

SOC 316 Cultural Sociology
Block 6, 2018-19
South Hall 18

Instructor: Tori Barnes-Brus

Office: College Hall 211

Class Meeting Times Vary. Typically 12:30-3 M-Th, 9-11:30 F, with some additional meeting times. See Course Schedule and Google Calendar for specifics, including lectures over the lunch period on 2/22 and 2/27.

Office Hours: an hour before class and by appointment.

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: Culture is one of the most commonly used words in the English language, yet our understanding of the term is quite varied. While sociologists have a long history of interest in the concept of culture, the discipline took a “cultural turn” within the last few decades and began to really explore the significance of culture in its own right. This course follows the cultural turn in sociology and investigates the connections between culture, social structures (like economics, politics, gender), and society as a whole. We will engage with the theoretical debates about the concept of culture and its importance to social processes. As such, we will explore the production and reception of culture, but our focus will be on the various ways that symbols, language, and other forms of knowledge work to create meanings, constitute power, and influence the social order. The goal of this course is to move beyond an understanding of culture as simply art, the media, or other “cultures,” and instead understand culture as the everyday meaning-making processes that constitute the social world. To comprehend the complex influence of culture on everyday life, we will explore issues of domination and resistance; the relationship between culture and inequality; the coherence and hegemony of culture; ways in which culture contributes to social reproduction; culture as boundary and distinction; and the connections between culture and social/historical change.



Learning Objectives:

Through readings, discussions, written work, lecture, projects and research, students will:

- Understand and explain various concepts and theories of cultural sociology (i.e. cultural diamond, cultural capital, ‘tool kit,’ symbolic boundaries, hegemony, etc) and the ways these definitions work to analyze the social world. (Knowledge, Inquiry)
- Comprehend the intricacies of both production and reception of culture and the relationship between structure and agency. (Knowledge, Inquiry)
- Analyze the connections between culture and social inequality. (Knowledge, Inquiry, Intercultural Literacy)
- Investigate the role of culture in creating social change.
- Demonstrate critical thinking, oral communication, and writing skills which strengthen our ability to understand, integrate, analyze, and communicate complex ideas. (Communication, Inquiry, Citizenship)

This course supports the Educational Priorities and Outcomes of Cornell College with emphases on knowledge, inquiry, communication, intercultural literacy, and citizenship.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Donovan, Brian. 2017. *Respectability on Trial: Sex Crimes in New York City, 1900-1918*. SUNY Press. (paperback)

RECOMMENDED:

Griswold, Wendy. 2013. *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World* (4th edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Several Articles are Available on [Moodle](#). I expect you to bring articles to class as we will frequently reference specific passages during discussion. Contact me as soon as possible if you have difficulty accessing any of the readings.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

As students at a liberal arts college, you are responsible for your own engagement in the academic conversation. To be solidly engaged you must read the syllabus and all the required materials, complete assignments, and participate in discussions. More importantly, this means thinking critically, asking questions, coming to class having formulated your own ideas and responses to the course material, and engaging in dialogue with others. No one—neither professor nor student—can participate effectively without having completed and contemplated the course readings.

This course incorporates a great deal of social theory with more empirical works and has an average reading load of 70 pages per night. As such, it will require time, patience, and commitment to grasp the depth and nuance of the debates within cultural sociology. This means it is imperative for students to commit several hours a night to preparing for class so you are prepared and willing to contribute to the academic discussion. **This course will operate as a seminar, meaning active participation, even student-lead discussions, are essential to the success of the course. Thus students are jointly responsible for creating the learning atmosphere for the block.** I will aid in the facilitation of the discussion **and each student must actively develop, discuss, and express opinions and questions about the texts and actively listen as other students do so.**

You should not take this class if you do not feel that you are able to (1) complete the required reading, (2) examine course material from an analytic, sociological perspective, and (3) engage in productive, non-combative discussions.

Technology use is a privilege in the classroom, but it can also be distracting and limiting to discussion. It's hard to have meaningful conversations if we are looking at screens. Thus, for this class, all technological devices will be prohibited. Cell phones must be put away and computers/tablets will not be allowed. This means you must print out your readings and your journals and bring them to class.

EVALUATION (Proposed):

Constructive Participation & Analytic Reflection	20%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	30%
Student Lead Discussion & Book Review	<u>25%</u>
TOTAL	100%

Grade Scale: I follow a traditional grading scale:

A = 93-99	A- = 90-92	B+ = 87-89	B = 83-86	B- = 80-82	C+ = 77-79
C = 73-76	C- = 70-72	D+ = 67-69	D = 63-66	D- = 60-62	F 59 and below

ASSIGNMENTS:

You are responsible for all assignments and materials covered in class, whether or not you attend and regardless of the reasons for your absence. Class assignments cannot be made up. All assignments are due at the designated times. Since this is an advanced seminar course students will have more opportunity to shape the expectations of this course. We will work together to establish the timing, format, and details of some assignments.

PARTICIPATION: You will be evaluated on the quality of your contributions in class, daily journals, and in-class assignments. Obviously you must be in class to actively participate. We have at least 2 required lectures over the lunch hour, in addition to regular class times. Check the schedule so you can negotiate any conflicts. If you must miss class, I suggest you communicate with me about your absence. Additionally, students should notify me of any college-sanctioned absences well in advance of the scheduled date.

This seminar class mixes lecture and discussion format and is designed to promote interaction and exchange. We will work together to create this class in the time allotted; thus ultimately we are each responsible for what emerges. As such, each student must contribute to the academic conversation and be *actively engaged* in the discussions taking place. This requires that you read carefully and think about the assigned material before every class. Be an informed participant—your comments should be related to the course material and should add to the topic being discussed. I also expect people to listen to each other, which requires patience, empathy, and mutual respect. You should be willing to share your ideas and be open to opposing perspectives. It is possible to disagree and still interact respectfully. Students should provide balanced, quality contributions to each day's discussions. Listening carefully, asking questions, and responding to what people have said demonstrates respectful engagement.

On the other hand, arriving late, inattention, sleeping, talking to neighbors, texting, facebooking, and rude or disconnected responses can be distracting and also disrespectful to our learning environment, thus these behaviors will negatively impact your participation grade. If you have personal circumstances that may prevent you from meeting these expectations, it is your responsibility to discuss them with me before problems arise.

Missing 3 or more classes may result in a failing participation grade. It is imperative that you discuss excessive absences with me immediately.

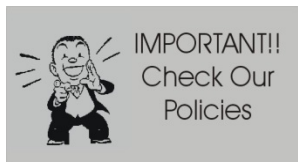
JOURNALS: This course is reading intensive. Some of the material will be difficult to read but it is imperative that you make every effort to critically read and think about this material thoroughly. To prepare for class discussion, a short analytic reflection on the day's assigned reading is due via Moodle by 11AM when we have afternoon only and 8 AM when we have morning class unless otherwise noted.

Analytic reflections are composed of a few sentences attempting to articulate the theoretical or conceptual perspective of 'culture' presented in the day's readings, 1 discussion question and a 1-paragraph analytic response to your discussion question. Details about the assignment are posted on Moodle.

MIDTERM (2/20) & FINAL (3/1): Information about the **Midterm (2/20) & Final (3/6)** will be distributed in class. We will work together to determine the specific format for these assignments. Generally, exams will involve short answer and essay responses that demonstrate understanding, integration, and application of course materials.

STUDENT-LEAD DISCUSSION & BOOK REVIEW: Individually or in pairs, students will lead the class for one period during week 3 or 4. To prepare for facilitating class discussion, students will select and read an important book of cultural sociology. Each discussion-leader will also evaluate readings

related to the book and assign appropriate materials for the class to read. Discussants will submit detailed lesson/discussion plans by 8 AM on the morning of their assigned session then meet with the professor at 9AM to review the lesson plan and make necessary changes before afternoon class. After leading discussion, students will submit a discussion portfolio which includes the original and revised lesson plan, a 4-5 page book review of the selected book, and a reflection on the project as a whole, including the actual class session. We will collaborate on the details of this assignment then post the final expectations on Moodle



POLICIES:

Missed/Late Work:

Students are responsible for all assignments and materials covered in class, whether or not they attend and regardless of the reasons for absence. Without either prior approval or evidence of a serious emergency, late journals and make-up work for classroom assignments will not be accepted and other late work may be penalized. If an extension is needed, please consult with me prior to the assignment deadline. *Failure to turn in any of the assignments may result in a failing grade for the course, regardless of points.*

Course Accommodations:

[College Policy](#) regarding students with disabilities: Students who need accommodations for learning disabilities must provide documentation from a professional qualified to diagnose learning disabilities. Students requesting services may schedule a meeting with the disabilities services coordinator as early as possible to discuss their needs and develop an individualized accommodation plan. At the beginning of each course, the student must notify the instructor of any accommodations needed for the duration of the course. **I would appreciate hearing from anyone in this class who has a particular need related to this course. If you would like to request course accommodations for any reason, see me after the first class or make alternative arrangements to meet with me, ideally within the first 3 days of the course.** While I am reasonably sure we can work out whatever arrangement is necessary, course accommodations should be discussed pro-actively before there is a failure to meet course requirements.

Academic Honesty:

College Policy: Cornell College expects all members of the Cornell community to act with academic integrity. An important aspect of academic integrity is respecting the work of others. A student is expected to explicitly acknowledge ideas, claims, observations, or data of others, unless generally known. When a piece of work is submitted for credit, a student is asserting that the submission is their own work unless there is a citation of a specific source. If there is no appropriate acknowledgement of sources, whether intended or not, this may constitute a violation of the College's requirement for honesty in academic work and may be treated as a case of academic dishonesty. The procedures regarding how the College deals with cases of academic dishonesty appear in The Compass, under the heading ["Academic Policies – Honesty in Academic Work"](#).

Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Any student in this course who is involved in academic dishonesty (portraying another person's work or ideas as their own, submitting the same or similar papers in more than one course without permission from the course instructors, facilitating plagiarism, etc.) will not earn credit for the relevant assignments and may be formally charged with academic dishonesty, and could earn a failing grade in the course.

Additional Resources:

There are a number of resources on campus to support your academic work. I strongly encourage you to utilize the support of the consultants in the Center for Teaching and Learning, located in Coleg Library. These individuals and offices can provide basic help as well as advanced guidance to help polish your research, writing, and presentation skills.