

ECONOMIC SOCIOLOGY

2020-21 L-36 6 ECTS

Prof. Matteo Villa

Course title

Economic Sociology: Studying the economies of past and present societies

Programme (contents of the course). Syllabus and examination program are divided into three parts, connected to each other:

The *first part*, "Getting Started. Origins and developments of contemporary economic sociology", introduces to a first-level knowledge about the origins of economic sociology and the classical scholars, some recent developments and the main differences with regard to the economic science.

The *second part*, "Institutional. Studying the economies of past and present societies: some assumptions," provides an understanding of the main assumptions of the so-called New Economic Sociology, stemming from the works of Karl Polanyi and Mark Granovetter and discussing the main assumptions and research tools helpful to observe the different economies in different historical and cultural contexts, the modes of social embeddedness of economic relations, and the roles of individual and collective actors, institutions, dynamics of power, trust, cultural and moral values.

The *third part*, "Research. Themes and research perspectives for the economies of the twenty-first century", proposes an in-depth study referred to some topical research fields in the current economic sociology and anthropology. There are three options among which the student must choose one:

- *Option 1*: "Society and economy in the face of ecological challenge: the Anthropocene and the uncontrolled growth"
- *Option 2*: "Debt: myth and history. Beyond the traditional version of the market's birth".
- *Option 3*: "Market value and value of the person: the social meaning of money"

In addition to the texts to be prepared, for each option a *short non-compulsory reading* is proposed on the Coronavirus crisis (Covid-19) related to the topic of the options themselves.

Bibliography (Required texts):

I PART – Getting Started: Origins and developments of contemporary economic sociology

- R. Swedberg, *Principles of Economic Society*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2003 – Only Preface and the Chapters 1 and 2

II PART – Institutional: Studying the economies of past and present societies: some assumptions

- K. Polanyi, *Primitive, Archaic and modern economies*. ed. G. Dalton, New York: Doubleday and Company Inc., 1968 – Only Chapters I, II, III, IV, VII.
- M. Granovetter, *Society and Economy. Framework and principles*, Cambridge, The Belknap press of Harvard University, 2017

III PART – Research: Themes and research perspectives for the economies of the twenty-first century. Chose one option between the following:

Option 1: "Society and economy in the face of ecological challenge: the Anthropocene and the uncontrolled growth"

- T.H. Eriksen, *Overheating. An Anthropology of accelerated change*, London, Pluto Press, 2016 – Only Preface, the Chapters 1, 2, 8 and three of the following chapters: 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
- *Reading*: Villa M., *Dire, fare, pensare qualcosa di diverso: il Coronavirus come crisi ecologica*, [Scienza e Pace Magazine](#), aprile 2020

- Option 2: Debt: the myth and history. Beyond the traditional version of the market's birth
- D. Graeber, *Debt. The First 5.000 Years*, New York, Melville House, 2011 – Only the Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 12
 - *Reading*: I. Gough: In times of climate breakdown, how do we value what matters?, Open Democracy, April 2020, leggibile su:
<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/oureconomy/times-climate-breakdown-how-do-we-value-what-matters/>

Option 3: Market value and value of the person: the social meaning of money

- V. Zelizer, *Vite economiche. Valore di mercato e valore della persona*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2009 – Studiare Introduzione e i Capitoli I, II, III, V, VI, VII (List of the original texts in English readable at page 7 of the book)
- *Reading*: O. Mallettand, A. M. Stirling, L. Skountridaki, *Where does work belong anymore? The implications of intensive homebased working*, Gender in Management, September 2020, download: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/GM-06-2020-0173>

Methodological indications. Lectures are based on theoretical-active teaching methods, mainly based on Action-Research methods for learning and integrated use of Theory, Experience, Reflection. Lessons include mixes of oral presentations, practical exercises, discussion and comparison. Whether online (remote teaching) it will be adapted to the possibilities offered by the available tools, trying to encourage the active participation of students. Information will be available on the lecturer's website: https://people.unipi.it/matteo_villa/

Exam mode. Exams are based on oral test according to the art. 23 of University Regulations on Teaching Activity. The third part of the program can be addressed in a different way, a practical exam consisting of a group oral presentation (2 or 3 people) to be performed in the classroom based on the contents of the texts of the chosen option. Those who choose this way will not be asked to answer questions on the third part of the programme during the individual exam. Group presentations can be made in one of the three planned days per year. Dates and other information can be found on Lecturer's Institutional website at the page Studenti > Esami.

At the student's choice it is possible to take the exam in English.

Depending on the security and organizational conditions related to the Covid-19 pandemic, oral and practical tests will be handled online or in attendance. Information on the lecturer's website https://people.unipi.it/matteo_villa/ and on [Valutami](#).

Indications for non-attendants. All the Students, particularly Non-attending students, Not Italian Native Speakers and Erasmus Students, are encouraged to get as soon as possible all the informations about courses, exams and other teaching issues from the Professor's Institutional website (see below). To clarify any possible doubt, getting further information about courses, lectures and examinations held by the lecturer, or to discuss the syllabuses you can write an e-mail or access to the Office Hour (see below).

Where to find more information:

Students are encouraged to carefully check the institutional Professor's web site to find additional information on programs and on their validity for courses of previous Academic Years and information on where to find the required texts.

E-mail lecturer: matteo.villa@unipi.it

Lecturer institutional website: https://people.unipi.it/matteo_villa/

Course Web Page: https://people.unipi.it/matteo_villa/sistemi-di-welfare-comparati/

Other students' info: https://people.unipi.it/matteo_villa/studenti/

Where to find texts: All the texts can be found in bookstores, on-line shops, and in the Political Science Library.