

Course Description

In this course, students will become familiar with the key theoretical paradigms and motivating questions in economic sociology. Students will read classic texts that have shaped the central dimensions of the field, as well as contemporary work that offer current perspectives on traditional questions. As a class, we will bring these ideas to life through group discussions and, when possible, live interaction with authors whose work we discuss. Students will also learn to identify the rhetorical devices that scholars employ to frame their papers, and will apply these tools to framing their own emerging contributions to economic sociology.

Deliverables and Course Grade

Class Participation (40%, ongoing)

PhD seminars are an act of collective production. They work well when everyone comes prepared, engages, and offers ideas. To contribute to a vibrant seminar experience, I expect that you will share your ideas, opinions, and critiques during each class session, and that you will do so in a manner respectful to your classmates.

Regular attendance and participation are critical to your successful completion of this course – we cover substantial material in each class and later classes build on work covered earlier in the term. You should complete assigned readings prior to class. Each reading will be assigned a “primary” reviewer who will critically review the reading and comment on it. The discussion will then be opened to the class; you are expected to participate actively in each session. Notes are recommended in sufficient detail to enable your regular participation in the discussion. You should be able to outline the topic that readings address, describe the core points of the reading, and, most importantly, offer your analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the reading’s central argument.

One student will be randomly selected to lead the discussion of each text. Students leading discussion should provide a brief description of the text (i.e., its research question and core arguments and/or main findings) and a balanced critique (i.e., both strengths and limitations) as well as 3-5 discussion-provoking questions for your classmates. After discussing each text individually, class members will integrate the week’s readings together to identify common themes, critical differences, limitations, and future research opportunities.

Paper Presentation (20%, Session 9)

To help you develop your final paper (see below), you will have the opportunity to present your preliminary ideas in a conference-style format (20 minutes). This will provide you with an opportunity to seek and obtain feedback on your ideas. Your presentation will be evaluated on the clarity with which you share your ideas, your ability to present ideas in the time allotted, the appropriateness of your visuals, and your response to the Question and Answer period. Please prepare a slide deck to support your presentation and distribute it to the class via email at least 24 hours before Session 9.

Final Paper (40%, 1 week after course end)

Your final paper should incorporate themes, readings, and questions addressed in the course. The paper should demonstrate your knowledge of economic sociology by incorporating ideas from relevant course readings and drawing on additional work from pertinent literatures. The final paper (15 pages, double-spaced, 12pt font, plus references) should take the form of a research proposal that includes: a well-motivated and clearly stated research question, a description of what we know about the question and explanation of how your project fits within the existing literature, a theoretical framework and set of predictions for investigating the question, and a realistic and suitable research design and (as applicable) an appropriate sampling and modeling approach for testing your predictions. Beyond your demonstrated understanding of economic sociology, the clarity of your research question, the effectiveness of your case for investigating your question, the clarity and persuasiveness of your arguments, and the fit between your research question and research design and methods will also factor into the assessment.

Note: You will need to begin thinking about your term paper early in the course. When you are ready to discuss your ideas with me – and no later than the week of Session 6 – please schedule a meeting with me to discuss your preliminary ideas and potential topics, as well as any questions you might have.

Readings

1. Introduction

Smelser, Neil and Richard Swedberg. 2005. "[Introducing Economic Sociology](#)" In Neil Smelser and Richard Swedberg (eds.), *The Handbook of Economic Sociology*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Pp. 3-26.

Dobbin, Frank. 2004. "The Sociological View of the Economy." In Frank Dobbin (ed.), *The New Economic Sociology: An Anthology*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Pp. 1-46.

Granovetter, Mark. 2002. "A Theoretical Agenda for Economic Sociology." In Randall Collins, Mauro F. Guillén, Paula England and Marshall Meyer (eds.), *The New Economic Sociology: Developments in an Emerging Field at the Millennium*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Pp. 35-60.

Gibbons, Robert. 2005. "[What is Economic Sociology and Should any Economists Care?](#)" *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 19: 3-7.

2. Institutions

Weber, Max. 2006 [1930]. [The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism](#). London: Routledge. (Chapters 1, 2, and 3).

Marx, Karl and Frederick Engels. 1978 [1848]. [Manifesto to the Communist Party](#). In R. Tucker (ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader*. New York: Norton & Company. Pp. 469-500.

Meyer, John W., and Brian Rowan. 1977. "[Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony](#)." *American Journal of Sociology* 83 (2): 340-363.

Fligstein, Neil and Doug McAdam. 2012. [A Theory of Fields](#). New York: Oxford University Press. (Chapter 1).

3. Networks

Simmel, Georg. 1950 [1922]. "The Triad." In *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press. Pp. 145-162.

Granovetter, Mark. 1985. "[Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness.](#)" *American Journal of Sociology* 91: 485-510.

Coleman, James S. 1988. "[Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital.](#)" *American Journal of Sociology* 94: S95-S120.

Burt, Ronald S. 1992. [Structural Holes: The Social Structure of Competition.](#) Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press. Pp. 8-30.

McEvily, Bill and Aks Zaheer. 1999. "[Bridging ties: A source of firm heterogeneity in competitive capabilities.](#)" *Strategic Management Journal* 20: 1133-1156

Uzzi, Brian and Ryon Lancaster. 2004. "[Embeddedness and Price Formation in the Corporate Law Market.](#)" *American Sociological Review* 69(3): 319-344.

4. Power & Cognition

Marsden, Peter. 1983. "[Restricted Access in Networks and Models of Power.](#)" *The American Journal of Sociology* 88 (4): 686-717.

Thornton, Patricia H., and William Ocasio. 1999. "[Institutional Logics and the Historical Contingency of Power in Organizations: Executive Succession in the Higher Education Publishing Industry, 1958-1990.](#)" *American Journal of Sociology* 105: 801-843.

Roy, William G. 2004. [Socializing Capital: The Rise of the Large Industrial Corporation in America.](#) Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Chapters 1 and 3).

March, James G., and Herbert Simon. 1958. "Cognitive Limits on Rationality" in *Organizations*. New York: John Wiley & Sons. (Chapter 6).

Weick, Karl E. 1993. "Sensemaking in Organizations: Small Structures with Large Consequences." In J. Keith Murnighan (ed.), *Social Psychology in Organizations: Advances in Theory and Research*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ. (Chapter 2).

5. The Rise of the Market

Polanyi, Karl. 1944. [The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of our Time.](#) New York: Rinehart. (Chapters 5, 11 and 12).

Hirschman, Albert O. 1977. [The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before its Triumph.](#) Princeton: Princeton University Press. Pp. 9-66.

Nee, Victor, and Sonja Opper. 2012. [Capitalism from Below: Markets and Institutional Change in China.](#) Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (Chapter 1 and 10).

Stark, David. 1996. "[Recombinant Property in East European Capitalism.](#)" *American Journal of Sociology* 101(4): 993-1027.

Zelizer, Viviana A. 1978. "[Human Values and the Market: The Case of Life Insurance and Death in 19th-century America.](#)" *American Journal of Sociology*, 84: 591-610.

6. Labor Markets

Granovetter, Mark. 1973. "[The Strength of Weak Ties.](#)" *The American Journal of Sociology*. 76 (6): 1360-1380.

Fernandez, Roberto M., and Isabel Fernandez-Mateo. 2006. "[Networks, Race, and Hiring.](#)" *American Sociological Review* 71 (1): 42-71.

Kang, Sonia K., Katherine A. DeCelles, András Tilcsik, and Sora Jun. 2016. [“Whitened Résumés: Race and Self-Presentation in the Labor Market.”](#) *Administrative Science Quarterly* 61 (3): 469–502.

Dobbin, Frank, Daniel Schrage, and Alexandra Kalev. 2015. [“Rage against the Iron Cage: The Varied Effects of Bureaucratic Personnel Reforms on Diversity.”](#) *American Sociological Review* 80:1014-1044.

Rivera, Lauren A. 2015. [Pedigree: How Elite Students Get Elite Jobs](#). Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press. Chapters 1, 6-8.

7. Gender Roles & Household Economy

Gary Becker. 1991. [A Treatise on the Family](#). Cambridge: Harvard University Press. (Chapters 1 and 2).

Viviana Zelizer. 2005. [The Purchase of Intimacy](#). Princeton: Princeton University Press. (Chapter 5, pp. 209-218; 225-230; 240-246).

Michael Bittman, Paula England, Nancy Folbre, and George Matheson. 2003. [“When does Gender Trump Money? Bargaining and Time in Household Work.”](#) *American Journal of Sociology* 109(1): 186-214.

Grigoryeva, Angelina. 2017. [“Own Gender, Sibling’s Gender, Parent’s Gender: The Division of Elderly Parent Care among Adult Children.”](#) *American Sociological Review* 82(1):116–46.

Thébaud, Sarah. 2015. [“Business as Plan B.”](#) *Administrative Science Quarterly* 60 (4): 671–711.

8. Economic Development

Evans, Peter. 1995. [Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation](#). Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. Chapters 1 & 10.

Sen, Amartya Kumar. 1999. *Development as Freedom*. New York: Knopf. (Introduction & Chapter 4, pp. 87-96).

Centeno, Miguel. 1997. [“Blood and Debt: War and Taxation in Nineteenth Century America.”](#) *American Journal of Sociology* 102:1565-1605.

Samford, Steven. 2017. [“Networks, Brokerage, and State-Led Technology Diffusion in Small Industry.”](#) *American Journal of Sociology* 122(5):1339–70.

Ang, Yuen Yuen. 2016. [How China Escaped the Poverty Trap](#). Ithaca New York: Cornell University Press. Chapter 1.

9. Student Presentations

Presentation slide decks (circulated via email at least 24 hours before Session 9).

10. Social Status in Market Transactions

Podolny, Joel M. 1993. [“A Status-Based Model of Market Competition.”](#) *American Journal of Sociology* 98 (4): 829–72.

Ridgeway, Cecilia L. 1997. [Interaction and the Conservation of Gender Inequality: Considering Employment.”](#) *American Sociological Review* 62 (2): 218–35.

Phillips, Damon and Ezra Zuckerman. 2001. [“Middle-Status Conformity: Theoretical Restatement and Empirical Demonstration in Two Markets.”](#) *American Journal of Sociology* 107(2): 379-429.

Baum, Joel A.C., Timothy J Rowley, Andrew V Shipilov, and You-Ta Chuang. 2005. [“Dancing with Strangers: Aspiration Performance and the Search for Underwriting Syndicate Partners.”](#) *Administrative Science Quarterly* 50(4): 536-575.

Kovács, Balázs, and Amanda J. Sharkey. 2014. "[The Paradox of Publicity: How Awards Can Negatively Affect the Evaluation of Quality.](#)" *Administrative Science Quarterly* 59 (1): 1–33.

11. Shareholder Value & Financialization

Davis, Gerald F., Kristina A. Diekmann, and Catherine H. Tinsley. 1994. "[The Decline and Fall of the Conglomerate Firm in the 1980s: The Deinstitutionalization of an Organizational Form.](#)" *American Sociological Review* 59(4): 547-570.

Ezra Zuckerman. 1999. "[The Categorical Imperative: Securities Analysts and the Illegitimacy Discount.](#)" *American Journal of Sociology* 104(5): 1398-1438.

Dobbin, Frank, and Jiwook Jung. 2010. "[The Misapplication of Mr. Michael Jensen: How Agency Theory Brought Down the Economy and Why it Might Again.](#)" *Markets on Trial: The Economic Sociology of the U.S. Financial Crisis. Research in the Sociology of Organizations* 30B:29-64.

Donald MacKenzie and Yuval Millo. 2003. "[Constructing a Market, Performing Theory: The Historical Sociology of a Financial Derivatives Exchange.](#)" *American Journal of Sociology* 109(1): 107-45.

Davis, Gerald F. 2009. "[The Rise and Fall of Finance and the End of the Society of Organizations.](#)" *Academy of Management Perspectives* 23(3): 27-44.

Krippner, Greta. 2011. [Capitalizing on Crisis: The Political Origins of the Rise of Finance](#). Cambridge: Harvard University Press. (Chapters 2 and 6).

12. Final Session: Students' Choice

TBD