Economic Sociology and Political Economy II (ECON 895 – 002)
Wednesday, 4:30 pm – 7:10 pm
D100 Buchanan Hall

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Course Description & Objectives

This seminar will explore key writings within the “new economic sociology” and survey recent developments within the field. Special emphasis will be placed on how culture, norms, ideologies and values shape economic action and interaction. The first half of the course will focus on key writings in the economics and sociology of the market. The second half of the course will introduce students to interesting writings in important areas in the current economic sociology literature. The goal of the class is to prepare students to understand and engage in the scholarly debates in this field.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course you will,

- Understand the scholarly literature in economic sociology.
- Be able to synthesize existing ideas and contribute to discussions about the relationship between economy and society.
- Be able to apply your understanding of the relationship between economy and society in conversations about how culture, values, norms, ideologies and institutions shape economic action and interaction. Also, be able to engage those perspectives through original research.

Course Readings & Required Books

You are expected to do all of the required readings prior to the class where they will be discussed. All of the required readings can be obtained through GMU’s e-library or e-reserves (http://library.gmu.edu/) or via the links that are provided below.

Course Grading

Grades for this class will be based on reaction memos (15%), class participation (60%), and a research paper (25%).

The reaction memos should be no less than one page and no more than two pages and contain your thoughts on any aspect of that week’s readings. These can focus on something as broad as the central themes advanced in that week’s readings, or something as narrow as a particular sentence or footnote. The memos are due at 11:59 pm on the day before the class meets and should be emailed to vstorr@gmu.edu. Obviously, no memos are expected on the week’s that there are no readings assigned.
Class participation involves frequently contributing to our weekly in-class discussions. There will be no lectures in this class. The success of the class depends entirely on class participation, which constitutes the majority of your grade. As such, it will be impossible to receive a high mark in this class without actively participating in class discussions.

The research paper should explore some topic related to economic sociology. You will be expected to turn in the abstract and outline for the research paper on or before February 27th, 2019. The final draft, which should be 15 to 20 pages, is due May 8th, 2019.

Course Outline

Class #1.  Introductions

Class #2.  The economics of the market: the market process and the market order


Class #3.  The sociology of the market: embeddedness


Class #4.  The sociology of the market: structural holes and the strength of weak ties


Class #5.  **The sociology of the market: social capital**


Class #6.  **The economic sociology of economic circuits**


Class #7.  **The economic sociology of economic culture: “the spirit of capitalism”**


* Storr, Virgil Henry 2013. *Understanding the culture of markets*, chapters 1, 2 and 4.


Class #8.  
**The economic sociology of commercial friendships**


Class #9.  
**The economic sociology of post-disaster community recovery**


Class #10.  


Class #11.  


Note that class will not meet February 26th, March 18th and April 8th. I reserve the right to change the schedule with notification.

Honor Code: All provisions of the GMU Honor Code will be followed in this class.  
[https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/](https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/).

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking: As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1412. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.