

**Sociology of Culture**  
SOCI 614

Spring, 2016  
Wednesday, 4:30 – 7:10 pm

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Office hours: M /W 3:00 – 4:00 pm, or by appointment

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Course schedule and readings:

Jan 20 Introduction

I. ***Democratic culture***

Jan 27 **deTocqueville**, Alexis. (1992) *Democracy in America*, vol. 2. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.  
Book 1, chapters 1-3, 5, 8-11, 13, 17, 19-21  
available online: [http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DETOC/toc\\_indx.html](http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DETOC/toc_indx.html)  
(look for Section 1 instead of “Book 1”)

**Blake**, Casey Nelson. “An atmosphere of effrontery: Richard Serra, *Tilted Arc* and the crisis of public art”, *The Power of Culture*, Fox and Lears, eds. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993) 247-289.

**Komar & Melamid**: *The Most Wanted Paintings on the Web*  
<http://awp.diaart.org/km/index.php>

II. ***Culture in action***

Feb 3 **Weber**, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. (Routledge, 1992).

Feb 10 **Swidler**, Ann. “Culture in action: Symbols and strategies” *American Sociological Review* vol. 51 (2), April 1986. 273-286.

**Silbey**, Susan. “Everyday life and the constitution of legality”, *The Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Culture*, Jacobs and Hanrahan, eds. (Blackwell Publishers, 2004). 332- 345.

**Appadurai**, Arjun. “The capacity to aspire: Culture and the terms of recognition,” *Culture and Public Action*, Rao and Walton, eds. (Stanford University Press, 2004). 59-84.

III. *Rethinking tradition*

Feb 17 **Narayan, Uma.** *Dislocating Cultures: Identities, Traditions and Third World Feminism.* (Routledge, 1997). Chapters 1 and 2.

**Dillon, Michele.** "Sexuality and religion: Negotiating identity differences", *The Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Culture*, (op.cit). 220-233.

IV. *Culture as ideology*

March 24 **Horkheimer, Max and Theodor Adorno.** "The culture industry: Enlightenment as mass deception," *Dialectic of Enlightenment.* (Continuum, 1991). 120-167.

\*\*also available online at: Marxists.org\*\*

March 2 **Collins, Patricia Hill.** *Black Sexual Politics: African-Americans, Gender and the New Racism* (Routledge, 2004).

*Spring break*

V. *The politics of public culture*

March 16 **Arendt, Hannah.** "The crisis in culture," *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (Viking, 1968) 197-226.

March 23 **Williams, Rhys and N. J. Demerath.** "Religion and political process in an American city". *American Sociological Review*, vol. 56, (4) August, 1991. 417-431.

**Benhabib, Seyla.** "Multiculturalism and gendered citizenship", *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era* (Princeton University Press, 2002). 82-104.

**Sennett, Richard.** "Fear of touching: the Jewish ghetto in Renaissance Venice", *Flesh and Stone: the Body and the City in Western Civilization* (W.W. Norton, 1994). 212-251.

March 30 **Zukin, Sharon.** (1995) *The Cultures of Cities.* Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers. Selections.

Sennett, Richard, (op.cit.) "Civic bodies: Multicultural New York", 355-376.

VI. *Cultural fields*

*April 6* **Bourdieu, Pierre.** "The production of belief: Contribution to an economy of symbolic goods," *The Field of Cultural Production* (Columbia University Press, 1993). 74-112.

**Illouz, Eva.** *Why Love Hurts* (Polity Press, 2012). Chap. 1 & 2.

Recommended supplementary reading:

**Garnham, Nicholas and Raymond Williams.** "Pierre Bourdieu and the sociology of culture: An introduction" *Media, Culture and Society* Vol. 2, 1980. 209-223.

**Johnson, Randal.** "Editor's Introduction: Pierre Bourdieu on art, literature and culture" *The Field of Cultural Production* (op.cit.) 1-25.

*April 13* **Illouz, Eva.** *Why Love Hurts*. Chap. 3 – 7.

**\*\*research abstract due\*\***

VII. *Beyond modernity*

*April 20* **Bauman, Zygmunt.** "Culture: Liquid-modern adventures of an idea" *Handbook of Cultural Sociology*, Hall, Grindstaff and Lo, eds. (Routledge, 2010). 326-334.

**Bourdieu, Pierre.** "Culture is in danger" *Firing Back: Against the Tyranny of the Market 2* (The New Press, 2001). 66-81.

**Freeman, Carla.** "Analyzing culture through globalization" *Handbook of Cultural Sociology*, (op.cit.). 577-587.

*April 27* TBD

*May 4* Final paper due

## Course Requirements:

1. **Class participation (25%):** This course is a seminar. Students should come to class prepared to discuss the readings every week. We will do close readings of the texts, identifying the main arguments, clarifying the terminology and considering the broader intellectual and political projects to which the work contributes. Having done that, we need to be able to think with the material, to use it to go beyond our "common sense" conceptions of the issue or problem it addresses.

**Attendance** is therefore expected and required. If you miss a single class, you should (obviously) still do the reading and get class notes from a colleague. If you miss more than one class session, you must also provide me with a 3-page summary of the reading *before the next class session*. This does not substitute for one of the issue papers.

2. **Facilitation (15%):** One student will be responsible for facilitating the discussion each class session. You will not be required to teach the class. To prepare for that role, please:

1. Identify the main argument of the text.
2. Identify the theoretical and political projects to which the work contributes (in other words, why did the author write the book, article, etc.?)
3. Present what you find most interesting - or surprising - about the reading for the week
4. Present what you find most confusing about the reading
5. Prepare two questions for class discussion

Please e-mail me a *one-page* statement of these 5 points by 1:00 pm on the day of the class. I will not read your personal reading notes or outlines of the text/s. Please also refrain from using hand-outs in class as they tend to foreclose rather than open up discussion.

3. **Two issue papers (10%).** In these papers you identify an issue in the reading that you find particularly interesting or problematic or important and: 1. clearly explain how the issue is presented and situated within the selected text or texts; 2. explain your interest in the issue and argue either for or against the author's position. Start your paper with a statement of the author's project and the basic argument of the text/s, to provide a foundation for your comments. Issue papers must be submitted *before class discussion* of the text/s in question. (maximum: 5 pages each)

4. **One final course paper (50%).**

*MA students:* Each student will prepare a 20-page **research proposal** on a topic of her choice in the sociology of culture. This entails:

1. Identifying a specific research question
2. Providing background, or a context for this question
3. Reviewing some of the relevant literature

#### 4. Specifying your proposed research methods

*PhD students* have the option of preparing either a 25-page research proposal as above, or a 25-page research paper.

This assignment allows you to explore a topic of particular interest to you at the same time that it will prepare you for your eventual thesis or dissertation work. We will devote class time as needed to your research concerns and I will schedule conferences with each student to discuss research topics and monitor progress.

#### Honor Code:

Students are expected to be familiar with and to abide by the **Honor Code** as cited in the university Catalog (<http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/9798/honorcod.html>). If you have any questions regarding proper attribution of sources, consult the Writing Center webpage: [http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/resources/workshops/quote\\_sum\\_para\\_files/frame.htm](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/resources/workshops/quote_sum_para_files/frame.htm) or ask me. *Any* violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for adjudication.

#### Disability Services:

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me at the beginning of the semester and also contact the Office of Disability Resources at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

