

SOC483H1 S

Culture and Cognition

Winter 2024 Syllabus

Course Meetings

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Section	Day & Time	Delivery Mode & Location
LEC0101	Wednesday, 11:10 AM - 1:00 PM	In Person:

Course Contacts

Course Website: <https://q.utoronto.ca/courses/335612>

Professor: Vanina Leschziner

Email: vanina.leschziner@utoronto.ca

Office Hours and Location: Tuesday 4-6pm, Sociology department, Room 17149

Course Overview

This course examines the social foundations of thinking and action, with a focus on how individuals think and act through shared cognitive schemas that are embedded in larger social structures. The course is organized around a wide-ranging array of classical and contemporary theories that help explain the various factors that shape culture and cognition. There is a research component to put this analytical understanding into practice. Restricted to 4th-year sociology majors and specialists.

Culture and Cognition is a relatively new area in Sociology, but one that has grown exponentially in the past few years. It is not simply the sum of its two parts (i.e., some culture and some cognition). Rather, the area is defined by relatively specific conceptual interests, analytical frameworks and methodological approaches to the study of culture and cognition as phenomena that are observable in their association at a social level, and are therefore subject to systematic study.

As an area of study, Culture and Cognition is associated with the Sociology of Culture. But it has a specific set of analytical concerns that make it clearly distinct from the larger subfield. Scholars in Culture and Cognition are interested in studying the relationship between cognitive patterns, cultural configurations, and social relations. Unlike the broader Sociology of Culture, the area of Culture and Cognition focuses on the workings of the mind (and sometimes the

body), seeking to understand how cognitive processes shape actors' perceptions, thinking, decision-making, actions, and social relations. Scholars in this area utilize a variety of methods (including qualitative, quantitative, experimental, and computational) to empirically investigate how culture and cognition interrelate to shape social arrangements.

This seminar will provide an overview of the topics, theories, and perspectives that inform current research in Culture and Cognition. However, the main goal of the seminar is not simply to acquire knowledge of the scholarship produced in the area, but rather to explore, debate, and ultimately gain a better understanding of what culture and cognition are and how they operate.

To this end, our readings and class meetings will be largely analytical and theory-oriented, so as to build a foundation from which to start to figure out what culture and cognition are and how best to study them. The seminar is organized around a number of main themes that logically build upon each other. The readings are dense, so you should allow enough time to read them carefully before class. You are expected to come to class prepared to critically discuss the readings.

Course Learning Outcomes

Prerequisites: 1.0 SOC credit at the 300+ level

Corequisites: None

Exclusions: SOC483Y1

Recommended Preparation: None

Credit Value: 0.5

Course Materials

Book selections and all journal articles will be available on the Quercus course website, under "Course Materials."

Marking Scheme

Assessment	Percent	Details	Due Date
in-class test	30%		2024-02-28
research proposal	5%		2024-03-13
research paper	35%		2024-04-03
oral presentation of readings	15%		No Specific Date
participation in class discussion	10%		No Specific Date
oral paper presentation	5%		2024-04-03

Late Assessment Submissions Policy

Late work will not be accepted unless submitted with proper documentation. See below for details.