

Department of Sociology
Emory University
Spring 2005

Economic Sociology – SOC 467

Instructor: Diogo Pinheiro (dpinhei@emory.edu)

Office hours: Wednesdays – 10:30-12:30

Office:

Course Overview

Every society, from the most primitive to the most advanced, produces, collects and distributes goods among its population. The allocation of resources, division of labor, mode of production, along with questions of fairness and efficiency, are all commonly thought of as being **economic** matters. These matters have been at the center of many debates and inquiries, from the ancient Greek philosophers (the word “economy” comes from the Greek Oikonomia, which means household management), through Adam Smith’s invisible hand, to today’s economists, sociologists and other social scientists. One of the most exciting and vibrant fields of economic analysis is Economic Sociology. At its basis is the notion that economic matters are inherently **social**, and economic sociologists purport to study this feature of social life.

This goal of this course is to introduce students to Economic Sociology, one of the fastest growing areas of sociology. One question we will constantly be trying to answer is: What is Economic Sociology? In other words, what makes it a field of inquiry of its own? Why Economic **Sociology**, and not simply economics? In order to address these questions, we will examine different topics within both economics and sociology.

In the first section of this course, our focus will be on the historic relationship between the disciplines of economics and sociology. These disciplines share a common origin, and so we will read texts on the history of both disciplines, and on their relationship throughout the years.

Part two analyzes how different societies organize and distribute its production. What are the origins of capitalism? What are its different forms? Why are some nations more successful under in than others? In this section we will read classic and contemporary works on the rise of capitalism and economic development throughout the world.

After reading on large scale social changes, we then turn to the sociological aspects of specific markets on part 3. How does social and historical factors influence the creation and operation of markets? The first part of this section is dedicated to understanding the sociological approach to markets, while on the second part we focus on the more applied issues.

On part 4, the focus is on firms. Where do firms come from? How are they organized and how do they survive? We will focus on issues dealing with rationality and uncertainty, and how they affect the way firms are structured and act. The emphasis is both on national and multinational firms.

Part 5 is on important applied areas within economic sociology. In this section, we will read work on networks, the rise of modern consumerism, and inequality.

By looking at these issues, students should be able to understand and come up with different explanations for several economic and social issues. Also, one of the purposes of this course is to broaden the horizons of students, showing different paths that one can follow if one wishes to pursue a career dealing with economic issues, allowing students to come up and/or criticize policy recommendations and daily issues.

Course Requirements

- 1- Participation- While lectures will make up the majority of time spent in class, student participation is encouraged, and, in many instances we will have class discussions, where students will be required to participate constructively. Attendance is expected, and excessive tardiness will not be tolerated. Students arriving more than 10 minutes late will be allowed to sit in class, but will be considered absent for that day. Students with more than 3 unexcused absences will have a point deducted from their participation grade for each additional absence, and students who miss fewer than 3 classes will receive 2 extra-credit points. Also, class discussions are to be conducted in a respectful and tolerant manner. Offensive behavior will not be tolerated.
- 2- Reading- This is almost a precondition for participation. Students are expected to do the readings for each class in advance. These are listed on the course outline. We will use the following textbook, which should be available at the Emory bookstore:
Swedberg, Richard. 2003. Principles of Economic Sociology. Princeton University Press
Required articles and book chapters available on reserve on Woodruff Library or online will complement this textbook
- 3- Short Essays – At 5 different points during the semester (2/7, 2/21, 3/ 4, 3/25 and 4/11), students will be asked to write a 2 page short essay answering a specific question. The question will be handed out one in advance and students will have a week to turn in their answers. Only 4 of these essays will count towards the student's final grade, with the lowest one being dropped.
- 4- Tests- This course will have two tests: one midterm (on 3/7) and one final (on 5/11). Both will be made up of a few multiple-choice questions and two to three short essay questions. A selection of possible essay questions will be distributed in advance, and in the day of the test, I will randomly pick the questions that students will have to answer. They will not be cumulative. That is, material covered in the first half of the class will not appear on the final. However, students should know key theories and concepts.
- 5- Paper and Presentation- Students are required to write a 10-12 page paper, which will be presented in class May 2nd. This paper should be on a contemporary issue that is of interest to the student. It should include a review of the relevant bibliography and an attempt to apply the relevant writings to a current relevant topic (e.g. current policy proposals, Enron, etc.). Students are strongly encouraged to discuss potential topics and the development of the paper throughout the

semester with me. All students must have picked a topic by **March 9th** and must submit a draft by April 25th. Final versions are due on May 2nd, when students will also present a brief description of their work to the rest of the class.

6- Grading-

Short Essays – 20%

Mid term exam – 25%

Final exam – 20%

Paper and Presentarion – 25%

Participation – 10%

Class Policies

Students with disabilities - Emory University complies with the regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and offers accommodations to students with disabilities. If you are in need of a classroom accommodation, please make an appointment with me to discuss this as soon as possible. All information will be held in the strictest confidence.

Academic Dishonesty – Students are expected to know and abide by the honor code. Violations of the honor code will be reported and dealt with according to Emory University's regulations

Disruptive class behavior – As previously stated, disruptive class behavior will not be tolerated, and will be dealt with in accordance to Emory University regulations. Disruptive class behavior includes use of offensive language, being offensive to others, and any behavior that negatively affects the learning environment.

Late assignments and make up exams- Late assignments are accepted, if the situation is previously discussed with me. However, late assignments will be marked down, depending on how late the assignment is handed in. If the student has a reasonable excuse for not being able to take an exam, a make up exam will be scheduled. Please consult with me on these matters.

Course Outline

January 19

Introductions

PART 1: What is Economic Sociology?

A brief history of economics and sociology

January 21

Swedberg, Richard. Introduction, pages 1-18 in *Economics and sociology : redefining their boundaries*.

January 24

Swedberg, Richard and Mark Granovetter.. Introduction to the second edition. Pages 1-19 in *The Sociology of economic Life*.

Differences between Economics and Sociology

January 26

Smelser, Neil and Richard Swedberg (1994), "The Sociological Perspective on the Economy," pages 3-20 in Neil Smelser and Richard Swedberg (Eds.) *The Handbook of Economic Sociology*

PART 2: Social Organization and the Rise of Capitalism

Introduction to the organization of society

January 28

PES. Chapter 3

Classical Approaches to the Rise of Capitalism

January 31

PES. Chapter 1.

The Marxian Perspective

February 2

Selection from "The German Ideology", pages 386-406 in Dobbin, Frank. *The New Economic Sociology*.

The Weberian Perspective

February 4

Collins, Randal. "Weber's Last Theory of Capitalism," pages 379-400 in Granovetter, Mark and Richard Swedberg, *The Sociology of Economic Life*

The Durkheimian Perspective

February 7

Selection from "The Division of Labor in Society", pages 227-244 in Dobbin, Frank. *The New Economic Sociology*.

Historical and Comparative perspectives on Capitalism and Development

Early Europe

February 9

Gary Hamilton, "Civilizations and the Organization of Economies," pages 183-205 in *The Handbook of Economic Sociology*.

East Asia

February 11

Collins, Randall. 1997. "Religious Economy and the Emergence of Capitalism in Japan." *American Sociological Review* 62.

Eastern Europe

February 14

Ivan Szelenyi, Katherine Beckett, and Lawrence p. King, "The Socialist Economic System," pages 234-255 in *The Handbook of Economic Sociology*..

Theories of Development

February 16

Carruthers, Bruce and Sarah Babb. "Economic Development," pages 143-180 in *Economy/Society*

February 18

Gary Gereffi, "The International Economy and Economic Development," pages 206-233 in *The Handbook of Economic Sociology*.

February 21

PES, chapter 9.

PART 3: The functioning of markets

Different Perspectives on the Market

February 23

PES, chapter 5

The Social Aspects of Markets

February 25

Zelizer, Viviana. 1988. "Beyond the Polemics on the Market: Establishing a Theoretical and Empirical Agenda." *Sociological Forum* 3:614-634.

Neil Fligstein, "Markets as Politics: A Political-Cultural Approach to Market Institutions," *American Sociological Review* 61,4 (1996):656-673

Case Studies on the social construction of markets

February 28

PES, chapter 6

March 2

Zelizer, Viviana. Chapter 4 "From a Proper Burial to a Proper Education" in *Pricing the Priceless Child*.

Zelizer, Viviana. 1978. "Human Values and the Market." *American Journal of Sociology*.

March 4

Fligstein, Neil and Iona Mara-Drita. 1996. "How to Make a Market" *American Journal of Sociology*. Pp 1-33.

March 7

Mid-term exam

States and Markets

March 9

PES, chapter 7

March 11

Dobbin, Frank. "Why the Economy Reflects the Polity: Early Rail Policy in Britain, France and the United States," pages 401-424 in in Granovetter, Mark and Richard Swedberg, *The Sociology of Economic Life*

Population Ecology Approaches

March 21

Michael T. Hannan, Glenn R. Carroll, Elizabeth A. Dundon and John Charles Torres, 1995. "Organizational Evolution in a Multinational Context," *American Sociological Review* 60 :509-528.

The Informal Economy

March 23

Portes, Alejandro (1994), "The Informal Economy and Its Paradoxes," in *The Handbook of Economic Sociology*.

PART 4: Firms and Organizations

March 25

PES, chapter 4

Bureaucracies and rationality

March 28

Scott, W. Richard. "Organizations as Rational Systems," pages 33-55 in *Organizations: Rational, Natural, and Open Systems*.

March 30

Williamson. Oliver E., "Transaction Cost Economics and Organization Theory," in *The Handbook of Economic Sociology*, pp. 77-107

Limits to Rationality

April 1

March, James G. and Herbert Simon. Selections from "Organizations: Cognitive Limits on Rationality," pages 518-532 in *The New Economic Sociology*.

North, Douglass C., pages 17-26 in *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance*

Dealing with Uncertainty

April 4

Hirsch, Paul. 1972. "Processing Fads and Fashions: An Organization-set Analysis of Cultural Industry Systems"

Negus, Keith. 1998. "Cultural production and the corporation: musical genres and the strategic management of creativity in the US recording industry." *Media, Culture & Society*

Institutionalized Solutions

April 6

Paul J. DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell, "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields," pages 63-82 in *The New Institutionalism in Organization Analysis*

April 8

Bielby, William T. and Denise D. Bielby. 1994. "All Hits are Flukes: Institutionalized Decision Making and the Rhetoric of Network Prime-Time Program Development." *American Journal of Sociology* 99: 1287-1313

PART 5: New Directions in Economic Sociology

Overview

April 11

PES, chapter 2

Networks

April 13

Carruther, Bruce and Sarah L. Babb, Pages 45- 70 in *Economy/Society*

April 15

Baker, Wayne 1990, "Market Networks and Corporate Behavior," *American Journal of Sociology* 96:589-625

Consumers and Fashions

April 18

Carruthers, Bruce and Sarah Babb. Pages 15-45 in *Economy/Society*.

April 20

Storey, John. "Cultural Consumption as Communication," pages 36-60 in *Cultural consumption and Everyday Life* (not available at emory/ photocopy).

April 22

Katz-Gerro, Tally. 2002. "Highbrow Cultural Consumption and Class Distinction in Italy, Israel, West Germany, Sweden, and the United States" *Social Forces* 81:1. pp. 207-229

Inequality and redistribution

April 25

Carruthers, Bruce and Sarah L. Babb. "Economic Inequality," pages 101-142 in *Economy/Society*.

April 27

Morris, Martina and Bruce Western. 1999. "Inequality in Earnings at the Close of the Twentieth Century." *Annual Review of Sociology* 25: 623-657.

Addressing Inequality

April 29

Esping-Andersen, Gosta. "Welfare States and the Economy", pages 711-732 in the *Handbook of Economic Sociology*

May 2

Presentations

May 11

Final Exam - 8:30 A.M. - 11:00 A.M