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.

I have revised this course substantially since it was last given (under a different number) in 2006. 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.

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 or two. I will provide hands-on experience with programs that do correspondence analysis. I will introduce Heise’s “event structure analysis.” And I will teach a few methods of network analysis. A small set of techniques is best done in the R computing environment, which I will introduce. All the programs are available to you free of charge. Please note however that some programs only run on Windows PCs (not on Macs). I do not assume technical / mathematical knowledge beyond a good undergraduate “stats” course, nor do I assume any specific knowledge of computer programming.

Course web page: I will make extensive use of a course web site, D2L, sponsored by the University of Arizona Learning Technology Center. You will find it helpful to “click” often on this site! The web address (url) is:

http://d2l.arizona.edu/

Please “bookmark” this location on your home computer, for easy future reference. Once at the above location, use the “NetID Login” option. If you have enrolled in the course, you should be recognized. (Otherwise, see me.)

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Course Requirements

Rationale: I want to use the requirements to encourage reading, thinking, grappling and playing with the data, models, and statistical techniques, and 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 prior to each class meeting. You may pose general comments and / or questions about the readings for the next class. Sometimes I will pose specific discussion questions and ask you to respond to them on the D2L Discussion page.

Grades for participation: A = participation that crystallizes issues, recognizes patterns, engages in data analyses (however exploratory), provokes discussion (for example, 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 describe. The aim is to empower you as a researcher who can conduct analyses and understand what you’re doing. Simply completing the homework responsibly will count in determining your final grade (20%).

3. There will be a midterm exercise. I will 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 about a week to do it. (20% of final grade.)

4. A term paper, which will take one of three forms, most likely the first: a data analysis paper / exercise (“A Reanalysis of Smith’s Study of X” or “A New Analysis of My Own Data on Y”); 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 right after class on Tuesdays and Thursdays, or by appointment. I have a new office: room 408. I am always interested in talking with you during office hours. Also, 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.
No class. There will be no class on September 9 (religious holiday for me). I am likely to be absent on several other class meeting days during the semester due to out-of-town meetings and conferences. Except for the religious holiday, I would like us to find ways to continue class activities if I have to be out of town for professional reasons.

**Reading List**

**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. **Social movements: Organizations, projects, and events (a three-way lattice)**
   
B. FIELDS AND CORRESPONDENCE ANALYSIS

6. Correspondence Analysis as ideology and vision


7. What is Field Theory?


8. Correspondence Analysis as method (a)


9. (b)

Chs. 3-4 in Clausen, ibid.


10. (c)

Chs. 5-6 in Clausen, ibid.
11. How to interpret a Correspondence Analysis


12. Correspondence Analysis and Ragin’s QCA (Qualitative Comparative Analysis)


c. NETWORKS AND CULTURE

13. What’s new in the study of networks and culture?


(C-1) ARTISTIC COMMUNITIES

14. Examining Bourdieu’s social topography


15. Creativity and hothouse innovation


16. Networks from rap music recordings


17. Success within an artistic community


(C-2) DISCOURSE SEQUENCES

18. Event Structure Analysis (ESA) as aid to ethnography


19. ESA and historical sociology


20. Social structures and discourse sequences


21. Restless events


(C-3) DISCOURSE FIELDS

22. Strategic discourse as network


23. Networks of discourse roles


24. A field model of emotions


**(C-4) DISCOURSE FIELDS AND SOCIAL CONFLICTS**

25. The “Greensboro Massacre” and Collective Memory


26. Narrative Boundaries of Ethnic Conflicts


27. Unriddling Ethnic Conflict


**(C-5) DOING CATEGORIES IN ORGANIZATIONS**

28. Institutional logics from counted data


29. Organizational classification and cognitive impact


30. Audiences, critics, and categories


**Coda**
