SOC 481H1S: CULTURE AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

2014 – 2015

Class meets: Thursdays 2 - 4 PM, SS 2129

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Course e-mail policies:
1) I will only accept e-mails from your University of Toronto e-mail account. Please put "SOC 481" in your subject line so I know the message is course-related.

2) I cannot provide instant or even overnight response. I will make every effort to reply to e-mails at least twice per week, when I 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 essay 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; some reading materials; and grades. 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 SOC200H1 and at least .5 FCEs at the SOC300 level, preferably selected from the recommended preparation courses: SOC 281, SOC 355, SOC356, SOC381, and SOC382. Students without these prerequisites will be removed at any time they are discovered.

READINGS
        Most of the readings are journal articles that you can easily download. I will make other readings available to you for copying. You MUST read the readings for each class BEFORE the class so that you can participate in class discussion – this is a fourth year seminar, not a lecture course.

INTRODUCTION

This course introduces students to the critical understanding of how social networks and forms of culture are related. This is a huge, multifaceted topic, so we will focus on two relatively important and coherent subtopics.

First, from January 8 through February 5 we will consider how personal networks and personal cultural repertoires affect each other. Personal network variables include the variety of kinds of people a person knows, the density of networks (the extent to which the people a person knows also know each other), and whether the focal person is a "broker" who connects people who are not otherwise connected. Cultural variables include knowledge about genres, high cultural forms and popular ones, tastes, and practices.

Second, from February 12 through April 2 we will consider the network structure of social settings that produce culture. One example of such settings is book clubs, in which people develop their own responses to a novel in the context of the influence relationship structure of their discussion group (February 12). All other examples are networks of cultural production such as interlinked sets of writers, artists, or musicians. We will ask questions such as how network location is related to cultural status, career success, innovation, and strategic network building.

The work of Pierre Bourdieu is foundational and shows up in most of our readings.

The goals of the course are to build your knowledge of this area, to provide you with ample opportunities to think critically and to discuss issues with others, to guide you in developing your own original essay, and by all these means to enhance your scholarly skills.

This is an advanced undergraduate seminar, not a lecture course. It is essential that you read the readings well ahead of time, think about important issues in the readings, and come to class well prepared to join in discussion.

TOPICS AND REQUIRED READINGS

January 8: Introduction

Introduces the course and some basics of network analysis and sociology of culture. Some tips on reading high-level scholarly research papers.

READINGS:
Erickson, Bonnie H. 1996. "Culture, Class, and Connections." *American Journal of Sociology* 102:217-251.
READ pages 217- 225 before this week's class, and the rest before next week's class.

Those of you who have NOT taken SOC 355 or SOC 356 need to improve your familiarity with the basics of network analysis. Please read:
Marin, Alexandra and Barry Wellman. 2011. "Social Network Analysis: An Introduction." Pp. 11-25 in *The Sage Handbook of Social Network Analysis*, edited by J. Scott and P. Carrington. London: Sage.
For your convenience I have put a PDF in Course Materials on Blackboard so you can download it at your convenience.

January 15: Network Variety and Cultural Variety

Erickson (1996) pioneered the study of links between the variety of kinds of people you know, and the extent to which you know something about a wide range of genres. While this is a highly cited and influential paper (winner of the Best Article Award from the American Sociological Association Section on Sociology of Culture), it is not without its critics. Holt (1998) is one of the strongest critics. Kane is also somewhat critical, and introduces new forms of network diversity plus density as predictors of culture.

The optional extra reading shows that today's well wired young people still use their networks to find music. The paper also reports on social status, kinds of media use, and opinion leadership in music.

READINGS:
Erickson, Bonnie H. 1996. "Culture, Class, and Connections." *American Journal of Sociology* 102:217-251.
Holt, Douglas B. 1998. "Does Cultural Capital Structure American Consumption?" *Journal of Consumer Research* 25: 1-25.
Kane, Danielle. 2004. "A network approach to the puzzle of women's cultural participation." *Poetics* 32: 105-127.

Optional extra reading

Tepper, Steven J. and Eszter Hargittai. 2009. "Pathways to music exploration in a digital world." *Poetics* 37: 227-249.

January 22: Network Variety and Political Culture

How does network variety affect political attitudes and political practices? For some interesting work on networks and culture in networks of organizations (not people) see the February 26 readings by Bail (2012) and Wang and Soule (2012).

There is a PDF of Erickson (2006) in Course Materials on Blackboard.

READINGS
Côte, Rochelle and Bonnie H. Erickson. 2009. "Untangling the Roots of Tolerance: How Forms of Social Capital Shape Attitudes toward Ethnic Minorities and Immigrants." *American Behavioral Scientist* 52:1664-1689.
Erickson, Bonnie H. 2006. "Persuasion and perception: new models of network effects on gendered issues." Pp. 293-322 in Brenda O'Neill and Elisabeth Gidengil (eds.), *Gender and Social Capital*. New York: Routledge.
Tindall, David B. 2002. "Social Networks, Identification, and Participation in an Environmental Movement." *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 39:413-452.

January 29: Personal Network Structure and Culture

Here we shift from the variety of kinds of people known, to the structure of the ties that connect them. Burt finds that people in brokerage positions   generate more good ideas and get more recognition of them. Arai and Van Alstyne show that sometimes people get more

information from a few strong ties than from brokerage. Merluzzi is the most recent in a series of papers that show the effects of brokerage positions depend on the prevailing culture in a network.

READINGS

Arai, Sinan and Marshall Van Alstyne. 2011. "The Diversity-Bandwidth Trade-off." *American Journal of Sociology* 117:90-171. Read pages 90-110 (and more if you are interested).
Burt, Ronald S. 2004. "Structural Holes and Good Ideas." *American Journal of Sociology* 110:349-399.
Merluzzi, Jennifer. 2013. "Social capital in Asia: Investigating returns to brokerage in collectivistic national cultures." *Social Science Research* 42: 882-892.

February 5: Effects of Culture on Networks
        Networks affect culture, but culture affects networks too.

READINGS
Lewis, Kevin, Marco Gonzalez, and Jason Kaufman. 2012. "Social selection and peer influence in an online social network." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 109: 68-72.
Lizardo, Omar. 2006. "How Cultural Tastes Shape Personal Networks." .*American Sociological Review* 71:778-807.
Lizardo, Omar. 2011. "Cultural correlates of ego-network closure." *Sociological Perspectives* 54: 479-487.
Vaisey, Stephen and Omar Lizardo. 2010. "Can Cultural Worldviews Influence Network Composition?" *Social Forces* 88:1595-1618.

February 12: Small Groups and Culture
        Here we shift from personal networks to whole networks. This week, we consider the structure of influence relationships in book clubs and their effects on how people interpret and evaluate a novel.

READINGS
Childress, C. Clayton and Noah E. Friedkin. 2012. "Cultural Reception and Production: The Social Construction of Meaning in Book Clubs." *American Sociological Review* 77:45-68.

February 19: ***Reading Week***

February 26: Networks and Attitudes
        Read Erickson (1988) first. This includes an introduction to some popular ways of finding the structure of whole networks, approaches that appear in more sophisticated forms in later readings.
        Bail (2012) and Wang and Soule (2012) are interesting examples of networks in which organizations, not people are the actors. Both have an important role for the centrality of an

organization within its inter-organizational network and show that centrality affects culture AND culture affects centrality. Bail (2012)   shows how displays of hostile attitudes can increase an organization's centrality over time. Wang and Soule (2012) show how centrality in networks of social movement organizations affects the spread of new political tactics. Both of these are rather long, so read for the key ideas and findings not for every little detail.

READINGS
Bail, Christopher A. 2012. "The Fringe Effect: Civil Society Organizations and the Evolution of Media Discourse about Islam since the September 11th Attacks." *American Sociological Review* 77: 855-879.
Bonnie H. Erickson. 1988. "The Relational Basis of Attitudes." Pp. 99-121 in Barry Wellman and S.D. Berkowitz (eds.),   *Social Structures: A Network Approach*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
Wang, Dan J. and Sarah A. Soule. 2012. "Social Movement Organization Collaboration." *American Journal of Sociology* 117: 1674-1722.

March 5: Fields of Cultural Production
Writers, musicians and other culture producers do not work alone – they work in communities. The network structure of such communities is critical. Becker and Bourdieu are the two most important general thinkers about what such communities are like. Bottero and Crosley argue that both Becker and Bourdieu needed more attention to networks, and give two examples of networks in UK music scenes.

READINGS
Becker, Howard S. 1974. "Art as Collective Action." *American Sociological Review* 39:767-776.
Bottero, Wendy and Nick Crossley. 2011. "Worlds, Fields and Networks: Becker, Bourdieu and the Structures of Social Relations." *Cultural Sociology* 5:99-119.
Bourdieu, Pierre. 1983. "The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World Reversed." *Poetics* 12:311-356.

March 12: A Model Analysis of a Literary Field
Anheier et al. map the social structure of a set of German writers, and connect their work to Bourdieu's theories.

READING
Anheier, Helmut K. Jurgen Gerhards, and Frank P. Romo. 1995. "Forms of Capital and Social Structure in Cultural Fields: Examining Bourdieu's Social Topography." *American Journal of Sociology* 100:859-903.

March 19: Personal Networks within Fields
An artist's career success depends on having a good location in the field's network structure (Guiffre, Scott.). Gatekeepers in different subfields need different kinds of networks to work effectively (Foster et al.).

READINGS
Foster, Pacey, Stephen P. Borgatti, and Candace Jones. 2011. "Gatekeeper search and selection strategies: Relational and network governance in a cultural market." *Poetics* 39:247-265.
Giuffre, Katherine. 1999. "Sandpiles of Opportunity: Success in the Art World." *Social Forces* 77:815-32.
Scott, Michael. 2012. "Cultural entrepreneurs, cultural entrepreneurship: Music producers mobilising and converting Bourdieu's alternative capitals." *Poetics* 40:237-255.

March 26: Field Structures and Innovation

READING
Giuffre, Katherine. 2009. "The return of the natives: Globalization and negative ties." *Poetics* 37:333-347.
Phillips, Damon J. 2011. "Jazz and the Disconnected City: City Structural Disconnectedness and the Emergence of a Jazz Canon, 1897-1933." *American Journal of Sociology* 117:420-483. Read pages 420-441.
Uzzi, Brian and Jarrett Spiro. 2005. "Collaboration and Creativity: The Small World Problem." *American Journal of Sociology* 111: 447-504 (read 447-465).

April 2: Your professor's turn!
No one will have time to read anything new this week, so I will entertain you with some results from my new research project, and welcome your comments and questions.

EVALUATION

Forms of evaluation and their contributions to your final grade:

1) Analytic Questions, 10%

For each of 10 weeks, January 15 to March 26, read the week's readings well ahead of time. Construct two analytic questions about the readings. Each question should be one paragraph about half a page long. Submit your questions to the entire class (via Blackboard) two days before the class (that is, on the Tuesday before the class).. You will receive one percentage point towards your final grade for each pair of analytic questions submitted on time.   Since the point of this is to prepare you for good class discussion, late submissions do not count.
Analytic questions address key issues, not picky little matters. Possible topics include key concepts (are they clear? Do they make sense in the context of the central argument of the paper? Would a different conceptualization be better?), measurement (is a key variable measured appropriately?), arguments (does the argument in a reading make sense? Does it leave out something important? Could the argument be generalized to other topics or settings?), and comparison and contrast of different arguments about the same thing.
Your first three readings include advanced examples of such questions: Erickson comments on and criticizes Bourdieu, Holt and Kane comment on and criticize Erickson.

2) Leading discussions, 15%

Each student will help to lead off discussion in one of the weeks January 15-March 26. Students will be assigned to weeks during the first class. There will be 3-4 students leading discussion in each week, so students leading discussion for the same week should meet ahead of time to divide up their work.

Each student will prepare a written set of discussion notes for the class. This will include a short (half page) summary of one important aspect of a reading or readings, some kind of analytic commentary, and questions for class discussion. Students will submit these notes to the whole class via Blackboard ahead of time IN PLACE OF the analytic questions you all submit the Tuesdays before class. Discussion leaders for the week do not need to submit both analytic questions and discussion notes. Each student will make a SHORT presentation based on the discussion notes (5 minutes maximum) and then raise issues for discussion. Other students (the ones not involved in leading that week) should raise related questions and comments of their own. After the discussion leaders have finished, we will move on to any remaining questions and issues contributed by others.

Each group of discussion leaders will get a group grade. The instructor will rate the overall quality of the group contributions and give the same grade to each group member.

3) Class attendance, 10%

You will receive 1% towards your final grade, to a maximum of 10%, for each class which you attend.

4) Class participation, 10%

You will receive 1% towards your final grade, to a maximum of 10%, for each class in which you make contributions to class discussions. Make it easy for your instructor to keep track – before your first contribution to a class meeting, announce your name.

Your contributions to class discussion should be respectful of other students. Engage in civilized debate, working towards a common goal of deeper understanding and learning. Do not hog all the air time – everyone needs to contribute.

5) Essay proposal, 10%. Due January 29 in class.

Write a short (1-3 pages) description of the topic you would like to write on for your essay. To this, add a starting reading list of scholarly books or articles you are thinking of using. The reading list is not part of the 1-3 page limit, that is just for your text. The proposal is an important way to make sure your topic is suitable for our course, and, to get some initial feedback from me.

When thinking about possible topics, do not limit yourself to the topics in the first few weeks! There is lots of fun stuff in the second half of the course. Skim readings for topics that seem interesting to you, and if they appeal, read them more seriously and start thinking about possible related topics for your essay.

Consulting with me before you write your proposal is highly recommended.

6) Extended essay proposal, 20%. Due February 26 in class.

Write a half-length version of your essay (no more than 8 pages of text). Use this opportunity to develop and/or modify the ideas in your proposal.

7) Essay, 25%. Due April 2 in class.

PROCEDURES

There is a strict page limit of no more than 15 pages for the essay, double spaced, with font size 12 points or larger and margins at least 1". References, figures and tables are not included in the page limit.

Please use ASA referencing style. Include a cover page with your name and student number, course information, and essay title. Please number your pages, starting with 1 for the first page of your text (not the cover page).

You must hand in a hard copy of your essay AND you must submit it to Turnitin.com, on or before April 2.

NO FAX OR E-MAIL SUBMISSIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

Submitting your paper to Turnitin.com: Detailed instructions will be provided. Please note the following paragraph:

"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.comTu 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."

TOPICS

Most students will pick a course topic that interests them and pursue it in greater depth by finding more scholarly work on the topic and developing an argument based on this richer set of materials.

Students who have completed both SOC 200 (methods) and SOC 300 (multivariate statistics) may consider doing a research paper using publicly available data sets. There are two kinds of good Canadian data sets that include network data similar to that in Erickson (1996): the Canadian Federal Election studies, 2004 onwards, and the General Social Survey of Canada, 2008. These data sets include variables that can be read as forms of culture. The election studies include a variety of questions about politics. The GSS includes questions about internet use, trust, political participation, volunteering, and religiosity. This is a challenging option, so if you are thinking about it, talk to me SOON.

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 on ACADEMIC INTEGRITY below.

LATE ESSAYS

If your essay proposal, extended essay proposal, or final essay is handed in late, I will deduct 10% of the maximum possible grade for *each weekday* the work is late. The maximum penalty is 100% of your grade, for papers 10 or more days late.

PERMISSION FOR LATE SUBMISSIONS OF ESSAY PROPOSALS AND ESSAYS

If you have acceptable reasons concerning things beyond your control, you may apply for permission to 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 supply a duly completed Verification of Student Illness or Injury form (available at www.illnessverification.utoroto.ca). This form may only be completed by a physician, surgeon, nurse practitioner, dentist or clinical psychologist. NO other medical documentation will be accepted. A doctor's note is NOT sufficient. Submit the form to the instructor in a sealed envelope addressed to the instructor, in class or during the instructor's office hours. 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.

In case of personal or family crisis, get a letter from your registrar. College registrars are very experienced, very discreet, and there to help you. A letter from your registrar should also be submitted to your instructor in a sealed envelope addressed to the instructor, during class or during the instructor's office hours.

Submit your documentation to your professor only, not the Sociology Department.

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.

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.

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.

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

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.