential works: John Evans's *Playing God*, Peter Bearman and Katherine Stovel's "Becoming a Nazi," and Wendy Griswold's "The Fabrication of Meaning." Biernacki's criticism range from big to small, but the upshot is to wrest the humanities away from number-grubbers—by showing that there is an inherent instability in the procedures the grubbers used to get their data in the first place. Biernacki's own stunning *The Fabrication of Labor* is not only an important use of coding (of which he is now critical), but a strong argument about the role of culture in economic life.