

Sociology 495 (Fall 2009)
Topics in Sociology: Sociology of Culture
Prof. Seio Nakajima
MW 12:00-1:15 pm, BUSAD G103

Office hours: Monday, 4-5 pm or by appointment
208 Saunders Hall
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Course Description:

This class will introduce students to the sociology of culture, or the ways that sociologists go about investigating the nature of culture in the broad sense including cultural objects (e.g., film, music, art works) and more abstract ideas and values (religious beliefs, ethnic identity, nationalism). The course has two major goals: (1) To familiarize students with several key theories and concepts developed in sociology of culture including the origins and consequences of cultural meanings as well as their cognitive basis. This goal will be achieved by close readings of the textbook and the extension of it in lectures and class discussions. (2) To prepare students with necessary skills to apply these theories and concepts to a wide variety of real-world cultural phenomena including cultural industries, advertising and consumption, youth subcultures, and the “culture wars.” This goal will be realized by watching films related to the topics discussed in this course as well as additional readings of articles published in both academic (e.g., journal articles and book chapters) and popular media (e.g., newspapers, magazines, the Internet). Classes will generally alternate between “textbook weeks” and “application weeks.” In “textbook weeks,” we concentrate on achieving goal (1). In “application weeks,” we focus on achieving goal (2) by watching/discussing films and working on the “Questions for Study and Discussion.”

Required Text:

- Griswold, Wendy. 2008. *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World, Third Edition*. Los Angeles: Pine Forge Press.

Additional Readings:

- To be handed out in class by the professor.

Course Requirements and Grades:

Final grades will be based on performance on the following six items:

- (1) 8 take-home assignments (submit at least 6) based on the “Questions for Study and Discussion” in the textbook (**30%**).
 - Choose one question from the list and write 1-2 page (double-space) answer/report.
 - On the due date, we will discuss the assignment together. So, although no formal presentation is required, you are expected to be prepared for in-class discussion of your assignment.
 - You are required to submit 6 of the 8 assignments; you can miss 2 assignments without penalty.
 - $5\% \times 6 = 30\%$. 1% for submission, 1% for participation in class discussion, 3% for substance.
 - 2 extra submissions count as extra credit of up to 10%.
 - **No late submissions accepted.**
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(2) An in-class mid-term exam (20%).

- **Monday, October 12, 12:00-1:15 pm.**
- Details TBA.
- Could consist of identifications, short answers, and/or essay questions based on readings, lecture, and other class activities.
- We'll have a thorough review session before the exam.

(3) A final research paper (20%).

- Approximately 8-10 pages long.
- The final research paper will be on a topic chosen by you in consultation with the professor.
- The paper must address a question raised by the lecture, readings, and class discussions, and must make use of primary source materials.
- E-mail potential research topics to professor on or before **Monday, October 19 by 11:59 pm.**
- **Due: Wednesday, December 9 by 11:59 pm** via e-mail. Papers turned in after the due date will be lowered 1/3 of a letter grade for each day late.

(4) A take-home final exam (20%).

- Take-home exam questions distributed in class on **Wednesday, December 9.**
- **Due: Friday, December 18 by 2 p.m.** via e-mail. **No late submissions accepted.**
- Details TBA.
- Could consist of identifications, short answers, and/or essay questions based on readings, lecture, and other class activities.
- We'll have a thorough review session before the exam.

(5) Class attendance and participation (10%).

- Class attendance and active participation in class is mandatory and will make up 10% of the final grade. This could include in-class activities as well as participation in discussions.

(6) Extra credit → See (1) (**up to 10%**).

* Grade percentage in sum: take-home assignments (30%), mid-term exam (20%), final research paper (20%), final exam (20%), attendance and participation (10%), extra credit (up to 10%).

Note:

For all of the course requirements, other than externally verified emergencies (i.e., medical emergencies explained with a doctor's note), there will be no exceptions.

Summary of Important Dates:

- Monday, October 12: In class mid-term exam.
- Monday, October 19: E-mail potential research topics to professor by 11:59 pm.
- Wednesday, December 9: Final research paper due via e-mail by 11:59 pm.
- Wednesday, December 9: Take-home final exam questions distributed in class.
- Friday, December 18: Take-home final exam due via e-mail by 2 p.m.

Week One (Textbook): Introduction/Culture and the Cultural Diamond I

Monday, August 24

Wednesday, August 26

Read for this week:
Griswold, Foreword, Preface, Chapter 1.

Week Two (Application): Culture and the Cultural Diamond II

Monday, August 31: Film #1 (details TBA)
Wednesday, September 2: Discussion on Film / **ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE IN CLASS**

Week Three (Textbook): Cultural Meaning I

Monday, September 7: Labor Day: **HOLIDAY-NO CLASS**

Wednesday, September 9

Read:
Griswold, Chapter 2.

Week Four (Application): Cultural Meaning II

Monday, September 14: Film #2 (details TBA)
Wednesday, September 16: Discussion on Film / **ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE**

Week Five (Textbook): Culture as a Social Creation I

Monday, September 21
Wednesday, September 23

Read:
Griswold, Chapter 3.

Week Six (Application): Culture as a Social Creation II

Monday, September 28: Film #3 (details TBA)
Wednesday, September 30: Discussion on Film / **ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE**

Week Seven (Textbook): The Production, Distribution, and Reception of Culture I

Monday, October 5
Wednesday, October 7: Mid-term Exam Review

Read:
Griswold, Chapter 4.

Week Eight (Application): The Production, Distribution, and Reception of Culture II

Monday, October 12: **IN-CLASS MID-TERM EXAM**
Wednesday, October 14: **ASSIGNMENT #4 DUE**

Week Nine (Textbook): Identities, Problems, and Movements I

Monday, October 19: **E-MAIL POTENTIAL RESEARCH TOPICS TO PROFESSOR BY 11:59 PM**

Wednesday, October 21

Read:
Griswold, Chapter 5.

Week Ten (Application): Identities, Problems, and Movements II

Monday, October 26: Film #4 (details TBA)

Wednesday, October 28: Discussion on Film / **ASSIGNMENT #5 DUE**

Week Eleven (Textbook): Organizations in a Multicultural World I

Monday, November 2

Wednesday, November 4

Read:
Griswold, Chapter 6.

Week Twelve (Application): Organizations in a Multicultural World II

Monday, November 9: **ASSIGNMENT #6 DUE**

Wednesday, November 11: Veteran's Day: **HOLIDAY-NO CLASS**

Week Thirteen (Textbook): Culture and Connection I

Monday, November 16

Wednesday, November 18

Read:
Griswold, Chapter 7.

Week Fourteen (Application): Culture and Connection II

Monday, November 23: Film #5 (details TBA)

Wednesday, November 25: Discussion on Film / **ASSIGNMENT #7 DUE**

Week Fifteen (Textbook): Culture and Power I

Monday, November 30

Wednesday, December 2

Read:
Griswold, Chapter 8.

Week Sixteen (Application): Culture and Power II/Conclusion

Monday, December 7

Wednesday, December 9: Conclusion/Final Exam Review: **1) FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE VIA E-MAIL BY 11:59 PM, 2) TAKE-HOME EXAM QUESTIONS DISTRIBUTED IN CLASS, 3) ASSIGNMENT #8 DUE**

TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAM DUE VIA E-MAIL BY 2 PM, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18. NO LATE SUBMISSIONS ACCEPTED.

Kokua Statement Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability is invited to contact me privately. I would be happy to work with you and the KOKUA Program (Office for Students with Disabilities) to ensure reasonable accommodations in my course. KOKUA can be reached at (808) 956-7511 or (808) 956-7612 (voice/text) in room 013 of the Queen Lili'uokalani Center for Student Services

Plagiarism The following definition of plagiarism comes from the UH-Manoa Student Conduct Code: *Plagiarism includes but is not limited to submitting, in fulfillment of an academic requirement, any work that has been copied in whole or in part from another individual's work without attributing that borrowed portion to the individual; neglecting to identify as a quotation another's idea and particular phrasing that was not assimilated into the student's language and style or paraphrasing a passage so that the reader is misled as to the source; submitting the same written or oral or artistic material in more than one course without obtaining authorization from the instructors involved; or "drylabbing," which includes obtaining and using experimental data and laboratory write-ups from other sections of a course or from previous terms.*

University of Hawai`i at Manoa Student Conduct Code (1992), p. 6