

Online Sociology 2377: Markets and Culture

Southern Methodist University: January Interterm 2017

Course Description

This **online self-paced course** can be completed over the course of the winter break. The course materials are divided into four modules with assigned videos and readings. As part of each module students will complete a quiz, an exam, and participate in online discussion forums. In addition to the graded discussion posts and exams, students will also complete an independent research project focused on a country of their choosing. Students will be able to interact with the professor through video conferencing.

- ❖ This course provides an excellent opportunity for students to remain at home during the entire winter break while still completing an SMU course .

Some detail about the course content. Recently, there has been a surge in the use of economic principles to explain a wide range of social phenomena, including love, dating, marriage, crime, and parenting (e.g., *Freakonomics*, 2005). This course in economic sociology turns *Freakonomics* on its head, using sociological principles to explain economic phenomena, examining markets as social institutions, and encouraging students to view the economy through a sociological lens. The fundamental premise of economic sociology is that economic exchanges are deeply embedded in cultural and social relationships and institutions. The sociological approach to the economy sometimes complements, sometimes supplements, and sometimes contradicts the explanation offered by mainstream and/or traditional economics. Topics to be studied in the course include: markets as social and cultural constructions, consumerism and consumption, globalization and economic development, McDonaldization, and how cycles of capitalism shape and reshape both economic and social relationships.

Learning Outcomes

- Students will be able to discuss economic concepts from a sociological perspective with a special emphasis on being able to identify the ways in which markets are socially constructed.
- Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of culture—its functions and its diversity.
- Students will demonstrate information literacy, finding and evaluating research and data sources as they pertain to course topics.

Faculty Biography

Sheri Kunovich is an Altshuler Distinguished Teaching Professor in the Department of Sociology at Southern Methodist University. Her research and teaching interests include women's political representation, democratization in Eastern Europe, wealth and consumption, social stratification and inequality, and research methods. She is a member of two international research teams focusing on economic, social, and political change in Poland and Central Europe.

Required Materials

1. Carruthers, Bruce and Sarah Babb. 2012. *Economy/Society: Markets, Meanings, and Social Structure*, 2nd edition. Sage Publications, Inc. [ES]
2. Florida, Richard. 2011. *The Great Reset: How the Post-Crash Economy Will Change the Way We Live and Work*. Harper Business. [RESET]
3. Hooker, John. 2003. *Working Across Cultures*. Stanford University Press. [WORKING]
4. Ritzer, George. 2009. *McDonaldization: The Reader*, 3rd edition. Sage Publications, Inc. [MCD]
5. Electronic Readings [ER]

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation, Discussion Forum	10
Participations, Peer Responses	5
Exam 1	10
Exam 2	10
Exam 3	10
Exam 4	10
Research Proposal	5
Research Paper	20
Research Presentation	10
Research Peer Review	10
Total	100

IMPORTANT NOTE: Students need a C or better in this class to declare as a Markets and Culture major.

Reading Assignments:

There is **ALOT** of required reading for this course. **Readings should be completed early in the module.** Reading is essential because it is the backbone of the curriculum for an online course. All quizzes, exams, discussion forum participation, as well as your research paper and video presentation **MUST** substantially incorporate class readings. *In terms of the readings, focus more on the main arguments, theoretical perspectives, and major concepts and findings as opposed to the minute details of the empirical analyses.*

Class Participation (15% of total grade):

Class participation is graded on the basis of your on-going participation in the discussion forum for the class, including *weekly* discussion posts over the readings (10%) as well as responding to two of your classmates' discussion posts (5%). One of the goals of this course will be to build a community of learning. To do this in a virtual space, you'll be connecting with other students. This will happen most frequently through **online discussion**. Every week, you will *post an initial response to the questions from the professor, and then post a reply to two of your classmates, for a total of at least three posts a week*. These posts will be graded – see the grading rubric to learn more – and will be a key part of your participation in the course. Posts should show real thought – avoid posts that only consist of “I agree” or “Interesting” in your replies to other students. Share your views in a way that adds to the

conversation. In addition to thinking through these concepts and connecting to your peers, the discussions should help prepare you for the types of questions that will be on the exam.

Discussion Post (1 a week/4 total)

Every week, you will post a reflection of that week's readings. For every discussion post, you must: 1) Demonstrate an understanding & synthesis of the week's readings, 2) Apply particular readings when discussing your points. For example, you might write, "Hooker (pg 11) argues.....However, I disagree and think that...." Each week there will also be one prompt specific to that week's readings in addition to the two prompts listed above.

Peer Response to Discussion Posts (2 a week/8 total)

Every week, you will respond to two of your class-mates discussion posts. Responses should be clear, concise, thoughtful, and respectful as well as stimulate further thought.

Four Reading Comprehension Quizzes:

These are weekly ***open-book/note*** quizzes. You must score 100% on each week's quiz before you are allowed to take the exam for that week. You can take these quizzes multiple times until you score 100%. Once completed, you are ready for the week's exam (see below).

Four Exams (40% of total grade—10% percent each):

At the end of each (usually on a Tuesday or Wednesday), there will be a ***closed-book/note*** exam. These exams will cover all material (i.e., readings/videos) covered in that . Format of the exams will be multiple- choice and "short" essay questions.

Class Participation (discussion posts and peer responses):

During the first week, I will be slightly more lenient in my grading of your discussion post and 2 peer responses so you can get used to the technology, system, timing, and expectations. After the first week (s 2-4), you will only receive half of your points if posted after the deadline. After 2 days past the deadline, you will receive zero points. 6

Research Projects

Proposal (5% of total grade): The proposal for your research paper should be no more than half a page to a page in length. Please see the prompt/rubric. Please note that I will not accept or grade your final research paper if you haven't submitted a proposal. Once students have posted their proposals, I will "assign" you one of your countries of choice. I will attempt to give every student their first choice of countries if possible. I will break the class into groups of approximately 4 students. Every student in a group will have a different country.

After all countries are assigned, there will be a 10 minute video-conference ***required*** for each student and the professor. You will sign-up for a time-slot on either December 28th or December 29th (Sign up here for appointment slot). Be prepared to discuss why you chose this country and what direction/focus your paper might take.

Research Paper (20% of total grade): The goal of this 7 page paper (see prompt and rubric) is to apply a sociological lens to understanding economic relationships in a country

of your choice, other than the United States or Japan. **You *MUST* substantially incorporate class readings, theories, concepts, videos, etc.** The specific direction of your paper can be related to any of the topics discussed in class, including but not limited to production and consumption, globalization, McDonaldization, economic inequality, the relationship between a country's culture and economy, economic development, or any combination of class-related topics.

Video Presentation of Research Paper (10% of final grade): Near the end of the term, you will upload to Canvas a 5-minute video summarizing the findings of your research paper and applying course concepts (see prompt/rubric).

Peer Review of Two Group-mates' Video Presentations (10% of final grade): You must respond with questions and comments to 2 video presentations of other students in your group. Please see the prompt and rubric.

Making Up Work:

If any deadline is missed, the student must contact me by email to *BEFORE THE DEADLINE* to inform me that work will be late and provide a justifiable and valid reason (with documentation) for its lateness.

Exams: Students may complete an exam after its due date *ONLY* for a valid and excused "absence" (e.g., illness requiring a doctor's) and communicated to me *before* the deadline. I must have documentation of the reason (e.g., doctor's note). I reserve the right to give an alternative format make-up exam for students with an excused absence.

Research Paper and Presentation:

The research paper and presentation will be graded as "late" with points deducted if not posted by the due date/time, *unless* I deem that missing the deadline is justified (e.g., illness, death in the family). You must contact me *before* the deadline. For late work without a documented and valid reason, 5 points will be deducted for every day late. Keep in mind that 5 points is a substantial penalty for the research paper (20 total points) and the presentation (10 total points).

COURSE TIMELINE

December 6 (Tuesday) from 10 to 11:30, Required and Necessary orientation:

Meet the Professor and IT support

NOTE: Must bring laptop or tablet to orientation

WEEK 1: Sociological Ways of Thinking about the Economy

Required readings for Week 1:

1) E-Reserve: Mills' "The Promise"

2) *Economy & Society* Chs 1 & 3

3) *McDonaldization* Chs 1-2; 5; 10; 12-13; 19

4) Case Study of the Sociological Imagination: Suicide in Chinese Factories

<http://www.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/asiapcf/06/01/china.foxconn.inside.factory/>

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/aug/05/woman-nearly-died-making-ipad>

Videos for Week 1:

Sociological Imagination

Taylorism & Scientific Management

The Iron Cage of Bureaucracy & the Irrationalities of Rationality

Evelyn Day (research support/tips for paper)

Assignments for Week 1:

Discussion Post

Weekly Quiz (open-book/notes)

Peer Response to 2 Discussion Posts

Exam (closed book/notes)

Research Proposal

WEEK 2: Cultural & Social Construction of Markets

Required Readings for Week 2:

1) E-reserve: Adler and Gunderson "The Impact of Culture on Organizations"

2) *Working Across Cultures* Chs 1-2; 4-7; 9-11; 15

3) *McDonaldization* Chs 30-32

4) Auntie Anne's Pretzels in China

5) How Hygge Can Help you Get Through the Winter

6) New Chinese Law: Visit your Parents (also video)

Videos for Week 2

Examples of Cultural Difference in orientation to environment

Cultural Orientations: the "West" vs. the "Rest"

The Secret Power of Time: Cultural Differences

Danish "Hygge"

Assignments for Week 2:

Discussion

Weekly Quiz (open-book/notes)

Video conference with prof on proposal

Peer Response to 2 Discussion Posts

Exam (closed book/notes)

WEEK 3: The Globalization of Culture & Economy

Required Readings for Week 3:

- 1) *McDonaldization* Chs 25-26; 36
- 2) *Economy & Society* Chs 2; 6-7
- 3) Wallerstein's World Systems Analysis
- 4) The Bhopal Chemical Disaster
- 5) The Shadows of Consumption
- 6) The True Cost of Cheap Fashion
- 7) E-Reserve Readings: Friedman vs. Ghemawat; free vs. fair trade

Videos for Week 3:

The Story of Stuff: Production & Consumption
The Social Construction of the World Map
The Bhopal Disaster
World Systems Analysis
Globalization
Consumption

Assignments for Week 3

Discussion
Weekly Quiz (open-book/notes)
Video conference with prof on proposal
Peer Response to 2 Discussion Posts
Exam (closed book/notes)

WEEK 4: Living & Working in the New Economy

Required Readings for Week 4:

- 1) *The Great Reset* Parts I, II, & III
- 2) E-Reserve: The 3rd Industrial Revolution
- 3) The Future of High Speed Rail in the U.S.
- 4) The end of the car?

Videos/Websites for Week 4:

Debate between *The Great Reset* and *The Economist*
Innovations
Megaregions & the Texas Triangle
High Speed Rail in Texas
The Markets & Culture major

Assignments for Week 4

Discussion Post
Weekly Quiz (open-book/notes)
Peer Response to 2 Discussion Posts
Video Presentation
2 Peer responses to video presentations
Exam (closed book/notes)
Research Paper

Class Policies

Absences:

Face-to-face courses are usually “synchronous” – students and professor meet at the same time. This course is largely “asynchronous”, except for 1) “virtual” office hours, and 2) a key, **required** video meeting with the professor to discuss your research proposal. One of the benefits of an online course is that as long as it falls within the deadlines explained in this syllabus, when you complete the assignments and readings is up to you. This obviously changes the traditional idea of absences, since time spent on the course falls within a more flexible schedule. Please be proactive in observing due dates so that if you have a conflict of schedule during the course you can complete the work ahead of time.

If you are experiencing profound life issues (e.g., chronic or severe illness, death in family, etc.) that are affecting your attendance/performance please contact your professor as **soon** as possible. If you have a medical issue/illness that prevents you from turning in assignments by the due date/time, you **MUST** contact me via email before it’s due and provide evidence of your issue (e.g., doctor’s note).

Due Dates

Students will be participating from a range of time zones. Due dates are in Central Daylight Time (CDT) – for example, if an assignment is due at 11:59 PM, it is 11:59 PM CDT. Please adjust your timing for submissions for discussion postings, quizzes and other course assignments accordingly. A useful tool for determining your time zone compared to Dallas’ time zone is the Time Difference Calculator.

Netiquette

Etiquette for participating in conversation online (“netiquette”) is important for the course community to be a safe, engaging, friendly place. Here are some guidelines that should guide your participation:

1. **Avoid sarcasm.** It’s difficult to detect online. Remember that you are relying on your words to show the tone you intend. If in doubt, leave it out.
2. **Avoid yelling.** ALL CAPS LOOKS LIKE YELLING. As does a lot of punctuation!!!!!!?????? Just as you wouldn’t shout during a classroom discussion, avoid shouting in an online discussion.
3. **Be professional.** Great discussions often include disagreements. Use positive, polite language in your comments about the text and other people’s comments. For example, if you disagree: “That’s a good point, but I disagree. My thinking is....” is a good way to let someone know you’ve read and thought about their post, but you have a different, and just as valid point of view. Avoid unprofessional language. Avoid texting shorthand (eg., UR, np). Check your spelling and grammar, and be patient with others’ spelling and grammar.
4. **Avoid responding immediately if you are upset.** If a post or feedback upsets you, stand up and take a breath before responding. Re-read your responses carefully before finally posting them. If you aren’t sure, wait a few minutes and then come back to get perspective. Once your thoughts are posted, they are free for everyone to read and even if they are removed the impact has still been made.

5. **Stay on point.** Avoid taking the conversation away from course content. If you want to chat with classmates about non-course related content, you can do that in the “Hallway” discussion forum.
6. **Use the readings.** When making a point, be sure to use the text, professor video, or other course materials. For example, “on page 27 of the Ritzer book it talks about McDonalozation, describing it as ‘’. To me, this means”
7. **Be clear.** Be as clear as possible in your response. Remember that you are not in the room with your classmates –all the information you want to express needs to be self-evident in the post itself.
8. **Avoid overly long posts.** As the number of posts increases as the week goes on, it’s easier for everyone to participate if posts are clear and to the point, so that everyone’s posts can be read in a timely manner.
9. **Read before responding.** Before you respond to the professor post, read the other comments in the discussion board first. If someone else made the point you wanted to make, you can agree with them and elaborate further, expand on the idea, take it in a different direction, or come up with a different approach altogether.

Tip: On a more practical level, it’s often useful to type out responses in word processing or text editing software to refine before posting them, in case there’s a problem with the browser or the software. Then copy and paste them into the discussion post.

Equipment Required

Please see Technical Requirements.

Disability Accommodations:

Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first be registered with Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS) to verify the disability and to establish eligibility for accommodations. Students may call 214-768-1470 or visit <http://www.smu.edu/alec/dass.asp> to begin the process. If you have a disability accommodation you must **contact DASS before the December 10th orientation** and bring your letter to the orientation to discuss (in private) with the professor. This is to give the professor time to make the appropriate arrangements for an online platform course.

UNIVERSITY RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

Writing Resources

To contact the Altshuler Writing Center call 768-4253 during writing center hours. Availability of support may be limited during the holidays.

Counseling Services

The counseling and testing center is located in the Health Center and their phone number is 768-2211. For 24 hour help contact 768-2860.

ACADEMIC HONESTY AND THE HONOR CODE

All SMU students are under the jurisdiction of the Honor Code. Students are required to issue a warning to, or to report to the Honor Council, any student suspected of violating the Honor Code, and to inform the course professor of a violation. Suspected violations may be handled privately by an professor, or they may be referred to the Honor Council. Suspected violations reported to the Council will be investigated and, if evidence warrants, a hearing will be held. Students convicted of academic dishonesty may appeal their cases to the University Judicial Council.

Academic dishonesty may be defined broadly as a student's misrepresentation of his/her academic work, or of the circumstances under which the work was done. This includes plagiarism in papers, projects, take-home exams, or other assignments in which the student represents the resulting work as being his or her own. It also includes cheating on exams, unauthorized access to test materials, and aiding another student to cheat or participate in an act of academic dishonesty. Failure to prevent cheating by another individual may be considered as participation in the dishonest act.

Possible sanctions given by the Honor Council for academic dishonesty include: a notation of "Honor Violation" for the course, which will remain on a student's official transcript for three years after graduation, deferred suspension for one calendar year, indefinite suspension, or even expulsion from the University.

FINAL NOTES

It is each student's responsibility to be thoroughly familiar with the course requirements and evaluation procedures outlined here, and to keep track of various assignments and activities that are required. This syllabus is an integral part of the course materials, and students should refer to it regularly to be sure that they are up-to-date with reading and other requirements.

I want this class to be enlightening, educational, and fun for you! In order to achieve these ends, each of you in the class must feel both engaged and secure enough to be able to question what you read, see, and hear (inside and outside class) and state your opinion on sometimes controversial matters. With that in mind, I want to make it clear that while I want to promote such open discussions, it must be conducted with utmost respect for your classmates and me.