This course serves as an introduction to sociological approaches to economic institutions and behaviors. What are markets and how do they work? In economics, the traditional assumption is that markets are impersonal, anonymous, and more or less universal. In contrast, economic sociologists study how markets are shaped by other social structures, such as law, culture, and social networks. By studying the economy, economic processes, and economic institutions, the goal is to provide you with a sociological lens to understand markets, corporations, production, labor, and economic actors. We will examine how economic activities are shaped, altered and impeded by social relations and social institutions. The course is divided into three parts. The first focuses on classical theories of Marx, Polyani, and Smith. The second part of the course will look at the rise of finance and the firms, networks, and industrial relations that have emerged. The third part of the course focuses on how different types of economic institutions (state, law, labor markets) shape and constitute economic behavior.
Required Readings


Course Requirements

1. The readings for this course will consist of a series of scholarly articles and excerpts from books. THIS COURSE REQUIRES AN INTENSE LEVEL OF READING The course will be conducted as a seminar with each class meeting devoted to discussion of the scheduled readings. Although some classes include a brief overview in lecture/PowerPoint form, most instruction will be through class discussions focused on the readings. Students are responsible for all material covered in class, including any missed classes.

2. Students are expected to check their Boston College email and the course’s CANVAS site regularly for communications and announcements relating to the course.
3. Throughout the semester, I encourage you to visit me during my office hours with any questions or concerns you may have about class. I am also available for meetings at other times by appointment.

A C A D E M I C I N T E G R I T Y

Academic integrity is a standard of utmost importance in this course. Guidelines for academic integrity in written work are posted on the Boston College website at: http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/polisci/integrity.html

If you have any questions pertaining to the academic integrity guidelines, please come and talk with me for clarification. If you are caught violating Boston College’s policies on academic integrity, you will receive a failing grade for the assignment and the appropriate Dean will be notified in accordance to the rules set forth by Boston College.

D I S A B I L I T Y S T A T E M E N T

Boston College is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and integrated access for students with disabilities to all available academic, social, and recreational programs and activities. Appropriate support and referral services are provided by the Disability Services Office, which serves students with hearing, visual, mobility, medical, and psychiatric disabilities. If you are a student with a documented disability seeking reasonable accommodations in this course, please contact Kathy Duggan, (617) 552-8093, dugganka@bc.edu, at the Connors Family Learning Center regarding learning disabilities and ADHD, or Paulette Durrett, (617) 552-3470, paulette.durrett@bc.edu, in the Disability Services Office regarding all other types of disabilities, including temporary disabilities. Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations.

T E C H N O L O G Y P O L I C Y

This is a discussion-based class. Laptops, smart phones or cellular phones of any kind, ipad’s, and other technological devices are not permitted for use outside of class purposes. Penalties for violations, including personal texting, web browsing (phone or computer), and ringing phone are listed below:

• First Violation: (ringing cell phone, on computer, etc.) — Dismissed from class for the day
• Second Violation: dismissed from the course

C O U R S E W O R K A N D G R A D I N G

Your final grade will be based on the components listed below. Your course grade will also take into consideration such elements as effort, improvement over time, and the quality of participation.

T R U N K I N G A S S I G N M E N T S: All assignments are to be turned in on the course’s Canvas site. Students are responsible for checking that their assignments have been
posted correctly. If Canvas is down, the assignment must be e-mailed to me by the
deadline and then posted subsequently when BB-Space is back up. Late
submissions will be penalized: 1/3 of a grade per day late.

a. Class Attendance, Participation, and Collaboration: 10% [50 PTS]
Attendance is required. If you have more than two unexcused absences, your
final course grade will be lowered by one-third of a grade (e.g., A- → B+).
Students are expected to come to class having completed all the reading assigned
for that day and prepared to contribute to discussion.

b. PowerPoint Presentation: 20% [150 PTS]
Students, working with a partner, are expected to give one 15-minute PowerPoint
presentation. There will be a signup sheet for topics and dates. The presentation
is expected to address a specific topic area covered by the course. A PowerPoint
presentation checklist will be handed out that details what should be in the
PowerPoint presentations and the expected formatting. Students must submit
the PowerPoint document to the assigned location on the course’s OWL-Space
site on the same date as the presentation is made.

c. Midterm In Class Essay Exam: 20% [200 PTS]
There are 2 exams, a midterm and final, each of which is cumulative to the beginning
of the year. The exams are mostly or entirely essays that require students to
intelligently summarize, discuss, and apply major themes in the readings,
lectures, and class discussions.

d. Weekly Reading Responses: 25% [200 PTS]
Each week students are required to post a 2-3 page reflection of that weeks
readings. In these memos, students will not only summarize the main points
from the readings they will reflect on what is missing. Students should write
these like a book review. You can look at the American Journal of Sociology for
sample book reviews.

e. Final Research Paper or Exam: 25% [250 PTS]
Students will have a choice of taking a final exam or producing a research paper.
The exam and paper will be discussed near the end of the term.

Grading Scale:
94-100= A    77-73= C
90-93= A-    72-70= C-
86-89= B+    69-68= D+
82-85= B     67-63= D
80-81= B-    62-60= D-
78-79= C+    59-00= F
A note about grades. I do not grade on a curve nor do I believe in grade inflation. As such, students overall grades will reflect the quality of their work, improvement overtime, and ability to turn assignments in on time. Late assignments are automatically given a ZERO (unless there is an emergency), which will detrimentally affect your grades.

Grade Disputes: I will honor all requests for grade changes that are submitted to me in writing. Please know that a request for a grade change can result in a higher or lower grade.

1- J 13, 2015
Overview of the Syllabus

2- J 20, 2015 C T C D
K M
• Karl Marx & Frederick Engels, The Communist Manifesto (1848). [canvas]
K P E
• Forward by Fred Block (2001), Forward by Joseph Stiglitz, Introduction to Karl Polanyi, The Great Transformation [orig. 1944], plus the following selections from Polanyi: 71-80;
• Karl Polanyi, The Great Transformation Pg’s 136-140; 145-7; 158-163; 265-267.

3- J 27, 2015 K P T

4- F 3, 2015 F E S
• Chapters by:
  o Granovetter: Economic Action and Social Structure: the Problem of Embeddedness
  o Bourdieu: The Forms of Capital
  o Geertz: The Bazaar Economy
  o Macaulay: Non-Contractual Relations in Business
  o Dore: Goodwill and the Spirit of Market Capitalism
  o Hamilton and Biggart: Market, Culture, and Authority

5 F 10, 2015 E S I B
  o “The Political and Economic Sociology of International Economic Arrangements” by Neil Fligstein (183-204)
6- F  17, 2015- T R F
  o Introduction, Chapter 3, Chapter 4,

7- F  24, 2015- I E
  o "The State and the Economy," Fred Block and Peter Evans (505-526)
  o "A Sociological Approach to the Law and the Economy," Lauren Edelman and Robin Stryker (527-551)
  o "Welfare States and the Economy," Evelyne Huber and John Stephens (552-574)

8- M  3, 2015 SPRING BREAK

9- M  10, 2015- C
  o Part One: Income and Capital Pg. 1-72

10- M  17, 2015
  o Part Two: The Dynamics of the Capital/Income Ratio
    ▪ Chapter 3 and Chapter 6
    ▪ Optional Chapter 4 and 5

11- M  24, 2015
  o Part Three: Chapter 7, 9, 10

12- M  31, 2015- T E
  o Introduction, Chapter 2, 4, 5

12- A  7, 2015- B C
13- A 14, 2015
  • Finish the Book

14- A 21, 2015 E G I E
  • Introduction, Chapter 3, 4, 5

15- A 28, 2015
  • Finish the Book

16- M 5, 2015 FINAL E AM EEK