

SOC280H1F: SOCIOLOGY OF CULTURE**LEC0101/LEC9101****University of Toronto****Fall 2020****Instructor:** Catherine Yeh**Email:** catherine.yeh@mail.utoronto.ca**Class Time: Thursdays, from 12-2**

- 1 hour of asynchronous pre-recorded lecture (watch before live class)
- 1 hour of live class at **1pm EST Thursday** (on BB Collaborate)

Office Hours: Monday 3-5pm EST by appointment (on BB Collaborate)**TA:** Gordon Brett**Email:** gordon.brett@utoronto.ca**Office Hours:** TBA and by appointment (on BB Collaborate)**Course Description and Objectives**

When we think about culture in our everyday lives, we tend to think of cultural objects (i.e. art or music) or cultural beliefs (i.e. religion and values). In this course, we will learn about the social dimensions of what we often consider to be “cultural.” How is culture produced? How do people interpret and use culture in their lives? How does culture get mobilized to reproduce inequality?

We will begin with an overview of the sociological perspective on culture and sociological theories on how to conceptualize culture. Then, we will read articles that provide empirical examples of cultural production and consumption. After familiarizing ourselves with how sociologists see cultural production and consumption as “social,” we will engage critically in thinking about how culture relates to social inequality. We will wrap up the course with a methodological discussion of how sociologists can analyze something as complicated as culture.

In this course, you will:

- Gain familiarity with key concepts in the field of sociology of culture such as toolkit, production of culture, omnivorousness, symbolic boundaries, and cultural capital
- Begin to think critically and draw connections between culture, society, and social inequality
- Develop important reading and writing skills (i.e. analyzing and synthesizing) in preparation for higher level sociology courses
- Draw critical connections between quantitative/qualitative methods and the analysis of culture

Prerequisites

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.

Online Course Format

I will pre-record a 1-hour lecture and upload it to Quercus by 9am EST on Thursdays and you should watch this lecture before meeting live on BB Collaborate at 1pm EST Thursday. I have opted for this format so students can have 1 hour of lecture that is guaranteed to be free of potential internet speed and/or software issues with a live stream. We will start live class at 1pm on Thursday to give you time to watch the lecture from 12-1pm if you need to.

Live classes will be from **1-2pm EST Thursday on BB Collaborate**. There will be an in-class activity or quiz that is due by the end of live class, so attendance is mandatory (more on this below). Live classes will not be recorded. If you are in a different time zone, it is your responsibility to determine when live class time is for you.

Course Evaluation

- 10% - 10 Article Summaries (250 words) – worth 1% each
- 20% - 10 In-Class Activities/Quizzes on Quercus – worth 2% each
- 25% - Writing Assignment 1 (800-1000 words) due October 23 at 11:59pm
- 25% - Writing Assignment 2 (800-1000 words) due November 27 at 11:59pm
- 20% - Final In-Class Test on December 3 from 12-2pm EST

Article Summaries

For each week where there are readings assigned, you will submit a **250-word summary** of the reading. If there are 2 readings assigned that week, you can choose one reading to summarize.

Each article summary is due on Quercus midnight before class (11:59pm on Wednesday). **No late article summaries will be accepted unless proper documentation is provided.**

Summaries are meant to help you think through what the “main point” or “main argument” of the article is. When writing them, you should answer the following questions: What is the research question/topic? How does the author attempt to address this question? You do not need citations for summaries.

Summaries should not exceed 300 words. Put the word count in brackets at the end of the summary. **All summaries excess of 300 words will be graded as 0.**

Summaries will be graded according to the following criteria:

Grade	Comment
0	Incomplete, excess of 300 words, copying the abstract, late
0.5	Completed but does not respond to the two questions underlined above
1	Completed and responds to the two questions

In-Class Activities/Quizzes

For each week where there are readings assigned, there will be an in-class activity or quiz that is handed in through Quercus Quizzes by the end of live class. You will be given time to complete these activities/quizzes during class time. **No late in-class activities or quizzes will be accepted and there are no makeup opportunities unless proper procedure is followed.**

In-Class Quizzes/Activities will be graded according to the following criteria:

Grade	Comment
0	Incomplete, late
1	Completed but only addresses questions/prompt partially, does not show engagement with course concepts
2	Completed, addresses questions/prompts fully, shows engagement with course concepts

Writing Assignments 1 and 2

There will be two writing assignments of 800-1000 words each during the term. I will provide the assignment prompts during the course.

In-Class Final Test

There will be an in-class final test which will cover materials from **lecture and readings from the entire term**. The test will be held during the scheduled live class time.

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 (see section on procedure for missed tests and late submissions). 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.

Late Assignment Penalty

Unless submitted with proper documentation (see section below for the proper procedure), late papers will incur a 5% penalty for each day it is late. The highest possible grade for a paper submitted a day late would be 95%, 90% for papers 2 days late, 85% for papers 3 days late, etc.

Procedure for Missed Tests and Late Submissions

1. If you miss tests or assignments for **medical reasons**, you do not need to submit the usual documentation (i.e. medical notes or verification of illness forms). Instead, please email the instructor AND declare you absence on ACORN.
2. If you miss tests or assignments for **non-medical reasons** (i.e. family or personal reasons), you will need to have your college registrar contact the instructor by email.

Email Policy

Both the instructor and TA will reserve a 48-hour rule when it comes to email. We aim to answer emails from students on weekdays within 48 hours, with the exception of weekends and holidays. When communicating via email to the instructor or the TA, please put “SOC280” in the subject line and use your official UofT email. Please be clear, polite, and succinct in your emails. Emails are meant for quick communication and questions. If you would like to discuss an assignment, please come to office hours.

Office Hours

My office hours are by appointment on Mondays from 3-5pm. Each appointment is a 15-minute slot. Office hours will be through BB Collaborate. If you wish to schedule an appointment with me, please use the appointment slots on Quercus: Click on the “Calendar” in the menu on the left-hand side, then go to “Find Appointments” on the right-hand side. If you are unable to find a slot that works for you, please email me.

TA office hours will be posted before the 2 writing assignments and before the final test. The office hours will also be by appointment on BB Collaborate. You can make an appointment the same way you make an appointment with me.

Regrading Policy

Please read the TA’s comments carefully after you receive your assignment grade. If after reading your comments on your test or assignment, you feel that your grade is unjustified, please contact the TA to present your case for a regrade. You have until **one week** after the assignment is returned to do this. In your email to the TA, please respond substantively to the comments provided on the assignment. Be clear on where and why you think that comment is misjudged. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the TA’s response, you may then contact me. **No regrading requests to the TA will be considered after a week of the grade being released.** Please be courteous in your regrading request to the TA.

Turnitin

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 assignment, sufficient secondary material (e.g., reading notes, outlines of the paper, rough drafts of the final draft, etc.) to establish that the assignment 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 someone 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. Here are some tips for avoiding plagiarism: <http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize/>

Accessibility Needs

If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, please visit <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/departments/accessibility-services/> as soon as possible. Students must make needed and appropriate arrangements at the beginning of the semester and obtain proper documentation. This documentation must be provided to the instructor at the beginning of the semester.

Class Schedule and Readings (all readings posted on Quercus)

Week 1 (September 10)

- Introduction, no readings

Week 2 (September 17): What is the Sociology of Culture?

- Roy, William G. and Timothy J. Dowd 2010. “What is Sociological about Music?” *Annual Review of Sociology* 36:183-203.

Week 3 (September 24): Culture in Action

- Swidler, Ann. 2001. *Talk of Love: How Culture Matters*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Pp. 11-34)
- Vaisey, Stephen. 2008. “Socrates, Skinner, and Aristotle: Three Ways of Thinking About Culture in Action.” *Sociological Forum* 23(3):603-613.

Week 4 (October 1): The Production of Culture Perspective

- Griswold, Wendy. 1981. “American Character and the American Novel: An Expansion of Reflection Theory in the Sociology of Literature.” *American Journal of Sociology* 86(4):740-765.

Week 5 (October 8): Culture and the Economy

- Mears, Ashley. 2011. “Pricing Looks: Circuits of Value in Fashion Modeling Markets.” Pp. 155-177 in *The Worth of Goods: Valuation and Pricing in the Economy*, edited by Jens Becker and Patrik Aspens. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Velthuis, Olav. 2006. *Talking Prices: Symbolic Meanings of Prices on the Market for Contemporary Art*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (Pp. 1-11, 179-184)

Week 6 (October 15): Culture and Consumption

- Askin, Noah and Michael Mauskopf. 2017. "What Makes Popular Culture Popular? Product Features and Optimal Differentiation in Music." *American Sociological Review* 82(5):910-944.

Week 7 (October 22): Culture and Meaning

- McDonnell, Terence E. 2010. "Cultural Objects as Objects: Materiality, Urban Space, and the Interpretation of AIDS Campaigns in Accra, Ghana." *American Journal of Sociology* 115(6):1800–1852.
- Writing Assignment 1 Due Friday October 23

Week 8 (October 29): Culture as Capital

- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1986. "The Forms of Capital." Pp. 241–58. in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, edited by John G. Richardson. New York: Greenwood Press.

Week 9 (November 5): Culture and Inequality

- Rivera, Lauren A. 2012. "Hiring as Cultural Matching: The Case of Elite Professional Service Firms." *American Sociological Review* 77(6):999–1022.
- Lareau, Annette. 2002. "Invisible Inequality: Social Class and Childrearing in Black Families and White Families." *American Sociological Review* 67(5):747–76.

November 9: Last day to drop F courses

Reading Week No Class (November 12)

Week 10 (November 19): Culture and Symbolic Boundaries

- Bryson, Bethany. 1996. "'Anything But Heavy Metal': Symbolic Exclusion and Musical Dislikes." *American Sociological Review* 61(5):884-899.

Week 11 (November 26): Wrap Up/So How Should Sociologists Study Culture?

- Lamont, Michèle and Ann Swidler. 2014. "Methodological Pluralism and the Possibilities and Limits of Interviewing." *Qualitative Sociology* 37(2):153-171.
- Writing Assignment 2 Due Friday November 27

Week 12 (December 3)

- In-class final test from 12-2pm EST