

16:920:646

Fall 2013

Wed 4:10 – 6:50

Cognitive Sociology

Eviatar Zerubavel

131 Davison Hall

Office Hours: Tuesday 4:30-5:30, Wednesday 3:00-4:00

e-mail: zerubave@rci.rutgers.edu

Welcome to “Cognitive Sociology,” where we will venture to explore the fascinating relations between the social and the mental. Using classical and contemporary works in sociology, anthropology, psychology, history, geography, linguistics, and philosophy, we will examine the sociocultural underpinnings of major mental processes (perception, attention, memory, classification, signification) as well as the sociocognitive foundations of identity. In so doing, we will be drawing on major theoretical traditions such as phenomenology, social constructionism, ethnomethodology, symbolic anthropology, structuralism, frame analysis, and semiotics. Throughout the semester, you will use these traditions in a variety of substantive contexts, acquire an intellectually pluralistic perspective that promotes engagement with different theoretical perspectives, and produce original, thematically-inspired pieces of sociological thinking.

There are six books we will be using extensively throughout the course – Eviatar Zerubavel’s *Social Mindscapes* (ISBN 0-674-81390-1), Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann’s *The Social Construction of Reality* (ISBN 0-385-05898-5), Eviatar Zerubavel’s *The Fine Line* (ISBN 0-226-98159-2), Christena Nippert-Eng’s *Home and Work* (ISBN 0-226-58146-2), Wayne Brekhus’s *Peacocks, Chameleons, Centaurs* (ISBN 0-226-07292-4), and Eviatar Zerubavel’s *Ancestors and Relatives* (ISBN 978-0-19-933604-3). They have all been ordered through the University’s bookstores (the Douglass one as well as the Barnes & Noble by the train station). All the other required course readings are posted on the course website on sakai.rutgers.edu. You are expected to read all the assigned readings prior to the class for which they are assigned.

There are four written course assignments: a ten-page paper on attention due on October 9, a ten-page paper on classification due on October 30, a ten-page paper on semiotics due on November 20, and a ten-page paper on identity due on December 16. Each of these assignments will count for 25% of your final grade.

The Rutgers Sociology Department strives to create an environment that supports and affirms diversity in all manifestations, including race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, social class, disability status, region/country of origin, and political orientation. We celebrate diversity of theoretical and methodological perspectives and seek to create an atmosphere of respect and mutual dialogue, and have zero tolerance for violations of these principles.

September 4 The Sociology of Thinking

Sociology and cognition; empiricism and rationalism; cognitive individualism and universalism

Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (New York: Free Press, 1995 [1912]), pp. 12-18, 433-40.

Ruth Simpson, "Neither Clear Nor Present: The Social Construction of Safety and Danger," *Sociological Forum* 11 (1996): 549-61.

Eviatar Zerubavel, *Social Mindscapes: An Invitation to Cognitive Sociology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), pp. 1-6.

Wayne Brekhus, "The Rutgers School: A Zerubavelian Culturalist Cognitive Sociology," *European Journal of Social Theory* 10 (2007): 448-60.

September 11 The Sociology of Thinking (continued)

The impersonal, normative, and conventional aspects of cognition; the social construction of reality; intersubjectivity; reification, essentialism, and ethnocentricity; language and typification; thought communities; cognitive traditions; cognitive norms; cognitive socialization; the politics of cognition

Emile Durkheim, "The Dualism of Human Nature and Its Social Conditions," in Robert N. Bellah (ed.), *Emile Durkheim: On Morality and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973 [1914]), pp. 151-53, 161-62.

Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City: Doubleday Anchor, 1967 [1966]), pp. 19-28, 34-46, 59-82, 89-92, 129-63.

Alfred Schutz and Thomas Luckmann, *The Structures of the Life-World* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), pp. 229-35, 247-51, 299-304, 309-18.

Eviatar Zerubavel, *The Seven-Day Circle: The History and Meaning of the Week* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989 [1985]), pp. 138-41.

Zerubavel, *Social Mindscapes*, pp. 6-22, 100-10.

September 18 The Sociology of Perception

Sociomental lenses; worldviews and perspectives; optical communities; optical norms; optical traditions; optical socialization; epistemic revolutions

Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Harvest, 1936 [1929]), pp. 1-3, 271-76.

Ludwik Fleck, *Genesis and Development of A Scientific Fact* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981 [1935]), pp. 38-51, 89-105, 110-11.

Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago

- Press, 1970 [1962]), pp. 111-35.
- Murray S. Davis, *Smut: Erotic Reality / Obscene Ideology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), pp. 230-34, 238-46.
- Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), pp. 4-6, 8-11, 81-82, 87-90, 149-50.
- Eviatar Zerubavel, *Terra Cognita: The Mental Discovery of America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992), pp. 70-71, 76-101.
- Zerubavel, *Social Mindscapes*, pp. 23-34.
- Ruth Simpson, *The Germ Culture* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Rutgers University, 2006), Chapter 5 ("The Forest and the Trees: Changing Styles of Focusing").

September 25 The Sociology of Attention

Attention and inattention; noticing and ignoring; figure and background; mental focusing; framing; relevance and irrelevance; joint attention; the social structure and dynamics of co-denial; the double wall of silence

- Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (New York: Harper Colophon, 1974), pp. 40-48, 58-74, 227-30, 251-69, 311-15.
- Eviatar Zerubavel, *The Fine Line: Making Distinctions in Everyday Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993 [1991]), pp. 10-12, 72.
- William Ocasio, "Towards an Attention-Based View of the Firm," *Strategic Management Journal* 18 (1997): 187-205.
- Eviatar Zerubavel, *The Elephant in the Room: Silence and Denial in Everyday Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 29-32, 35-38, 47-56.
- Malinda Carpenter and Kristin Liebal, "Joint Attention, Communication, and Knowing Together in Infancy," in Axel Seemann (ed.), *Joint Attention: New Developments in Psychology, Philosophy of Mind, and Social Neuroscience* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), pp. 159-76.

October 2 The Sociology of Attention (continued)

The social organization of attention; sociomental filters; the social organization of relevance and noteworthiness; norms of attending and disattending

- Erving Goffman, *Behavior in Public Places: Notes on the Social Organization of Gatherings* (New York: Free Press, 1963), pp. 83-88.
- Joan P. Emerson, "Behavior in Private Places: Sustaining Definitions of Reality in Gynecological Examinations," in Hans-Peter Dreitzel (ed.), *Recent Sociology No.2: Patterns of Communicative Behavior* (London: Macmillan, 1970), pp. 74-93.
- Goffman, *Frame Analysis*, pp. 202-15.
- Davis, *Smut*, pp. 216-24.

Zerubavel, *The Fine Line*, pp. 108-12.

Charles Goodwin, "Professional Vision," *American Anthropologist* 96 (1994): 606-28.

Zerubavel, *Social Mindscapes*, pp. 35-52.

Takahiko Masuda and Richard E. Nisbett, "Attending Holistically versus Analytically: Comparing the Context Sensitivity of Japanese and Americans," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 81 (2001): 922-34.

Zerubavel, *The Elephant in the Room*, pp. 62-68.

Asia Friedman, *Blind to Sameness: Sexpectations and the Social Construction of Male and Female Bodies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), pp. 27-51.

October 9 The Sociology of Memory

Collective memory; mnemonic communities; impersonal recollections; social sites of memory; norms of remembrance; mnemonic traditions; mnemonic socialization; mnemonic battles; plotlines and narratives; the social construction of historical continuity and discontinuity

Maurice Halbwachs, *The Social Frameworks of Memory*, in Lewis A. Coser (ed.), *Maurice Halbwachs on Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992 [1925]), pp. 37-40.

Michael Frisch, "American History and the Structures of Collective Memory: A Modest Exercise in Empirical Iconography," *Journal of American History* 75 (1989): 1133-43.

Zerubavel, *Social Mindscapes*, pp. 81-99.

Eviatar Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), pp. 11-25, 34-36, 52-54, 102-10.

Robyn Fivush, "Remembering and Reminiscing: How Individual Lives Are Constructed in Family Narratives," *Memory Studies* 1 (2008): 49-56.

Thomas DeGloma, "The Strategies and Tactics of Mnemonic Battle: Patterns in the Dynamics of Conflict over the Past" (paper presented at the annual Couch-Stone Symposium, Evanston, 2012).

October 16 Classification

Categories and boundaries; difference and similarity; lumping and splitting; rites of passage; mental divides and quantum leaps; mental distance: metric vs. topological; the rigid mind: compartmentalization, polarization, purity and contamination

Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960 [1909]), pp. 15-25.

Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Praeger, 1966), pp. 1-6, 35-40, 121-28.

Suzanne J. Kessler and Wendy McKenna, *Gender: An Ethnomethodological Approach* (New York: John Wiley, 1978), pp. 142-67.

- Eviatar Zerubavel, *Hidden Rhythms: Schedules and Calendars in Social Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985 [1981]), pp. 117-26.
- Davis, *Smut*, pp. 122-24, 134-41, 144-49, 155-60.
- Zerubavel, *The Fine Line*, pp. 1-10, 13-60.
- Eviatar Zerubavel, "Lumping and Splitting: Notes on Social Classification," *Sociological Forum* 11 (1996): 421-22, 428-30.
- Zerubavel, *Time Maps*, pp. 82-100.
- Raymond Corbey, *The Metaphysics of Apes: Negotiating the Animal-Human Boundary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2005), pp. 105-20.
- Eviatar Zerubavel, "Language and Memory: "Pre-Columbian" America and the Social Logic of Periodization," *Social Research* 65 (1998): 315-28.
- Friedman, *Blind to Sameness*, pp. 80-86.

October 23 Classification (continued)

The fuzzy mind; culture and classification; the politics of classification; etics and emics; fuzzy sets and prototypes; hybridity and liminality; the flexible mind: essence vs. potential, ambiguity, polysemy

- Kenneth L. Pike, *Language in Relation to A Unified Theory of the Structure of Human Behavior* (The Hague: Mouton, 1967 [1954]), pp. 37-39, 41-46.
- Charles O. Frake, "The Ethnographic Study of Cognitive Systems," in Stephen A. Tyler (ed.), *Cognitive Anthropology* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1969 [1962]), pp. 28-39.
- Victor Turner, "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites de Passage," in *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970 [1964]), pp. 93-99.
- Zerubavel, *The Fine Line*, pp. 61-108, 112-22.
- Martin W. Lewis and Kären E. Wigen, *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 2-13, 33-38, 150-54.
- Friedman, *Blind to Sameness*, pp. 141-49.

October 30 Symbols and Meaning

Language and meaning; representation and symbolism: signifiers and signifieds, semiotic contrast

- Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* (New York: International Publishers, 1967 [1867]), Vol. 1, pp. 35-38, 71-83.
- Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, pp. 221-24, 228-35, 303-13.
- Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959 [1915]), pp. 15-17, 65-69, 114-24.
- Charles S. Peirce, *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932), Vol. 2, pp. 156-69.

- Raymond Firth, "Hair as Private Asset and Public Symbol," in *Symbols: Public and Private* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), pp. 271-74.
- Marshall Sahlins, *Culture and Practical Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), pp. 179-97.
- Eviatar Zerubavel, "The Language of Time: Toward A Semiotics of Temporality," *Sociological Quarterly* 28 (1987): 343-47, 353-54.
- Zerubavel, *Social Mindscapes*, pp. 68-80.

November 6 Social Marking

Asymmetrical experience of space; asymmetrical experience of time

- Henri Hubert, "A Brief Study of the Representation of Time in Religion and Magic," in *Essay on Time* (Oxford: Durkheim Press, 1999 [1905]), pp. 50-56, 61-63, 72-76.
- Robert Hertz, "The Pre-eminence of the Right Hand: A Study in Religious Polarity," in Rodney Needham (ed.), *Right and Left: Essays on Dual Symbolic Classification* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978 [1909]), pp. 3-22.
- Zerubavel, *The Seven-Day Circle*, pp. 107-08, 113-20, 133-38.
- Johanna Foster, "Menstrual Time: The Sociocognitive Mapping of 'the Menstrual Cycle,'" *Sociological Forum* 11 (1996): 525-28, 540-42.
- Zerubavel, *Time Maps*, pp. 25-34.

November 13 Social Marking (continued)

Cognitive asymmetry; markedness and unmarkedness; the explicit and the implicit; taken-for-grantedness

- Horace Miner, "Body Ritual among the Nacirema," *American Anthropologist* 58 (1956): 503-07.
- Harold Garfinkel, *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1967), pp. 36-49, 53-55.
- Linda R. Waugh, "Marked and Unmarked: A Choice between Unequals in Semiotic Structure," *Semiotica* 38 (1982): 298-316.
- Wayne H. Brekhus, "Social Marking and the Mental Coloring of Identity: Sexual Identity Construction and Maintenance in the United States," *Sociological Forum* 11 (1996): 497-520.
- Wayne H. Brekhus, "A Sociology of the Unmarked: Redirecting Our Focus," *Sociological Theory* 16 (1998): 34-49.
- Karen A. Cerulo, *Never Saw It Coming: Cultural Challenges to Envisioning the Worst* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), pp. 6-13.
- Wayne H. Brekhus et al., "On the Contributions of Cognitive Sociology to the Sociological Study of Race," *Sociology Compass* 4 (2010): 61-72.

November 20 A Sociocognitive Look at Identity

Classification and identity; integrators and segmentors

Zerubavel, *Hidden Rhythms*, pp. 153-66.

Eviatar Zerubavel, "The Rigid, the Fuzzy, and the Flexible: Notes on the Mental Sculpting of Academic Identity," *Social Research* 62 (1995): 1093-1102.

Christena Nippert-Eng, *Home and Work: Negotiating Boundaries through Everyday Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 34-104.

Nicole Isaacson, "The 'Fetus-Infant': Changing Classifications of *In Utero* Development in Medical Texts," *Sociological Forum* 11 (1996): 457-77.

Thomas DeGloma, "Awakenings: Autobiography, Memory, and the Social Logic of Personal Discovery," *Sociological Forum* 25 (2010): 510-36.

December 4 A Sociocognitive Look at Identity (continued)

Mental weighing; marked and unmarked identities; identity lifestylers, commuters, and integrators; the cognitive politics of identity

C. L. Carr, "Cognitive Scripting and Sexual Identification: Essentialism, Anarchism, and Constructionism," *Symbolic Interaction* 22 (1999):1-20.

Jamie Mullaney, "Making It 'Count': Mental Weighing and Identity Attribution," *Symbolic Interaction* 22 (1999): 269-81.

Wayne H. Brekhus, *Peacocks, Chameleons, Centaurs: Gay Suburbia and the Grammar of Social Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), pp. 12-16, 24-31, 35-58, 74-89, 93-98, 137-64, 179-214.

December 11 A Sociocognitive Look at Identity (continued)

Lineage; kinship; bloodlines and blood ties; genealogical capital: pedigree; common ancestry; co-descent; genealogical communities: family, ethnicity, nationhood and citizenship; genealogical narratives: origins, "roots," indigenusness, matrilineal and patrilineal descent, the one-drop rule; the social organization of relatedness; the politics of ancestry and descent; genealogical engineering: purity, assimilation, endogamy and exogamy, integration and segregation; symbolic kinship and descent

Eviatar Zerubavel, *Ancestors and Relatives: Genealogy, Identity, and Community* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 15-131.