

The power of culture in the economy: Theories and applications of the “moral economy“

08-29-GS-28

Thursdays, 12:00 - 14:00, UNICOM 3.3390 (SOCIUM - Mary-Somerville-Str. 3)

Instructor: Dr. Till Hilmar, till.hilmar@uni-bremen.de

Office Hours: Tuesday, 16.00 – 17.30, UNICOM 9.1160 (please register in advance on wiki)

This course offers an introduction to the concept of moral economy, exploring the relation between economic frameworks and norms, structures of feelings, and cultural perceptions. It first reviews foundational texts from political philosophy and social theory, tracing the moral economy in relation to legitimacy and the political economy, and exploring the tension between redistribution and recognition. Second, it considers contemporary applications, including moral economy and the welfare state, social boundaries and class, the sociology of valuation, relational inequality, and the study of racism. The course maps out ways of thinking about the problem of how, in our contemporary world, economic processes are perceived and evaluated. It has a global scope, featuring examples from the US, Europe, and beyond.

The key competency gained in this course is to connect theoretical concepts and empirical applications. Students can use these tools in a variety of ways, such as analyzing media debates, or studying social problems in work environments. The course covers novel practical applications that can be applied in a range of areas (such as relational methods in economic sociology) and that can also be used to set up a research or media project in this field.

Obligatory requirements: course readings, participating in discussions on the digital course platform (discussion prompts for each session will be provided)

3CP: Input presentation (oral presentation, 10 minutes) and theses paper (2-3 pages) or protocol of the session (2-3 pages)

6CP: Input presentation (oral presentation, 10 minutes), term paper 8 pages.

The course language is English; final projects may be written up in German.

Thursday, October 17th: **Introduction: Foundations in political and social theory**

Thursday, October 24th: **The two faces of the moral economy**

Albert O. Hirschman (1982). Rival Interpretations of Market Society: Civilizing, Destructive or Feeble? *Journal of Economic Literature* 20:1463–1484

Recommended:

Marion Fourcade and Kieran Healy (2007): Moral Views of Market Society. *Annual Review of Sociology* 33, 285–311

Thomas Clay Arnold (2001): Rethinking Moral Economy. *American Political Science Review* 95(1), 85–95.

No session on Thursday, October 31st (holiday)

Thursday, November 7th: **“Thick” morality and the social force of shared norms**

Gabriel Abend (2014): *The Moral Background. An Inquiry into the History of Business Ethicists*, Princeton University Press, 28–56.

Recommended:

Andrew Sayer (2005): *The Moral Significance of Class*. Cambridge University Press, 111–138.

Steven Hitlin and Sarah K. Harkness (2017): *Unequal Foundations. Inequality, Morality, and Emotions across Cultures*. Oxford University Press, “The difficulty of studying morality across cultures”, 57–68.

Thursday, November 14th: **The view from history**

Karl Polanyi (2001) {1944}: *The Great Transformation. The political and economic origins of our time*. Beacon Press. “Societies and Economic Systems”, “The self-regulating market and the fictitious commodities: Land, Labor, and Money”, 45–58, 71–80.

Edward P. Thompson (1963): *The Making of the English Working Class*. Vintage. 9–13, 55–76.

Recommended:

George Steinmetz (1992): Reflections on the Role of Social Narrative in Working-Class Formation. Narrative Theory in the Social Sciences. *Social Science History*, 16 (3), 489–516.

Thursday, November 21st: **The view from anthropology**

James C. Scott (1976): *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southern Asia*. Yale University Press. “Introduction” and “Reciprocity and Subsistence as Justice”, 1–12, 157–192.

Thursday, November 28th: **Tracing moral-economic sentiments**

Justin Farrell (2015): *The battle for Yellowstone. Morality and the sacred roots of environmental conflict*. Princeton University Press, “Between Good and Evil. The Science, Culture, and Polarization of Wolf Conflict”, 168–216. (focus on 188-216)

Recommended:

Andrew Sayer (2005): *The Moral Significance of Class*. Cambridge University Press, “Chapter 6: Moral and immoral sentiments and class”, 139–168.

Thursday, December 5th: **Moral “deservingness” in institutional and welfare state perspectives I: Cultural classification**

John Mohr (1994): Soldiers, mothers, tramps. Discourse Roles in the 1907 New York City Charity directory. *Poetics* 22, 327–357.

Recommended:

Wim van Oorschot (2000): Who should get what and why? On deservingness criteria and the conditionality of solidarity among the public. *Policy & Politics*, 28(1), 33–48.

Marion Fourcade and Kieran Healy (2013): Classification situations: life chances in the neoliberal era. *Accounting, Organizations, and Society* 38, 559–572.

Thursday, December 12th: **Moral “deservingness” in institutional and welfare state perspectives II: Race and policing**

Didier Fassin (2005): Compassion and Repression: The Moral Economy of Immigration Policies in France. *Cultural Anthropology* 20: 363-387.

Thursday, December 19th: **Researching moral-economic boundaries: The morality of work**

Michele Lamont (2000): *The Dignity of Working Men. Morality and the Boundaries of Race, Class and Immigration in the US and France*, Harvard University Press. 17–54.

Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb (1972): *The Hidden Injuries of Class*. Cambridge University Press, 119–150

Thursday, January 9th: **Researching justifications of wealth**

Rachel Sherman (2017): *Uneasy Street. The anxieties of affluence*. Princeton University Press, 1–56.

Thursday, January 16th: **Relational economic sociology: Carrying Polanyi forward**

Viviana Zelizer (1994): *The Social Meaning of Money*. Basic Books, 1–35, 71–99

Recommended:

Nina Bandelj (2015): Thinking about Interpersonal Relations in the Economy as Relational Work. In: Patrick Aspers and Nigel Dodd (eds.), *Re-Thinking Economic Sociology*, Oxford University Press, 227–251.

Thursday, January 23rd: **Researching relational workplace inequalities**

Adam Reich and Peter Bearman (2018): *Working for Respect. Community and Conflict at Walmart*, Columbia University Press, 83–117, 168–209. (focus on 83-117)

Recommended:

Donald Tomaskovic-Devey (2014): The Relational Generation of Workplace Inequalities. *Social Currents* 1(1), 51–73.

Thursday, January 30th: **Risk, debt and moral guilt**

David Graeber (2012): *Debt. The First 5000 Years*. Melvillehouse Publishing. Chapter 5: “A Brief Treatise on the Moral Grounds of Economic Relations”, 89-126.

Recommended:

Friedrich Nietzsche (2014) {1887} *On the Genealogy of Morality*. Penguin Classics, “Second Essay: ‘Guilt’, Bad Conscience, and Related Matters”, 35-67.