

# SOC 281: CULTURE AND INEQUALITY

FALL 2012

*Time and place:* Tuesdays 2 - 4 PM, LM 159

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## *Course e-mail policies:*

- 1) We will only accept e-mails from your University of Toronto e-mail account. Please put "SOC 281" in your subject line so we know the message is course-related.
- 2) We cannot provide instant or even overnight response. We will make every effort to reply to e-mails at least twice per week, when we have time.
- 3) Many important course announcements will be sent to you through the University of Toronto e-mail address recorded for you on Blackboard. Be sure to check this e-mail account regularly.
- 4) E-mails asking for information in this course outline (e.g. "How much is the midterm worth?") will NOT be answered. Read this outline!

## *Course Website:*

This website is open to students enrolled in the course. On it you will find the course outline; announcements as they are made; grades; and some lecture notes. Since this is a new course this year, lecture notes may not be available for all classes. The lecture notes are usually posted the day before the lecture. Most students like to print the notes off, bring them to class, and add marginal notes on extra things that come up in class.

To get access to the site: (1) get a UTORid if you do not already have one, (2) log on to Blackboard at <http://portal.utoronto.ca>, (3) click on the course name.

It is your responsibility to check for course news regularly.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** The prerequisite to take this course is SOC101Y1 or SOC102H1 or SOC 103H1. Students without this prerequisite will be removed at any time they are discovered.

## *The Course and its Objectives*

Culture includes everything that is learned: tastes, habits, values, and so on. Culture is learned socially, in social structures from macro (societal systems of stratification) to meso

(intermediate groupings like organizations, networks, and subcultures). Culture develops in the first place, and is maintained or changes, within social structures.

In this course, we focus on structures of inequality. We will consider the most important forms of inequality in our society: class, age, gender, and ethnicity. People in different classes, stages of the life course or generations, genders, or ethnic or racialized groups acquire different cultural repertoires. These differences then contribute to maintaining inequality.

Pierre Bourdieu is the most famous and influential of sociologists of culture and inequality so we will begin with his work on culture and class. We begin with Bourdieu's big question: how are class and culture related to each other in societies? Then we discuss which kind of socioeconomic stratification societies (including our own) have: class, hierarchies of income or prestige, or occupational structures? And how do different forms of socioeconomic inequality relate to culture? What kinds of culture become "cultural capital," or the kinds of culture that provide advantage in the competition for success? Next we ask how unequal cultural repertoires shape people's unequal pathways through socioeconomic structures by shaping their fortunes in school and work. Then we ask how culture is related to major forms of social inequality that Bourdieu neglects: gender, ethnicity, and age or generation. And how do multiple forms of inequality combine? We conclude with social and cultural boundaries between the different kinds of people that stratification systems create, and, variations in the type and extent of lower status resistance to the cultural domination of upper status groups.

Below is a detailed description of the topics and readings for each week. Please note that I have listed a reading for the week for which it is MOST relevant, but, many of the readings will be used for several topics.

### *Required Readings*

TEXT: Julie McMullin. 2010. *Understanding Social Inequality: Intersections of Class, Age, Gender, Ethnicity, and Race in Canada. Second Edition.* Oxford University Press Canada.

This is a recent text with summaries of major theories about inequality, combined with many Canadian findings and examples. It is a valuable resource for the "inequality" part of "culture and inequality," but a bit thin on the role of culture in inequality. The other required readings focus on culture, and the various reading ingredients will be put together in lectures.

The text will be available at the U of T Bookstore. For students with serious financial issues, one copy will be put on reserve in Short Term Loans in Robarts Library.

### OTHER REQUIRED READINGS

Other required readings are articles that you can easily find on line, for reading or downloading. Do not neglect these; they are the most important readings for our course.

You will notice that required readings are much heavier at the start of the course, when you will have more time to read them. Do not put this off! Later, you will be very busy studying for tests, and doing additional reading for your library research paper.

## ***Course Outline: Dates for Topics, Required Readings, and Deadlines***

September 11: Introduction

What is inequality? What are its major forms in Canada today? What are the roles of culture in inequality, and inequality in culture? Some basics of the most important scholar in this area, Pierre Bourdieu. Please note that this is not a “quick overview of the course” short lecture but a full two hour one. We have a lot to cover. Please try to read the required readings for this lecture, and for other lectures, before the class.

### **READINGS**

TEXT Chapters 1 (Introduction) and start on 2 (Class and Inequality).

### **ASSIGNED ARTICLE**

Paul DiMaggio. 1979. “Review Essay: On Pierre Bourdieu.” *American Journal of Sociology* 84: 1460-1474.

This article was written at a time when Bourdieu was just becoming well known outside France, so it provides an introduction to Bourdieu’s key ideas in his earlier work and how they relate to classic work on inequality (work discussed in your text readings in more detail).

September 18: Fields; Canada as a Field

What is the overall structure of class inequality, and related differences in culture, in a society? Bourdieu pioneered the study of this topic for France. Your reading by Brubaker includes a summary of Bourdieu’s major work on this topic, *Distinction*, as well as more on Bourdieu in general. Your Blackboard site will include Bourdieu’s famous “map” of class and culture in France. Your reading by Veenstra presents and discusses a similar kind of map for Canada. (Feel free to skip the technical statistical bit pp. 95-97.)

### **READINGS**

TEXT Finish Chapter 2, Class and Inequality

### **ASSIGNED ARTICLES**

Rogers Brubaker. 1985. “Rethinking Classical Theory: The Sociological Vision of Pierre Bourdieu.” *Theory and Society* 14: 723-744.

Gerry Veenstra. 2010. “Culture and Class in Canada.” *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 35: 83-111.

### **OPTIONAL FURTHER READING**

Modesto Gayo-Cal, Mike Savage and Alan Warde. 2006. “A Cultural Map of the United Kingdom, 2003.” *Cultural Trends* 15: 213-237.

This is part of a massive study of class and culture in the UK.

September 25: Culture and Class Relations in a Field

Bourdieu's map shows the kinds of cultural tastes and practices characteristic of different class locations, but does not show how culture is used in social relationships. Your reading by Erickson discusses this for the "field" of private contract security in Toronto. The text reading gives useful background on class and inequality at work in Canada.

This week also introduces the importance of social networks in the links between culture and inequality, a theme somewhat neglected in your text.

#### READING

TEXT Chapter 9, Paid Work, sections on class

#### ASSIGNED ARTICLE

Bonnie H. Erickson. 1996. "Culture, Class, and Connections." *American Journal of Sociology* 102: 217-51.

#### October 2: Cultural Capital

By now it will be clear to you that cultural capital is one of Bourdieu's most important concepts, and also much debated. We will compare and contrast cultural capital as high status culture (Bourdieu's main view) versus cultural capital as wide-ranging cultural competence (the omnivore thesis). The optional further reading by Warde et al. Considers omnivorous taste in the UK, while the further reading by Ollivier et al. discusses different forms of omnivorousness, using examples from Quebec.

#### READING

No new assigned reading this week.

#### OPTIONAL FURTHER READING

Michele Ollivier, Guy Gauthier, Alexis Hieu Trong. 2009. "Cultural classifications and social divisions: A symmetrical approach." *Poetics* 37: 456-473.

Alan Warde, David Wright, and Modesto Gayo-Cal. 2008. "The Omnivorous Orientation in the UK." *Poetics* 36: 148-165.

#### October 9: Culture and Education

How families in different class locations pass on their culture to their children, thus giving their children very unequal chances of success in school. Education, in turn, is the main predictor of the child's own class position, so culture plays a pivotal role in class reproduction from generation to generation.

#### READINGS

TEXT Chapter 10, pp. 209-224 (class and education); Chapter 6, especially Bourdieu on habitus

#### OPTIONAL FURTHER READING

Bonnie H. Erickson. 2008. "The Crisis in Culture and Inequality." Pp. 343-362 in Steven J.

Tepper and Bill Ivey, (eds.), *Engaging Art: The Next Great Transformation of America's Cultural Life*. New York: Routledge.

October 16: In-Class Midterm Test.

October 23: Gender, Culture, and Inequality

We now move from a focus on class, which was Bourdieu's primary concern, to three other major forms of inequality. How do the key ideas developed for culture and class transfer to other kinds of inequality? Following the order in your text, we begin with gender. About the optional readings: Erickson et al. (2000) shows the contested nature of gender ideas, and their variable application depending on field position, for the Toronto Security industry. Erickson 2004 concerns gender and networks in Canada.

#### READING

TEXT Chapter 3, theories of gender inequality; the relevant parts of Chapter 9 (paid work) and 10 (education).

#### OPTIONAL FURTHER READING

Bonnie H. Erickson, Patricia Albanese, and Slobodan Drakulic. 2000. "Gender on a Jagged Edge: The Security Industry, its Clients, and the Reproduction and Revision of Gender." *Work and Occupations* 27:294-318.

Bonnie H. Erickson. 2004. "The distribution of gendered social capital in Canada." Pp. 27-50 in Henk Flap and Beate Volker (eds.), *Creation and Returns of Social Capital: A New Research Program*. London, UK: Routledge.

October 30: Ethnicity, Culture, and Inequality

Here I will draw quite a bit from Wimmer (your optional further reading), which I would assign if it were not so long. Those interested in this topic should try reading Wimmer.

#### READING

TEXT Chapter 4, theories of racialization and oppression; the relevant parts of Chapter 9 (paid work) and 10 (education).

#### OPTIONAL FURTHER READING

Andreas Wimmer. 2008. "The Making and Unmaking of Ethnic Boundaries: A Multilevel Process Theory." *American Journal of Sociology* 113: 970-1022.

November 6: Age AND Generation, Culture, and Inequality

McMullin discusses age and inequality at length, but does little on generation – which is powerfully related to culture. I will expand on this in lectures, drawing on Mannheim and related research. The assigned article discusses how members of a new generation – Toronto high school students – develop musical tastes and cultural orientations in many different subcultures based on

intersections of class, ethnicity, and gender.

#### READINGS

TEXT Chapter 5, theories of age and inequality, and relevant parts of Chapters 9 and 10; Chapter 7, pp. 128-129, a too brief summary of Mannheim on generations.

#### ASSIGNED ARTICLE

Julian Tanner, Mark Asbridge and Scot Wortley, 2008. "Our favourite melodies: musical consumption and teenage lifestyles" *The British Journal of Sociology* 59:118-144.

#### OPTIONAL FURTHER READING

Karl Mannheim. 1952. "The Problem of Generations." Pp. 288-320 in *Essays in the Sociology of Knowledge*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

November 13: Fall Break - No class!

November 20: Boundaries (NOTE: YOUR ESSAYS ARE DUE IN CLASS TODAY!)

The theme of boundaries (between classes, genders, ethnicized groups, life course stages, and generations) has come up repeatedly in the course so far. Here, we focus on this topic directly, drawing on materials from the earlier parts of the course. No new required readings!

#### OPTIONAL FURTHER READINGS

Michele Lamont and Virag Molnar. 2002. "The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences." *Annual Review of Sociology* 28:167-95. See especially pp.167-177. Very terse, but introduces some key themes in this area of study, and gives quick summaries of work you might like to read.

Michele Lamont and Annette Lareau. 1988. "Cultural Capital: Allusions, Gaps, and Glissandos in recent Theoretical Developments." *Sociological Theory* 6: 153-168. Calls for a focus on boundaries in work in the Bourdieu tradition.

Michele Ollivier, Guy Gauthier, Alexis Hieu Trong. 2009. "Cultural classifications and social divisions: A symmetrical approach." *Poetics* 37: 456-473. Discusses the mutual influence of social divisions like class and gender, and cultural patterns such as omnivorousness.

November 27: Domination and Resistance

Much of our course has focused on how inequality is maintained and reproduced, often with the partial consent of those oppressed. But oppressed groups do not always consent or stay passive; various forms of resistance are possible. We will discuss this using two key Canadian examples. Oakes et al. discuss a case of successful domination in which a right-wing Alberta government imposed a business model of practice on Alberta Heritage sites. The articles by Parashak and by Heine and Young provide a contrast between areas where native Canadians accepted a Euro-centric form of sports, and areas where they successfully maintained more traditional practices. This will fuel our discussion of why resistance varies in its nature and success. For those interested in education, the review article by Downey sums up some important work on Black resistance in US schools, and argues that cultural capital is a better explanation for Black/White differences in performance.

## OPTIONAL FURTHER READINGS

Douglas B. Downey. 2008. "Black/White Differences in School Performance: The Oppositional Culture Explanation." *Annual Review of Sociology* 34: 107-26.

Michael K. Heine and Kevin Young. 1997. "Colliding Identities in Arctic Canadian Sports and Games." *Sociological Focus* 30: 357-372.

Leslie S. Oakes, Barbara Townley and David J. Cooper. 1998. "Business Planning as Pedagogy: Language and Control in a Changing Institutional Field." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 43: 257-292.

Victoria Paraschak. 1997. "Variations in Race Relations: Sporting Events for Native Peoples in Canada." *Sociology of Sport Journal* 14: 1-21.

Shively, JoEllen. 1992. "Cowboys and Indians: Perceptions of Western Films among American Indians and Anglos." *American Sociological Review* 57: 72-734.

December 4 In-Class Final Test

## EVALUATION

- 10% Essay proposal, due October 9
- 25% In-class midterm test, October 16
- 40% Library research paper, due November 20
  - hand in hard copy to room 225, 725 Spadina, with time and date stamp
  - or at the START of class
  - submit electronic copy to Turnitin before midnight
- 25% In-class final test, December 4

## YOUR ESSAY

Your essay **MUST** be suited to this particular course. It must discuss connections between culture and inequality. However, there are endless possibilities – and choosing one that is especially interesting for YOU is both a real challenge and a real opportunity.

One way to get started is to read ahead as much as you can and spot a course topic you find especially interesting, then start an electronic literature search to find some very recent work in this area. It is always best to find something very recent first, since it will cite most of the relevant earlier work, and you will get up-to-date quickly. Search scholarly journals using a popular data base like Sociological Abstracts; do not rely on non-scholarly internet sources like Wikipedia. Then decide on something you would like to explain, look for literature on this, and construct your own argument to explain it, incorporating **BOTH** some readings from our course and new ones you have found for yourself.

Maximum length of text (not including your reference list or tables or figures if any): 10 pages, double spaced, 1" margins, 12 point or larger type.

**HAND IN YOUR ESSAY** by November 20, both in hard copy and as a submission to Turnitin (see below). You may hand in the hard copy in class November 20, or in the second year drop box in room 225, 725 Spadina, which is open Monday - Friday 9 AM - 5 PM. You may **NOT** submit your essay by fax or e-mail and you may **NOT** hand it in to the sociology department

We will make every effort to return the essays at the end of the final test.

We have only 12 weeks, so you need to start NOW. Read ahead, do some exploring. It is highly advisable (though not required) to send me an e-mail briefly sketching a possible topic; include a starting reading list if possible. I will provide feedback for any such e-mails I get by September 25, and will do my best for those I get by October 2.

Then hand in your essay proposal for more feedback.

#### YOUR PROPOSAL

Your proposal briefly outlines your topic, what you want to explain, and what explanations you will examine. Maximum length of text: 1 page, double spaced, 1" margins, 12 point or larger type. This does not include your list of the readings you plan to use. We will return the proposals to you with comments and suggestions for developing your essay.

HAND IN your essay proposal in class October 9. You may NOT submit your proposal by fax or e-mail and you may NOT hand it in to the sociology department.

We will make every effort to return your proposals at the end of your mid-term test.

#### YOUR ESSAY AND TURNITIN

As well as handing in a hard copy of your essay, you must submit an electronic copy of your essay to Turnitin.com by November 20. Please note the following paragraph carefully:

"Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com Tu reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site."

#### DO NOT PLAGIARIZE

Be careful to avoid plagiarism. That is, do not copy words from someone else's writings and present them as your own. If you include someone else's words, use quotation marks and give proper references. It is NOT enough to just include your source in your list of references. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense with very heavy penalties (see the Academic Handbook).

See also the section "More on academic integrity" below.

#### LATE ESSAY PROPOSALS

Late essay proposals will NOT be accepted, whatever the reasons for the lateness.

#### LATE ESSAYS

Penalty for lateness: 10% of your grade for every weekday late. For example, if you submit your essay on November 21 (one day late) and get a grade of 80%, you will lose 8% and get a grade of 72%. These are heavy penalties, so – don't be late! The maximum penalty is 100% of your grade, for papers 10 or more days late.

#### MISSED TESTS

If you do not write a test at the scheduled time, you will get a grade of zero.



## PERMISSION FOR LATE SUBMISSIONS AND MAKE-UP TESTS

If you have acceptable reasons concerning things beyond your control, you may apply for permission to write a make-up test or hand in your essay late. You must have a very good reason, and you must be able to document it.

The most common reason is ill health that makes it impossible to write the test at the scheduled time, or a period of ill health that makes it impossible to complete your essay on time. You must get your doctor to complete a University of Toronto medical certificate. This must clearly state when you were unable to work. Please note that it is your responsibility to work ahead on your essay, so a minor short illness days before the due date is not an excuse for lateness.

There are other kinds of good reasons. ALL must be documented. If documentation is difficult, or if it involves confidential matters, please go to your college registrar. College registrars are very experienced, very discreet, and there to help you. Submit your documentation to your professor only, not the TA or the Sociology Department.

Unacceptable reasons include: (1) "It is the end of term and I have so many tests and assignments." So does every other student! And you knew this was coming; it is your responsibility to work ahead. (2) "My family has booked me in for a vacation/my sister's wedding in a foreign country/ other trips or occasions." It is your responsibility to show up for your academic work, including lectures, tests, and handing in essays. (3) "My computer crashed." It is your responsibility to work ahead and to back up your work. (4) "I got stuck in traffic, my car broke down, etc." It is your responsibility to show up on time.

## DATES FOR MAKE-UP TESTS

If you have to miss a test for a valid reason beyond your control, and you have appropriate documentation in the form of a U of T health certificate or a letter from your registrar, you may write a make-up test. Here are the dates for the make-up tests. **MAKE-UP TESTS CAN ONLY BE WRITTEN AT THESE TIMES, THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS, SO CHECK YOUR SCHEDULE NOW.**

Mid-term test make-up: October 24, 2-4 PM

Final test make-up: December 7, 2-4 PM.

## GETTING HELP IN WRITING YOUR ESSAY

Please remember that your college has a writing lab with lots of experience. These labs are always very popular and very busy, so you need to make appointments well in advance.

## MORE ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University of Toronto treats cases of academic misconduct very seriously. Academic integrity is a fundamental value of learning and scholarship at the UofT. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that your UofT degree is valued and respected as a true signifier of your individual academic achievement. The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters outlines the behaviours that constitute academic misconduct, the processes for addressing academic offences, and the penalties that may be imposed. You are expected to be familiar with the contents of this

document. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
- Making up sources or facts.
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment (this includes working in groups on assignments that are supposed to be individual work).

On tests and exams:

- Using or possessing any unauthorized aid, including a cell phone.
- Looking at someone else's answers.
- Letting someone else look at your answers.
- Misrepresenting your identity.
- Submitting an altered test for re-grading.

Misrepresentation:

- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) doctor's notes.
- Falsifying institutional documents or grades.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following the procedures outlined in the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters*. If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted in this course, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you have questions about appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information from me or other available campus resources like the College Writing Centers, the Academic Success Centre, or the U of T Writing Website.

## STUDENTS WHO NEED ACCOMMODATIONS

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please approach Accessibility Services at (416) 978 8060; [accessibility.utoronto.ca](http://accessibility.utoronto.ca).

Accommodations include getting a volunteer note-taker and writing tests under special conditions.

Do not approach your professor or TA about accommodations. Accessibility services has the necessary expertise, and they provide full confidentiality, so your privacy is protected.