What is culture? How do cultures shape individuals, nations, and economies? And what kinds of social processes influence cultural production and consumption (art, music, literature, movies, television)? This course looks at questions of culture through a sociological lens, and at society through a cultural lens. Most of the readings will be from cultural sociology and the sociology of culture, but we will also discuss anthropology, literary criticism, philosophy, and cultural history.

The course is fairly theoretical as sociology courses go, and requires serious reading and discussion. It is particularly suitable for students interested in the media, arts, literature, religion, social theory, and cultural differences.

Readings

1. Lynn Spillman, *Cultural Sociology* (Spillman)
2. Philip Smith, *Cultural Theory* (Smith)
3. Articles linked from this site

Assignments

*Undergraduates (4260):*

Two exams, 20% (May 19) and 30% (May 26) each

Plus a final exam, 35% (June 2)

Pop quizzes, 15%

*Graduate students (5260):*
2-page response papers on 1 reading each (any reading from that week) due Mondays and Wednesdays (5 papers, 6 points each, 30 points total)

Active participation in every class (10 points)

Pop quizzes, 15%

Final Exam (45%)*

*Doctoral students who wish for this course to count toward the globalization concentration may substitute a 10-pg. globalization-related final paper for the final exam. The paper should be a research proposal or very thorough literature review with a title page, abstract (max. 150 words), and introduction justifying the project. Research proposals should specify a research question, predictions, methods, and data to be used. A literature review should specify weak areas in the literature and discuss possible research directions to address these. Formatting and editing, including parenthetical notation and references, should be professional quality (APA, ASA, MLA, or Chicago-style references are acceptable).

Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory, and active participation in class discussion is encouraged.

Attendance will not be taken, but absence will be noted.

There will be no make-up quizzes or exams.

Syllabus

WEEK 1

Part I: Introduction

William Sewell jr., The Concept(s) of Culture (download from bottom of this page)
Philip Smith, Introduction: What is Culture? What is Cultural Theory? (Smith)
Lynn Spillman, Introduction: Culture and Cultural Sociology (Spillman)

Part II: Critical Theory and its Critics

Philip Smith, "Culture as Ideology in Western Marxism" 34-53 (Smith)
Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception” (Spillman)
Tamar Liebes and Elihu Katz "Patterns of Involvement in Television Fiction"
Pierre Bourdieu, "Television" (download from bottom of this page)

Part III: Max Weber and Values Analysis

Philip Smith, 12-16 (Smith)
Max Weber, “The Social Psychology of the World Religions” (download from bottom of this page)
Max Weber, "The Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism"
Bryan Turner, Islam, Capitalism and the Weber Theses (bottom of page)
Samuel Huntington, Cultures Count (bottom of page)
Stephen Vaisey "What People Want: Rethinking Poverty, Culture, and Educational Attainment"

Exam I

WEEK 2

Part IV: Cultural Anthropology and Cultural Relativism

Ruth Benedict, “The Diversity of Cultures” (Spillman)
Clifford Geertz, Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture (Spillman)
Richard Shweder, "On the Return of the 'Civilizing' Project" (bottom of page)
Part V: Durkheim’s “Religious Sociology”

Philip Smith, 9-12, 69-110 (Smith)

Film: "Warriors of the Amazon"

Jeffrey Alexander and Philip Smith, "The Discourse of American Civil Society" (Spillman)

Tognato, "A Neo-Durkheimian Perspective on Central Banking" (5260 only) (bottom of page)

Ignatow “Idea Hamsters on the Bleeding Edge” (5260 only) (bottom of page)

Part VI: Bourdieuan Sociology

*Culture and Status*

Pierre Bourdieu, Cultural Power (Spillman)

Pierre Bourdieu, Social Space and Symbolic Power (5260 only) (bottom of page)

Bourdieu, The Field of Cultural Production (read through pg. 40) and The Market of Symbolic Goods (5260 only for both)

Small, Harding, and Lamont, Reconsidering Culture and Poverty (5260 only)

Exam II

WEEK 3

*Cultural Consumption*

Michele Lamont, Symbolic Boundaries and Status (Spillman)

Bethany Bryson, Symbolic Exclusion and Musical Dislikes (Spillman)

DiMaggio and Mukhtar, "Arts Participation as Cultural Capital in the United States" (bottom of page)

Richard Peterson and Roger Kern, "Changing Highbrow Taste: From Snob to Omnivore" (bottom of page)
Habitus

Philip Smith, The Body in Cultural Theory, 262-279 (Smith)

Dan Winchester, Embodying the Faith (bottom of page)

Gabe Ignatow, Culture and Embodied Cognition (bottom of page)

Part VII: The Culture Industries

Philip Smith, 158-175 (Smith)

clip from The Devil Wears Prada (Cerulean Sweater)

Richard Peterson, Why 1955? Explaining the Advent of Rock Music (Spillman)

Paul DiMaggio, Market Structure, the Creative Process, and Popular Culture (Spillman)

Wendy Griswold, American Character and the American Novel (Spillman)

Final Exam

*Students with disabilities are invited to meet during office hours, or to email, to discuss any special needs for this class.

*As for all classes at UNT, academic dishonesty, plagiarism, collusion and falsification of academic records or the attempt to do these things constitute academic dishonesty, as per the UNT Code of Student Conduct and Discipline. All exams for this course are closed-book and closed-notes unless otherwise specified by the instructor.