Carleton University  
Summer 2018  
Department of Sociology and Anthropology  

SOCI 5805  
Sociologies of Global Capitalism  

Instructor: Mark Thomas  
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Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday, 15:00-16:00  
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Seminar Times: Tuesday & Thursday, 11:35-14:25  
Seminar Location: Room 1524 Dunton Tower  

Course Description  
This course constructs a sociological analysis of the economy by combining developments in the fields of economic sociology, political economy, and global sociology in order to study contemporary global capitalism. The social organization of capitalist markets, the social implications of economic processes, and the sociological bases of economic power are explored through Marxist, institutionalist, network, feminist, and postcolonial perspectives. Beginning with the assertion that economic relations have a social basis, the course examines a range of sociological perspectives on the interrelationships between ‘the social’ and ‘the economic’, the power relations that characterize capitalism as a social system, and the tensions, contradictions and conflicts that shape the social organization of capitalist economies.

Organization of the Course  
In the first half of the course, we cover several foundational sociological theorists of the economy (Marx, Weber, Polanyi) and their legacies. Through the concept of ‘embeddedness’, a key concept in economic sociology, we investigate the ways in which processes of capital accumulation are embedded in a range of social relations and processes. In the second half of the course, using the work of contemporary social theorists of the economy we investigate a series of topics related to global capitalism, including the spatial reorganization of the global economy, the feminization of global production, the social organization of consumerism, and alternatives to contemporary capitalism.

Required Reading  
Required course readings are available through ARES.

Evaluation  
Term paper 50%  
Paper proposal 20%  
Seminar presentation 20%  
Seminar participation 10%
Term Paper
Students must prepare a research paper of approximately 6000 words related to the themes of the course. Topics may come directly from course readings and discussions, or they may be related to a student’s more specific research interests, so long as they are connected to the overall course themes.

Paper Proposal
A proposal outlining the paper topic must be submitted by May 31. The proposal should be 500–750 words, plus a working bibliography.

Presentation
Each student must make a presentation and lead a seminar discussion based on course readings. Presentations should outline the contributions of the required texts to the class topic and the course overall, explore connections and/or tensions between the readings, and consider their application to issues related to contemporary global capitalism. To assist the seminar group in preparing for the discussion, each presenter will submit 3–4 discussion questions the evening before the class in which they will present.

Seminar Participation
Students are expected to come to class having read all required material and prepared to participate in seminar discussions. To promote seminar participation, discussion questions will be circulated in advance of the class (as above).
COURSE SCHEDULE

May 8  Introduction - Toward a Sociology of the Economy
  • Overview of course themes
  • Discussion of reading materials, writing assignments, and organization of seminar time
  • Presentations sign-up

Recommended

Supplementary
  • Beamish, Thomas. 2007. ”Economic Sociology in the Next Decade and Beyond.” American Behavioral Scientist 50(8), 993-1014.

May 10  Embedding the Economic in the Social
    o “Satanic Mill”, 35-80, 116-35.
    o “Self-Protection of Society”, 136-228.

Supplementary
May 15  Capital Accumulation and The Protestant Ethic

  - "Luther’s Conception of the Calling", 39-50.
  - "The Religious Foundations of Worldly Asceticism" (Calvinism), 53-80.

Supplementary


May 17  Class Relations and Wage Labour

  - Chapter 1: The Two Factors of the Commodity, 125-31
  - Chapter 1: The Fetishism of the Commodity and its Secret, 163-77.
  - Chapter 6: The Sale and Purchase of Labour-Power, 270-80

Supplementary

May 22 Capital Accumulation and Dispossession


Supplementary


May 24 Capitalism and Reproductive Labour


Supplementary


May 29 Spatializing Global Capitalism

Supplementary

May 31 Global Capitalism and Financialization

Supplementary

June 5  Gendering Global Production

Supplementary

June 7  Provincializing Global Capitalism
  o The Two Histories of Capital, 47-71
  o Translating Life-Worlds into Labor and History, 72-96.
  o Capital’s Universalizing Tendency, 101-29
  o Capital, Abstract Labor, and Difference, 130-51.

Supplementary

**June 12  Consumption, Consumers, and Consumerism**

• Lazzarato, Maurizio. 2012. ”Understanding Debt as the Basis of Social Life”, in *The Making of Indebted Man*. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 13-35

**Supplementary**


**June 14  Beyond Capitalism?**


**Supplementary**


**June 19 Course Conclusion**
• Presentation of term paper proposals