In compressed form, this six-week course provides an introduction to economic sociology seen not as a subordination of sociology to economics but as the sociological explanation of economic phenomena. As it has developed over the past twenty years, economic sociology has concentrated on two activities: first, the extension of economic models to social phenomena rarely examined by economists, and second, the study of contexts that constrain the operation of economic processes as usually understood by economists. In line with these two preoccupations, economic sociologists have focused on firms and markets. This course emphasizes a third activity, the search for alternative accounts of phenomena that most specialists have explained in terms of economics. In particular, it seeks sociological explanations of production, consumption, and exchange. After a general orientation to economic sociology as a whole, the course explores economic activities in an unconventionally wide range of settings including households, informal sectors, gift economies, and consumption. The course culminates with the analysis of compensation systems as a point of confrontation between conventional and alternative accounts of economic phenomena.

** REQUIREMENTS: **

1. **Readings:** (a) Required readings: All students must read in preparation for class discussion and reports, (b) Recommended readings identify valuable paths to and from the week’s topic. Readings will be available in the Sociology Department mailroom. You should return them immediately after reading or photocopying.
2. **Reports**: Over the course of the six weeks each student prepares a total of three written reports. The first two reports consist of a short critical essay about weekly readings, of no more than 1,000 words, on two or three of the readings (to be selected each week). These reports serve as a basis for class presentation and discussion; students bring finished versions of the report to class and submit them to the instructor at the end of the class.

The reports should focus on the following issues;

a. what question is addressed by the author(s)?
b. what is the significance of that question for key issues in the field?
c. what are competing answers to that question?
d. how well does the author address that question, in terms of logic and methodology?
e. what would be a different, valid way of addressing the same question, preferably one you regard as superior?

(Note: Depending on course enrollment we will modify the number and kind of assignments during our first session).

The third report, also of no more than 1,000 words, is due on Friday, November 6. It will take up one of the following three options:

1. a brief research proposal based on one of the seminar's subjects or another topic to be chosen in consultation with instructor,

2. A national tradition in economic sociology,

3. Intellectual biography of one of the authors in the course.

For topics 2 or 3 the report should include:

a. an exposition of the tradition or author
b. at least one illustration confirming your description
c. a brief critique, indicating strengths and weaknesses
d. a tentative explanation of this work's distinctive properties

If possible, identify changes either in the work of the author or the national tradition.
READINGS

WEEK 1 (September 24) **ANALYSES OF ECONOMIC PROCESSES**

**Required:**


**Recommended:**


WEEK 2 (October 1) VARIETIES OF ECONOMIC TRANSFERS

Required:


Recommended:


WEEK 3 (October 8) TRANSFER MEDIA

Required:


Recommended:


WEEK 4  (October 15) HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY

Required:


Recommended:


WEEK 5 (October 22) CONSUMPTION

Required:


Recommended:


**WEEK 6 (October 29) COMPENSATION**

**Required:**


**Recommended:**

