Course Description and Objectives
This course is an introduction to economic sociology. Sociologists have always studied economic processes, though perhaps never as militantly and self-consciously as they do today. The last twenty years have indeed seen a rather extraordinary flourishing of sociological scholarship in this area, which seeks both to critique the analytical assumptions and research procedures commonly used in mainstream economics, and also to offer sociologically grounded accounts of economic phenomena. This movement culminates in the formulation of alternative claims regarding economic behavior and economic processes, and in the institutionalization of a specific subfield known as economic sociology.

This course will approach the field of economic sociology from the particular angle of the relationship between market structures, technologies, and moral categories. We will start from the observation that moral judgments that justify or vilify the market on the basis of some final value are extremely common in the social sciences. We will then move progressively toward more constructivist arguments that show, in many different ways, how markets, through their own operation, create the very moral categories we act upon. This will allow us to engage with important foundational work in economics, sociology and political science, as well as with some of the most exciting and newest literature dealing with social classification through markets, the performative role of economic technologies, and subjectivity and control in a neoliberal economy.

General information:
The following two books have been ordered at the Cal Student Bookstore:


Kimberly Hoang. Dealing in Desire. UC Press.

Late addition: please also buy:

There is a course website for Sociology 280Q on bCourse. All journal articles and book excerpts are available in PDF format. You can access the papers directly by clicking the hyperlinks in the syllabus or by going to the 'Files' page on bCourse.

Course Requirements:
- Active participation of all seminar members to class discussions.
- Two in class presentations. One presentation will cover the readings for one week. It should be supported by a written memo briefly summarizing the main arguments and raising a number of themes/questions for further discussion in class. The memo should be posted on the course website no later than midnight, on the day before class, so that people have enough time to read it. I will not grade the memos. The second presentation will take place at the end of the semester and will involve a discussion of the proposed research paper. (See below)
- One three-to-five pages final paper proposal, due on October 19. (My mailbox or email is fine). The proposal should outline the research question, the research strategy, and explain the sociological motivation behind the problem studied (a critical review of the scholarly literature is an acceptable motivation). You are welcome to come discuss your proposal in office hours.
- One final research paper (15-20 double-spaced pages), due on December 11. (No later than 5pm in my mailbox please!) The only imperatives for this requirement are: (i) The paper must address an economic topic of your choice (ii) It must use some of the readings in this class. The paper may be empirical (e.g., a pilot study) or consist in a research proposal. More guidelines to come.
PART I. MORAL VIEWS

Week 1. Aug 27. INTRODUCTION. MORAL VIEWS.


Week 2. Sept 3. GOOD MARKETS.


Further reading
Week 3. Sept 10. BAD MARKETS.


Further reading


PART II. SOCIAL STRUCTURES OF CAPITALISM

Week 4. September 17. THE DYNAMICS OF CAPITAL.


Further Reading


Week 5. Sept 24. MARKETS AND POLITICS.


Further Reading


Watch: *Mondovino*.

**Further Reading.**


Franck Cochoy. 2005. A Brief History of Consumers or the Gradual Standardization of Markets and Organizations. *Sociologie du Travail* 47: 36-56. [Here](#).


**PART III. MORALITY**

**Week 7. Oct 8. DEBT AND CREDIT.**


Further Reading


Week 8. Oct 15. TABOO MARKETS: DEALING WITH DEATH


Further Reading: 


**Week 10. Oct 29. WORTH, VALUE, PRICE.**


**Further Reading**


PART IV. DESIGNS.

Week 11. Nov 5. RISK, SPECULATION


Leslie Salzinger. Manuscript TBA.

Further Reading


Week 13. Nov 19. MACHINES.


**Further Reading**


Michael Lewis. *Flash Boys.*

**Important debates about the performativity approach:**


Note: You might also want to see the rest of the debate:

- 2002 reply by Callon in Economic Sociology. European Electronic Newsletter
- 2007 reply by Holm (“Which Way is Up Callon?” in MacKenzie, Muniesa, Siu)


**Week 15. Dec 3. Book Focus.**


**Week 16. Dec 10. Student presentations [4 HOURS CLASS]**

**--FINAL PAPER DUE DEC 11--**