

**SOCIOLOGY 210:**  
**THE ECONOMY, ORGANIZATIONS & WORK**

Fall 2011  
*Section 6518*

Instructor: Shawna N. Smith  
Meeting Time: 1-2:15PM Tues & Thurs  
Meeting Place: Wylie Hall 015

Office Hours: Tuesday 2:30-4:30pm in the Union Starbucks, or by appointment  
Email: sns3@indiana.edu  
Mailbox: Ballantine Hall 744 (under "S. Smith")  
*NOTE: This box is available Monday through Friday, from 9am-4pm.*

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This is an introductory course to the sociological study of the capitalist economy and the social processes that inform economic life. Neo-classical economics (and, frequently, conventional wisdom) commonly assert that there are fundamental tensions between--on one hand--markets, profit-seeking and efficiency and--on another--social relations, personal ties, and systems of social and moral regulation. Economic sociologists challenge and revise these understandings, showing instead that economic institutions and behaviors are *shaped* by the same social structures that shape, e.g., political, religious and familial behavior.

This course will explore a number of these supposed tensions, as well as how and why the 'embeddedness' of markets within social structures matters. A few of the questions we will contend with include:

- How are economies organized? How might organization change over time or differ between countries?
- How are markets created? Do some things lie outside of the market?
- How & why has the role of the 'the worker' changed?
- Are consumerist behaviors related to personal values?
- Do personal relationships inform economic productivity or advancement?
- How do economic systems generate or incorporate different 'groups'?
- What forces lead to change in economic organization and/or organizational difference?

A diverse range of cases will be used to explore these questions—from pricing organs to pricing Mardi Gras beads; the economic aims of Protestants to the economic aims of pirates; getting hired to getting fired; etc. However, this course will be consistent in applying a sociological perspective, or attempting to understand how economic processes are shaped by social structures, cultural understandings & distributions of power.

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## COURSE OBJECTIVES

*This course is intended to:*

1. Introduce you to the basic concepts and perspectives of economic sociology;
  2. Help you develop analytical tools for connecting your own experiences with economic structures and organizations to more general understandings of economic sociology;
  3. Enhance general critical thinking abilities through the production of original research projects, analytical papers and short presentations.
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## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Readings:

There are three *required* texts for this course, all available at IU Bookstores or T.I.S.:

Carruthers, Bruce and Sarah L. Babb. (2000). *Economy/Society: Markets, Meanings, and Social Structure*. CA: Pine Forge Press.

Leeson, Peter T. (2009). *The Invisible Hook: The Hidden Economics of Pirates*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Watts, Duncan J. (2004). *Six Degrees: The Science of a Connected Age*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company.

**All other required readings will be made available on ONCOURSE.**

### *Notes on course readings:*

- (1) Readings must be completed *in advance* of the class for which they are assigned.
- (2) All assigned readings *must* be brought to class on the day they are assigned. This will require you to *print out* additional readings.
- (3) All readings are subject to change. As a group, we may become more (or less) interested in certain topics or require more consideration of certain topics or theories. This syllabus allows for some flexibility, and adequate advance warning will be given. but you are required to pay attention to email & in-class announcements.

### Films:

Films will be shown in this class as supplements to readings, often to help illustrate more abstract concepts. Exams and other assignments may reference material from these films, so you should plan to show up *and* pay attention. If you miss a film screening, you need to arrange to make it up, either by (1) watching the film in the Sociology Department or (2) loaning the video independently [from me, library, Netflix, etc.]. Please confirm this arrangement with me within *3 days* of the missed class.

**Performance Assessment:**

This syllabus is a contract, and your grade will depend entirely upon your preparation for class and engagement with the ideas we cover. *As a general rule, you should plan to spend at least 2-3 hours out of class preparing for every hour you spend in class.*

**Grades will be assigned based on the following criteria:**

Assessment	Points available
Discussion papers (8 @ 30pts)	240
Midterm exam	200
Group project (210 pts total):	
(1) Presentation	100
(2) Paper	100
(3) Evaluative statement	10
Final exam	250
Class participation	100
<b>Total points possible:</b>	1000

**Discussion Papers:** Discussion papers are short papers that connect the week’s readings to past discussions, theories and ideas. Discussion papers should be 1-2 (double-spaced) pages in length and comprise three distinct sections:

- (1) A *summary* of the most important argument from each assigned reading;
- (2) A *discussion* comparing one or more of the week’s readings to one or more readings from the prior week. This discussion should focus on sociological questions and reasoning (e.g., “How are Weberian conceptions of efficiency different from Taylor’s?” or “How would Veblen interpret corporate social responsibility initiatives?”), as opposed to more ‘normative’ questions (e.g., “Did Taylorism make economies more efficient?”); and
- (3) One or two further *questions* about the readings for the class.

Discussion papers should be submitted to Oncourse [under ‘Assignments’]. Discussion papers will be collected 11 times during the semester; your 8 highest grades will be recorded. Examples of a high-quality discussion paper can be found on Oncourse [under ‘Resources’]. *HINT:* You would do well to model your own papers after these exemplars.

**Exams:** Exams will evaluate material synthesis and retention and will consist of multiple-choice, short-answer, and essay questions. There are two exams in this course:

**MIDTERM EXAM: THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20 @ 1PM**  
**FINAL EXAM: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15 @ 12:30PM**

**Group projects:** During the second week of class, you will be assigned to a group of four. Your group will then be randomly assigned one of three projects. More details on your project and grading guidelines will be provided during the second week of class.

- Project A:** Organizational success/failure; **Due date: October 4**
- Project B:** Network structure; **Due date: November 1**
- Project C:** Exploring equality; **Due date: December 1**

**Class participation:** Class participation counts for 10% of your overall grade. Each class period, I will award up to three points to those students who show up for class prepared and remain *actively & respectfully* engaged throughout lecture, discussion and class activity.

**A Note on Assignments:**

**All assignments should be submitted to ONCOURSE & are due at the beginning of class (before 1pm).**

Assignments should be typewritten with your name, the course number and assignment title (e.g., “Discussion paper #1” on the first page. Pages should be numbered. As a general rule, all assignments should use 12-pt Times New Roman or similar font & 1” margins.

Bibliographies count separately from assigned paper length. Handwritten assignments will NOT be accepted.

**Late Policy:** *For each day an assignment is late, the grade will drop one full letter grade.* Submissions received after 1pm on the due date are considered one day late. Submissions to Oncourse are not accepted after 1pm on due date. Late assignments must be submitted in hardcopy.

***\*\*I strongly suggest you complete and submit all assignments the night before class.***

**Writing Help & Resources:**

Writing is a skill that is continually cultivated. The assignments in this class have been designed to improve your writing skills, both analytically and stylistically. As such, I expect you to spend time crafting your written assignments. If you struggle with this, I strongly recommend taking full advantage of the IU Campus Writing Center, which provides *free* writing assistance. You may also stop by my office hours at any time to discuss your writing.

- IU Campus Writing Center Writing Tutorial Services  
Ballantine Hall 206 (+ satellite locations)  
**To make an appointment:** Stop by BH office in advance or call 855-6738  
More info: <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/info.shtml>

**Final grades:**

Final grades are assigned based on the following scale:

A+	970-1000 pts.
A	930-969
A-	900-929
B+	870-899
B	830-869
B-	800-829
C+	770-799
C	730-769
C-	700-729
D+	670-699
D	630-669
D-	600-629
F	<600

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## GENERAL GUIDELINES & POLICIES

### Attendance Policy:

There is no attendance policy for this class. However, as exams will draw heavily on material covered by my lectures, doing well on an exam without attending class consistently will be very difficult. Additionally, absences do not excuse you from the requirements of the class (including class participation and on-time discussion papers).

### University Sanctioned Absences:

If you intend to miss class for a university sanctioned event (such as a religious holiday or student athlete event) you are required to notify me within the first two weeks of the semester and provide the appropriate documentation. Early notification will also ensure that you are given the opportunities you need to keep up with the material you will miss due to your absence.

### Lecture Notes:

I do *not* provide lecture notes. It is your responsibility to take notes during class. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to borrow notes from a fellow classmate. As such, you should exchange contact information with the members of your group or other course members in the event that you are absent.

### Missed Exams:

*Makeup exams will not be given*, except in extremely unusual AND documented circumstances. If you cannot take the exam due to a circumstance that is both legitimate AND documentable, you must contact me **prior** to the exam & we will arrange for you to take an alternative exam. If you do not contact me prior to the exam, or miss an exam without a legitimate excuse, you will receive a 0.

### Incompletes:

In accordance with departmental & university policies, incompletes are not granted except in cases with exceptionally unusual circumstances.

### Special Needs:

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), IU seeks to provide “reasonable accommodation” for qualified individuals with documented disabilities. It is your responsibility to contact the Disability Student Service Office (812-855-7578; <http://www.indiana.edu/~iubdss>) and to inform me about any special learning/study needs relating to a documented disability.

### Email:

Email is my preferred method of communication. Feel free to email with questions or issues you would like to discuss. On weekdays, I check email between 9am & 8pm and I aim to respond to all emails within 24 hours. When sending an email, include the course number (S210) in the subject line.

### **Cell Phones and Laptops:**

Any use of cell phones (including texting) is prohibited during class. **Please turn your cell phone off** or put it in silent mode (no light, vibration, or sound). Further, during exams cell phones must be kept completely out of sight. Additionally, unless specified for special needs accommodation, **laptops are not allowed in this course**. Please leave your laptop either in your bag or at home.

### **Oncourse:**

*You must have access to Oncourse.* Assignments must be turned in via Oncourse, class readings (other than the three required books) will be posted on Oncourse, and other announcements, handouts, etc. will also be distributed via Oncourse. Further, you are responsible for making sure your grades are correctly posted. You should plan to check your grades once a week. Please contact me *immediately* if you notice an incorrect grade posting.

### **Respecting others:**

Class discussion will play an integral part in this course. As such, I expect all contributions to be respectful and *rooted in scholarly pursuit*. Personal attacks, interruptions, foul language &/or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated.

Further, respectful behavior requires you to: (1) arrive to class on time; (2) pay attention during lecture; (3) be actively involved during in-class activities. Failure to meet these expectations will be dealt with accordingly.

### **Honor Code:**

It is not possible for us to have an intellectual community without honor. I expect that you demonstrate respect by recognizing the labor of those who create intellectual products.

Academic dishonesty (including cheating and plagiarism) will not be tolerated and will be dealt with according to university policy. Please see the Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct for university policies on academic misconduct and dishonesty at: <http://www.iu.edu/~code/code/responsibilities/academic/index.shtml>.

**If you cheat (and this includes plagiarism/not citing sources), your final grade will be an F. You will be reported. Ignorance is not an excuse. If in doubt, ask.**

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## *Schedule of Class Meetings & Readings*

*Readings & assignments are due the day they appear on the schedule.*

*\* indicates the reading is available on Oncourse.*

August 30: Course introduction.  
NY Times. *Walk Away From your Mortgage!* [in class]

### ***I. BEYOND SUPPLY & DEMAND: CONSTRUCTING MARKETS***

September 1: Carruthers & Babb. *Chapter 1: Embeddedness of Markets.*  
\*Greenspan. *1999 Commencement Address at Harvard.*

September 6: \*Polanyi. *The Great Transformation.* (excerpt)  
***PROJECTS & GROUPS ASSIGNED.***

September 8: \*Healy. *Embedded Altruism.*  
\*NYTimes. *Is Money Tainting the Plasma Supply?*  
***DUE: Discussion paper 1.***

### ***II. ORGANIZING WORK: AUTHORITY, RATIONALITY...PIRACY?***

September 13: Carruthers & Babb. *Chapter 4: Organizations & the Economy.*

September 15: Leeson. *The Invisible Hook.* Chapters 1 & 3.

September 20: Leeson. *The Invisible Hook.* Chapters 4 & 5.  
***DUE: Discussion paper 2.***

September 22: Leeson. *The Invisible Hook.* Chapters 6 & 8.

September 27: \*Marx. *Selections.*

September 29: \*Weber. *Selections.*  
\*Edwards. *Contested Terrain.* Chapter 1.  
***DUE: Discussion paper 3.***

October 4: ***GROUP A PRESENTATIONS***

### ***III. MAPPING SOCIAL EMBEDDEDNESS: ECONOMIC NETWORKS***

October 6: Carruthers & Babb. *Chapter 3: Networks in the Economy.*  
Watts. *Six Degrees.* Chapter 1.  
***DUE: Discussion paper 4.***

- October 11: Watts. *Six Degrees*. Chapters 3 & 5.
- October 13: \*Granovetter. *Getting a Job: A Study of Contacts and Careers*. [introduction]  
\*DiMaggio & Louch. *Socially-Embedded Consumer Transactions*.  
**DUE: Discussion paper 5.**
- October 18: Watts. *Six Degrees*. Chapters 7 & 9.
- October 20: **MIDTERM EXAM.**

#### IV. CONSUMERISM & CONSUMPTION

- October 25: Carruthers & Babb. *Chapter 2: Marketing & the Meaning of Things*.  
\*Veblen. *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. [selections]
- October 27: \*Zelizer. *Pricing the Priceless Child*. [excerpts]  
**DUE: Discussion paper 6.**
- November 1: Film. *Mardi Gras: Made in China*.  
**GROUP B PRESENTATIONS**
- November 3: \*Sandel. *What Money Can't Buy: The Limits of the Market*. [Tanner Lecture on Human Values]  
**DUE: Discussion paper 7.**

#### V. ORGANIZING DIFFERENCE: INEQUALITY, DIVERSITY & COMPARABLE WORTH

- November 8: Carruthers & Babb. *Chapter 5: Economic Inequality*.
- November 10: \*Jacobs. *Detours on the Road to Equality*.  
\*NYTimes. *The Women's Crusade*.  
**DUE: Discussion paper 8.**
- November 15: \*Kirschenman & Neckerman. "We'd Like to Hire Them But...".  
\*Reskin. *Rethinking Employment Discrimination and its Remedies*.
- November 17: \*Dobbin. *Inventing Equal Opportunity*. [introduction]  
**DUE: Discussion paper 9.**

#### VI. EXPLAINING SIMILARITY & DIFFERENCE: MARKETS & INSTITUTIONS

- November 22: **Thanksgiving Break. No class.**
- November 24: **Thanksgiving Break. No class.**



- November 29: \*Espeland & Sauder. *Rankings and Reactivity: How Public Measures Recreate Social Worlds*.  
\*NYTimes. *Triple-A Failure*.  
***DUE: Discussion paper 10.***
- December 1: Carruthers & Babb. *Chapter 7: Globalization*.  
***GROUP C PRESENTATIONS.***
- December 6: Film. *Mondovino*.
- December 8: \*Louch et al. *Phone Calls and Fax Machines: The Limits to Globalization*.  
***DUE: Discussion paper 11.***
- December 15: ***FINAL EXAM. 12:30-2:30PM.***