Foundations of Economic Sociology
First Term Seminar 2017-2018
Organised by Klarita Gërxhani, with N. Kulic (MWF) & A. Trantidis (MWF)

Please register online
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Course Description and Objectives
This course introduces the field of economic sociology. It does so by focusing on modern classics and contemporary literature studying the intersection of economy and society. Its main goal is two-fold. First, to provide an understanding of the ways in which various kinds of institutions and social structure and processes play a fundamental role in explaining economic outcomes. Second, to stimulate an integration of the major theories, approaches and topics covered into students’ research interests. At the end of the course, students will be able to:

- have an understanding of the most important thematic literature and the critical analytical capacity to evaluate its scholarly validity from different methodological angles and within both a disciplinary and interdisciplinary context;
- have the capacity to fully participate and adopt a clear position in academic discussions on substantive theories and methodological design;
- have the ability to independently present social science research findings both orally and in writing in English to the required scholarly standard, making use of theoretical insights relevant to the particular research problem under study;
- have the ability to contribute theoretical knowledge and insight to the formulation and resolution of scientifically and socially relevant research problems.

Each week, for seven meetings, students will read and discuss the selected readings. During the last three meetings, students will present an application of the theories and approaches covered into their own research topic. By collectively reading a list of studies, students get to know the different traditions of theory and research in economic sociology, how the theory is connected to empirical research, how particular research designs and methods may be chosen for different research questions, and how new research projects can build on existing studies.

Teaching Methods/Learning Formats
Weekly two-hour class meetings, weekly active participation, and discussion.
Schedule
This seminar takes place on Mondays at 15.00-17.00 in Seminar Room 2 at the Badia Fiesolana, with the exception of the sessions on the 6th of November and on the 20th of November, which will take place in Seminar Room 3.

The full list of seminar sessions is the following:

Monday 2nd October: Seminar Room 2
Monday 9th October: Seminar Room 2
Monday 16th October: Seminar Room 2
Monday 23rd October: Seminar Room 2
Monday 30th October: Seminar Room 2
Monday 6th November: Seminar Room 3
Monday 13th November: Seminar Room 2
Monday 20th November: Seminar Room 3
Monday 27th November: Seminar Room 2
Monday 4th December: Seminar Room 2

Teaching Criteria
This seminar is worth 20 credits.

Students who choose to take this seminar for credit are required to meet Departmental attendance, participate actively, and complete the discussion memo tasks.

Students also have the option of writing a term paper for this course as part of their general term paper requirements. Should they wish to do so, they must discuss their proposed topic with Professor Gërxhani well before the Department’s deadline for Term Papers.

In detail:

- Students are required to participate actively. This implies that they are required to read the designated literature before each meeting and participate actively in class discussions.

- Discussion memos: It is important to carefully study each week’s readings prior to the meetings. This improves the quality of the discussion since students come to the meeting well prepared. For this reason, students are requested to prepare a brief discussion memo on the readings programmed for each week. Discussion memos should consist of max 250 words and must include: (1) a reflection of what you find most engaging, exciting, and/or puzzling from the weekly literature; and (2) what you would like the class discussion to focus on (in the form of one or two questions).

  The Discussion memos are not meant to be mere summaries of the readings. Instead, they are meant to be food for thought, by reflecting your own intellectual engagement with the material; specifying what is obscure or confusing in the readings; taking issue with some core idea or argument; or, exploring some interesting consequences of an idea. The Discussion memos will be the basis for the meetings’ discussions. Each student submits them to the course website at the latest every Sunday prior to the meeting at 23:00, and takes them to class for the discussion.

- Term paper: Students who chose to submit a term paper are required to make significant use of the selected literature and provide an application to their research topic. The term paper must be submitted via email to Professor Gërxhani with the administrative assistant in copy
Credit is only given to students who meet the tasks outlined here above. Moreover, students are required to take part in the meetings. Taking part in a meeting implies timely presence, good preparation, and active participation in-group discussions. Should a student decide to submit a term paper for this course, it must be handed in by the deadline indicated in the 2017-18 Researchers’ Guide. A term paper which is handed in late will not be considered.

Feedback
Discussion memos and active participation: students can expect to receive brief individual feedback at the end of each meeting. Group feedback will also be provided, as part of the learning process in class discussions.

Core Texts
Researchers wishing to further their knowledge of Economic Sociology can consult these core texts. These books can be found on the reserved shelf of the EUI library.


Readings

WEEK 1: Introduction, basic background readings
Optional:

WEEK 2: Institutions

Optional:

WEEK 3: Economic crisis

Optional:

WEEK 4: Culture and Values

Optional:
WEEK 5: Social capital


Optional:

WEEK 6: Gender


Optional:

**WEEK 7: Labor market and Networks**


*Optional:*


**WEEK 8-10**

Presentations of students (approximately 20 minutes per presentation).