

SOCI 3010: Sociology of Culture

Spring Semester 2009

Instructor:	Daniel Buffington, Temporary Instructor of Sociology
Classroom:	Baldwin Hall, 322
Lecture Sessions:	MWF: 12:20-1:10 PM (period 5)
Instructor's Office:	Baldwin Hall, 417
Instructor's Office Hours:	MWF, 11:10AM-12 PM, 1:30-2:20, or by appointment
Instructor's Contact Information:	email: dbuffing@uga.edu office phone number: 542-3252 or 542-2421 (dept office)

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Hello and welcome to Sociology 3010.

This course will explore recent trends in American culture, focusing on traditions, practices, and products, including books, music, and film. Organizing themes are culture as both a source of social integration and an arena of strife, and the reciprocal effects of culture and human agency. Although particular attention will be given to the United States, class material will also cover issues pertinent to the process of globalization which increasingly links cultures across the globe. The goals of this course will be to provide students with a sociological understanding of culture that will compliment and challenge their everyday knowledge as well as to develop a greater understanding of sociological theories and concepts. These goals will be achieved through a mixture of lectures, discussions, readings, assignments, written examinations, and group work.

COURSE MATERIALS

There are two required texts for this course:

Griswold, Wendy. 2008. Cultures and Societies in a Changing World. 3rd edition. Pine Forge Press.

A secondary text designed to give an overview of the field of sociology of culture from one its most respected contemporary practitioners. It is available via the university and other bookstores, as well as on the web.

SOCI 3010: Course readings (online and reserve desk)

A series of mostly primary texts that present key ideas, theories, and themes that will be developed during the lecture period. These readings can be obtained via UGA's main library system. They are available online through the library's e-reserve system at: www.libs.uga.edu. Click on "course reserves," then "search course reserves" and under the "instructor" field select my name. In order to obtain the articles online, the computer you are using must have Adobe Acrobat Reader (can be downloaded for free at adobe.com) and you must enter a password: _____. In addition, physical copies of all readings are available at the main library's reserve desk. The call number for the reserve file is _____.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADES

Final grades will be based on your performance in FIVE areas:

(1) Exams (2 exams at 60 pts each = **120 pts**)

This course will have 2 examinations correlating with the first two units covered. Each exam will consist of a combination of multiple choice questions, identification terms, and short answer essays. Each exam will be worth 50 points a piece. These exams will not be cumulative.

MISSED EXAMS: Make-ups will be given only under circumstances of serious illness or emergency (to be determined by the instructor). *You must contact me in advance of the test time.* Written documentation may be required before a request for a make-up is granted. Exams not made up will receive a zero. I reserve the right to offer a different exam than that offered during the normal test-taking period.

(2) Reading Quizzes & In-Class Assignments (amount to be determined = **40 pts**)

Because the success of the course hinges on you not only reading the appropriate materials, but reading them thoroughly so we can spend class time discussing their implications, we will have several unannounced quizzes on the assigned readings.

The make-up policy for reading quizzes is the same as that for exams. You must contact me ahead of time so that I may determine if the absence is legitimate (documentation may be required). A summary paper of the article/book chapter must be completed to make up missed quizzes (I will send you instructions via email once the absence has been verified). Failure to work out your absence in advance with ample time to complete the assignment will not be a legitimate reason for a late make up paper. Those who arrive late to class will not be allowed to make up the quiz.

(3) Papers (2 = **90 pts**)

There will also be several papers due. You will write two short papers in which you analyze a cultural object of your choice. You will also write a paper on authenticity and its relation to local social worlds related to the subject matter covered in Unit 2. Finally, you will write a research review paper in which you analyze several papers on a specific topic assigned via the group project. More specific information on the requirements of these papers will be handed out in class. As with the exams and reading quizzes, no late assignments will be accepted unless worked out in advance with me for approved reasons.

(4) Group Projects (1 at **50 pts**)

For the final Unit (“Meaning in the social world”), you will select one of several chosen topics and be assigned to a group. This group will be responsible for reading/viewing all of the assigned materials, presenting them to their classmates, and coming up with several other related sources. In addition, you will write a review paper of these sources and subject matter. More specific information on the requirements of this group project will be handed out in class.

(5) Participation

Your participation is expected and required, as seen in the following incentive structure:

Enthusiastic Participation	+2pts
Strong Participation	+1pt
Average Participation	no points
Irregular or substandard participation	-1pts
Negative or uncooperative participation	-2pts

Your grade will be determined by the amount and quality of participation on the WebCT discussion boards, the in-class discussion of the readings, and group work. If you miss a class it is your responsibility to seek out notes and handouts from fellow students or to view films on your own time, through your own arrangements.

<u>Summary of course point totals:</u>		<u>Grading Scale</u>	
2 exams, 50 points per:	120 points	A: 285-300	C+: 231-239.5
Reading Quizzes:	40 points	A-: 270-284.5	C: 219-230.5
2 Papers:	90 points	B+: 261-269.5	C-: 200-218.5
Group Presentation:	50 points	B: 249-260.5	D: 180-199.5
Total points possible	300 points	B-: 240-248.5	F: 179.5 and below

***No rounding will take place

COURSE POLICIES

Withdrawals: Students who withdraw from the class before the official withdrawal deadline (Thursday, March 24th) will be given a “W” regardless of their grade. These grades do have an impact on financial aid, athletic eligibility, and some scholarships. In addition, recent policy changes by the university mean they now have more severe implications in the long term. Please contact the appropriate advisor if you have questions about the specific impact. Withdrawals after the midpoint are automatically assigned a “WF,” which can only be avoided by contacting the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs (542-3564) and being granted a “Hardship withdrawal.”

Disabilities: Students with disabilities or health-related issues who need classroom accommodations should see me after class, during office hours, or make an appointment. I take these requests very seriously and will make every attempt to accommodate reasonable requests.

Academic Honesty: All academic work must meet the standards contained in *A Culture of Honesty*. Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. Ignorance of these rules and regulations is not an acceptable defense of academic dishonesty. You may read the rules and regulations online at: <http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/acadhon.htm>

Attendance: In previous years I have not had a formal attendance policy, but in recent semesters professors across departments, including myself, have noted declining attendance levels. Therefore I will be instituting a formal attendance policy for this course. ***Those who fall above the following threshold will be withdrawn from class with a “WF”:***

- More than 1 absence before Exam 1 [2/6]
- More than 3 absences before Exam 2 [3/30]
- More than 4 absences before the last day of class [4/30]

Those who show up late or leave early will not be given credit for that day. Those who have an emergency or other extenuating circumstances [to be determined by instructor] may be granted immunity. Please contact me as soon as possible, preferably before class.

Classroom etiquette: The success of this class depends on having a productive classroom environment. Arriving late, leaving early, talking to friends, reading the newspaper, doing crossword puzzles, eating, and sleeping are all behaviors that distract me and other students. **Cellphones & PDAs** are never allowed at anytime during class. **Laptops** may only be used with prior approval by me. Note that I will ask you to send me your typed notes as proof of legitimate laptop use. *I reserve the right to withdraw students from the class (with a W or WF) who are repetitively disruptive.*

TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE:

The course outline is a general plan for the course; deviation announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary. The date in **bold** to the left of each reading is the day for which that particular reading has been assigned. If changes to this schedule are necessary, they will be announced in class and updated on the course’s WebCT calendar.

*****UNIT 1/Introducing the sociological perspective on culture*******

TOPIC 1: CLASSICAL PERSPECTIVES

1/12	Griswald, pp 1-18, 21-9
1/14 <i>Marx</i>	Griswald, pp. 29-34 <u>Reading:</u> Williams, Raymond. “Base and Superstructure”
1/21 <i>Weber</i>	Griswald, pp 37-47; 57-60 <u>Reading:</u> Weber, Max. 1958. “the social psychology of world religions” in <u>From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology</u>
1/26 <i>Durkheim</i>	Griswald, pp 34-37, 49-56 <u>Reading:</u> Jeffrey Alexander. 1988. “Introduction: Durkheimian Sociology and Cultural Studies Today.” Pp 1-22 in <i>Durkheimian Sociology: Cultural Studies</i> . New York: Cambridge University Press.

TOPIC 2: CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENTS

1/30 <i>Cultural diamond</i>	Griswald pp 11-18 (re-read)
2/2 <i>Cultural Sociology</i>	<u>Reading:</u> Alexander and Smith (2003) "The strong program in cultural sociology: Elements of a structural hermeneutics." Pp 11-26 in <i>The meanings of social life: A cultural sociology</i> edited by J. Alexander. New York: Oxford University Press.

UNIT 1 Exam scheduled for FRI, February, 6th

*****UNIT 2/Social Worlds*******

TOPIC 3: HIGH, ELITE, & OFFICIAL CULTURE

2/11 <i>Elite/High Culture</i>	<u>Reading:</u> Pierre Bourdieu, “Artistic taste and cultural capital.” Pp. 205-215 in Jeffrey Alexander and Steven Seidman, editors, <i>Culture and Society. Contemporary Debates</i> (Cambridge University Press, 1990).
2/16 <i>Schools</i>	<u>Reading:</u> Willis, Paul. 1981. “Labour, Power, culture, class and institution.” Pp 89-116 in <u>Learning to Labor: How working class kids get working class jobs</u> . Morningside ed. New York : Columbia University Press.

TOPIC 4: LOCAL SOCIAL WORLDS

2/20 <i>Idiocultures</i>	<u>Reading:</u> Lu, Shun and Gary Allen Fine. 1995. "The presentation of ethnic authenticity: Chinese food as a social accomplishment." <i>Sociological Quarterly</i> , 36(3):535-53.
2/23 <i>Subcultures</i>	Griswald, pp 60-65 <u>Reading:</u> Beezer, Ann "Dick Hebdige, Subculture: <i>The meaning of style.</i> " Pp 101-18 in <i>Reading into Cultural Studies</i> edited by M. Barker and A. Beezer. New York: Routledge.
2/27	Guest Lecture, Authenticity

TOPIC 5: POPULAR CULTURE AND MASS MEDIA

3/6 <i>Production</i>	Griswald, pp 73-85 <u>Reading:</u> Horkheimer, Max & Theodor Adorno "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception."
3/16	<u>Reading:</u> Inglis, David and Hughson, John. 2003. "Land of the Free? Producing Culture in America and Elsewhere." Pp. 190-214 in <u>Confronting Culture: Sociological Vistas</u> . Polity.
3/20 <i>Reception</i>	Griswald, pp 85-97 <u>Reading:</u> Hall, Stuart. 1980. "Encoding/Decoding" Pp. 128-38 in <u>Culture, Media, Language</u> . Edited by S. Hall, et al. Hutchinson: London.
3/23	<u>Reading:</u> Jhalley, Sut and Justin Lewis. 1992. "White responses: The Emergence of 'Enlightened' Racism" and "Black responses: The hollow images of success" Pp 93-129 in <u>Enlightened Racism: The Cosby Show, audiences, and the myth of the American dream</u> .
3/25	PAPER ON AUTHENTICITY DUE

UNIT 2 Exam scheduled for MON, March 30TH

*****UNIT 3/ Meaning in the Social World*******

April 1st – April 30th

TOPIC 6: PAST AND MEMORY

4/3 <i>Collective Memory</i>	Griswald, pp 170-173 <u>Reading:</u> Beamish, Tom, Harvey Motloch and Richard Flacks. 1995. "Who Supports the Troops? Vietnam, the Gulf War, and the Making of Collective Memory." <i>Social Problems</i> 42(3): 344-60.
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TOPIC 7: THE PRESENT

4/6 <i>Post-modernism</i>	Griswald, pp. 157-60 <u>Reading:</u> Jameson, Frederick (1984). "Postmodernism, or the cultural logic of late capitalism"
4/10	<u>Reading:</u> Ritzer, George. 2002. "An introduction to McDonalidization." Pp 7-23 in <u>McDonadlization: The Reader</u> . Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

*****Group Work*******
(one of the following to be assigned in class on 4/1)

TOPIC 8: THE ENVIRONMENT

TOPIC 9: TOURISM, LEISURE, AND SPORT

TOPIC 10: REGIONS: THE MEANING(S) OF THE AMERICAN SOUTH

TOPIC 11: IDENTITIES:

(a) NATIONALITY

(b) GENDER

(c) RACE

NO EXAM for Unit 3; hand in FINAL PAPER by

end of final exam period [WED May 6th, 3PM]

Human Rights Statement

All students should know that the Department of Sociology has a Human Rights Committee for the resolution of student grievances. Any student registered for a sociology course at the University of Georgia who feels that he or she has not been treated in a fair or professional manner by an instructor is advised to follow these procedures:

- (1) The student should discuss his or her problems with the instructor of the course, unless extenuating circumstances prohibit this.
- (2) If that discussion does not resolve the grievance, the student should then discuss the problem with the Head of the Department of Sociology.
- (3) If that discussion does not resolve the grievance to the satisfaction of the student, the student may request the activation of the Human Rights Committee by submitting a letter to the Chairman of the Human Rights Committee, Department of Sociology, University of Georgia.

The Human Rights Committee will have the responsibility of investigating all charges in accordance with procedures on file in the Sociology office, copies of which are available to students. The Committee will also have the responsibility of making recommendations in writing to the Head, copies of which will be made available to the student complainant and the instructor involved. The Department Head will review the recommendations and make a decision in writing, with copies to the students complainant and the instructor or staff member involved. Any appeal of that decision must be to the Dean of the college of Arts and Sciences.