

SOC6518: Culture Industries

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Wed, 9-11, Room 240
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.

Equally importantly, I'll be honest: I kind of don't care if you end up working in this research area or not. For that reason, 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) and interactionally/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 at a variety of journals these days.

Course Goals:

- 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

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.

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.

- 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 foci, but we’ll be engaging them in many small and non-obtrusive ways.

A Typical Day in the Course:

On a typical day there will be a *discussion leader* and a *project presenter*. Both roles are discussed below. The *discussion leader* will do what their title suggests for the first hour (or so) of our course meeting.

This will be followed by fifteen minute (or so) meta-conversation which we’ll call “*architecture talk*.” Architecture talk treats the articles not as vessels of content, but as structural vessels that are worthy of discussion beyond their contents. During architecture talk we’ll talk about successes and failures in how the articles are structured, the conventions of different journals, and what of these architectures should be poached, pillaged, and avoided in constructing our own work.

In the last 45 minutes (or so) of class we’ll engage in discussion and workshopping of the *project presenters* project for the course. We’ll just be going off their initial assignment worksheet, whatever it may be.

Metrics of Evaluation:

- Each week you will fill out the *reading keys* worksheet for all three articles. 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. **(10% 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)**.
- After the first course meeting you will complete the *Week 1 Assignment* worksheet. The first page is specific to this course. The second and third pages are by Charles Tilly. 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. Your paper grade will be based on *the progress* you’ve made during the semester, not what you ultimately hand in. The *Week 1 Assignment* worksheet is worth **10% of your final grade**.

- Starting several weeks into the course, we'll rotate having a *project presenter* for the last 45 minutes of class or so. The project presenter will recap for everyone what their semester long project is, and come with well-thought out questions to pose to the group that will help them accomplish their goals (**10% of final grade**)
- As you'll see on your *Week 1 Assignment* worksheet, you can write a term paper for this course if you choose to do so, but you *are not required* to write a term paper for this course. Instead, you are required to make *substantial progress* on a project that is worthy of credit for a course or more. With the *Week 1 Assignment* you'll be handing in what have you so far, and your grade for this component of the course (and really your course grade) will be based on how *substantial the progress* you make is. Here's the trade-off though: as I'm not requiring you to write a term paper, if you don't make substantial progress on something of your choosing for this course, you have quite simply failed yourself, and I'm going to fail you too. To be clear, I'm not kidding. Making *substantial progress* on a project of your choosing is worth **50%** of your final course grade.
- *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.

Plagiarism and & 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. 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. Likewise, you are better off handing in nothing than handing in something that is plagiarized. See policies here: <http://goo.gl/1sJEzy> and avoidance practices here: <http://goo.gl/Ak47k>

Course Outline

Week 1

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

Starting at Our Beginning

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

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

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

DISCUSSION LEADER:

PROJECT PRESENTER:

Week 3

Field Theory

Leschziner, V., and I. A. Green. (2013). Thinking about food and sex: deliberate cognition in the routine practices of a field. *Sociological Theory* 31(2): 116-144

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

Buchholz, L. (2018). Rethinking the center-periphery model: Dimensions and temporalities of macro-structure in a global field of cultural production. *Poetics* 71: 18 – 32.

DISCUSSION LEADER:

PROJECT PRESENTER:

Week 4

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. (2018). Socializing rejection and failure in artistic occupational communities. *Work and Occupations* (online first): 1-27

de Laat, K. (2015). 'Write a word, get a third': managing conflict and rewards in professional songwriting teams. *Work and Occupations* 42(2): 225-256.

DISCUSSION LEADER:

PROJECT PRESENTER:

Week 5

Networks

Godart, F.C. (2018). Culture, structure, and the market interface: Exploring the networks of stylistic elements and houses in fashion. *Poetics* 68: 72 – 88.

Serino, M., D. D'Ambrosio, and G. Ragozini. (2017). Bridging social network analysis and field theory through multidimensional data analysis: The case of the theatrical field. *Poetics* 62(2016):66–80.

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:

PROJECT PRESENTER:

Week 6

Creativity

Koppman, S. (2014). Making art work: Creative assessment as boundary work. *Poetics* 46:1-21.

Harrison, S. H., & Rouse, E. D. (2014). Let's dance! Elastic coordination in creative group work: A qualitative study of modern dancers. *Academy of Management Journal* 57(5): 1256-1283.

De Vaan, M., Stark, D., & Vedres, B. (2015). Game changer: The topology of creativity. *American Journal of Sociology* 120(4): 1144-1194.

DISCUSSION LEADER:

PROJECT PRESENTER:

Week 7

Work in Cultural Economies

Haynes, J., and Marshall, L. (2018). Reluctant entrepreneurs: musicians and entrepreneurship in the 'new' music industry. *The British Journal of Sociology* 69(2): 459-482.

Borkenhagen, C., & Martin, J. L. (2018). Status and career mobility in organizational fields: Chefs and restaurants in the United States, 1990–2013. *Social Forces* 97(1): 1-26.

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

DISCUSSION LEADER:

PROJECT PRESENTER:

Week 8

Intermediation

Fürst, H. (2018). Making the discovery: The creativity of selecting fiction manuscripts from the slush pile. *Symbolic Interaction* 41(4):513–32.

Friedman, S. (2014). The hidden tastemakers: comedy scouts as cultural brokers at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. *Poetics* 44: 22–41.

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:

PROJECT PRESENTER:

Week 9

Art and Commerce

Fine, G.A. (2017). A matter of degree: Negotiating art and commerce in MFA education. *American Behavioral Scientist* 61(12): 1463-1486.

Austin, R, D. Hjorth, and S. Hessel. (2018). How aesthetics and economy become conversant in creative firms. *Organization Studies* 39(11):1501–19.

Tarassi, S. (2018). Multi-tasking and making a living from music: Investigating music careers in the independent music scene of Milan. *Cultural Sociology* 12(2): 208 – 223.

DISCUSSION LEADER:

PROJECT PRESENTER:

Week 10

Categories and Classification

Wheaton, D. R., & Carroll, G. R. (2017). Where did “Tex-Mex” come from? The divisive emergence of a social category. *Research in Organizational Behavior* 37: 143-166.

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

DISCUSSION LEADER:

PROJECT PRESENTER:

Week 11

Awards

Cattani, G., Ferriani, S., & Allison, P. D. (2014). Insiders, outsiders, and the struggle for consecration in cultural fields: A core-periphery perspective. *American Sociological Review* 79(2): 258-281.

Rossman, G., & Schilke, O. (2014). Close, but no cigar: The bimodal rewards to prize-seeking. *American Sociological Review* 79(1):86-108.

Kovács, B., & Sharkey, A. J. (2014). The paradox of publicity: How awards can negatively affect the evaluation of quality. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 59(1): 1-33.

DISCUSSION LEADER:

PROJECT PRESENTER:

Week 12:

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.

Childress, C., & Nault, J. F. (2019). Encultured biases: The role of products in pathways to inequality. *American Sociological Review*, 0003122418816109.

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