



# UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Faculty of Social Sciences  
Department of Sociology  
<http://www.soci.ucalgary.ca>

## SOCI401 Sociology of Culture

- |               |                        |           |
|---------------|------------------------|-----------|
| • Winter 2019 | • T,Th 9:30 – 10:45 AM | • KNB 131 |
|---------------|------------------------|-----------|

**Instructor:** Professor Matt Patterson  
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**Office Hours:** Thursdays 2:00 – 4:00 PM

### Course Description

The sociologist Raymond Williams once wrote that “culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language.” Indeed, culture means many things to many people. It is also a topic on which fields across the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences claim some authority. In this course we will examine some of the ways that sociologists have attempted to define and study culture. In particular, we will focus on two highly interrelated approaches. The first treats culture as a collection of shared meanings (e.g. ideas, values, beliefs) and practices (e.g. behaviours, rituals) that bind a society together. Often called “cultural sociology”, this approach uses culture to explain other social phenomena by showing how they are shaped by shared meanings and practices. There are cultural sociologies of finance (Zuckerman 1999), gender (Martin 1998), ethnicity (Brubaker et al. 2004), politics (Alexander 2010), and countless other topics. This approach will be the focus of Unit #1., which will take up the first six weeks of the term.

The second approach, often called “the sociology of culture”, treats culture as a distinct institutional arena that includes the production and consumption of art, entertainment, fashion, cuisine, music,

and other “cultural” products. In this approach, culture is taken as the topic of analysis, the phenomena that needs to be explained. The sociology of culture seeks to answer questions such as how certain cultural products came to exist and why people are attracted to certain cultural products while being repulsed by others (Bourdieu 1984; Bryson 1996). In many cases, attempts to explain the production and consumption of culture also emphasize shared meanings and practices. Thus, there is a significant overlap between cultural sociology and the sociology of culture.

The sociology of culture will be the focus of Units #2 and #3 which will focus on cultural production and cultural consumption respectively.

In learning about these two approaches and their intersections, we will discuss a wide and diverse array of topics, including children’s literature, rap music, William Shakespeare, quilts, Hank Williams, elite chefs in Manhattan, the Alberta tar sands, foie gras, Rihanna, and much, much more.

## Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes

- Develop an in-depth understanding of major sociological approaches to defining and studying culture.
- Ability to critically evaluate and synthesize existing sociological theory.
- Ability to write a theoretically-informed analytic paper with an original sociological thesis.
- Ability to grasp and critically evaluate challenging readings.
- Oral communication skills through group and class discussion.

## Required Textbooks, Readings, Materials

Most readings for this course are available through the University of Calgary Library website. These readings can be accessed through the links provided in the syllabus (see below) or by searching for the articles through the library website.

Readings that are not available through the library or via a link can be downloaded within D2L.

For each week, the syllabus provides a list of supplementary readings. These readings are not required, but are there for your interest and for further research for your written assignments.

## Methods of Evaluation

| Assignment        | Due Date                            | % of Final Grade |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| Test #1           | Tuesday, February 26 <sup>th</sup>  | 20%              |
| Test #2           | Tuesday, March 26 <sup>th</sup>     | 10%              |
| Test #3           | Thursday, April 11 <sup>th</sup>    | 10%              |
| Position Paper #1 | Thursday, February 14 <sup>th</sup> | 25%              |
| Position Paper #2 | Monday, April 15 <sup>th</sup>      | 25%              |
| Participation     |                                     | 10%              |

### Tests

There will be three in-class tests corresponding to each of the lecture units. Note that because Unit #1 is roughly twice as long as units #2 and #3, test #1 will be worth twice as much toward your final grade (20% versus 10%). All tests will involve multiple choice questions and cover material in both the lectures and the readings.

### Position Papers

Position papers are essays in which you will make an argument based on course material. There will be two position papers due over the course of the term. The first will be due on the last class of Unit #1 (February 14<sup>th</sup>). This paper will focus on the course material presented in Unit #1. The second will be due on the first Monday after the end of classes (April 15<sup>th</sup>). This paper will focus on material from Units #2 and #3.

Position papers should be a maximum of 1200 words (or approximately 4 pages double-spaced at size 12 font). Additional information on the position papers will be presented in class and posted on D2L.

### Grade Reappraisal

Within one week of the date that the paper is returned, students seeking reappraisal of tests or assignments must submit a written response to the instructor explaining the basis for reconsideration of the grade. The instructor will reconsider the grade assigned and will then book a time with the student to discuss his or her work and rationale. It should be noted that a re-assessed grade may be raised, lowered, or remain the same. The re-assessed grade will be final and cannot be changed again.

### Late Papers

Position papers and term papers that are handed in after the due date without a valid reason (see below under Deferrals) will still be accepted, but a late penalty of -5% per day (including weekends) will be imposed.

## Participation

Discussion questions related to assigned readings will be posted each week. At some point over the course of the week, time will be provided for group and class discussion of the questions. Participation grades, worth 10% of your course grade, will be based not only on attending discussion classes, but also in contributing to class discussion and presenting group answers to the rest of the class.

## Grading Scale

Letter grades will be assigned and submitted to the registrar based on the following scale:

| Grade | Percent range | Grade Point Value | Description                              |
|-------|---------------|-------------------|--|
| A+    | 95 – 100%     | 4.0               | Outstanding performance                  |
| A     | 90 – 94%      | 4.0               | Excellent-superior performance           |
| A-    | 85 – 89%      | 3.7               |  |
| B+    | 80 – 84%      | 3.3               |  |
| B     | 75 – 79%      | 3.0               | Good – clearly above average performance |
| B-    | 70 – 74%      | 2.7               |  |
| C+    | 67 – 69%      | 2.3               |  |
| C     | 63 – 66%      | 2.0               | Satisfactory - basic understanding       |
| C-    | 59 – 62%      | 1.7               |  |
| D+    | 55 – 58%      | 1.3               |  |
| D     | 50 – 54%      | 1.0               | Minimal pass - marginal performance      |
| F     | <50%          | 0                 | unsatisfactory performance               |

The grades for a course component may be scaled to maintain equity among sections and to conform to departmental norms.

## Email Contact and Office Hours

Please include “SOC401” in the subject of your e-mails. I aim to respond to e-mails within 24 hours during the working week. To ensure a quick response, it is best to keep e-mails simple and straight to the point. More complicated questions should be asked in person during office hours. I also encourage you to ask questions during or right after lectures.

# LECTURE SCHEDULE & READING LIST

## Unit #1: Culture, Meaning, and Practice

### Week 1: What is Culture?

Jan. 8, 10

- [Parsons, Talcott. 1972. "Culture and Social System Revisited." \*Social Science Quarterly\* 53\(2\): 253-66.](#)
- [Griswold, Wendy. 1992. "The Sociology of Culture: Four Good Arguments \(and One Bad One\)." \*Acta Sociologica\* 35: 323-8.](#)
- Supplemental:
  - [Kroeber, Alfred L. and Talcott Parsons. 1958. "The Concepts of Culture and of Social System." \*American Sociological Review\* 23\(1\): 582-3.](#)

### Week 2: Interpretation and Thick Description

Jan. 15, 17

- Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture." Pp. 3-30 in *The Interpretation of Cultures*. Basic Books. (See [D2L](#))
- Darnton, Robert. 1984. "Workers Revolt: The Great Cat Massacre of the Rue Saint-Séverin." Pp. 75-104 in *The Great Cat Massacre: And Other Episodes in French Cultural History*. Basic Books. (See [D2L](#))
- Supplemental:
  - [Alexander, Jeffrey C. and Philip Smith. 2001. "The Strong Program in Cultural Sociology." Pp. 135-50 in Jonathan H. Turner \(ed.\) \*The Handbook of Sociological Theory\*. Kluwer.](#)
  - Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight." Pp. 412-53 in *The Interpretation of Cultures*. Basic Books.

### Week 3: Bourdieu's "Habitus" and Cultural Reproduction

Jan. 22, 24

- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1990. "Structures, Habitus, Practices." Pp. 52-65 in *The Logic of Practice*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. (See [D2L](#))
- [Martin, Karin. 1998. "Becoming a Gendered Body: Practices of Preschools." \*American Sociological Review\* 63\(4\): 494-511.](#)
- Supplemental:
  - [Lareau, Annette. 2002. "Invisible Inequality: Social Class and Childrearing in Black Families and White Families." \*American Sociological Review\* 67\(5\): 747-76.](#)

### Week 4: Swidler's "Toolkit"

Jan. 29, 31

- [Swidler, Ann. 1986. "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies." \*American Sociological Review\* 51\(2\): 273-86.](#)
- [Patterson, Orlando. 2014. "Making Sense of Culture." \*Annual Review of Sociology\* 40\(1\): 1-30.](#)
- Supplemental:
  - Swidler, Ann. 2001. *Talk of love: How culture matters*. University of Chicago Press.
  - [Lizardo, Omar and Michael Strand. 2010. "Skills, toolkits, contexts and institutions: Clarifying the relationship between different approaches to cognition in cultural sociology." \*Poetics\* 38\(2\): 205-28.](#)

- [Lizardo, Omar. 2017. "Improving Cultural Analysis: Considering Personal Culture in its Declarative and Nondeclarative Modes." \*American Sociological Review\* 82\(1\): 88-115.](#)

## Week 5: Culture and Cognition

Feb. 5, 7

- [DiMaggio, Paul. 1997. "Culture and Cognition." \*Annual Review of Sociology\* 23: 263-87.](#)
- [Ignatow, Gabriel. 2007. "Theories of Embodied Knowledge: New Directions for Cultural and Cognitive Sociology." \*Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior\* 37: 115-135.](#)
- [Vaisey, Stephen 2008. "Socrates, Skinner, and Aristotle: Three Ways of Thinking About Culture in Action." \*Sociological Forum\* 23\(3\): 603-13.](#)
- Supplemental:
  - [Lizardo, Omar. 2004. "The Cognitive Origins of Bourdieu's Habitus." \*Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour\* 34\(4\): 375-401.](#)
  - [Martin, John Levi. 2010. "Life's a beach but you're an ant, and other unwelcome news for the sociology of culture." \*Poetics\* 38\(2\): 229-44.](#)
  - [Vaisey, Stephen. 2009. "Motivation and Justification: A Dual-Process Model of Culture in Action." \*American Journal of Sociology\* 114\(6\):1675–1715.](#)
  - [Cerulo, Karen A. 2010. "Mining the Intersections of Cognitive Sociology and Neuroscience." \*Poetics\* 38\(2\): 115-32.](#)

## Week 6: Boundaries, Categorization and Valuation

Feb. 12, 14

- [Lamont, Michèle and Virág Molnár. 2002. "The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences." \*Annual Review of Sociology\* 28: 167-95.](#)
- [Martin, John Levi. "What Do Animals Do All Day? The Division of Labor and Totemic Thinking in the Popular Imagination." \*Poetics\* 27: 195-231.](#)
- Supplemental:
  - [Brubaker, Rogers, Mara Loveman, and Peter Stamatov. 2004. "Ethnicity as Cognition." \*Theory and Society\* 33: 31-64.](#)
  - [John Mohr and Vincent Duquenne, "The Duality of Culture and Practice: Poverty Relief in New York City, 1888-1917," \*Theory and Society\* 26 \(1997\): 305-56.](#)
  - [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 \(2005\): 249-67.](#)
  - [Zuckerman, Ezra 1999. "The Categorical Imperative: Securities Analysts and the Illegitimacy Discount." \*American Journal of Sociology\* 104\(5\): 1398-438.](#)
  - [Fourcade, Marion and Kieran Healy, "Seeing Like a Market." \*Socio-Economic Review\* 15\(1\): 9-29.](#)

## Mid-Term Break – No Classes

Feb. 19, 21

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## Test #1

Feb. 26

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## Unit #2: The Production of Culture

### Week 7: The Production of Culture

Feb. 28

- [Peterson, Richard A., and N. Anand. 2004. "The Production of Culture Perspective." \*Annual Review of Sociology\* 30:311-334.](#)
- [Lena, Jennifer C. 2008. "Social Context and Musical Content of Rap Music, 1979–1995." \*Social Forces\* 85\(1\):479-95.](#)
- Supplementary
  - [Adorno, Theodor W. 1975. "Culture Industry Reconsidered." \*New German Critique\* 6\(1\): 12-19.](#)
  - [Dowd, Timothy J. 2004. "Concentration and Diversity Revisited: Production Logics in the U.S. Mainstream Recording Market, 1940 to 1990." \*Social Forces\* 82\(4\): 1411-1455.](#)

### Week 8: High Culture and the Art World

Mar. 5, 7

- [DiMaggio, Paul. 1982. "Cultural Entrepreneurship in Nineteenth-Century Boston: The Creation of an Organizational Base for High Culture in America." \*Media, Culture & Society\* 4\(1\):33–50.](#)
- [Peterson, Karin Elizabeth. 2003. "Discourse and Display: The Modern Eye, Entrepreneurship, and the Cultural Transformation of the Patchwork Quilt." \*Sociological Perspectives\* 46\(4\): 461–90.](#)
- Supplementary:
  - [Li, Peter S. 1994. "A World Apart: The Multicultural World of Visible Minorities and the Art World of Canada." \*Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology\* 31:365-391.](#)
  - [DiMaggio, Paul. 1987. "Classification in Art." \*American Sociological Review\* 52:440-455.](#)
  - [Baumann, Shyon. 2001. "Intellectualization and Art World Development: Film in the United States." \*American Sociological Review\* 66\(3\): 404-26.](#)

### Week 9: The Field of Cultural Production

Mar. 12, 14

- [Bourdieu, Pierre. 1983. "The field of cultural production, or: the economic world reversed." \*Poetics\* 12\(4\): 311-56.](#)
- Supplementary:
  - [Ferguson, Priscilla Parkhurst. 1998. "A Cultural Field in the Making: Gastronomy in 19th Century France." \*American Journal of Sociology\* 104:597-641.](#)

### Week 10: Creativity, Innovation, and Diffusion

Mar. 19, 21

- [DiMaggio, Paul, and Walter Powell. 1983. "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields." \*American Sociological Review\* 48: 147-160.](#)
- Peterson, Richard A. 1997. "Hank Williams as the Personification of Country Music" and "Creating a Field Called 'Country'" Pp. 173-201 in *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity*. University of Chicago Press. (See [D2L](#))
- [Leschziner, Vanina. 2016. "Mapping Out Creative Patterns." Pp. 147-71 in \*At the Chef's Table: Culinary Creativity in Elite Restaurants\*. Stanford University Press.](#)

- Supplementary:
  - [Bielby, William T. and Denise D. Bielby. 1994. "All Hits Are Flukes': Institutionalized Decision Making and the Rhetoric of Network Prime-Time Program Development." \*American Sociological Review\* 59: 1287-1313.](#)
  - [Patterson Orlando and Jason Kaufman. 2005. "Cross-National Cultural Diffusion: The Global Spread of Cricket." \*American Sociological Review\* 70\(1\): 82-110.](#)
  - [Rossman, Gabriel. 2012. \*Climbing the Charts: What Radio Airplay Tells Us about the Diffusion of Innovation\*. Princeton University Press.](#)

Test #2

Mar. 26

## Unit #3: Cultural Consumption

Week 11: Culture and National Identity

Mar. 28

- Aronczyk, Melissa. 2017. "Raw Materials: Natural Resources, Technological Discourse, and the Making of Canadian Nationalism." Pp. 58-82 in Geneviève Zubrzycki (ed.) *National Matters: Materiality, Culture, and Nationalism*. Stanford University Press. (See [D2L](#))
- [DeSoucey, Michaela. 2010. "Gastronationalism: Food Traditions and Authenticity Politics in the European Union." \*American Sociological Review\* 75\(3\): 432-55.](#)
- Supplementary:
  - [Alexander, Jeffrey C. 2010. \*The Performance of Politics: Obama's Victory and the Democratic Struggle for Power\*. Oxford University Press.](#)

Week 12: Distinction, Cultural Capital, and Symbolic Boundaries

Apr. 2, 4

- [Bourdieu, Pierre. 1986. "The Forms of Capital." Pp. 241-258 in J. Richardson \(Ed.\) \*Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education\*. New York: Greenwood.](#)
- [Bryson, Bethany. 1996. "'Anything But Heavy Metal': Symbolic Exclusions and Musical Dislikes." \*American Sociological Review\* 61\(5\): 884-99.](#)
- Supplementary:
  - [Goldberg, Amir, Sameer B Srivastava, V. Govind Manian, William Monroe, and Christopher Potts 2016. "Fitting In or Standing Out? The Tradeoffs of Structural and Cultural Embeddedness." \*American Sociological Review\* 81\(6\): 1190-222.](#)

Week 13: Omnivores

Apr. 9, 11

- [Peterson, Richard A. and Roger M. Kern. 1996. "Changing Highbrow Taste: From Snob to Omnivore." \*American Sociological Review\* 61\(5\): 900-7.](#)
- [Johnston, Josée and Shyon Baumann. 2007. "Democracy versus Distinction: A Study of Omnivorousness in Gourmet Food Writing." \*American Journal of Sociology\* 113\(1\): 165-204.](#)

Test #3

Apr. 11



## Other Important Information

### Emergency Evacuations

In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom, please proceed to the assembly point at the MacEwan Student Centre - North Courtyard.

### Handing in Papers, Assignments

1. The main Sociology Department office does not deal with any course-related matters. Please speak directly to your instructor.
2. **Protection of Privacy:** The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPP) legislation does not allow students to retrieve any course material from public places. Anything that requires handing back will be returned directly during class or office hours. If students are unable to pick up their assignments from the instructor, they provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.
3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology Department. They are only available online.

### Research Ethics

Students are advised that any research with human subjects – including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation – must have the approval of the Faculty Ethics Committee. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.

### Academic Misconduct

Please refer to the website listed below for information on University of Calgary policies on Plagiarism/Cheating/Other Academic Misconduct:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-5.html>

### Absences and Deferrals

When possible, please provide advance notice if you are unable to write a test or complete/turn-in assignments on time. All requests for deferral of a course component due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while the student has the health issue rather than after recovery. Deferrals will be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. Travel arrangements, misreading the syllabus, and scheduling conflicts with other classes or employment are not valid reasons for requesting a deferral. Deferrals will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student.

For written documentation, students should provide a statutory declaration. For information on how to acquire a statutory declaration, see the following address:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/appeals/student-faq>

If you have missed a test for a legitimate reason you must write a “make-up” test as close in time to the original test as possible. The date and location of the make-up test will be at the convenience of the Department of Sociology.

**Deferred Term Work Form:** Deferral of term work past the end of a term also requires a form to be filled out. It's available at

[https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/deferred\\_termwork15\\_0.pdf](https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/deferred_termwork15_0.pdf)

Once an extension date has been agreed between instructor and student, the form should be taken to the Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (SS 110) for approval by an Associate Dean (Students).

## Student Representation

The 2018-19 Students' Union VP Academic is Jessica Revington ([suvpaca@ucalgary.ca](mailto:suvpaca@ucalgary.ca)).

For more information, and to contact other elected officials with the Student's Union, please visit this link: <https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/>

You may also wish to contact the Student Ombudsperson for help with a variety of University-related matters: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ombuds/contact>

## Safewalk

The University of Calgary provides a "safe walk" service to any location on Campus, including the LRT, parking lots, bus zones, and campus housing. For Campus Security/Safewalk call 220-5333. Campus Security can also be contacted from any of the "Help" phones located around Campus.

## Academic Accommodation

The student accommodation policy can be found at: [ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy](http://ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy).

Students needing an Accommodation because of a Disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities [ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy](http://ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy).

Students needing an Accommodation based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the course instructor.

## Student Resources

[SU Wellness Centre](#)

[Campus Mental Health Strategy](#)