



Foundations of Economic Sociology

First Term Seminar 2018-2019

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Course Description and Objectives

This course introduces the field of economic sociology, from both macro and micro perspective. 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, researchers 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, researchers will read and discuss the selected readings. During the last three meetings, researchers will present an application of the theories and approaches covered into their own research topic.

Teaching Methods/Learning Formats

Weekly two-hour class meetings, weekly active participation and discussion, individual presentations in the last three meetings.

Schedule

This seminar takes place on **Thursdays at 9:00-11:00** in Seminar Room 2 at the Badia Fiesolana, with the exception of the sessions on the 4th of October and on the 8th of November, which will take place in Seminar Room 4. In addition, the session on the 29th of November will be moved to Monday the 5th of December, and that of the 13th of December to the 7th of December.

The full list of seminar sessions is the following:

Thursday	4 th October:	Seminar Room 4
Thursday	11 th October:	Seminar Room 2
Thursday	18 th October:	Seminar Room 2
Thursday	25 th October:	Seminar Room 2
Thursday	8 th November:	Seminar Room 4
Thursday	15 th November:	Seminar Room 2
Thursday	22 th November:	Seminar Room 2
Wednesday	5 th December	Seminar Room 2
Thursday	6 th December	Seminar Room 2
Friday	7 th December	Seminar Room 2

Teaching Criteria

This seminar is worth 20 credits.

Researchers who choose to take this seminar for credit are required to meet Departmental attendance, *participate actively*, complete the *discussion memo* tasks, and *present* their progress in the end.

Researchers 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:

- Researchers 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 researchers come to the meeting well prepared. For this reason, researchers 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 researcher submits them to the course website at the latest every Tuesday prior to the meeting at 23:00, and takes them to class for the discussion.

- *Presentations*: By collectively reading a list of studies, researchers 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. In the last three meetings, researchers are asked to present the extent to which this added knowledge has affected their research ideas from their original proposals.
- *Term paper*: Researchers 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

(Claudia.Fanti@eui.eu). Please see the 2018-19 Researchers' Guide for more information regarding the term paper and the deadlines for submission.

Credit is only given to researchers who meet the tasks outlined here above. Moreover, researchers 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 researcher decide to submit a term paper for this course, it must be handed in by the deadline indicated in the 2018-19 Researchers' Guide. A term paper which is handed in late will not be considered.

Feedback

Researchers can expect to receive brief individual feedback on their discussion memos and their presentations. 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.

1. Neil J. Smelser and Richard Swedberg (Eds.). 2005. *The Handbook of Economic Sociology*, second edition. New York and Princeton: Russell Sage Foundation and Princeton University Press.
2. Mark Granovetter and Richard Swedberg (Eds.). 2001. *The Sociology of Economic Life*, second edition. Boulder, CO: Westview.
3. Mauro F. Guillén, Randall Collins, Paula England and Marshall Meyer (Eds.). 2002. *The New Economic Sociology: Developments in an Emerging Field at the Millennium*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
4. Frank Dobbin (Ed.). 2004. *The New Economic Sociology: A Reader*. Princeton University Press: Princeton.

Readings

WEEK 1: Introduction, basic background readings - KG

1. Swedberg, R. (2003). Ch. 1 "The Classics in Economic Sociology" (p. 1-32), in *Principles of Economic Sociology*. Princeton University Press.
2. Swedberg, R. (2003). Ch. 3 "Economic Organization" (p. 53-74), in *Principles of Economic Sociology*. Princeton University Press.
3. Dobbin, F. (2004). Ch. 1 "The Sociological View of the Economy." (p. 1-46), in *The New Economic Sociology: A Reader*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. [pdf](#)
4. Smelser, N.J. and R. Swedberg (2005). Ch. 5 "Behavioral Economics" (p. 90-109) in *The Handbook of Economic Sociology* (2nd edition). Princeton University Press.

Optional:

1. Swedberg, R. (2003). Ch. 2 “Contemporary Economic Sociology” (p. 32-53) in *Principles of Economic Sociology*. Princeton University Press.
2. Coleman, J.S. (1990). Ch. 1 “Metatheory: Explanation in Social Science” (p. 1-27) & Ch. 2. “Actors and Resources, Interest and Control” (p. 27-45) in *Foundations of Social Theory*. Harvard University Press.

WEEK 2: (Historical) institutionalism and institutional change - SR

1. Thelen K. (1999). Historical institutionalism in comparative politics. *Annual Review of Political Science* 2(1): 369-404.
2. Streeck W. and Thelen K. (2005). *Beyond Continuity: Institutional Change in Advanced Political Economies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, chapter 1.
3. Hacker, J. S. (2004). Privatizing risk without privatizing the welfare state: The hidden politics of social policy retrenchment in the United States. *American Political Science Review* 98(02): 243-260.
4. Gingrich J. and Ansell B. (2012). Preferences in context: Micro preferences, macro contexts, and the demand for social policy. *Comparative Political Studies* 45(12): 1624-1654.

Optional:

1. Hall P. A. (2010). Historical institutionalism in rationalist and sociological perspective. In Mahoney J. and Thelen K. (eds.) *Explaining institutional change: ambiguity, agency, and power*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 204-224.
2. Steinmo S. (2016). Historical institutionalism and experimental methods. In Fioretos O., Falletti T. G. and Sheingate A., *The Oxford handbook of historical institutionalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 107-123.
3. Thelen K., Palier B. and Wiedermann A. (2018). *The Anxiety of Precarity: The United States in Comparative Perspective*. Paper presented at the EUI–SPS Dept. Seminar, June 15, 2018.

WEEK 3: Varieties of capitalism - GS

1. Hall P. and D. Soskice, eds (2001). *Varieties of Capitalism*. Oxford University Press, Chapter 1, pp. 1-68.
2. Crouch, C. (2005). *Capitalist Diversity and Change*. Oxford University Press, Chapter 2, pp. 25-45.

3. Baccaro, L. and C. Howell (2011). A Common Neoliberal Trajectory: The Transformation of Industrial Relations in Advanced Capitalism. *Politics & Society* 39(4): 521– 563.
4. Scalise, G. (2018). Converging Policy Ideas, Divergent Local Interpretations: The Active Inclusion Strategy from a Comparative Perspective, *EUI Working Paper*, MWP Red Number Series 2018/12.

Optional:

1. Schmidt, V. (2008). Discursive Institutionalism: The Explanatory Power of Ideas and Discourse. *Annual Review of Political Science* 11: 303–26.
2. Amable, B. (2009). *The Diversity of Modern Capitalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Chapter 1. pp. 1-25.
3. Hancké, B., M. Rhodes and M. Thatcher (2007). *Beyond Varieties of Capitalism: Conflict, Contradictions, and Complementarities in the European Economy*. Oxford University Press, Chapter 2, pp. 39-83.

WEEK 4: Welfare states and the crisis - SR

1. Myles, J., and Quadagno, J. (2002). Political theories of the welfare state. *Social Service Review* 76(1): 34-57.
2. Morel, N., Palier, B., and Palme, J. (2012). Towards a social investment welfare state?: Ideas, policies and challenges. *Policy Press*. Chapters 1 and 3.
3. Pavolini, E., León, M., Guillén, A. M. and Ascoli, U. (2016). From Austerity to Permanent Strain? The European Union and Welfare State Reform in Italy and Spain. In *The sovereign debt crisis, the EU and welfare state reform* (pp. 131-157). Palgrave Macmillan, London.
4. Kersbergen, K., Vis, B. and Hemerijck, A. (2014). The great recession and welfare state reform: Is retrenchment really the only game left in town?. *Social Policy & Administration* 48(7): 883-904.

Optional:

1. Hay, C., and Wincott, D. (2012). *The political economy of European welfare capitalism*. Palgrave Macmillan: Chapter 1.
2. Pierson, P. (2011). *The welfare state over the very long run*. ZeS-Arbeitspapier.
3. Kvist, J. (2013). The post-crisis European social model: developing or dismantling social investments?. *Journal of International and Comparative Social Policy* 29(1): 91-107.
4. Armingeon, K., Guthmann, K., and Weisstanner, D. (2016). Choosing the path of austerity: how parties and policy coalitions influence welfare state retrenchment in periods of fiscal consolidation. *West European Politics* 39(4): 628-647.

WEEK 5: Social capital - KG

1. Portes, A. (1998). Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology* 24: 1-24.
2. Coleman, J.S. (1988). Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital. *American Journal of Sociology* 94: s95-s120.
3. Ostrom, E. (2000). Social Capital: A Fad or a Fundamental Concept?, in Dasgupta, Partha and Ismail Serageldin, eds., *Social Capital: A Multifaceted Perspective*, pp. 172-215, The World Bank, Washington.
4. Lin, N. (2001). *Social Capital: A Theory of Social Structure and Action*. Chapter 2: "Social Capital: Capital Captured through Social Relations", in pp. 19-29, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Optional:

1. Bourdieu, P. 1986. "The Forms of Capital." Pp. 241 –58 in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, edited by J.G. Richardson. New York: Greenwood Press.
2. Fidrmuc, J. and K. Gërkhani (2008). Mind the Gap: Social capital, East and West! *Journal of Comparative Economics* 36: 264-286.
3. Lyon, F. (2000). Trust, networks and norms: The creation of social capital in agricultural economies in Ghana, *World Development* 28(4): 663-681.

WEEK 6: Labor market and Networks - KG

1. Granovetter, M. (2005). The Impact of Social Structure on Economic Outcomes. *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 19(1): 33-55.
2. Castilla, E. J., Lan, G.J. and Rissing, B.A. (2013). Social Networks and Employment. Part 1 and Part 2, *Sociology Compass* 7/12: 999–1012 & 1013–1026.
3. Erickson, B.H. (2001). Good networks and good jobs: the value of social capital to employers and employees. In Lin, N. (2001). *Social Capital: A Theory of Social Structure and Action*. pp. 127–58. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
4. Gërkhani, K., J. Brandts, and A. Schram (2013). The Emergence of Employer Information Networks in an Experimental Labor Market. *Social Networks* 35: 541-560.

Optional:

1. Bridges, W.P. and W. J. Vellemez (1986). Informal hiring and income in the labor market. *American Sociological Review* 51: 574-82.
2. Wegener, B. (1991). Job mobility and social ties: Social resources, prior job, and status attainment. *American Sociological Review* 56: 60-71.

3. Di Stasio, V. and K. Gërxhani (2015). Employers' Social Contacts and Their Hiring Behavior in a Factorial Survey. *Social Science Research* 51: 93-107.
4. Kalleberg, A. L. and A.B. Sorensen (1979). The Sociology of Labor Markets. *Annual Review of Sociology* 5: 351-379.

WEEK 7: Gender - KG

1. England, P. and N. Folbre (2005). Gender and Economic Sociology. Ch. 27 (p. 627-650), in Neil J. Smelser and Richard Swedberg (2005). *The Handbook of Economic Sociology* (2nd edition). Princeton University Press.
2. Barbara, R.F. and D. McBrier (2000). Why Not Ascription? Organizations' Employment of Male and Female Managers. *American Sociological Review* 65: 210-33.
3. Correll, S.J. (2001). Gender and the Career Choice Process: The Role of Biased Self-Assessments. *American Journal of Sociology* 106(6): 1691-1730.
4. Schram, A., J. Brandts and K. Gërxhani (2018). Social-Status Ranking: A Hidden Channel to Gender Inequality under Competition. Forthcoming at *Experimental Economics*.

Optional:

1. Burt, R.S. (1998). The Gender of Social Capital. *Rationality and Society* 10, pp. 5-46.
2. Sorensen, A. and McLanahan, S. (1987). Married women's economic dependency, 1940-1980. *American Journal of Sociology* 93/3: 659-687.
3. Charles, M. (2003). Deciphering sex segregation: Vertical and horizontal inequalities in ten national labor markets. *Acta Sociologica* 46/4: 267-287.
4. Reuben, E., P. Sapienza, and L. Zingales (2014). How Stereotypes Impair Women's Careers in Science. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 111: 4403–4408.

WEEK 8-10

Presentations of students (approximately 20 minutes per presentation).