Course objectives:
This course uses sociological theories to explore the production and consumption of culture. It introduces how sociologists answer central questions about the relationships between culture and society: What is the relationship between social change (particularly, changes in the economy, but also new patterns of settlement and lifestyle) and the kinds of culture people produce and consume? How is contemporary popular culture produced? What sets of institutions and actors are involved in shaping the cultural objects we consume? What and who influences our judgments? What role do tastemakers play in how people in different racial and socioeconomic positions craft their identity? How different is elite and non-elite cultural consumption -- are consumers of "trashy novels" really more passive and less original in their reading habits than are elite cultural consumers of hip hop music or experimental novels? How do newsmakers and activists shape our view of reality? We will answer these questions through discussions and close readings of sociological studies that fall under three main topics: 1) Methods for studying cultural meanings, 2) Production of culture, and 3) Professionals gatekeepers and cultural mediation.

A main objective is to teach you to use this class to write a serious research paper that utilizes sociological methods to explore a case of cultural consumption or production chosen in consultation with me.

Prerequisites: Sociology 211.

The following books can be purchased from the Reed College Bookstore and are available on reserve at the College library:

- Victoria Alexander, *Sociology of the Arts: Exploring Fine and Popular Forms*
- Richard A. Peterson, *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity*
- David Grazian, *Blue Chicago: The Search for Authenticity in Urban Blues Clubs*
- Janice Radway, *Reading the Romance*

In addition, all of the books we are reading have been made available at the library reserve desk. Required articles (see below) are available through on-line journal archives (typically, JSTOR, but also EBSCOHOST). For your research paper, you will be encouraged to also use the on-line journal archive “Project Muse.” If you are not familiar with these resources, I will be glad to demonstrate how to use them.
Reading Assignments
PART I CULTURAL CONSUMPTION

Week 1 Introduction Jan. 31, Feb. 2

Monday
Introduction

Wednesday
Classic Debates on Human Agency and Capitalist Hegemony
Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception,” excerpt from *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (available via moodle, under “resources”)


Homework exercise: choose a set of images from Charlene Makley’s image archive ([http://academic.reed.edu/anthro/faculty/mia/sexist.html](http://academic.reed.edu/anthro/faculty/mia/sexist.html)). Analyze it for class discussion in light of Horkheimer and Adorno’s argument. Be prepared 1) to talk about its meaning in class, 2) to use it to illustrate and analyze models/perspectives mentioned by Crane for explaining consumption of hegemonic meaning.

Week 2 Feb. 7, 9
CLASS REPRODUCTION THEORY

Monday
Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, pp. 1-7 in "Introduction,”; pp. 13-41 in Chapter 1; and all of Chapter 2
Key word: Habitus

Wednesday
Michele Lamont, *Money, Morals, and Manners*, Chapters 1, 4, 7 (reserve)

Recommended:

**Key word:** Boundary work, cultural boundaries, “cultural excludor”, possessing a wide range of cultural repertoires, omnivore

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**Week 3 Feb. 14, 16**

**Consuming Romances**

Over half of paperback novels sold annually are romance novels. Why and how has romance been commodified so successfully, who are its consumers, and why do they find this genre so appealing?

**Monday  Patriarchal domination or resistance?**


Read the following:

An online Harlequin romance novel (“for women who love to read”)


[handout to be distributed via moodle]

Janice Radway, *Reading the Romance*, Chapters 1-2,

Victoria Alexander, *The Sociology of the Arts*, Chapter 10

**Wednesday**

Radway, *Reading the Romance*, Chapters 4-5

**Key words:** reception approaches, popular culture, the dominant-hegemonic position, the oppositional position, horizon of expectations, “dominance games”

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**PART II THE PRODUCTION OF CULTURE:**

**PRODUCERS, CORPORATIONS, and MARKETS for CULTURE**

**Week 4 Feb. 21, 23**

**Blues Performances and Performers**

**Monday**


**Paper one, Memo, 5 pages, due in class Monday**
Alexander, Sociology of the Arts, pp. 67-75 in Chapter 5
**Key words:** art worlds, conventions, nocturnal capital, authenticity

**Wednesday**
David Grazian, Blue Chicago, Chapter 3-5, 7

**Week 5 Feb. 28, March 2**
**Country Music Production**

**Monday**
Listen to:
“NPR: Scott Simon Essay: Hank Williams”
http://www.npr.org/features/feature.php?wfId=902058
“NPR: Hank Williams’ Last Ride”
Hank Williams “Cold, Cold Heart”
http://www.npr.org/programs/asc/archives/asc12/index.html#hank

Richard Peterson, Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity, Chapters 1, 2, 3 (circa 50 pages) plus 6 and 9 (circa 40 pages)

**Wednesday**
Richard Peterson, Creating Country Music, Chapters 11-13

**Week 6 March 7, 9**
**THE PRODUCTION OF CULTURE PARADIGM**

**Monday Musical Innovation Cycles**

Read:

**Wednesday**
**Theories of Innovation and Diversity**
**Week 7 March 14, 16**

**Monday**

Library research session

**Wednesday**

*Whose vision of the past is hegemonic?*


"Maya Lin [videorecording] “A Strong Clear Vision” (excerpts about the conflict over the Vietnam War Memorial)

**Week 8  SPRING BREAK**

**PART III**

**GATEKEEPERS AND CULTURAL MEDIATION**

**Week 9 March 28, 30**

**THE MASS MEDIA**

**Monday The production of news**

Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*, Preface, Chapter 1

Michael Schudson, “The Sociology of News Production,” Chapter 1 in Dan Berkowitz, *Social Meaning of News* (reserve) or pdf file on the class moodle (“resources”)

Read the entire front section of the New York Times (bring a print copy in to class)

**Research proposal/literature review due**

**Wednesday**

*What makes a “fact”? What work do newsmakers think they do?*


Please watch, or listen to, an entire mainstream news broadcast and take notes on the roles played by the following: anchorman, reporters, interviewees – how are they depicted relative to the story lines you might draw from novels or film characters in a television drama or sitcom?

**Week 10 April 4, 6**

**MONDAY**

**Moral panics and sex scandals**


**Keywords:** Moral panic, drama, institutional morality tale

Recommended:


**WEDNESDAY**

**Oppositional Media Routines**

Nina Eliasoph, “Routines and the Making of Oppositional News,” Chapter 16 in Dan Berkowitz, Social Meaning of News (reserve), or download pdf on class moodle (“resources”)

Please watch, or listen to, an alternative new broadcast, such as 90.7 FM KBOO. What types of “sources” are cited in mainstream versus “alternative” news? What stories are told? Many news broadcasts are now available as podcasts you can download and listen to when it is convenient.

**Week 11 April 11, 13**

**Framing and content analysis**
MONDAY
Victoria Alexander, The Sociology of the Arts, Chapter 12, Case Study 12.1

Keywords: Frames, frameworks, frame resonance, emplotment

In-class frame analysis exercise: Bring in relevant examples of texts written by gatekeepers in your case and be prepared to present the main frames to the class and talk about progress on your final research paper.

WEDNESDAY

Week 12 April 18, 20
CONCLUDING DEBATES

MONDAY
Interpretation, reflection and shaping approaches
Monday How does culture work? Tool kits? Cultural repertoires? Strategic action?

Read:

Define and explain the relevance of the following terms and reply to reading questions distributed via moodle.

Key words: reflection, content analysis; resistance

WEDNESDAY Thinking about the effect of “culture industries”
Victoria Alexander. The Sociology of the Arts, Chapters 3-4
Key words: dimensions of cultural power (retrievability, rhetorical force, resonance, institutional retention, resolution), “aura”, hegemony, cultural dope, cultural diamond, distribution and production systems

Week 13 April 25, 27
RESEARCH PAPER WORKSHOPS

MONDAY
Methods readings (TBA)

WEDNESDAY
Author presentations in small groups

Note: You must complete Author and Reader reports before each class.

Week 14 May 2, 4

Monday
Reader report: Peer-editing presentations in small groups

Wednesday
Wrap-up

FINAL PAPER DUE MONDAY, MAY 16