



Foundations of Economic Sociology

First Term Seminar 2019-2020

Organised by Prof. Klarita Gërxhani, with Dr. Stefano Ronchi (MWF)

Contact: Claudia.Fanti@eui.eu

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, weekly discussion memos, individual presentations in the last three meetings.

Schedule

This seminar takes place on **Tuesdays at 15:00-17:00** in **Seminar Room 2** at the Badia Fiesolana, with the *exception* of the session on the 12th of November, which will take place in Capitolo room at the Badia Fiesolana.

The full list of seminar sessions is the following:

Tuesday	1 st October:	Seminar Room 2
Tuesday	8 th October:	Seminar Room 2
Tuesday	15 th October:	Seminar Room 2
Tuesday	22 nd October:	Seminar Room 2
Tuesday	29 th October:	Seminar Room 2
Tuesday	5 th November:	Seminar Room 2
Tuesday	12 th November:	Capitolo Room
Tuesday	19 th November:	Seminar Room 2
Tuesday	26 th November:	Seminar Room 2
Tuesday	3 rd 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 Gërkhani 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 Monday 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 Gërkhani with the administrative assistant in copy (Claudia.Fanti@eui.eu). Please

see the 2019-20 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 2019-20 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. Smelser N. J. and Swedberg R. (Eds.). 2005. *The Handbook of Economic Sociology*, second edition. New York and Princeton: Russell Sage Foundation and Princeton University Press.
2. Granovetter M. and Swedberg R. (Eds.). 2001. *The Sociology of Economic Life*, second edition. Boulder, CO: Westview.
3. Guillén M. F, Collins R., England P. and Meyer M.(Eds.). 2002. *The New Economic Sociology: Developments in an Emerging Field at the Millennium*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
4. Dobbin F. (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. 1-31), in *Principles of Economic Sociology*. Princeton University Press. ©(2003) Princeton University Press.
2. Swedberg, R. (2003). Ch. 3 "Economic Organization" (p. 53-73), in *Principles of Economic Sociology*. Princeton University Press. ©(2003) 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. ©(2004) Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. ©(2004) Princeton University Press
4. Smelser, N.J. and R. Swedberg (2005). Ch. 5 "Behavioral Economics" (p. 90-108) in *The Handbook of Economic Sociology* (2nd edition). Princeton University Press. ©(2005) Princeton University Press

Optional:

1. 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. ©(1990) Harvard University Press
2. Swedberg, R. (2003). Ch. 2 “Contemporary Economic Sociology” (p. 32-52) in *Principles of Economic Sociology*. Princeton University Press. ©(2003) Princeton University Press

WEEK 2: Historical institutionalism in political economy - SR

1. Thelen K. (1999). Historical institutionalism in comparative politics. *Annual Review of Political Science* 2(1): 369-404. ©(1999) Cambridge University Press
2. Streeck W. and Thelen K. (2005). *Beyond Continuity: Institutional Change in Advanced Political Economies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, chapter 1. ©(2005) Oxford University Press USA
3. Trampusch, C. (2010). Employers, the state and the politics of institutional change: Vocational education and training in Austria, Germany and Switzerland. *European Journal of political Research*, 49(4), 545-573. © (2009) The Author(s) Journal compilation © (2009) (European Consortium for Political Research)
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. © (2012) The Author(s)

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. ©(2010) Cambridge University Press
2. Steinmo S. (2016). Historical institutionalism and experimental methods. In Fioretos O., Falleti T. G. and Sheingate A., *The Oxford handbook of historical institutionalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 107-123. ©(2018) Oxford University Press
3. Ibsen, C. L., & Thelen, K. (2017). Diverging solidarity: Labor strategies in the new knowledge economy. *World Politics*, 69(3), 409-447. © (2017) Trustees of Princeton University

WEEK 3: New institutionalism - KG

1. DiMaggio, P.J. and W. Powell (1983). The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields. *American Sociological Review*, 48: 147-160. © (1983) by American Sociological Society
2. North, D.C. (1990). Institutions, institutional change and economic performance. *Cambridge: Cambridge University Press*. Chapter 1: An introduction to institutions and institutional change (pp. 3-10). © (1990) by Cambridge University Press.

3. Nee, Victor and Paul Ingram (1998). Embeddedness and beyond: Institutions, exchange, and social structure. In: Brinton & Nee (Eds.), *The New Institutionalism in Sociology*. Stanford University Press. (pp. 19-46). © (1998) by New York : Russell Sage Foundation
4. Ingram, Paul and Karen Clay (2000). The choice-within-constraints new institutionalism and implications for sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology* 26: 525-46. © (2000) Palo Alto, Calif., Annual Reviews Inc

Optional:

1. Meyer, J.W. and B. Rowan (1977). Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 83(2): 340-363. © (1977) by The University of Chicago Press
2. Nee, V. (2005) The new institutionalisms in economics and sociology. In: Smelser & Swedberg (Eds.), *The Handbook of Economic Sociology*. Princeton University Press. (pp. 49-75). © (1998) by Princeton University Press

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. © (2002) by The University of Chicago.
2. Pierson, P. (2011). *The welfare state over the very long run*. ZeS-Arbeitspapier. © Text: Paul Pierson
3. Van 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. ©(2014) John Wiley & Sons Ltd
4. Vesan, P. and Ronchi, S. (2019). The Puzzle of Expansionary Welfare Reforms under Harsh Austerity: Explaining the Italian Case. Forthcoming in *Southern European Society and Politics*.

Optional:

1. Hay, C., and Wincott, D. (2012). *The political economy of European welfare capitalism*. Palgrave Macmillan: Chapter 1. © (2013) John Wiley & Sons Ltd
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. 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: Culture, Social Norms and Values - KG

1. Di Maggio P. (1994) "Culture and economy" (pp. 27–57) in Smelser N and Swedberg R (eds) *The Handbook of Economic Sociology*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press and New York: Russell Sage Foundation. ©(1994) Princeton University Press
2. Knight, J. and Ensminger J. (1998). Conflict over changing social norms: Bargaining, ideology, and enforcement. In: Brinton & Nee (Eds.), *The New Institutionalism in Sociology*, Stanford University Press. (pp. 105-127). © (1998) by Russell Sage Foundation
3. Guiso, L., Sapienza, P. and Zingales, L. (2006). Does Culture Affect Economic Outcomes?. *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 20/2: 23-48. © 2006 AEA
4. Gërkhani K. and van Breemen J. (2019). Social Values and Institutional Change: An Experimental Study. *Journal of Institutional Economics*, 15(2): 259-280. © (2018) Millennium Economics Ltd

Optional:

1. Elster, J. (2009). "Norms." In Peter Hedström and Peter Bearman, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Analytical Sociology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. © (2009) Oxford: Oxford University Press
2. Zelizer, V. (2010). The Social Meaning of Money: "Special Monies" in Economic lives: How culture shapes the economy. Princeton University Press. © (2010) Princeton University Press
- This book can be found on the reserved shelf of the EUI library

WEEK 6: (Network) Social capital - KG

1. Coleman, J.S. (1988). Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital. *American Journal of Sociology* 94: s95-s120. © (1998) by The University of Chicago
2. Portes, A. (1998). Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology* 24: 1-24. © (1998) by Annual Reviews.
3. Granovetter, M. (2005). The Impact of Social Structure on Economic Outcomes. *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 19(1): 33-55. © (2005) AEA
4. 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. © (2013) John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

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. © (1986) Greenwood Press
2. 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. © (2001) Cambridge University Press

3. Gërxhani, K., Brandts J., and Schram A. (2013). The Emergence of Employer Information Networks in an Experimental Labor Market. *Social Networks* 35: 541-560. © (2013) Elsevier B.V.

WEEK 7: Gender - KG

1. Barbara, R.F. and McBrier D. (2000). Why Not Ascription? Organizations' Employment of Male and Female Managers. *American Sociological Review* 65: 210-33. © (2000) ASA
2. Correll, S.J. (2001). Gender and the Career Choice Process: The Role of Biased Self Assessments. *American Journal of Sociology* 106(6): 1691-1730. © (2001) ASA
3. England, P. and Folbre N. (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. © (2005) Princeton University Press
4. Schram, A., Brandts J., and Gërxhani K. (2019). Social-Status Ranking: A Hidden Channel to Gender Inequality under Competition. *Experimental Economics*, 22(2): 396-418. © (2018)The Author(s)

Optional:

1. Sorensen, A. and McLanahan, S. (1987). Married women's economic dependency, 1940-1980. *American Journal of Sociology* 93/3: 659-687. © (1998) SAGE Publications
2. Burt, R.S. (1998). The Gender of Social Capital. *Rationality and Society* 10, pp. 5-46.
3. Charles, M. (2003). Deciphering sex segregation: Vertical and horizontal inequalities in ten national labor markets. *Acta Sociologica* 46/4: 267-287. © (2003) Scandinavian Sociological Association and SAGE Publications
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).