

SOC483H1F: CULTURE AND COGNITION
Professor Vanina Leschziner
Department of Sociology
University of Toronto
Fall 2017

Location and Time: FE 41, Wednesday, 10AM-12PM

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Brief Overview of the Course

This course is organized as a discussion seminar. This means that you **MUST** do **ALL** the readings and come prepared to critically discuss them in class. In this seminar, you will have the opportunity to actively participate in discussions, hone your communication and analytical skills, explore and develop your research interests, and improve your writing and research skills.

This is a Theory and Research seminar around the specific topic of Culture and Cognition. Readings and discussions will be heavily theory-oriented. However, the main goal is not simply to read theory and discuss it (as fruitful an endeavor as this is), but to acquire analytical and theoretical tools in order to apply them to the analysis of the social world. Culture and Cognition are central aspects of our everyday life, and we will be bringing our native's knowledge of the social world to critically evaluate the readings. This seminar will provide an overview of the contemporary literature in Culture and Cognition, exploring a variety of perspectives and research areas within this sub-field.

What is Culture and Cognition? It is a relatively new and small area in Sociology. It is not simply the sum of its two parts, that is, some Culture and some Cognition. Rather, the area is defined by relatively specific conceptual interests and empirical approaches to the study of culture and cognition as phenomena that are observable in their association at a social level, and that are thus subject to systematic study. As an area of study, Culture and Cognition is associated to, but nonetheless distinct from, the Sociology of Culture. Scholars in Culture and Cognition are interested in studying how actors actively use culture through shared cognitive schemas that are embedded in larger social structures. They study the actions, practices, discourses or patterns through which actors put cognition at work. And they use methods to empirically identify how actors put their cognition at work rather than assume how they do it. **BUT**, what really is culture and cognition is a question that we will explore and debate *as* we learn about it throughout the year.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The prerequisite to take this course is 1.0 SOC at the 300+ level. Students without this prerequisite will be removed at any time they are discovered.

Class Format, Requirements, and Grading

1- in-class test, October 25	30%
2- research proposal, due November 1	5%
3- paper, due December 6	35%
4- presentation and leading class discussion	15%
5- participation in class discussions	10%
6- final paper presentation, December 6	5%

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. Students are responsible for all material presented in class. Students who are unable to attend class are responsible for obtaining information about any announcements that may have been made in class as well as notes on the material covered from their classmates.

Proper documentation from a University of Toronto Student Medical Certificate or college registrar is required to justify an absence.

Deadlines: Late work will not be accepted unless submitted with proper documentation from your physician and a University of Toronto Student Medical Certificate, or from your college registrar. See below for details.

Documentation from your Physician or College Registrar

If you miss a test or a paper deadline, do not contact the instructor unless you have you have followed the steps described here.

In case of illness, you must supply a duly completed Verification of Student Illness, or Injury form (available at www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca). A doctor’s note is not acceptable. The form must be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to the instructor, and submitted with your work at class or during office hours, within seven days of the missed assignment

If a personal or family crisis prevents you from meeting a deadline, you must get a letter from your college registrar (it is a good idea anyway to advise your college registrar if a crisis is interfering with your studies). The letter must be placed in a sealed envelop, addressed to the instructor, and submitted with your work at class or during office hours.

Readings

BOOK SELECTIONS AND JOURNAL ARTICLES Some book selections and all journal articles will be available on the Blackboard course website, under “Course Materials.” Other book selections will be available as a coursepack at the University of Toronto Bookstore, 214 College St. You should also purchase Zerubavel’s *Social Mindscapes* at the bookstore.

Students are solely responsible for obtaining and reading all required materials before class. Please give yourself enough time to deal with any problems or delays accessing the readings that may arise so you can be sure to come to class prepared to discuss the materials. Problems accessing readings (the packet or online articles) will not excuse failure to demonstrate having done the required readings.

Assignments

In-class test

There will be one in-class closed-book test on October 25.

Make-up test

Students who miss the test for a valid reason and wish to take a make-up test must give your instructor a written request for special consideration which explains why the test was missed, accompanied by proper documentation from a physician or college registrar (see above). A student who misses a test and the subsequent make-up test for a valid reason will not have a third chance to take the test, and the mark assigned for the test will be a zero.

Research Proposal

You must submit a printed copy of a proposal for your final paper on November 1. This proposal should specify the kind of paper you will write (empirical paper, theoretical paper, or research proposal), the topic, and research question. It should include information about the data, theories, and perspectives that you will use for the paper.

Paper

You may choose to write an empirical paper, a theoretical paper, or research proposal. The paper will be based on a topic of your choice that is suited to this course. The paper is due on December 6, and it should be no more than 20 pages (all double spaced, 12 point type). Papers are to be submitted at the beginning of the class on the due date in TWO forms: as hard copy, and electronic copy to be submitted to <http://turnitin.com>. Papers are not to be submitted via email or fax, or to the receptionist at the Department of Sociology.

“Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for 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.” For information about the terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service, go to

<http://www.teaching.utoronto.ca/teaching/academicintegrity/turnitin/conditions-use.htm>

Assignments not submitted through Turnitin will receive a grade of zero (0 %) unless a student instead provides, along with their position paper, sufficient secondary material (e.g., reading notes, outlines of the paper, rough drafts of the final draft, etc.) to establish that the paper they submit is truly their own. The alternative (not submitting via Turnitin) is in place because, strictly speaking, using Turnitin is voluntary for students at the University of Toronto.

Plagiarism: Be careful to avoid plagiarism. It is a serious academic offense with serious penalties (see the “Code of Behavior on Academic Matters”). If you are using somebody else’s ideas, do not present them as your own. Give proper references if you are using somebody else’s ideas, and use quotation marks if you are quoting. When in doubt, it is always safer to over-reference --you are not going to be punished for that. Please also be

aware that turning in an old paper, or large parts thereof, for credit in a second (or third etc.) course, is considered an academic offense that results in students being referred off to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Presentation and Leading Class Discussion

You will be scheduled to present readings and lead discussion on an assigned day to be arranged with the instructor at the beginning of the term. On the assigned day, you are expected to give a presentation about the readings, and to provide a handout with: a) a summary of the main points of the readings, b) definitions of key concepts used in the readings, and 3) at least two questions related to the readings for class discussion.

Participating in Class Discussions

You will be evaluated for your contributions to class discussion over the course of the semester. I will consider both the quantity and quality of your contributions. This is a small seminar, organized around class discussions, so student participation is expected. Be sure to allow enough time to read materials closely and critically think about them prior to each class meeting so that you are prepared to participate in class. The quality of your learning experience will hinge upon what each student brings to the classroom.

Final Paper Presentation

You are expected to give a brief presentation about your paper on the last class of the semester, when your paper is due. The presentation should cover the main ideas in your paper, describe your approach, and explain your analysis and conclusions.

Accessibility Needs

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: _disability.services@utoronto.ca_ or [_http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility_](http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility_).

Class Schedule

September 13

INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS CULTURE AND COGNITION?

CLASSICAL FOUNDATIONS

September 20

THE SOCIAL MIND

Eviatar Zerubavel, "The Sociology of the Mind," chapter 1, "Social Optics," chapter 2, "The Social Gates of Consciousness," chapter 3, and "The Social Division of the World," chapter 4 in *Social Mindscapes* (Harvard University Press, 1997), pp. 1-22, 23-34, 35-52, 53-67.

Daniel Gilbert, "How Mental Systems Believe," *American Psychologist* 46 (1991): 107-119.

September 27

CATEGORIES AND COGNITIVE SCHEMAS

Eleanor Rosch, "Principles of Categorization" in *Cognition and Categorization*, edited by Eleanor Rosch and Barbara Lloyd (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1978), pp. 27-48.

Roy D'Andrade, "The Growth of Schema Theory," chapter 6 in *The Development of Cognitive Anthropology* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 122-149.

October 4

SOCIAL COGNITION

Paul DiMaggio, "Culture and Cognition," *Annual Review of Sociology* 23 (1997): 263-287.

Karen Cerulo, "Mining the Intersections of Cognitive Sociology and Neuroscience." *Poetics* 38 (2010): 115-132.

October 11

SITUATED COGNITION

Edwin Hutchins, selections from "introduction," "Navigation as Computation," chapter 2, "The Implementation of Contemporary Pilotage," chapter 3, "Cultural Cognition," chapter 9 in *Cognition in the Wild* (The MIT Press, 1995), pp. xi-xiv, 65-67, 92-99, 110-116, 164-174, 353-374.

October 18

SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND CULTURE

Pierre Bourdieu, "Structures, *habitus*, practices," chapter 3 in *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford University Press, 1990), pp. 52-65.

Pierre Bourdieu, "Conclusion: Classes and Classifications" in *Distinction* (Harvard University Press, 1984), pp. 466-484.

October 25
In-class Test

November 1

CULTURAL REPERTOIRES

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

Ann Swidler, selections from "Finding Culture," chapter 1, "Repertoires," chapter 2, "Conclusion: How Culture Matters" in *Talk of Love* (The University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp. 11-23, 24-34, 160-180.

Research Proposal Due

November 8
Fall Reading Week

November 15

CLASSIFICATIONS AND INTERPRETATION IN OCCUPATIONS

Rick Mayes and Allan Horwitz, "DSM-III and the Revolution in the Classification of Mental Illness," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 41 (2005): 249-267.

Diane Vaughan, "Signals and Interpretive Work: The Role of Culture in a Theory of Practical Action," chapter 3 in *Culture in Mind: Toward a Sociology of Culture and Cognition*, edited by Karen Cerulo (Routledge, 2002), pp. 28-54.

November 22

COGNITIVE SCHEMAS: REPRODUCTION AND CHANGE

Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powell, "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields," *American Sociological Review* 48 (1983): 147-160.

Ronald Burt, "Structural Holes and Good Ideas," *American Journal of Sociology* 110 (2004): 349-399.

November 29

THE DUALITY OF COGNITION AND INSTITUTIONS

Reading: John Mohr and Vincent Duquenne, "The Duality of Culture and Practice: Poverty Relief in New York City, 1888-1917," *Theory and Society* 26 (1997): 305-356.

December 6
Final Paper Due

Final Paper Presentations

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!