

**Department of Sociology
Faculty of Social Sciences
South Asian University**

Economy and Society

(Compulsory Course for M.A.)

Total Credits: 04

Objectives of the course

The aim of this course is to introduce students to a wide range of theories and practices within the field of economic anthropology/sociology examining the understanding of economic life – a field in which scholars from history, geography and political science have also made valuable contributions.

Central to this course is the question whether prospects and claims of profit and material gain should be the only consideration through which to understand how economies are shaped within societies. In other words, is Homo Economicus? This question has dominated much of the scholarly debate in economic sociology/anthropology of the past half a century, which this course will critically revisit.

Beyond this broad framework, this course will familiarise students with key anthropological and sociological texts on land, labour, finance and enterprise. It will also introduce students to diversity of political-economic and socio-economic structures in different parts of the world. It is not required that students have formal training in economics prior to taking this course, nor are expertise of quantitative techniques mandatory. It is expected however that students have familiarity with the basic economic concepts and categories.

Unit 1: Economic anthropology/sociology as a field. This section will map out the field of economic anthropology and sociology and familiarise students with the basic tenets of the field.

1. Weber, Max (1930). **The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.** Translated by Talcott Parsons. Routledge: London and New York. (Chapter 2: The Spirit of Capitalism, p. 13-38)
2. Marx, Karl (1867). **Capital: A Critique of Political Economy.** (Chapter 1, Section 4: The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof).

3. Hann, Chris and Keith Hart (2011). **Economic Anthropology: History, Ethnography, Critique**. Polity Press: Cambridge.

Following chapters of the book:

Chapter 2: Economy from the Ancient World to the Age of Internet (p. 18-36)

Chapter 3: The Rise of Modern Economics and Anthropology (p. 37-53)

Chapter 4: The Golden Age of Economic Anthropology (p. 55-69)

Chapter 5: After the Formalist-Substantivist Debate (p. 72-96)

Unit 2: Neoliberalism, institutionalism and the 'embeddedness' question.

This section will introduce students to the key sociological literature on neoliberalism, and will go on to discuss the distinction between 'new' and 'old' institutional economics which has dominated the academic discourse on economic anthropology and sociology since the 1960s.

1. Granovetter, M. (1985). 'Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness.' In **American Journal of Sociology**. 91. 481-510.
2. Harriss, J. et al (eds) (1995). **The New Institutional Economics and Third World Development**. Routledge: London.
[Chapter 1: Harriss et al 'introduction']
[Chapter 9: W.G. Clarence-Smith 'cocoa plantations in the third world']
3. Issac, Barry (2005). 'Karl Polanyi (Chapter 1)' in Carrier, James G. (ed). **A Handbook of Economic Anthropology**. Edward Elgar: Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, USA.
4. Hann, C. and K. Hart (eds) (2009). **Market and Society: The Great Transformation Today**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[Chapter 3: Beckert 'embeddedness,' pp. 38-55].
5. Harvey, David (2005). **A Brief History of Neoliberalism**. OUP: Oxford/NY. (Chapter 3: The Neoliberal State, p. 64-85).
6. Mirowski, Phil (2013). **Never Let a Serious Crisis Go to Waste: How Neoliberalism Survived the Financial Meltdown**. Verso Books: London.

Unit 3: Divergent order(s) of capitalism around the world. This section will familiarise students with diversity of socio-economic organisation within and outside South Asia.

1. Fukuyama, F. (1995). **Trust : The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity**. Hamish Hamilton: London.

2. Clegg, S.R. et al (eds) (1990a) **Capitalism in Contrasting Cultures**. Walter de Gruyter: Berlin.
3. Knorringa, P. (1996) **Economics of Collaboration: Indian Shoemakers Between Market and Hierarchy**. Sage Publications: New Delhi.
4. Harriss-White, B. (2005). **India's Market Society**. New Delhi: Three Essays Press.

Unit 4: The 'other' economies and societies: Ethnographies and case studies. This section familiarises students with some of the classical ethnographies noted for their economic orientation.

1. Geertz, Clifford (1979). 'Suq: The Bazaar Economy in Sefrou.' In C. Geertz, H. Geertz and L. Rosen. **Order and Meaning in Moroccan Society: Three Essays in Cultural Analysis**, pp. 159-268. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
2. Sahlins, Marshall (1974). **Stone Age Economics**. Chicago: Aldine. (Chapter 4: The Domestic Mode of Production: The Structure of Underproduction, pp. 41-99)
3. Parry, J. and Maurice Bloch (eds.) (1989). **Money and the Morality of Exchange**. CUP: Cambridge. (Chapter 3: On the Moral Perils of Exchange, pp. 65-93)

Unit 5: Human economy and the question of unequal development. This section will introduce students to the concept of 'human economy' and alternative economic thoughts, and walk them through the key emerging literature within this discourse.

1. Hann, C. and K. Hart (2011). **Economic Anthropology: History, Ethnography, Critique**. Cambridge: Polity.
Following chapters:
Chapter 6: Unequal Development, p. 100-118
Chapter 8: One World Capitalism, pp. 142-162
2. Hart, K.; Laville, J.L. and D. Cattani (2010). **The Human Economy: A Citizen's Guide**. Polity: London.
Following chapters:
Chapter 13: Informal Economy, p. 142-154 (Keith Hart)
Chapter 17: Gift, p. 180-186 (Alain Caille)
Chapter 18: Moral Economy, p. 187-198 (Chris Hann)
Chapter 21: Solidarity Economy, p. 225-235 (J-L Laville)
Chapter 23: Local Development, p. 248-261

Unit 6: Land, labour, money and enterprise. These are the three key elements within economic anthropology/sociology. This unit involves reading of significant case studies, ethnographies and historical analyses on land, labour and enterprise.

1. Regmi, M.C. (1978). **Thatched Huts and Stucco Palaces: Peasants and Landlords in Nineteenth Century Nepal.** Vikas Press: New Delhi.
2. Ong, A. (1997). **Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline: Factory Women in Malaysia.** State University of New York Press: New York.
3. Breman, J. (1996). **Footloose Labour: Working in India's Informal Economy.** Cambridge University Press: New York.
4. Parry, J., Breman, J. and K. Kapadia eds. (1999). 'The Worlds of Indian Industrial Labour.' In **Contributions to Indian Sociology.** Sage Publications: New Delhi
5. Graeber, D. (2011) **Debt: The First 5,000 Years.** New York: Melville House.
6. Guyer, J. (2004) **Marginal Gains: Monetary Transactions in Atlantic Africa.** Chicago: Chicago University Press.
7. Harriss-White, B. (2008). **Rural Commercial Capital and the Left Front: Food Markets in Central West Bengal over the Last Quarter Century.** Oxford University Press: New Delhi.
8. Papanek, G. 1972. 'Pakistan's Big Businessmen: Muslim Separatism, Entrepreneurship, and Partial Modernisation.' **Economic Development and Cultural Change** 21(1): 1-32.
9. Willis, P. (1977.2000). **Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs.** Ashgate: London.