

**SOC 483Y1Y: ADVANCED SEMINAR
CULTURE AND COGNITION
Professor Vanina Leschziner
Department of Sociology
University of Toronto
2012-2013**

Location and Time: IN312, Wednesday, 10AM-12PM

Office Hours: Tuesday 2-4PM, Room 398, 725 Spadina (third floor)

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Brief Overview of the Course

This course is organized as a discussion seminar. This means that you **MUST** do **ALL** the readings and come prepared to critically discuss them in class. The seminar is designed to afford you with the opportunity to actively participate in open-ended discussions of interesting ideas, in an environment where you can speak often, hone your analytical skills, experiment with your research inclinations, and improve your writing skills.

This is a Theory and Research seminar around the specific topic of Culture and Cognition. Readings and discussions will be heavily theory-oriented. But, as a Theory and Research seminar, the main goal is not simply to read theory and discuss it (as interesting an endeavor as this may be), but to learn theories, concepts, frameworks and ideas in order to apply them to the analysis of the social world. Culture and Cognition are central aspects of our everyday life, and we will be bringing our native's knowledge of the social world to critically evaluate the readings. We will first gain an understanding of the theoretical foundations of Culture and Cognition, beginning from the classical sociological theories. Then, we will get an overview of the contemporary literature in Culture and Cognition, exploring particular perspectives and areas of research in this area.

What is Culture and Cognition? It is a new and small area in Sociology. It is not the sum of its two parts --some Culture and some Cognition. Rather, the area is defined by relatively specific conceptual interests and empirical approaches to the study of culture and cognition as phenomena that are observable in their association at a social level, and that are thus subject to systematic study. As an area of study, Culture and Cognition is associated to, but nonetheless distinct from, the Sociology of Culture. Scholars in Culture and Cognition are interested in studying how actors actively use culture through shared cognitive schema that are embedded in larger social structures. They study the actions, practices, discourses or patterns through which actors put cognition at work. And they use methods to empirically identify how actors put their cognition at work rather than assume how they do it. **BUT**, what really is culture and cognition is a question that we will explore and debate *as* we learn about it throughout the year.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The prerequisite to take this course is SOC201H1 or SOC203H1 and a 300+ level SOC course. Students without this prerequisite will be removed at any time they are discovered.

Class Format, Requirements, and Grading

- 1- in-class test, November 28 25%
- 2- short paper, due January 30 15%
- 3- final paper, due April 3 35%
- 4- leading class discussion on assigned dates 15%
- 5- participation in class discussions 10%

Papers

The short and final papers will be based on the same topic. You may choose to write a research paper, a research proposal, or an analytical paper. Whichever you choose, it should be a topic that is suited to this course, *to be approved by the instructor by November 21*. Working on the same topic throughout the year will give you a chance to gradually build on your initial ideas, incorporate more perspectives as you learn about them, discuss them in class with the rest of the group, and develop a more complex analysis for your final paper.

The short paper should be no more than 8 pages, and the final paper no more than 20 pages (all double spaced, 12 point type).

Papers 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>

“To deter and detect plagiarism, this course will make use of the turnitin.com system. In addition to submitting a hard copy of the research proposal in class on the due date, each student must upload the proposal to Turnitin.com. Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to textual similarity review to detect plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com 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.”

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.

Deadlines: Late work will not be accepted unless submitted with proper documentation from your physician (and a University of Toronto Student Medical Certificate) or college registrar within two days.

In-class test

There will be one in-class closed-book test at the end of the first term, on November xxx. Request for a make-up test will only be granted with proper documentation (see above).

Leading and participating in class discussion

You will be scheduled to lead discussion on assigned days to be arranged with the instructor at the beginning of the term. The days you are leading discussion you are expected to provide a handout with: a) a summary of the main points of the readings, b) definitions of key concepts that are dealt with in the reading, and 3) at least two questions you would like the class to discuss in regard to the reading.

You will also be evaluated for your contributions on days when you are not scheduled to lead discussion. I will consider both the quantity and quality of your contributions. Be supportive of your fellow students when they speak and they are likely to be supportive when your turn comes!

Readings

BOOK SELECTIONS Some book selections will be available on the Blackboard course website, under “Course Materials,” and others will be available as a coursepack at the University of Toronto Bookstore, 214 College St. You should also purchase Zerubavel’s *Social Mindscapes* at the bookstore.

JOURNAL ARTICLES Links to the required journal articles are posted on the Blackboard course website, under “Course Materials.”

Students are solely responsible for obtaining and reading all required materials before class. Please 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.

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_ or [_http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility_](http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility_) .

Class Schedule

Fall Term

September 12

INTRODUCTION WHAT IS CULTURE AND COGNITION?
THEORY & RESEARCH

September 19

CLASSICAL FOUNDATIONS I: DURKHEIM AND SIMMEL
SOCIAL STRUCTURE, NETWORKS, AND THE CONSTITUTION OF SELVES

Reading: Emile Durkheim, selection from “Conclusion” in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (The Free Press, 1955), pp. 433-448.

Reading: Georg Simmel, selections from “The Isolated Individual and the Dyad” and “Secrecy” in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, edited by Kurt H. Wolff (The Free Press, 1950), pp. 122-128, 135-136, 330-333.

September 26

CLASSICAL FOUNDATIONS II: MARX AND WEBER
CULTURE, POWER, AND IDEAS

Reading: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, selection from *The German Ideology*, in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert C. Tucker (Norton, 1978), pp. 149-155.

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.

October 3

MIND, LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL INTERACTION

Reading: George H. Mead, selections from “Mind,” chapter 2, and “The Self,” chapter 3 in *Mind, Self, and Society* (The University of Chicago Press, 1934), pp. 75-82, 135-144, 152-178, 192-200.

Reading: Ferdinand de Saussure, selections from “Introduction,” and “General Principles” in *Course in General Linguistics* (Mc Graw-Hill, 1966), pp.7-17, 65-70, 81-87.

October 10

THOUGHT AND STRUCTURE

Reading: Mary Douglas, "Introduction," selections from "The Abominations of Leviticus" *Purity and Danger* (Praeger, 1966), pp. 1-6, 41-44, 51-57, 94-104.

Reading: Claude Lévi-Strauss, selection from "The Science of the Concrete," chapter 1 in *The Savage Mind* (The University of Chicago Press, 1966), pp. 1-22.

October 17

MEANING AND PRACTICE

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

Reading: Marshall Sahlins, "Conclusion: Utility and the Cultural Order" in *Culture and Practical Reason* (The University of Chicago Press, 1976), pp. 205-221.

October 24

THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF EXPERIENCE

Reading: Erving Goffman, selections from "Introduction," "Primary Frameworks," chapter 2, and "The Anchoring of Activity," chapter 8 in *Frame Analysis* (Harper Colophon Books, 1974), pp. 1-16, 21-28, 247-257.

Reading: Erving Goffman, "Embarrassment and Social Organization" in *Interaction Ritual* (Aldine Publishing Company, 1967), pp. 97-112.

October 31

SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONDITIONS FOR PERCEPTION

Reading: Ludwik Fleck, "How the Modern Concept of Syphilis Originated," chapter 1, and selections from "Epistemological Conclusions from the Established History of a Concept," chapter 2 in *Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact* (The University of Chicago Press, 1979), pp.1-19, 20-23, 38-51.

Reading: Michael Baxandall, selections from "The Period Eye" in *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy* (Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 29-40, 94-102.

November 7

CLASSIFYING

Reading: Michel Foucault, "Preface," selections from "Classifying," chapter 5 and "The Limits of Representation," chapter 7 in *The Order of Things* (Vintage Books, 1970), pp. xv-xxiv, 128-138, 157-162, 226-232.

November 14

CATEGORIZING: MENTAL AND CULTURAL PROCESSES

Reading: Eleanor Rosch, "Principles of Categorization" in *Cognition and Categorization*, edited by Eleanor Rosch and Barbara Lloyd (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1978), pp. 27-48.

Reading: Roy D'Andrade, "Cultural Representations and Psychological Processes," chapter 8 in *The Development of Cognitive Anthropology* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 182-217.

November 21

ATTENDING

Reading: Eviatar Zerubavel, "The Sociology of the Mind," chapter 1, "Social Optics," chapter 2, "The Social Gates of Consciousness," chapter 3, and "The Social Division of the World," chapter 4 in *Social Mindscales* (Harvard University Press, 1997), pp. 1-22, 23-34, 35-52, 53-67.

Reading: Karen Cerulo, "What's the Worst That Could Happen?," chapter 1, and selection from "Practicing Positive Asymmetry" in *Never Saw it Coming* (The University of Chicago Press, 2006), pp. 1-16, 95-121.

Paper Topic to be approved by this date!!

November 28

In-class Test!!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!!

Winter Term

January 9

COGNITION IN PRACTICE

Reading: Jean Lave, selections from "Introduction: Psychology and Anthropology I," chapter 1, "Inside the Supermarket (Outdoors) and from the Veranda," chapter 5 in *Cognition in Practice* (Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 6-18, 97-123, 148-169.

January 16

SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND CULTURE

Reading: Pierre Bourdieu, "Introduction," selection from "The Habitus and the Space of Life-Styles," chapter 3, and "Conclusion: Classes and Classifications" in *Distinction* (Harvard University Press, 1984), pp. 1-7, 169-177, 466-484.

January 23

COGNITIVE SCHEMA

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

January 30

CULTURAL REPERTOIRES

Reading: Ann Swidler, "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies," *American Sociological Review* 51 (1986): 273-286.

Reading: Robert Darnton, "Workers Revolt: The Great Cat Massacre of the Rue Saint-Séverin," chapter 2 in *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (Basic Books, 1984), pp. 75-104.

Short Paper Due!!

February 6

THE WORKING OF CLASSIFICATIONS IN PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES

Reading: Rick Mayes and Allan Horwitz, "DSM-III and the Revolution in the Classification of Mental Illness," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 41 (2005): 249-267.

Reading: Karen Cerulo, "Institutionalizing Right, Wrong, and Undecided," chapter 4 in *Deciphering Violence* (Routledge, 1998), pp. 77-110.

February 13

COGNIZING

Reading: Edwin Hutchins, selections from "introduction," "Navigation as Computation," chapter 2, "The Implementation of Contemporary Pilotage," chapter 3, "Cultural Cognition," chapter 9 in *Cognition in the Wild* (The MIT Press, 1995), pp. xi-xiv, 65-67, 92-99, 110-116, 164-174, 353-374.

February 20

Reading Week

February 27

ASSESSING AND INTERPRETING INFORMATION

Reading: Daniel Gilbert, "How Mental Systems Believe," *American Psychologist* 46 (1991): 107-119.

Reading: Diane Vaughan, "Signals and Interpretive Work: The Role of Culture in a Theory of Practical Action," chapter 3 in *Culture in Mind: Toward a Sociology of Culture and Cognition*, edited by Karen Cerulo (Routledge, 2002), pp. 28-54.

March 6

CULTURE AS PROCESS

Reading: Ann Swidler, selections from "Introduction," "Finding Culture," chapter 1, "Repertoires," chapter 2, "Codes, Contexts, and Institutions," chapter 8, "Conclusion: How Culture Matters" in *Talk of Love* (The University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp. 1-6, 11-23, 24-34, 160-180, 187-196.

March 13

INSTITUTIONALIZING COGNITIVE SCHEMA

Reading: Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powell, "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields," *American Sociological Review* 48 (1983): 147-160.

Reading: Roger Friedland and Robert Alford, "Bringing Society Back in: Symbols, Practices, and Institutional Contradictions," in *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, edited by Walter Powell and Paul DiMaggio (The University of Chicago Press, 1991): 232-263.

March 20

INSTITUTIONAL CONDITIONS FOR COGNITIVE INNOVATION

Reading: Ronald Burt, "Structural Holes and Good Ideas," *American Journal of Sociology* 110 (2004): 349-399.

Reading: Elizabeth Clemens and James Cook, "Politics and Institutionalism: Explaining Durability and Change," *Annual Review of Sociology* 25 (1999): 441-466.

March 27

THE DUALITY OF COGNITION AND INSTITUTIONS

Reading: John Mohr and Vincent Duquenne, "The Duality of Culture and Practice: Poverty Relief in New York City, 1888-1917," *Theory and Society* 26 (1997): 305-356.

April 3

CONCLUSION

Final Paper Due!!