

Extreme Markets

Soc401 · Spring 2015 · Tues & Thurs, 9:00 – 10:50 · Savery 409

Instructor: Sarah Quinn

Email: slquinn@uw.edu

Office: 253 Savery

Office Hours: by appointment via meetme.so/SarahQuinn

Course Description

How do people decide what should or should not be sold? Can markets change our morality, and if so, how? What is the role of the government in supporting or limiting what markets do?

This course will review core insights of economic sociology through the analysis of particularly risky, taboo, and intimate market exchanges. This will include the study of exchanges in intimacy and sex work, the global black market for organs, donations of cadavers, markets for eggs and sperm, racketeering, colonialism, and more. The first half of the class will focus on intimate and taboo markets, opening with debates about morality in markets, and exploring how social ties, cultural categories, and inequality structure what we buy and sell. The second half of the class will expand to include a focus on risky markets, focusing on how people rely on governments, institutions, and their own emotions to manage uncertainty and competition. This is a designated writing class, so we will also focus on the development of critical reading and writing skills.

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Develop an original analysis of a market by identifying and applying relevant sociological concepts.
- Summarize, synthesize, question, and discuss complex texts.
- Produce clear, well-organized, and well-supported arguments.

Course Website

Announcements and assignments will be posted on a Canvas website that you can access via myuw.com.

Course Materials

- There is one required book for this class, available at the bookstore and available as an ebook through the UW Library:

Kimberly Kay Hoang. 2015, *Dealing in Desire: Asian Ascendancy, Western Decline, and the Hidden Currencies of Global Sex Work*. Berkeley: University of California Press

Requirements & Grading

Class Participation	10%
Pop Quizzes	20%
Group Project & Presentation	20%
Paper 1	20%
Paper 2	30%

CLASS PARTICIPATION

When it comes to a seminar, a great class depends on great discussions, and great discussions depend on everyone's contributions. You should come to each class on time having read the assigned materials, and with a copy of the readings in-hand. As part of class participation you may be asked to share a comment or question about the readings at the start of class, or contribute to the course website. We will discuss and revise guidelines for discussion and computers on the first day of class.

POP QUIZZES

There will be seven pop quizzes, for a total 20% of the course grade. Each quiz is worth 4 points, and when calculating grades I will drop your two quizzes with the lowest scores. These will be handed out at the start of class. Quizzes will consist of short answer questions, multiple choice questions, and definitions of key concepts. They will typically cover that day's readings, and may also include questions about previous lectures or class discussion. Please note that there are no make up quizzes, so if you miss one because you were absent or late, you will receive a zero for that portion of the grade. I have posted questions on the Canvas calendar for each set of readings; these will guide you through the readings and help you prepare for the quizzes.

PAPERS

Two 5-7 page long papers are required to pass this course. If your paper is late I will lower your grade by a third of a letter grade per day (e.g., "A" paper would become an "A-" paper for the first day, and so on). It is possible to get an extension due to extenuating circumstances, *but only if you let me know ahead of time*. Please note that I do not excuse delays that are caused by damaged or lost computers, so you should subscribe to an automated backup service like Dropbox or Crashplan if you have not already done so.

GROUP PROJECT & PRESENTATION

Students will work in small groups to research and present an analysis of a market. We will workshop aspects of these presentations during the quarter, and each group will present findings during the last week of class. More information about this assignment is posted on Canvas.

Accommodations

I want students to learn as much as possible and do well in this course, and I will work with you to accommodate learning-related needs. If you have already established accommodations with Disability Resources for Students (DRS), please share your approved accommodations either with me or with your TA in the first three weeks of class. If you have not yet established services through DRS, but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations, you are welcome to contact me or contact DRS at 206-543-8924 or uwdrs@uw.edu.

Academic Honesty

If caught plagiarizing or cheating, you will receive no credit for the assignment and the violation may be reported to the University. You are responsible for understanding the University's guidelines for plagiarism and academic integrity. If you have questions about this, please speak with me. You may also consult guidelines posted on the Sociology Department's webpage:

http://www.soc.washington.edu/academics/undergrad_program/experientiallearning/AcademicHonestyandPlagiarism.htm

Course Schedule

Please check Canvas for updates, additional instructions, and questions that will help guide your reading of the course materials.

3/29. Week 1, Tuesday: Welcome

- Smelser, Neil J. and Richard Swedberg. "Introducing Economic Sociology." 2004. Pp. 1-6 in *The Handbook of Economic Sociology*, Second Edition. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press & The Russell Sage Foundation.

3/31. Week 1, Thursday: Family Life

- Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 2003. *The Commercialization of Intimate Life: Notes from Home and Work*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Pp. 30-44 ("Chapter 2: The Commodity Frontier"), Pp. 213-223 ("Chapter 16: The Culture of Politics: Traditional, Postmodern, Cold Modern and Warm Modern Ideas of Care.")
 - What is the "commodity frontier"? What is a "care deficit"?

4/5. Week 2, Tuesday: Commensuration

- Espeland, Wendy Nelson, and Mitchell L. Stevens. 1998. "Commensuration as a Social Process." *Annual Review of Sociology* 24(1): 313-43.
 - What is commensuration? What is gained, and what is lost, through this process? What is the relationship between commensuration and capitalism? Between commensuration and money? How do people work to make something incommensurable? What is the relationship between commensuration and power? And what do Espeland and Stevens mean when they say that commensuration can "produce new entities" (338)?
- <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/02/14/the-order-of-things>

4/7. Week 2, Thursday: Sex & Intimacy

- Zelizer, Viviana. 2005. *The Purchase of Intimacy*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. Pp. 32-41 (from the "Introduction")
 - What are connected lives? What are relations, media, transactions, and boundaries? How do they fit together in Zelizer's theory?
- Wardlow, Holly. 2004. "Anger, Economy, and Female Agency: Problematizing "prostitution" and "sex work" among the Huli of Papua New Guinea." *Signs*: 1017-1040
 - What is the relationship between transactional sex and normative courtship and marriage? What is a "passenger woman"? According to Wardlow, why aren't the words "prostitution" and "sex work" adequate for explaining their experiences?

4/12. Week 3, Tuesday: Eggs & Sperm

- Rene Almeling. 2007. "Selling Genes, Selling Gender: Egg Agencies, Sperm Banks, and the Medical Market in Genetic Material." *American Sociological Review* 72(3): 319- 340
 - *What is the difference between sex and gender? How are egg and sperm donation different in terms of (1) the physical process of donation, (2) norms of parenthood, (3) ideas about altruism, and (4) financial compensation?*

4/14. Week 3, Thursday: Class cancelled

- Groups should use this time to make progress on their research design for the proposal due next week.

4/19. Week 4, Tuesday: Cadavers

- **Group Project Proposal Due**
- Anteby, Michel. 2010. "Markets, Morals, and Practices of Trade: Jurisdictional Disputes in the U.S. Commerce in Cadavers." *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 55: 606–638
 - *Who uses whole cadavers? What specific practices and techniques do doctors use to mark the exchange in cadavers as moral?*

4/21. Week 4, Thursday: Resistance & Motherhood

- Turco, Catherine. 2012. "Difficult Decoupling: Employee Resistance to the Commercialization of Personal Settings." *American Journal of Sociology*, 118(2): 380-419
 - *What is decoupling? What does Turco mean when she calls euphemistic discourse a "semiotic weapon"?*

4/26. Week 5, Tuesday: Resistance & Body Parts

- Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 2001. "Commodity Fetishism in Organs Trafficking" Pp. 31- 62 in *Commodifying Bodies* (Scheper-Hughes and Wacquant, eds.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
 - *What does Nancy Scheper-Hughes mean when she says the market for organs is driven by an artificial scarcity? How is organ donation like cannibalism and sacrifice? Why doesn't she think this is a win-win situation for organ buyers and sellers?*
- Optional reading: This article connects reports of genital thefts to fears about organ trafficking: <http://www.psmag.com/magazines/march-april-2013/genital-theft-africa-central-african-republic-53341/> (Links to an external site.).
 - *What's the relationship between the global market for organs and reports of genital theft?*

4/28. Week 5, Thursday: Section wrap-up

- **Paper 1 Due**

5/3. Week 6, Tuesday: Labor

- Pierre Bourdieu. "Making the Economic Habitus: Algerian Workers Revisited." *Ethnography* 2000. 1(1): 17-41. You should read the first section of the article more than once.
 - *What kinds of changes in labor, modes of exchange, values and dispositions does Bourdieu observe? What is the "spirit of calculation"? What does Bourdieu think about rationality?*

5/5. Week 6, Thursday: Gangs

- Volkov, Vadim. 2002. *Violent Entrepreneurs: The Use of Force in the Making of Russian Capitalism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Pp. 1 -28 ("Veblen"s Warning"), Pp. 116-125 ("Uralmashevskie")
 - *What is violent entrepreneurship? Which institutions supported the rise of post-soviet gangs? What s the role of those gangs in the economy? According to Volkov, which academic theory offers the best explanation for the explosion of organized crime in the late 1980s in Russia? What sort of things did the Uralmashveski gang do to become legitimate?*

5/10. Week 7, Tuesday: Sugar

- Mintz, Sidney. 1985. *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. New York: Viking. Pp. 3 to 8 (stop at " . . . and those to which it eventually supplanted, was altered"; Pp. 13 ("it should be superfluous to point out . . .") to 14 (" . . . and not merely the code itself."); Pp. 94 ("It is no longer considered a sign of elevated rank to stuff guests with sugar . . .") to 96 (" . . . was being steadily emptied of its potency"); Pp. 145 ("These observations throw light . . .") to the end of p. 150; Pp. 156 (from "The meaning that sugar . . .") to 157 (end at " . . . that dictated its policies."); Pp. 166 (From "Few concepts in the social sciences . . .") to 170 (ending at " . . . similar support measures."); Pp. 180 (start at "As the first exotic luxury . . . ") to 186.
 - *Where does meaning come from, according to Mintz? How did the use of sugar as a status symbol change when sugar became more common? Be sure to pay attention to the role of the following groups in the development of the market for sugar: English elites, slaves, industrial workers, English government, Plantation owners.*

5/12. Week 7, Thursday: Trading Floors

- Screening (in class): Selections from *Floored*
- Zaloom, Caitlin. 2006. *Out of the Pits: Traders and Technology from Chicago to London*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 93-110 ("Chapter 4: The Work of Risk") and 111-126 ("Chapter 5: Economic Men"), Pp. 127-140 ("Chapter 6: The Discipline of the Spectacular")
 - *What are the roles of the following in the pits: social bonds, status, risk-taking, violence, rationality, gender.*
 - *What techniques to traders use to try to stay disciplined in the pits?*

5/17. Week 8, Tuesday: Dealing in Desire

- Kimberly Kay Hoang. 2015, *Dealing in Desire: Asian Ascendancy, Western Decline, and the Hidden Currencies of Global Sex Work*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Introduction, Chapters 1 & 2

5/19. Week 8, Thursday: Dealing in Desire

- Dealing in Desire, Chapters 3, 4 & 5

5/24: Week 9, Tuesday: Dealing in Desire

- Dealing in Desire, Chapters 6, 7, Conclusion

5/26: Week 9, Thursday

- **Paper 2 Due**

5/31: Week 10, Tuesday: Presentations

6/2: Week 10, Thursday: Presentations