

# **SOC323H1S: ECONOMIC SOCIOLOGY**

## **University of Toronto**

Term: Winter 2023 - Lecture Date/Time: Monday, 3:10-5 p.m. - Tutorial Date/Time:  
Monday, 5:10-6 p.m. - Location: SS1085

**Instructor:** Shawn Perron

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**Office:**

Virtual: Zoom (838 8214 9383);

In-person: 725 Spadina Rd., Rm 335

**Office hours:** By appointment (see syllabus)

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**Teaching Assistants:** Anna Kuznetsov; Paul Jakhu

**Office hours:** By appointment

### **Course Description**

This course offers a sociological account of economic phenomena. It introduces students to sociological perspectives on production, consumption, exchange and distribution, economic crises, and other economic matters. In addition to exploring economic behaviour in the corporate and financial worlds, we will also examine behaviour in markets for intimacy and human goods.

Throughout, the course emphasizes two major points: (1) how in all areas of economic life people are creating, maintaining, symbolizing, and transforming meaningful social relations, and (2) how economic behaviour cannot be fully understood outside of its structural and cultural context. Economic life, from this perspective, is as just social as religion, family, or education.

### **Prerequisite**

Prerequisites include SOC201H1, SOC202H1, SOC204H1 and 1.0 credit from SOC251H1, SOC252H1, SOC254H1. Students without the prerequisites can be removed at any time without notice.

Exclusion SOC306H1

### **Class Format, Requirements, and Grading**

1. One online term test, February 15: 20%
2. One online term test, April 5: 25%
3. Topic proposal, due February 6 at 2:59 pm.: 15%
4. Term paper, due March 20 at 2:59 pm: 30%
5. Discussion Questions (multiple dates): 9%
6. Check-in Surveys: 1%

## **Attendance**

Course tests and assignments will cover required readings and material presented in class. While PowerPoint slides are posted on the course web page, lecture notes are not. Students are responsible for all material presented in class. Students are expected to complete all assigned readings prior to class and to come to class prepared to discuss and write about the readings.

## **Weekly Discussion Questions**

Students are asked to submit two discussion questions about the week's course readings to the course website for weeks 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, and 12 by **11:59 pm the Sunday before that week's class** (e.g. students should submit two discussion questions about the Week 3 readings before the end of Sunday, January 22). I incorporate these questions into the weekly lecture.

While late submissions are permitted (see late penalties), questions received after class that copy or re-word questions shared during class will receive a score of 0.

If you are having trouble coming up with questions, consider the following:

- What did you see as the most important insights or ideas from the assigned readings?
- What are your critical reactions to the readings (strengths and weaknesses)?
- What issues or concepts did you find confusing?
- What issues would you particularly like to discuss in class?

## **Tests (20%; 25%)**

There will be two online tests (February 15 and April 5), which will cover material from the lecture and the readings up to the date administered. The tests will become available on the date we hold class (February 13 and April 3) and remain available for three days. Students are encouraged to complete the test during class hours, during which the instructor will hold drop-in office hours for answering questions. However, you may complete the test at any time during this three-day period. Once you begin the test, you will have two hours to complete and submit the questions.

Be cautious of the 11:59 pm deadline. If you intend to leave the test until the final date, be sure to begin the test by 9:59 pm to give yourself the full length of time.

A make-up test or missed submission(s), will be granted only to students with valid reasons (see next section).

If you are unable to turn in an assignment/or miss the test for medical reasons, you will need to **email** the instructor, not the TA, **and also** declare your absence on ACORN.

If a **personal or family crisis** prevents you from meeting a deadline, you must ask your college registrar to contact me (it is a good idea anyway to advise your college registrar if a crisis is interfering with your studies). I must receive an email from your registrar before you write the make-up test or submit the missed assignment.

If you miss a test for **accessibility reasons** (e.g. you miss the test for disability-related reasons and you are registered with accessibility services), you must contact your accessibility advisor about the circumstances and ask them to contact me. I must receive an email from your accessibility advisor before you write the makeup test.

### **Topic Proposal (15%)**

Students are also asked to submit a three-page double-spaced (approximately 600-900 words) topic proposal along with a list of at least three external references. Please submit the assignment to the course website by 2:59 p.m. on February 6.

### **Term Paper (30%)**

Students will write an analytic research proposal for this course. This assignment asks you to demonstrate an understanding of the theoretical framework of economic sociology by applying it to a new case in an independent research proposal. In 8-10 pages (double-spaced), you will be asked to select and analyze an economic phenomenon of your choice. The paper should draw from lecture material, course readings, and at least five additional academic sources to support your analysis.

The paper is due before 2:59 p.m. on March 20 and will count for 30 percent of your final grade. Students should submit one copy of the paper to the **assignment link on the course website**.

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool to review textual similarity and detect possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation website (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

Assignments not submitted to the plagiarism detection tool will receive a grade of zero unless a student instead provides, along with their assignment, sufficient secondary material (e.g., reading notes, outlines of the paper, rough drafts of the final draft, etc.) to establish that the paper they submit is truly their own. The alternative (not submitting to the plagiarism detection tool) is in place because, strictly speaking, using the plagiarism detection tool is voluntary for students at the University of Toronto.

### **Late Penalties**

**Tests:** Must be completed within the designated time. Notify the course instructor within three days of the test if you have a documented reason for being absent. Also, be sure to declare your absence on Acorn and/or contact your college registrar as early as possible.

**Assignments:** A late penalty of 5 percent per day will apply for up to 7 days. Submission after this time will not be possible.

### **Regrade Policy**

The instructor and TA strive to grade fairly, transparently, and consistently within the expectations outlined in the assignment outlines and rubrics. While uncommon, unintentional errors are possible. If you believe there has been an error in how your assignment was evaluated, please adhere to the following:

- For mathematical errors (e.g., overlooked rubric criteria), simply alert your TA.
- All regrade requests must be made to the person who graded your work.
- Before asking for a re-grade, please **wait for 24 hours** after your assignment has been returned. After this period, you may **submit your request within two weeks**. Regrade requests received after this two-week period will not be considered.
- A **short memo** must be submitted with your regrade request. This memo should include justification(s) for the request, using examples/evidence from your assignment.
- After you submit a regrade request, you will receive a written response from the grader. Based on the re-evaluation, **your grade may go down, stay the same, or go up**.
- If you are not satisfied with the response or outcome of the regrade, you can then contact the course instructor.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense with serious penalties. Plagiarism means presenting work done by another person or source as your own or using the work of others without acknowledgment. If you are in doubt as to whether you are plagiarizing, please consult the following tips on using sources from the University of Toronto webpage on writing:

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>

### **Office Hours**

My office hours are by appointment to students registered for this class get the opportunity for one-on-one consultations. If you wish to schedule an appointment, **please use the appointment slots made available weekly on Quercus**. Click on the “Calendar” in the menu on the left-hand side, then go to “Find Appointments” on the right-hand side. If you find you need to cancel your appointment, please do so at least 24 hours in advance, to allow other students to take your slot.

I will hold office hours in person or over Zoom (student’s choice). I will assume that you plan to attend over Zoom unless you tell me otherwise (please let me know in advance if you plan to attend in person). Please attend your scheduled appointment by clicking the Zoom meeting link posted to the course Quercus site. I will admit you to the meeting room after your scheduled appointment time starts.

### **Email**

My goal is to answer emails from students within 48 hours, with the exception of those received on Fridays (these will be answered on Mondays or the next business day if the Monday is a holiday). If I have not responded to you within 48 hours, please do not hesitate to follow up. Please include “SOC323” in the subject line of the email.

## **Readings**

All course readings will be available through the course website. Students are solely responsible for obtaining and reading all required materials before class. Please give yourself enough time to deal with any problems or delays accessing the readings that may arise so you come to class prepared to discuss the materials. Problems accessing readings will not excuse failure to demonstrate having done the required readings.

## **Accessibility Needs**

I am committed to an accessible classroom. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible:  
[\\_disability.services@utoronto.ca](mailto:_disability.services@utoronto.ca) or [\\_http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility\\_](http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility_).  
If you plan to use academic accommodations in this course, please send me your letter of accommodation as soon as possible so that I can accommodate your needs.

## **WEEK 1: January 9**

### **Introduction and the Economic Approach to Economic Behavior**

Becker, Gary S. 1978. "Introduction." Pp. 3-17 in *The Economic Approach to Human Behavior*. University of Chicago Press.

Hirsch, Paul, Stuart Michaels, and Ray Friedman. 1987. "'Dirty hands' versus 'clean models.'" *Theory and Society* 16(3):317-36

## **WEEK 2: January 16**

### **Competing Analyses of Economic Life**

Dobbin, Frank. 2004. "The Sociological View of the Economy." Pp. 1-7 in *The New Economic Sociology: A Reader*, edited by Frank Dobbin. Princeton University Press: Princeton.

Granovetter, Mark. 1985. "Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness." *American Journal of Sociology*, 91(3): 481-510

**\*Beginning of term check-in survey due \***

**\* Tutorials meet today \***

## **WEEK 3: January 23**

### **Money**

Zelizer, Viviana. 2017. "The Marking of Money" Pp. 1-35 in *The Social Meaning of Money: Pin Money, Paychecks, Poor Relief and Other Currencies*. Princeton University Press.

Bearman, Peter. 2005. "The Bonus" Pp. ix-xii; 171-205 in *Doormen*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

**\*Tutorials meet today\***

**\*Discussion questions due January 22\***

**WEEK 4: January 30**

**Markets**

Smith, Charles W. 1993. "Auctions: From Walras to the Real World," pp. 176-192 in *Explorations in Economic Sociology*, edited by Richard Swedberg.

Abolafia, Mitchel Y. 1996. "Homo Economicus Unbound: Bond Traders on Wall Street." Pp. 1-13; 14-37 in *Making Markets*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

**\*Tutorials meet today\***

**\*Discussion questions due January 29\***

**WEEK 5: February 6**

**Consumption**

Barber, Benjamin. 2007. "Chapter 1." Pp. 3-37 in *Consumed*. New York: Norton.

Williams, Christine. 2006. "Chapter 5: "Kids In Toyland." Pp. 137-84 in *Inside Toyland*. Berkeley: University of California Press

**\*Tutorials meet today\***

**\* Topic proposal due \***

**WEEK 6: February 13**

**In-Class Test**

**WEEK 7: February 20**

**Family Day (University Holiday, No Class)**

**WEEK 8: February 27**

**Labor Market Inequalities**

Rivera, Lauren A. 2015. *Pedigree: How Elite Students Get Elite Jobs*. Princeton University Press. Pp. 134 - 145.

Pedulla, David S. and Devah Pager. 2019. "Race and Networks in the Job Search Process." *American Sociological Review* 84(6): 983–1012.

**\*Discussion questions due February 26\***

**\*Tutorials meet today\***

**\*Mid-term check-in survey due today\***

**WEEK 9: March 6**  
**The Rise of Service Work**

Cranford, Cynthia, Leah Vosko, and Nancy Zukewich. 2003. "The Gender of Precarious Employment in Canada." *Relations Industrielles / Industrial Relations* 58(3): 454-479

Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. 1992. "From Servitude to Service Work: Historical Continuities in the Racial Division of Paid Reproductive Labor." *Signs* 18(1):1-43

**\*Tutorials meet today\***  
**\*Discussion questions due March 5\***

**WEEK 10: March 13**  
**Income Inequality Trends**

Lin, Ken-Hou, and Donald Tomaskovic-Devey. 2013. "Financialization and U.S. Income Inequality, 1970-2008." *American Journal of Sociology* 118(5):1284-1329.

Western, Bruce, and Jake Rosenfeld. 2011. "Unions, Norms, and the Rise of U.S. Wage Inequality." *American Sociological Review* 76(4):513-37.

**\*Tutorials meet today\***  
**\*Discussion questions due March 12\***

**WEEK 11: March 20**  
**Markets for Human Goods**

Healy, Kieran. 2006. "Chapter 1: Exchange in Human Goods and Chapter 2: Making a Gift" pp. 1-42 in *Last Best Gifts. Altruism and the Market for Human Blood and Organs* Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Rothman, S.M. and D. J. Rothman. 2006. "The Hidden Cost of Organ Sale," *American Journal of Transplantation* 6: 1524-28.

Friedman, E.A. and A.L. Friedman. 2006. "Payment for donor kidneys: Pros and cons," *Kidney International* 69: 960-962.

**\*Tutorials meet today\***  
**\* Term Paper Due\***

**WEEK 12: March 27**  
**Intimate Economies**

Posner, Richard A. 1992. "Chapter 5: Sex and Rationality" Pp. 111-145 in *Sex and Reason*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Zelizer, Viviana. 2005. "Prologue and Chapter 3: Coupling," pp. 1-6; 94-157 in *The Purchase of Intimacy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

**\*Tutorials meet today\***

**\*Discussion questions due March 26\***

**WEEK 13: April 3**

**Test 2**