

SOC6518: Culture Industries

Clayton Childress (he/him)
Clayton.Childress@utoronto.ca

Office Hours: After Class

Course Description

It goes without saying that mediated cultural objects such as art, fashion, novels, and music are both produced and consumed. This course, drawing on the sociology of culture, economic sociology, and organizational sociology, focuses on the production and distribution of culture within fields, industries, organizations, and markets. As we'll be covering a range of linked subfields and perspectives and our semester is short, we'll only be covering the last 50 years or so of intellectual development, cross-pollination, and shared interests, albeit sometimes under different flags and names.¹



This means we'll be missing some history and some perspectives from *Ye Olde Sociology* that have fallen out of favor or aren't as widely used anymore. On the first day I'll be providing some background on these alternate perspectives and how we got to where we are. Don't worry; we won't just be genuflecting to what we're reading. Should you choose to work in this area, you will of course be getting jobs by building on the things we'll learn in this course, or, dare I say, maybe even occasionally trying to tear them down.

Our goal in the course is twofold: (1) for you to *know* the areas of interest and debate in this research area; (2) for you to professionalize yourself and make *substantial progress* both substantively (e.g. on a project on culture) and interactionally or emotionally (e.g. for you to feel more confident in the hidden curriculum of academia). You'll note that after the first week I've almost entirely assigned articles that have been published in the last five years or so. That's not because these are all exemplary articles in their topical areas (although some of them are), but rather, it's important for you to know what counts as publishable social science in a variety of journals these days.

Course Goals (more formally):

- Students will leave the course with an understanding of the current issues and debates in the study of culture producing industries, as well as with an understanding of the recent historical antecedents to these issues and debates. Put another way, students will have a frame of reference for what people are talking about—and why they're talking about what they're talking about—when going to professional conferences and the like.

¹ See “The Production of Culture” or “Sociology of Culture” in North American sociology, “Creative Industries” in Business, Management, and Economics, “Cultural Industries” in European Sociology, and “Media Industries” in Media Studies and the like. As always, there are stakes and allegiances signaled with the usage of these terms, but for this course we'll maintain terminological agnosticism while applying definitional skepticism.

- Students who seek to contribute to this area will have a storehouse of knowledge and citations to draw upon in order to maximize their contribution to the (perhaps dreaded) “conversation.”
- As this is a graduate-level course, the “hidden curriculum” of the course is to professionalize you (e.g. to get you ready for presenting at conferences, submitting articles for peer-review, and perhaps even going on the job market). As this is a topical seminar these things will never be our primary areas of focus, but we’ll be engaging them in many small and non-obtrusive ways.

A Typical Day in the Course:

1. Accountability Roundtable (10): We’ll spend the first ten minutes updating on our previous weeks progress, and setting a research related goal for the next week.
2. Content Talk (60-70): The *discussion leader* will guide discussion of the three articles for about 50-60 minutes. This will be about the theory, methods, and arguments of the articles, how they fit in the broader picture, and so on.
3. Break (5 minutes): We take a five minute break.
4. Architecture Talk (15): *The discussion leader* will guide discussion on the architecture of the articles. This is not a discussion about their content, but rather, the architecture of them, what works well and not as well, and what can be ported into our own work (or should be avoided in our own work).
5. I’ve Got a Problem (15): In the last fifteen minutes (or so) of class the assigned person will (very briefly – think in a minute or two) will present us with a problem they’re having and that they’d like help with. This can be related to something in the readings they don’t understand, something they’re unsure about with their course paper or larger research agenda, or involving academic life more generally. (Examples could be “is there any literature that anyone knows about on X?” or “Which citation manager should I use?” or “How should I code this variable?” or “Do you think X is a good interview question if I want to get at Y?” or “Can someone explain this part of reading X to me again” and so on.)

Metrics of Evaluation:

- Each week you will fill out the *reading keys* worksheet for all three articles. These are due to be uploaded to the Quercus pages in the appropriate “discussion” forum *by at least Noon before the start of each class*. I’m not having you write response papers because after finishing your coursework it’s a form of writing you’ll never have to do again; it’s looking to the past, not the future. From the perspective of an instructor, reading responses are a way to ensure that you’re not arriving to class as a zombie that’s hoping to live off the brains of others. The *reading keys* worksheet is for you a lower-cost way for me to ensure you’re not a zombie. It’s also good practice to start thinking about the articles you read this way, if you haven’t already. **(25% of final grade)**
- We will be rotating presentation of the day’s readings. In your rotation you will be responsible for *briefly* summarizing the articles (your expectation is that everyone has read them, and if they haven’t that’s their problem, not yours). Your real job is to come up with a wide-swath of questions and conversation points that get discussion going, and to be the point-person for that discussion. **(10% of final grade)**.
- Once during the term for the last fifteen minutes of class you’ll present a problem that you’re having related to the readings, your course paper, your research, or academic interests/life more generally. This should be a problem that we can help you with, not just a

gripe or complaint. See examples in the “A Typical Day in the Course” outline above. Presenting your problem is worth **5% of your final grade.**

- Before the fourth course meeting you will complete the *Week 4 Assignment* worksheet. The first page is specific to this course. The second page is by Charles Tilly. If you’ll be continuing on with a project you’ve already begun when emailing me back the work sheet you should also email me back *what you have so far* on the project you’ll be working on. The *Week 4 Assignment* worksheet is worth **10% of your final grade.**
- As you’ll see on your *Week 4 Assignment* worksheet, you can write a term paper for this course, but there is also a wider range of semester-length intensive writing projects related to the study of culture that you can take on. You are not allowed to work on a paper for this class that you are concurrently working for another class (read: you can’t hand in the same paper or variations on the same paper for this class and another concurrent or future class). Your paper grade will be based on *the progress* you’ve made during the semester, not what you ultimately hand in. This semester long research project is worth **40%** of your final course grade. If you are unsure about if what you want to do is related to the study of culture, you can use our course syllabus and the readings from the culture comp exam to confirm you are in fact doing an assignment for the sociological study of culture.
- *Scholarly Attitude*: Usually called “participation”, the adoption of a “scholarly attitude” is worth **10% of your final grade.** Students with a scholarly attitude take the intellectual endeavor seriously and demonstrate their commitment to academic pursuits by actively engaging in the material, reflecting deeply on the readings, raising thoughtful questions and comments in class, and generally going above and beyond the requirements of the course. Students who lack a scholarly attitude passively complete the readings assignments, occasionally engage in other activities in class (playing with phones, texting, daydreaming, and so on), and are primarily concerned with doing the minimum required in the course, obtaining a particular grade in the course, and cutting corners in an effort to appear more prepared than they really are. Graduate students who adopt a scholarly attitude are practicing their identity as they look forward to their future careers. Graduate students who do not adopt a scholarly attitude are still looking backward to the past and need to leave undergraduate expectations behind.

Academic Integrity & Late Policies:

Reading keys assignments will not be accepted after the class for which they are assigned, because what’s the point? Late work will generally be very frowned upon, and I reserve the right to be as punitive as the case calls for, up to but not exceeding a markdown of one half letter grade (not to exceed 3.5 total points) per 24 hour period. If something is going to be late informing me before the deadline and specifying the deadline by which you will have it done is imperative.

Copying, plagiarizing, falsifying medical certificates, or other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Any student caught engaging in such activities will be referred to the Dean’s office for adjudication. Any student abetting or otherwise assisting in such misconduct will also be subject to academic penalties. Students are expected to cite sources in all written work and presentations. See this link for tips for how to use sources well: (<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>). According to Section B.I.1.(e) of the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters it is an offence “to submit, without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere.” By enrolling in this course, you agree to abide by the

university's rules regarding academic conduct, as outlined in the Calendar. You are expected to be familiar with the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/The-rules/code/the-code-of-behaviour-on-academic-matters>) and *Code of Student Conduct* (<http://www.viceprovoststudents.utoronto.ca/publicationsandpolicies/codeofstudentconduct.htm>) which spell out your rights, your duties and provide all the details on grading regulations and academic offences at the University of Toronto. Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.

Accessibility Services

It is the University of Toronto's goal to create a community that is inclusive of all persons and treats all members of the community in an equitable manner. In creating such a community, the University aims to foster a climate of understanding and mutual respect for the dignity and worth of all persons. Please see the University of Toronto Governing Council "Statement of Commitment Regarding Persons with Disabilities" [here](#). In working toward this goal, the University will strive to provide support for, and facilitate the accommodation of individuals with disabilities so that all may share the same level of access to opportunities, participate in the full range of activities that the University offers, and achieve their full potential as members of the University community. We take seriously our obligation to make this course as welcoming and accessible as feasible for students with diverse needs. We also understand that disabilities can change over time and will do our best to accommodate you. Students seeking support must have an intake interview with a disability advisor to discuss their individual needs. In many instances it is easier to arrange certain accommodations with more advance notice, so we strongly encourage you to act as quickly as possible. To schedule a registration appointment with a disability advisor, please visit Accessibility Services at <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>, call at 416-978-8060, or email at: accessibility.services@utoronto.ca. The office is located at 455 Spadina Avenue, 4th Floor, Suite 400. Additional student resources for distressed or emergency situations can be located at distressedstudent.utoronto.ca; Health & Wellness Centre, 416-978-8030, <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/hwc>, or Student Crisis Response, 416-946-7111.

Equity and Diversity

The University of Toronto is committed to equity and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect. As a course instructor, I will neither condone nor tolerate behaviour that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of any individual in this course and wish to be alerted to any attempt to create an intimidating or hostile environment. It is our collective responsibility to create a space that is inclusive and welcomes discussion. Discrimination, harassment and hate speech will not be tolerated. Additional information and reports on Equity and Diversity at the University of Toronto is available at <http://equity.hrandequity.utoronto.ca>

Statement of Acknowledgement of Traditional Land

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

Course Outline

Week 1 (9.10)

Meetings and Greetings, plus the Older Ways to Study Cultural Production

(Translation: watch your professor be massively unfair to exceptionally bright historical figures)

Week 2 (9.17)

Starting at Our Beginning

Becker, H. S. (1974). Art as collective action. *American Sociological Review* 39(6): 767-776.

Bourdieu, P. (1983). The field of cultural production, or: The economic world reversed. *Poetics* 12(4-5): 311-356.

Griswold, W. (1994) Culture and the cultural diamond, in *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World*. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press.

Peterson, R. A., & Anand, N. (2004). The production of culture perspective. *Annual Review of Sociology* 30:311-334.

DISCUSSION LEADER:

PRESENTER OF A PROBLEM:

Week 3 (9.24)

Field Theory

Krause, M. (2018). How fields vary. *British Journal of Sociology* 69(1):3–22.

Wilderom, R., & van Venrooij, A. (2019). Intersecting fields: The influence of proximate field dynamics on the development of electronic/dance music in the US and UK. *Poetics*, 77, 101389.

Basov, N. (2019). The ambivalence of cultural homophily: Field positions, semantic similarities, and social network ties in creative collectives. *Poetics*.

DISCUSSION LEADER:

PRESENTER OF A PROBLEM:

Week 4 (10.1)

Worlds

Reilly, P. (2018). No laughter among thieves: Authenticity and the enforcement of community norms in stand-up comedy. *American Sociological Review* 83(5): 933-958.

Skaggs, R. (2019). Harmonizing Small-Group Cohesion and Status in Creative Collaborations: How Songwriters Facilitate and Manipulate the Cowriting Process. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 82(4), 367-385.

Parker, J. N., & Corte, U. (2017). Placing collaborative circles in strategic action fields: Explaining differences between highly creative groups. *Sociological Theory*, 35(4), 261-287.

DISCUSSION LEADER:

PRESENTER OF A PROBLEM:

Week 5 (10.8)

Networks

Godart, F. C., & Galunic, C. (2019). Explaining the popularity of cultural elements: Networks, culture, and the structural embeddedness of high fashion trends. *Organization Science*, 30(1), 151-168.

Light, R., & Odden, C. (2017). Managing the boundaries of taste: culture, valuation, and computational social science. *Social Forces*, 96(2), 877-908.

Dowd, T.J., and D.L. Pinheiro. (2013). The ties among the notes: The social capital of jazz musicians in three metro areas. *Work and Occupations* 40(4):431–64.

DISCUSSION LEADER:

PRESENTER OF A PROBLEM:

Week 6 (10.15)

Creativity

Leschziner, V., & Brett, G. (2019). Beyond Two Minds: Cognitive, Embodied, and Evaluative Processes in Creativity. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 82(4), 340-366.

Sagiv, T., Simons, T., & Drori, I. (2020). The Construction of Authenticity in the Creative Process: Lessons from Choreographers of Contemporary Dance. *Organization Science*, 31(1), 23-46.

Furnari, S., & Rolbina, M. (2018). Brokerage styles and interaction rituals in creative projects: Towards an interactionist perspective on brokerage. *Research in the Sociology of Organizations*, 55, 17-45.

DISCUSSION LEADER:

PRESENTER OF A PROBLEM:

Week 7 (10.22)

Work in Cultural Economies

Wohl, H. (2020). Creative visions: Presenting aesthetic trajectories in artistic careers. *Poetics*, 76, 101358.

Anteby, M., & Occhiuto, N. (2020). Stand-in labor and the rising economy of self. *Social Forces*, 98(3), 1287-1310.

Friedman, S., & O'Brien, D. (2017). Resistance and resignation: Responses to typecasting in British acting. *Cultural Sociology* 11(3): 359-376.

DISCUSSION LEADER:

PRESENTER OF A PROBLEM:

Week 8 (10.29)

Intermediation

Vaughn, M. P. (2019). Supermodel of the World: The Influence of Legitimacy on Genre and Creativity in Drag Music Videos. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 82(4), 431-452.

Banks, P. A. (2019). High culture, black culture: Strategic assimilation and cultural steering in museum philanthropy. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 1469540519846200.

Christin, A. (2018). Counting clicks: Quantification and variation in web journalism in the United States and France. *American Journal of Sociology* 123(5): 1382-1415.

DISCUSSION LEADER:

PRESENTER OF A PROBLEM:

Week 9 (11.5)

Inequality

Erigha, M. (2020). Racial Valuation: Cultural Gatekeepers, Race, Risk, and Institutional Expectations of Success and Failure. *Social Problems*

Simon, S. J. (2019). Hollywood power brokers: Gender and racial inequality in talent agencies. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 26(9), 1340-1356.

Childress, C., & Nault, J. F. (2019). Encultured biases: The role of products in pathways to inequality. *American Sociological Review*, 84(1), 115-141

DISCUSSION LEADER:

PRESENTER OF A PROBLEM:

Week 10 (11.19)

Categories and Classification

Coman, S., & Phillips, D. J. (2018). Ambiguity and the longevity of creative industries: the case of swing through the lens of interdisciplinary collaboration. *Frontiers of Creative Industries: Exploring Structural and Categorical Dynamics*, 55, 203-35.

Keuschnigg, M., & Wimmer, T. (2017). Is category spanning truly disadvantageous? New Evidence from primary and secondary movie markets. *Social Forces* 96(1): 449-479.

van Venrooij, A. and V. Schmutz. (2018). Categorical ambiguity in cultural fields: The effects of genre fuzziness in popular music. *Poetics* 66:1–18.

DISCUSSION LEADER:

PRESENTER OF A PROBLEM:

Week 11 (11.26)

Consecration

Reyes, V. (2014). The production of cultural and natural wealth: An examination of World Heritage sites. *Poetics*, 44, 42-63.

Price, T. (2020). Posthumous consecration in rock's legitimating discourse. *Poetics*, 101431.

Inoue, T. (2018). Western classical music in a non-Western culture: The repertoires of Japanese professional orchestras in the twentieth century. *Poetics*, 67, 13-25.

DISCUSSION LEADER:

PRESENTER OF A PROBLEM:

Week 12 (12.3)

Cultural Objects as Causal Variables

Domínguez R. F. (2014). Preserving the unpreservable: Docile and unruly objects at MoMA. *Theory and Society* 43(6):617–45.

Askin, N., & Mauskapf, M. (2017). What makes popular culture popular? product features and optimal differentiation in music. *American Sociological Review* 82(5): 910-944.

Zamora-kapoor, A., Godart, F., & Zhao, Y. (2020). Networks on the walls : Analyzing “ traces ” of institutional logics in museums ’ permanent exhibitions. *Poetics*, 79

DISCUSSION LEADER:

PRESENTER OF A PROBLEM: