CULTURAL SOCIOLOGY
920: 571: 01 / 920:492:04

Professor Karen A. Cerulo, Department of Sociology

Tuesday –1:00PM-3:40PM
In our Zoom classroom

Office: At my house ;-)
Email: cerulo@sociology.rutgers.edu
Office Hours: Tues: 11:30AM--12:30PM; 3:55--4:40PM & *by Zoom appt.*

OBJECTIVES

Welcome to Cultural Sociology, one of the most vibrant and steadily growing subfields in sociology! This course is designed to familiarize you with the field and review the various perspectives and approaches within it.

We begin the course by asking: What is culture? The question may seem straightforward, but there is enormous variety in how scholars identify the concept of culture and its components. Different definitions lead to different theories, ideas and ways to measure culture. We will discuss these varying ideas. Most importantly, we will ask: How does culture apply? By doing so, we can explore ways to productively use cultural sociology in sociological research more generally, making it relevant in fields that may not currently consider culture a core building block in research.

By examining a wide variety of approaches to cultural sociology, you will get a sense of the most important theorists, questions and debates driving the field. While the course will attend to the theoretical roots of the field, *I will prioritize contemporary works to help familiarize you with the current pulse* of this exciting and ever-changing subfield.

READINGS

All readings for this course will be posted on Canvas or available on the web (link included in the syllabus). To access Canvas readings:

- Go to https://canvas.rutgers.edu/ and log in.

- On the left side of the page, click on "Courses." Our course site, identified by name and course number, should immediately pop up as one of your courses.

- Look at the bar on the left side of the screen and click on "Modules."

- The syllabus is organized by modules and each module will contain the readings (and any other materials relevant for a specified week.

Note: If you have trouble accessing the Canvas site, please contact the Canvas Help Desk help@canvas.rutgers.edu They are very helpful.

CLASS ENVIRONMENT

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 also celebrate diversity of theoretical and methodological perspectives among our faculty and students and seek to create an atmosphere of respect and mutual dialogue. We have zero tolerance for violations of these principles and have instituted clear and respectful procedures for responding to such grievances.

Knowing this, our classroom should be considered a "safe place" for everyone. Students are encouraged to engage in discussion and debate related to the readings and topics scheduled for the class provided that one's views are not intended to provoke, insult, or damage another member of the class or the instructor. To facilitate such an environment, all of us (students and instructor) must act with mutual respect and common courtesy.

LEARNING GOALS

In this course, you will:

- Master various definitions and theories of culture
- Become familiar with different ways of measuring culture
- Consider ways to apply culture in sociological explanations
- Consider the ways in which cultural sociology intersects with other sociological subfields and other disciplines

ACHIEVING THE LEARNING GOALS-- DESIGN OF THE CLASS

There are several requirements for the course:

1) Read the works assigned for each class. ***All readings must be completed prior to class***. Our classes revolve around discussion. So, familiarity with the material is essential.

2) You are expected to attend every class and fully participate in class discussions of the readings. If you are taking the course for credit, t**his portion of the course will account for 10% of your grade**.

3) Each week, you must produce a 2-3 page typed, double-spaced "reaction paper" to the readings. The paper should:

- briefly summarize the themes of the readings and the debates the readings raise
- share your critiques of the readings
- provide 1-2 questions that you will raise in class discussion.
- provide 1-2 ways the concepts covered in the cultural sociology readings apply to the "discussion topic" listed for a given week.

Your comments must be emailed to me (cerulo@sociology.rutgers.edu) **by 9AM** on the day of the course meeting. **Please do not send me emails through canvass—emai me directly at the address I just gave.** If you are taking the course for credit, **this portion of the course will account for 35% of your grade**.

Achieving the Learning Goals, continued on the next page

Achieving the Learning Goals, continued

4) Each class will have a "free style discussion topic." We will try to apply the cultural sociological theories and concepts discussed in the class to probe ways of studying the discussion topic. Over the course of the semester, each student should lead 1-2 class discussions (It depends on the size of the course.) **Don't let this scare you.** You'll simply use your weekly reaction papers to guide you. (See next page.) If you are taking the course for credit, **this portion of the course will account for 20% of your grade**.

5) Each student must propose a research topic and write a research proposal. The topic may be in any substantive area, but the project must utilize cultural sociology theories/concepts from the course as part of the analytic lens for the proposal topic.

The proposal should follow this structure—use it as a rough guide:

a) State your topic/problem/question/puzzle—however you like to think about it. (This section should be 1 to 1 ½ pages in length)

b) Explain how a cultural sociology frame will enhance the project—how will cultural sociology help you address your topic/problem/question/puzzle? What contemporary themes does your question address … what gaps in the literature does it fill … what puzzles does it solve? (This section should be about 2-4 pages in length)

c) Discuss 6-10 relevant articles or books that inform your topic of inquiry. You may use readings we have covered in class or create a list of readings on your own. But culture readings must play a major role here. (This section of your proposal should be about 5-10 pages in length.)

d) Explain the method you will use to study your topic—i.e. interviews, focus groups, survey method, content analysis, ethnography, etc. Explain how you will execute the project. I will be especially impressed if you can identify a viable funding source for your project. (This section should be about 2-4 pages in length)

e) Provide a reference list at the end of your proposal. (This section should be about 1-2 pages in length)

Overall, you can see that your final product will be about 11-21 double-spaced pages in length. If you are taking the course for credit, **this portion of the course will account for 35% of your grade**.

OK—Let's Get Going!

CLASS SCHEDULE

Module 1: Complete for the 1/19 class: *Introduction to the Class*

First, we'll do some "bookkeeping": review the syllabus, schedule presentations, etc. Then, we will discuss some basic definitions of culture and familiarize ourselves with different types of culture: public culture which includes codes, contexts, and institutions; nondeclarative or "know how" culture; and declarative or "know that" culture. (Both nondeclarative and declarative culture are elements of personal culture).

Assignment: No paper this week, but …

- ✓ Make sure you are registered on the Canvas site. If you cannot access the site, please contact Canvas personnel at https://canvas.rutgers.edu/

- ✓ Read the following article for our first meeting:

  Lizardo, Omar. 2017. "Improving Cultural Analysis: Considering Personal Culture in Its Declarative and Nondeclarative Modes." *American Sociological Review* 82(1): **Read pages 88-100 only**. (*This article provides a new approach—one that will help me organize the course.)*

Oh … one more thing: Next Monday is my birthday. So after today's class, make sure to tell me how youthful I look. ;-)

Module 2: Complete for the 1/26 class: *What is Public Culture?*

Public Culture is culture externalized in the form of symbols, scripts and codes, frames and narratives, contexts and institutions. For many years, this was the only type of culture sociologists studied. Today, we will review Swidler's often cited discussion of the concept. Then, we will review writings/studies that illuminate and utilize some of the components of public culture—first codes, then scripts and frames, then institutions.

Assignment:

Read (in this order):

Swidler, Ann. 2001. *Talk of Love: How Culture Matters.* Chicago, University of Chicago Press. **Pp. 160-161.**

Cerulo, Karen A. 2015. "The Embodied Mind: Building on Wacquant's Carnal Sociology." *Qualitative Sociology* 38:1: **33-38.**

Winterrowd, Erin, Silvia Sara Canetto, and Kathrin Benoit. "Permissive Beliefs and Attitudes about Older Adult Suicide: A Suicide Enabling Script?" *Aging and Mental Health* 21: 2: **173-181**.

Trivundža, Ilija Tomanić, and Sašo Slaček Brlek. 2017. "Looking for Mr Hyde: The Protest Paradigm, Violence and (de) Legitimation of Mass Political Protests." *International Journal of Media & Cultural Politics* 13: 1-2: **131-148.**

Swidler, Ann. 2001. *Talk of Love: How Culture Matters.* Chicago, University of Chicago Press. Pp. **169-180**.

Free style Discussion: What role does public culture play in our ideas about poverty? What components of public culture are at work here?

Module 3: Complete for the 2/2 class: *Nondeclarative Culture—"Know How" or Procedural Knowledge*

Personal Culture has two elements: nondeclarative culture and declarative culture. Nondeclarative culture is akin to procedural knowledge—that is, the skills and "know how" we acquire from our experiences. To fully understand nondeclarative culture, we have to consider the role of cognition and embodied experience. Today, we will explore some of the theoretical works that bring these ideas alive. Then we will apply the ideas—through one reading and some freestyle class discussion.

Assignment:

Read (in this order):

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1980. *The Logic of Practice*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press: **Pp. 52-65.**

Giddens, Anthony. 1984. *The Constitution of Society.* Malden, MA: Polity. **Pp. 7-8**

Wacquant, Loïc J. D. 2005. "For a Sociology of Flesh and Blood." *Qualitative Sociology* 38 (1): **pp. 2-3 and pp. mid 4- mid 5.**

Lande, Brian. 2007. "Breathing Like a Soldier: Culture Incarnate." *The Sociological Review* 55:1_suppl: **95-108.** *(This article is important because it takes the theoretical ideas presented this week and applies them in a research project.)*

Free style Discussion: What role does nondeclarative culture play in racial bigotry? Can we apply Lande's "step-by-step" explanation to better understand bigotry?

Module 4: Complete for the 2/9 class: *Nondeclarative Culture: How Is It Acquired?*

How is nondeclarative culture "deposited" in us? In this class, we will review two important cognitive mechanisms that play a role here: mirror neurons and embodied simulation. These are concepts from cognitive science, but they have made their way into cultural sociology in some very interesting applications.

Assignment:

Read (in this order):

Iacoboni, Marco. "Imitation, empathy, and mirror neurons." *Annual Review of Psychology* 60 (2009): **pp. pp. 653-667**.

Bergen, Benjamin K. 2012. *Louder Than Words: The New Science of How the Mind Makes Meaning.* New York: Basic Books. **Pp 10-20.**

Summers-Effler E, Van Ness J Hausmann, C. 2015. "Peeking in the Black Box: Studying, Theorizing, and Representing the Micro-foundations of Day-to-day Interactions." *J Contemp Ethnogr* 44: **450-479**. *(This article is important because it takes the theoretical ideas presented this week and applies them in a research project.)*

Free style Discussion: What role can mirror neurons and embodied simulation play in making social movements more powerful?

Module 5: Complete for the 2/16 class: *Declarative Culture—"Know That" Knowledge or Discursive Consciousness*

Declarative culture is a component of personal culture as well; it builds on what Giddens calls "discursive consciousness"—the things that people are able to verbally express about the social world around them. The primary symbolic medium via which people "declare" culture is spoken or written language. However, non-linguistic symbolic systems (e.g., image, sound, smell, etc.) are part of declarative culture as well.

Assignment:

Read (in this order):

Lizardo, Omar. 2017. "Improving Cultural Analysis: Considering Personal Culture in Its Declarative and Nondeclarative Modes." *American Sociological Review* 82: 1: **Re-read pages 91-92 only**.

Giddens, Anthony. 1984. "The Analysis of Strategic Conduct." in *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structure*. Berkeley: University of California Press. **Pp. 288-293.**

Hall, Stuart. 2006. "Encoding/decoding." in (M. G. Durham and D. M. Kellner, eds.) *Media and Cultural Studies: Key Works.* London: Routledge. **Pp. 91-103**

Mohr, John W. et al. 2020. *Measuring Culture.* New York: Columbia University Press. **Pp. 34-40** (Talk and Aims).

Lamont, Michèle, Bo Yun Park, and Elena Ayala-Hurtado. 2017. "Trump's Electoral Speeches and His Appeal to the American White Working Class." *The British Journal of Sociology* 68: **153-180.**

Free style Discussion: Playing off the Lamont et al. article, how do politicians use declarative culture to garner support?

Module 6: Complete for the 2/23 class: *The Interaction between Nondeclarative and Declarative Culture: Dual Process Models*

Does nondeclarative culture, as some suggest, dominate meaning-making and subsequent behavior? Or, as competing works suggest, is there an interaction or simultaneity between nondeclarative and declarative culture in meaning-making and behavior? What role does social context play in the dominance of one cultural type versus the interaction or simultaneous operation of both types of personal culture? And when both declarative and non-declarative processes occur, what are the implications for meaning-making and behavior? (Apologies: the reading is heavier than usual.)

Assignment:

Read (in this order):

Cerulo, Karen A., Vanina Leschziner and Hana Shepherd. Forthcoming 2021. "Rethinking Culture and Cognition." *Annual Review of Sociology* Volume 47: read section on "How Do Types of Personal Culture Interact? **Pp. 13-17**

Vaisey, Stephen. 2009. "Motivation and Justification: A Dual-process Model of Culture in Action." *American Journal of Sociology* 114: 6: **pp. 1675-1715**.

Module 6, continued

Moore R. 2017. Fast or Slow: Sociological Implications of Measuring Dual-process Cognition. *Sociological Science* 4: **196-223.**

Free style Discussion: What contributions can sociologists make to better understanding dual processing? What can we tell cognitive scientists that they should know?

Module 7: Complete for the 3/2 class: *Storing and Activating Culture*

Where is culture stored and how is it activated? We'll touch briefly on concepts such as schemas, prototypes, metaphors and neural binding. But as sociologists, we will be more interested on how culture is activated. We will focus here on processes such as implicit bias, priming, and, in our free style discussion, message distortion.

Assignment:

Read (in this order):

Cerulo, Karen A., Vanina Leschziner and Hana Shepherd. Forthcoming 2021. "Rethinking Culture and Cognition." *Annual Review of Sociology* Volume 47: read section on "Storage" **Pp. 6-9.**

Ridgeway, Cecilia L. 2014. "Why Status Matters for Inequality." *American Sociological Review* 79: **1-16.**

Dixon TL, Maddox KB. 2005. "Skin Tone, Crime News, and Social Reality Judgments: Priming the Stereotype of the Dark and Dangerous Black Criminal." *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 35: **1555-1570**.

Free style Discussion: What role can disruption play in activating culture? The case of marketing (discussion led by Cerulo)

Module 8: Complete between 3/9-11: *Individual Meetings: Talking through your proposals*

We will schedule 30-60 minute meetings (via Zoom) to help you get going on your research proposals.

Spring Break—Cut Loose!

Module 9: Complete for the 3/23 class: *How is Culture Shared?*

Social interaction is central to how culture is stored at the individual level. Today, we review sociological work that pays particular attention to the role of interaction and transmission in the formation of building blocks of culture—particularly representations and social rules.

Assignment:

Read (in this order):

Cerulo, Karen A., Vanina Leschziner and Hana Shepherd. Forthcoming 2021. "Rethinking Culture and Cognition." *Annual Review of Sociology* Volume 47: read section on "Storage" **Pp. 17-20.**

Lyons, Anthony, and Yoshihisa Kashima. 2003. "How Are Stereotypes Maintained through Communication? The Influence of Stereotype Sharedness." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 85: 6: **989-1005**.

Cowan, Sarah K. and Delia Baldassarri, D. 2018. "It Could Turn Ugly": Selective Disclosure of Attitudes in Political Discussion Networks. *Social Networks* 52: **1-17**.

Kitts J. 2003. Egocentric Bias or Information Management? Selective Disclosure and the Social Roots of Norm Misperception. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 66: **222–237**.

Free Style Discussion: What happens when culture attempts to be shared between people of different social classes? What important questions could sociologists be posing on this issue?

Module 10: Complete for the 3/30 class: *Cultural Objects*

Where do objects fit in the study of culture. Today, we look at several new ideas about how we should think about cultural objects.

Assignment:

Read (in this order):

McDonnell Terence E., Bail Christopher A. and Iddo Tavory. 2017. A Theory of Resonance. *Sociological Theory 35*: **1-14**.

Winchester, Daniel. 2017. ""A Part of Who I Am": Material Objects as "Plot Devices" in the Formation of Religious Selves." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 56: 1: **83-103.**

Griswold, Wendy, Gemma Mangione, and Terence E. McDonnell. 2013. "Objects, Words, and Bodies in Space: Bringing Materiality into Cultural Analysis." *Qualitative Sociology* 36(4): **343-364.**

Free Style Discussion: How can we analyze the public's response to Covid 19 "Masks" using the ideas presented today?

Module 11: Complete for the 4/06 class: *Measuring Culture*

One of the greatest challenges in cultural sociology has been the issue of measurement. Today, we will look at some new ideas on how to measure culture. (Apologies: the reading is heavier than usual.)

Assignment:

Read (in this order):

Mohr, John W. et al. 2020. *Measuring Culture*. New York: Columbia University Press, Chapters 2 and 3: **Pp. 58-127.**

Free Style Discussion: I'd like every member of the class to come up with a form of culture. Then, we can discuss in class how we might measure it.

Module 12: Complete between 4/13-4/15: *Individual Meetings: Talking through your proposals*

We will schedule 30-60 minute meetings (via Zoom) to help you move forward on your research proposals.

Module 13: Complete for the 4/20 class: *Culture in Action*

How does culture and the context in which it resides enable or constrain action? Today's articles are a sampling of the literature addressing this question.

Assignment:

Read (in this order):

Swidler, Ann. 1986. "Culture in Action" *American Sociological Review* 51(2): **273-286**.

Abramson, Corey M. 2012. "From "either-or" to "when and how": A Context-dependent Model of Culture in Action." *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 42: 2: **155-180**.

Winchester, Daniel, and Jeffrey Guhin. 2019. "Praying "Straight from the Heart": Evangelical Sincerity and the Normative Frames of Culture in Action." *Poetics* 72: **32-42**.

Free Style Discussion: Using Swidler's ideas of settled and unsettled times, what might we note in hindsight about culture's role in the 2020 presidential election?

Module 14: Complete for the 4/27 class: *New Applications*

Today, we will explore some new ideas and applications in the cultural sociology literature.

Assignment:

Read (in this order):

Leschziner, Vanina, and Gordon Brett. 2019. "Beyond Two Minds: Cognitive, Embodied, and Evaluative Processes in Creativity." *Social Psychology Quarterly* **82: 4: 340-366**.

 Kahan, Dan M., and Donald Braman. 2006. "Cultural Cognition and Public Policy." *Yale Law and Policy Review* 24: **147-169.**

Banakou, Domna, Parasuram D. Hanumanthu, and Mel Slater. 2016. "Virtual Embodiment of White People in a Black Virtual Body Leads to a Sustained Reduction in their Implicit Racial Bias." *Frontiers in human neuroscience* 10: **1-12.**

Free Style Discussion: Taking off on Banakou et al., how might virtual reality technology help fight racial bigotry?

All research proposals are due in my email box by noon on 5/3/21 or earlier. No ifs, ands, or buts!