I see cultural sociology not as a subfield concerned with a particular institutional sphere (such as the arts or popular culture), but rather as a general approach to sociological work that highlights the constructed nature of social order and the active agency of human beings who, as Geertz asserts, are suspended in webs of meaning that they themselves have spun. Therefore, in my view the kinds of formal methods that are most appropriate for cultural analysis, and the models and methods I will emphasize in this course, are relational, and they are focused on a particular approach to the study of meaning, which views meaning as an interweaving of practices and significations.

Courses on formal methods for cultural analysis could, in principle, take many diverse forms. In order for you to understand the limits of this course, as well as the contributions to teaching serviceable procedures for cultural analysis that I hope to make, I encourage you to look over the specific topics covered in the readings listed below. Four interrelated topics are covered in this seminar, with the reading list organized accordingly:

A. DUALITY AND LATTICES
B. FIELDS AND CORRESPONDENCE ANALYSIS
C. TEXT ANALYTICS AND BIG DATA
D. NETWORKS AND CULTURE

I hope to provide you, by the end of the course, with solid experience in running computer programs that can assist you in performing the kinds of cultural analyses that are featured on the reading list. This is very much a “hands-on” course, in that I will focus on “how to do” the analyses, and ask you to be interested in learning how to do the analyses for yourself. I will introduce a simple, super-easy to use, but fairly powerful Galois lattice program. I will provide hands-on experience with packages that do correspondence analysis, text analytics, topic modeling, and natural language processing. I will even have a few things to say about social network analysis. Quite a few of these techniques are best carried out in the R computing environment, which I will introduce, along with a super user-friendly suite of programs (ConText) by Jana Diesner, for many aspects of text analytics and the construction of networks from natural language texts. All the programs are available to you free of charge, and all run on Macs as well as PCs (though a little coaxing will be required to run the lattice program on a Mac). I do not assume any specific knowledge of computer programming, nor do I assume technical / mathematical knowledge beyond a good undergraduate “stats” course. Please note that the TA in this course is me. Please let me know when you can’t get a program to run, have trouble installing it, etc., all these issues are normal, and almost all can be fixed—the sooner the

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better.

Course web page: I will make extensive use of a course web site, D2L. **You will find it helpful to “click” often on this site, usually at least once before each class meeting!** Almost all the readings (except for those in the “little green books” by Clausen and by Le Roux & Rouanet) will appear on the web page. The web address (url) is: http://d2l.arizona.edu/

Course Requirements

Rationale: I want to use the requirements to encourage reading, thinking, grappling and playing with the data, models, and formal techniques, for looking for connections across different theoretical orientations and methods, and for stimulating the kind of discussion that seminar participants will look forward to engaging in.

1. Full participation in a seminar of this type is essential, and needs to be based on thorough preparation for each class. Participation will include

   (a) in-class discussion, and

   (b) I will ask participants to contribute to the Discussion page of our D2L course website on a regular basis (about once a week, at your discretion). You may pose general comments and/or questions about the readings for the next class, or comments about how different topics might fit together, or how your own research informs your thinking about these topics, and more.

Grades for participation: A = participation that crystallizes issues, recognizes patterns, engages in data analyses (in however an exploratory fashion), provokes discussion (in class and by contributing to the “Discussion” section of the course web page), is supportive and respectful of other participants, and reflects consistently thoughtful reading and preparation. B = participation that demonstrates consistently thoughtful reading and preparation. C or below = occasional demonstration of thoughtful reading and preparation. 20% of final grade.

2. I will often assign homework, and occasionally (with advance notice) collect it. All homework is **ungraded**. These assignments will usually involve repeating some analysis that the readings or my in-class handouts describe. The aim is to empower you as a researcher who can conduct analyses and understand what you’re doing. Simply completing the homework in a responsible manner will count in determining your final grade (20%).

3. There will be a midterm exercise. I might for example give you a published article and the data on which it is based, and ask you to discuss/criticize/extend the author’s analysis by means of playing around with the same data, by using the programs we will have discussed in class. This is an exercise, not a magnum opus. I’ll give you a week or so to do it. (20% of final grade.)

4. A term paper, which will take one of four forms according to your interest: a data analysis paper / exercise (“A Reanalysis of Smith’s Study of X” or “A New Analysis of My Own Data on Y”); a research proposal making use of concepts we have covered; a conventional library-research term paper (e.g., “Approaches to the Study of the Culture of Science”); or a critical essay (e.g., “What’s Wrong with Existing Methods for Studying Art Worlds”). The paper will be due on the regularly scheduled day of finals, though I will be asking for discussion with me, a rough outline, and progress report earlier in the semester. 40% of final course grade.
Office Hours: My office hours will be Thursdays after class, or by appointment. I am always interested in talking with you, so we can always work together to figure out a time to talk. Also, as mentioned previously, the TA in the class is me. Especially because we will be using computer programs that are new to you, many “minor” questions will arise that will get in your way unless they are resolved quickly. See me about these, either in class, during office hours, or (a very good option) via the Discussion page on our course website.

More course rules and policies: These are given on pp. 10-11 below, and are binding – so please read them at the beginning of the course.

Reading List

Note: Before each class I will “clue you in” on which specific readings I intend to emphasize. Some of these topics may spill into more than one class session. We may not get to all the numbered topics. For our first substantive class (on January 20; note that on Monday, Jan. 18 the University observes Martin Luther King’s birthday) please read all the readings shown for “class 1” just below.

A. DUALITY AND LATTICES

1. Practice theory and the logics of culture


2. How to construct and interpret a Galois lattice


3. **Lattices and the duality of categories and practices**

Pp. 314-56 in Mohr & Duquenne, *op. cit.* [class 1]


4. **What does love mean?**


5. **Where do categories come from?**


B. **FIELDS AND CORRESPONDENCE ANALYSIS**

6. **Correspondence Analysis as ideology and vision**


7. **Correspondence Analysis as method (1)**


8. **Correspondence Analysis as a method (2)**

Chs. 3-4 in Clausen, *ibid*.

9. **The distinctively French approach to Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA)**


10. **How to interpret a Correspondence Analysis**

Ch. 3 (pp. 52-67) in Le Roux and Rounet (see previous class).


11. **Culture as consensus (or: test theory without an answer key)**

Our focus:


Origins of the culture-as-consensus model:


Maximum-likelihood and Bayesian approaches:


12. Statistical methods for studying cross-national similarities and differences in semantic structure


13. What is the relationship between Correspondence Analysis (CA), Dual Lattices (FCA), Ragin’s QCA (Qualitative Comparative Analysis), and social networks (SNA)? – Part 1


14. ... Part 2 (CA, FCA, QCA, SNA)


C. TEXT ANALYTICS AND BIG DATA

15. Two early approaches and two contemporary ones


16. Latent Semantic Analysis


[http://doi.acm.org/10.1145/57167.57214](http://doi.acm.org/10.1145/57167.57214)

Alex Thomo, “Latent Semantic Analysis (Tutorial)”  
[http://www.engr.uvic.ca/~seng474/svd.pdf](http://www.engr.uvic.ca/~seng474/svd.pdf)

17. Topic Modeling (1)

[http://doi.acm.org/10.1145/2133806.2133826](http://doi.acm.org/10.1145/2133806.2133826)

Introduction to Jana Diesner’s program, **ConText** [Connections and Texts: an extremely user-friendly suite of programs for the construction of network data from natural language text data, topic modeling, sentiment analysis, text visualization, and much more. Runs on Mac and PC. No cost to obtain.]  
[http://context.lis.illinois.edu/](http://context.lis.illinois.edu/)

[http://bds.sagepub.com/content/spbds/2/2/2053951715617185.full.pdf](http://bds.sagepub.com/content/spbds/2/2/2053951715617185.full.pdf)

[http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2013.08.003](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2013.08.003)

[http://www.jstatsoft.org/v40/i13](http://www.jstatsoft.org/v40/i13)

18. Topic Modeling (2)

[http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2013.08.004](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2013.08.004)

[http://bds.sagepub.com/content/spbds/2/2/2053951715602908.full.pdf](http://bds.sagepub.com/content/spbds/2/2/2053951715602908.full.pdf)

19. Restless Events and the “But” paper


20. Turning Tweets into Knowledge

Analytics Edge (edX) / Open Course / Courseware / Unit 5: Text Analytics / Turning Tweets into Knowledge. Videos 1-6. [https://www.edx.org/](https://www.edx.org/) (and then navigate to the course called “Analytics Edge,” course number MITx – 15.071x, where you will see the archived course materials that we will use. I recommend that you sign up for an account – it’s free.)

In addition to watching Videos 1-6 (see above), please read:


21. Classification and Prediction of Supreme Court voting

Unit 4 (Classification Trees; Judge, Jury, Classifier): Videos 1-4: Predicting Supreme Court voting [https://www.edx.org/course/analytics-edge-mitx-15-071x-0](https://www.edx.org/course/analytics-edge-mitx-15-071x-0)

22. Predicting Sentiment with Tweets

Unit 5 (Text Analytics; Turning Tweets into Knowledge): Videos 7- 8: Predicting sentiment in tweets [https://www.edx.org/course/analytics-edge-mitx-15-071x-0](https://www.edx.org/course/analytics-edge-mitx-15-071x-0)


23. Scraping Tweets, and Working with Them


24. Qualitative Discourse Analysis Package (QDAP)


Biernacki, R. 2014. "Humanist Interpretation Versus Coding Text Samples." *Qualitative Sociology* 37 (2):173-188. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11133-014-9277-9](http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11133-014-9277-9)

D. NETWORKS AND CULTURE

23. Clustering Movie Recommendations and Beliefs
Analytics Edge (EdX) [see above].
Unit 6 (Clustering; Movie Recommendations): Videos 1-8
https://www.edx.org/course/analytics-edge-mitx-15-071x-0


24. Discourse fields and social conflict


25. What’s the big deal about networks and culture?


26. Cultural holes

Bail, Christopher A. 2016. "Combining Natural Language Processing and Network Analysis to Examine how Advocacy Organizations Stimulate Conversation on Social Media." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 113:11823-8. [http://www.pnas.org/content/113/42/11823](http://www.pnas.org/content/113/42/11823)


### 27. Social structure and discourse sequences


### 28. Strategic discourse as network


### 29. Networks from rap music recordings


30. Coda


http://www.ibiblio.org/culture/newsletter-archive/2004c_Fall.pdf


→ on D2L page

Course rules and policies

See pages 2-3 (above) for the course requirements.

Copyrighted Material

All matter which is covered in the lectures and course materials is copyrighted and the copyright is held by the instructor. This includes hand-outs in class, lectures placed on D2L, and all other materials prepared by the instructor placed on D2L. According to the University’s attorneys, the instructor’s copyright includes student notes or summaries that substantially reflect the lectures or materials covered in class. These copyrighted materials are made available only for the personal use of the students, and students may not distribute or reproduce the materials for commercial purposes without the instructor’s express written consent. If students wish to share their notes on an individual basis they may do so, as long as they do not sell their notes for a profit. Violation of the instructor’s copyright may result in course sanctions and may violate the Code of Academic Integrity.

Academic Honesty

I encourage you to get together to talk about the readings and ideas brought up in class. With respect to written assignments (other than the discussions on the course D2L page), words or ideas that come from someone else must be cited: “A good rule of thumb is this: Whenever you consciously borrow any important element from someone else--any sentence, any colorful phrase or original term, any plan or idea--say so, either in a footnote, bibliography, or parenthesis” (from "Academic Honesty in the Writing of Essays and Other Papers", Carleton College, 1990). See the University of Arizona Code of Academic Integrity for specific information regarding University of Arizona policy (http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/codeofacademicintegrity). The UA library has a guide to help recognize plagiarism (http://www.library.arizona.edu/help/tutorials/plagiarism/index.html).

Violations of the Code of Academic Integrity may result in your failing to receive credit for this class and/or additional penalties as stated in the Code of Academic Integrity.

There is a short video “Academic Integrity Video” (under Media and Social Networking at http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/). You are expected to watch this video before the class time.

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2 This is to acknowledge that I have taken this section on rules and policies just about *verbatim* from Joseph Galaskiewicz’s Soc 527 syllabus (R.B.) – see the section on “Academic Honesty” below.
Accommodations

Students with disabilities who may require academic adjustments and/or reasonable accommodations in order to fulfill course requirements must register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) and request the DRC send the instructor official notification of your accommodation needs as soon as possible. You must also come in and speak with the instructor about your requirements. The DRC web page is http://drc.arizona.edu/

Classroom behavior

You are expected to follow the student code of conduct (http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/studentcodeofconduct); disruptive and/or threatening behavior will not be tolerated. The use of cell phones, mp3 players, etc. is not allowed during class and there is no text messaging. You may be asked to leave the class if you are judged to be a disruption to either the instructors or your fellow students.