Sociology 376  
Global Cultures and Societies  

Mon-Wed 11-12.20 p.m.  
555 Clark 00B01

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Office Hours
Mon-Wed, 2.30-4 p.m.  
515 Clark, Room 202  
(or by appointment)

This course brings together readings from cultural sociology, and studies in transnational cultures to imagine what a transnational cultural sociology might look like, and how we might sociologically understand "culture" in a globalizing world. The first three weeks of class we will spend on forming a common ground for how to understand and study culture sociologically, which will inform the rest of our discussions throughout the quarter. Through considering how cultural production, consumption, reception, travel and translation, labor, intimacy, identity, memory and trauma take shape in different cultures all of which find themselves in a "transnational moment," we will carefully investigate global cultural flows and circuits making sure not to reify culture, and also not losing sight of inequalities still produced and reproduced by a world located in a historical time that is infinitely marked and remarked by "flow, circuits, change" -terms which can work to obscure those inequalities. The readings will take us to Bali, France, Japan, India, Indonesia, Egypt, Germany, Chile, Canada and China; but we will also remain on "American soil" at times and read about how transnational subjects from Mexico, Philippines or Pakistan figure "here." Given the limited time we have, this course does not aim at covering the entire global map, but rather provides you with critical readings that will equip you with tools necessary to understand culture and globalization in relationship to each other to take with you to any global context of your own choosing.

Required Readings
Coursepack (two volumes at Quartet Copies)

Course Assignments
* Short Writing Assignments 40%
We have no midterm paper or exam for this course. Instead, you are required to write along the course four 2-3 page papers. Each paper asks you to reflect about what you have learned from the readings associated with the paper topic in the context of your own lives. While these are short papers, I expect you to be very thoughtful and sophisticated in the ways in which you weave theory with your everyday life, showing a deep understanding of the course material and providing an engaged and engaging account of your own material realities. More specifically:

- **4/11: Culture and Power:** In this paper I would like you to discuss your education history, including your current college education at Northwestern. What do you expect from your education; what do your parents expect from it? What kind of a "culture" do you receive in college? What things do you find yourself "versed" in that someone who does not receive a college education might not be? Discuss these in the light of the Gramsci, Williams, and Bourdieu readings, but feel free to bring in other readings into dialogue as well.

- **4/18: Globalization and Me:** In this paper I want you to talk about the role globalization plays in your life -your past, your present and your future. You are welcome to talk about language, access, opportunities etc. Make sure to tie this discussion to a couple of the week's readings. (Hint: There are papers coming up that will ask you to talk about consumption, and intimacy, so, you might want to save those aspects of globalization for later.)

- **4/25: Consumption and Me:** Discuss the different kinds of cultural consumption you engage in on a regular basis (food, music, movies, art, novels, magazines, comics, clothing etc.) Where are the "items of culture" you consume produced? Does your social location in the world effect the way in which you relate to the culture you consume? (One way to think about this is: Does one's eating of one's Chinese mother's home cooking differ from a white person going out for "Chinese"?) What kind of a role does globalization play in your cultural consumption practices? Make sure to tie this discussion to a couple of the week's readings.

- **5/14: Travel, Labor, Intimacy:** Discuss what role travel, transnational labor, OR transnational intimacy play in your life. This paper can touch on your personal travels, or your family's, or the travel of culture and concepts that play a role in your life; it can contain an analysis of your relationship with an au-pair, or you working as one; it can talk about transnational romantic relationships or friendships you are or have been engaged in, OR any of the topics that are covered by the readings you find yourself compelled to write about because the subject is relevant to your life. What forms of culture are implicated in these relationships? What forms of cultural value are produced?
* Group Memos 15%

Every student is required to sign up for one week to be part of the memo group for that week's readings. Memo groups will consist of 2-3 students and every group will meet in person outside of the class sessions to discuss the readings for the day, and prepare a one-page memo with:

- Two three paragraphs summarizing the central questions asked and the main arguments developed in the readings, in your own words.
- 3-4 discussion questions about the readings.
- 2-3 "quotable quotes." (These will also help you think about what is quote-worthy when you are working on your papers.)

Memos are to be emailed to class via Blackboard every Sunday evening by 5 p.m.

* Final Paper 30%

There is no final exam for this course. Instead, you are required to write a 8-10 page final research paper. You will be submitting a one-page proposal for your research paper approximately three weeks before the due date and will get feedback on it. You are always very welcome to come to my office hours to discuss your research ideas and/or brainstorm about a research topic. Your papers will be combining the research you have conducted about the topic you selected with the course materials we covered throughout the quarter.

_Al l written work is to be typed, double-spaced, 12 pt. Times New Roman font, with standard margin sizes. Please do not turn in unstapled work._

_It is crucial that you take great care in putting together and articulating your ideas. In all your writing, I expect you to be elaborate, precise, analytically clear, very well organized and sophisticated thinkers of gender, sexuality and power._

* Attendance and Participation %15

Attendance in this course is mandatory, and it is crucial that you come to class prepared to discuss the material. The short papers and memos are there to facilitate your participation in class discussions, and if you do not read the material and do a good job with those exercises it will be very hard for you to participate in the discussion. You should think of the lecture and the readings in no way as mimicking each other—the lectures are not a summary of the readings; they rather will be going hand in hand and complement each other in various ways.

Participation in class discussions will also help you articulate your questions and your ideas in a friendly setting. You should never be discouraged to talk, but also remember that ideas informed by the readings and by the lectures are formulated into much better
statements. Also, you learn much better when you verbalize what you know. I want you to feel that we are all working as a team, with each other rather than against each other competing for grades. Think of this course as a collaborative intellectual project where we help each other to think and learn. I am hoping you will learn from me as well as from each other.

**Course Rules, Etiquette and Student Responsibilities**

You are responsible for knowing any information on the syllabus and on class handouts. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed and to get any relevant notes from peers and handouts. It is your responsibility to hand your assignments in to me on time. It is your responsibility to make sure all assignments are returned to you with a grade (i.e., if you miss class, you need to find out if papers were returned. If you are in class, but you don’t get your paper back, you need to find out why). It is your responsibility to contact me **before** the due date if you are not handing an assignment in on time. If you are asked to re-do any assignment, it is your responsibility to return the assignment by the set date. If you qualify for a note-taker, it is your responsibility to register with the Disability Services and Programs and notify me at the beginning of the quarter so that I can ask for a volunteer note-taker.

When we are having a discussion, please be respectful of everyone else’s right to speak. Not everybody is equally comfortable with talking in a big group. Hence, especially if you are comfortable and talk often, please watch for others who might want to talk, but might need a short break before they can get into discussion. So, do not dominate discussion, but make sure your opinion is heard every session.

When you are composing a blog post, or a paper, make sure every sentence you write that is not your own is cited properly. **Everything you read anywhere, including websites, wikipedia, the newspaper, or a book has to be cited.**

Attendance is mandatory in the course, and I will be taking attendance every session. The only excused absences are if you bring a note from a doctor, or if you are traveling for the university in some capacity. I will need proof of those as soon as you have paperwork showing you missed class due to health reasons, a university competition etc.

**Course Schedule**

3/26 Intro
**3/28 What is Culture? The Problem of Definition**


**4/2 Culture and 'Social Structure'**


**4/4 The Relative Autonomy of Culture; The Logic of Cultural Systems**


**4/9 & 4/11 Culture and Power: Cultural Hegemony, Cultural Capital, Cultural Boundaries**

*Short Essay due 4/13: Culture & Power*


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4/16 & 4/18 Globalization of Culture / Cultural Globalization


4/23 Pieces of Culture as Reflections (and Creators) of Larger Cultural Themes

! Short Essay Due 4/23: Globalization and Me


4/25 Consumption of Culture / Cultural Consumption


4/30 Production of Culture / Cultural Production

! Short Essay Due 4/30: Consumption and Me


5/2 Reception of Culture


5/7 Travel and Translation of Culture

! Final Paper Proposal Due 5/7


5/9 Transnational Labor & Culture


5/14 & 5/16 Transnational Intimacies, Identities & Modernity

! Short Essay Due 5/16: Travel, Labor, Intimacy


5/21 & 5/23 Memory, Trauma & Culture

Movie: Waltz with Bashir


*Final Papers Are Due June 4th, 2012, at 5 p.m.!*