

**SOC280H1F: SOCIOLOGY OF CULTURE**  
**Professor Vanina Leschziner**  
**Department of Sociology**  
**University of Toronto**  
**Fall 2018**

*Location and Time:* MP103, Wednesday, 10AM-12PM

*Office Hours:* Thurs. 3-5PM, Room 398, 725 Spadina Avenue

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***Brief Overview of the Course***

This course introduces students to the sociology of culture, understood as an area of study that examines (one) social influences on cultural developments, and (2) cultural influences on social processes. While there is a distinct set of objects, practices, and organizations that are explicitly “cultural” (e.g., art, music, food, fashion) most of what we call “culture” happens beyond those domains. Thus, in this course, we will examine culture not as those narrow domains, but as an approach to the study of social processes; that is, as shared meanings, shared orientations to the world, shared repertoires of action, or socio-cognitive schemas that shape social life.

The focus of this course is on the role of culture, the widely shared values, beliefs, logics of action, and practices that create patterns in the social world. This course is organized around theoretical approaches rather than substantive areas of research, with the goal of providing students with analytical tools to understand the social world, instead of with sets of examples about how “culture” works here or there. We will consider the role of culture in large societal contexts, as well as in small, delimited settings (e.g., occupations).

The course will begin with an overview of classical texts in sociology. These texts were written prior to the advent of the sociology of culture, but they provided the analytical, epistemological, and methodological foundation from which later approaches were developed. From the classics, the course will move to more contemporary times, and review some of the most important theories and perspectives in the sociology of culture of the past few decades. By the end of the course, students will have been introduced to several of the major perspectives in the sociology of culture, and should have gained a basic understanding of how culture shapes social processes.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** The prerequisite to take this course is SOC101Y1 or SOC102H1 or SOC100H1. Students without this prerequisite will be removed at any time they are discovered.

### ***Class Format, Requirements, and Grading***

- 1- in-class test, October 24 ..... 35%
- 2- take-home test, due November 21 ..... 40%
- 3- in-class test, December 5 ..... 25%

### **Attendance**

Attendance is mandatory. Students are responsible for all material presented in class. Students who are unable to attend class are responsible for obtaining information about any announcements that may have been made in class as well as notes on the material covered from their classmates.

Proper documentation from a University of Toronto Student Medical Certificate, doctor's note, or college registrar is required to justify an absence.

**Deadlines:** Late work will not be accepted unless submitted with proper documentation from your physician and a University of Toronto Student Medical Certificate, or from your college registrar. See below for details.

### **Documentation from your Physician or College Registrar**

If you miss a test or a paper deadline, do not contact the instructor unless you have followed the steps described here.

In case of illness, you must supply a duly completed Verification of Student Illness, or Injury form (available at [www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca](http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca)). A doctor's note is also acceptable but *must* contain the start data and anticipated end date of the illness. The form must be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to the instructor, and submitted with your work at class or during office hours, within seven days of the missed assignment

If a personal or family crisis prevents you from meeting a deadline, you must get a letter from your college registrar (it is a good idea anyway to advise your college registrar if a crisis is interfering with your studies). The letter must be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to the instructor, and submitted with your work at class or during office hours.

### **Readings**

**BOOK SELECTIONS AND JOURNAL ARTICLES** Book selections and all journal articles will be available on the Blackboard course website, under "Course Materials."

Students are solely responsible for obtaining and reading all required materials before class. Give yourself enough time to deal with any problems or delays accessing the readings that may arise so you can be sure to come to class prepared to discuss the materials. Problems accessing readings (the packet or online articles) will not excuse failure to demonstrate having done the required readings.

### **Assignments**

#### ***In-class test***

There will be two in-class closed-book tests on October 24 and December 5.

### ***Make-up test***

Students who miss the test for a valid reason and wish to take a make-up test must give the instructor a written request for special consideration -- no later than 5 days after the date of the test -- which explains why the test was missed, accompanied by proper documentation from a physician or college registrar (see above). A student who misses a test and the subsequent make-up test for a valid reason will not have a third chance to take the test, and the mark assigned for the test will be a zero.

### ***Take-home Test***

The take-home test is due on November 21, and it should be no more than 2,000 words (double spaced, 12 point type). Students will receive the questions before the Reading Week. Take-home exams are to be submitted at the beginning of the class on the due date in TWO forms: as hard copy, and electronic copy to be submitted to <http://turnitin.com>. Take-home exams are not to be submitted via email or fax, or to the receptionist at the Department of Sociology.

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* reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of those papers. The terms that apply to the University's use of the *Turnitin.com* service are described on the *Turnitin.com* web site.

Assignments not submitted through Turnitin will receive a grade of zero (0 %) unless students instead provide, along with their exams, sufficient secondary material (e.g., reading notes, outlines of the paper, rough drafts of the final draft, etc.) to establish that the exam they submit is truly their own. The alternative (not submitting via Turnitin) is in place because, strictly speaking, using Turnitin is voluntary for students at the University of Toronto.

**Plagiarism:** Be careful to avoid plagiarism. It is a serious academic offense with serious penalties (see the "Code of Behavior on Academic Matters"). If you are using somebody else's ideas, do not present them as your own. Give proper references if you are using somebody else's ideas, and use quotation marks if you are quoting. When in doubt, it is always safer to over-reference --you are not going to be punished for that. Please also be aware that turning in an old paper, or large parts thereof, for credit in a second (or third etc.) course, is considered an academic offense that results in students being referred off to the Office of Academic Integrity.

### **Accessibility Needs**

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: [\\_disability.services@utoronto.ca](mailto:_disability.services@utoronto.ca) or [\\_http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility\\_](http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility).

### ***Class Schedule***

September 12

INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS “CULTURE”?  
THE SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

September 19

CLASSICAL FOUNDATIONS I: CULTURE AND MEANING

Reading: Karl Marx, “The Fetishism of Commodities” from *Capital*, in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert C. Tucker (Norton, 1978), pp. 319-329.

Reading: Max Weber, “Calvinism” in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Routledge, 1930), pp. 98-128.

September 26

CLASSICAL FOUNDATIONS II: CULTURE AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Reading: Emile Durkheim, selection from “Conclusion” in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (The Free Press, 1995), pp. 433-448.

Reading: Georg Simmel, selections from “The Isolated Individual and the Dyad” in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, edited by Kurt H. Wolff (The Free Press, 1950), pp. 122-128, 135-136.

October 3

THE CONTEMPORARY STUDY OF CULTURE

Sewell, William, Jr. 1999. “The Concept(s) of Culture,” in *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture*, edited by Victoria E. Bonnell and Lynn A. Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press), pp. 35-61.

October 10

CULTURE AND MEANING

Clifford Geertz, “Thick Description: Towards an Interpretive Theory of Culture,” chapter 1 in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (Basic Books, 1973), pp. 3-30.

October 17

CULTURAL REPERTOIRES

Ann Swidler, selections from “Finding Culture,” chapter 1, “Repertoires,” chapter 2, “Conclusion: How Culture Matters” in *Talk of Love* (The University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp. 11-23, 24-34, 160-180.

October 24

*In-class Test*

October 31

CULTURE AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Paul DiMaggio, "Review: On Pierre Bourdieu," *American Journal of Sociology* 84 (1979): 1460-1474.

David L. Swartz, "Metaprinciples for Sociological Research in a Bourdieusian Perspective," chapter 1 in *Bourdieu and Historical Analysis*, edited by Philip S. Gorski (Duke University Press, 2013), pp. 20-35.

November 7

Fall Reading Week

November 14

SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND CULTURAL TASTE

Omar Lizardo and Sara Skiles, "Cultural Consumption in the Fine and Popular Arts Realms," *Sociology Compass* 2 (2008): 485-502.

November 21

THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF CULTURAL WORK

Howard S. Becker, "Art Worlds and Collective Activity," chapter 1 in *Art Worlds* (University of California Press, [1982] 2008), pp. 1-39.

*Take-Home Exam due*

November 28

THE COGNITIVE DIMENSIONS OF CULTURE

Eviatar Zerubavel, "Introduction: In the Beginning," "Islands of Meaning," chapter 1, and "The Great Divide," chapter 2, in *The Fine Line: Making Distinctions in Everyday Life* (The University of Chicago Press, 1993), pp. 1-32.

December 5

*In-class Test*

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!