

Spring '18 · Tue. & Thu. 11:45am to 1:00pm · Classroom: Carr 106 · Office: 255 Sociology/Psychology

Sociology 340 · Ethics 280

Taboo Markets

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What this course is about

This course is about taboo, stigmatized, or otherwise morally controversial markets. Examples include trade in alcohol and other drugs, baby-selling, paid domestic labor, care work, sex, human blood, organs, and tissue, eggs, sperm, genetic material, viatical contracts, and pollution rights. We will read ethical arguments together with social-scientific research about these markets, focusing mostly on how exchange in these goods is practically accomplished and morally justified in theory and practice. We will also consider broader questions about the scope and limits, if any, of the market as a social institution, and its relationship to other sorts of transfers, especially gift exchange.

Readings

Readings will be made available on Sakai and may change from those listed below. While not required, I recommend you purchase two books:

Rene Almeling. 2011. *Sex Cells*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

M.M. Ertman and J.C. Williams, eds. 2005. *Rethinking Commodification*. New York: New York University Press. (“E&W” below.)

Contact information

Office hours are by appointment. My office is 255 Sociology/Psychology, on West Campus. To schedule an appointment or contact me about other class-related matters, email me at kjhealy@soc.duke.edu.

Requirements

You are required to attend, write a weekly 1-page memo, and participate actively in class. There will be an in-class midterm exam, an in-class presentation, and a related final paper.

1. *Attendance, Weekly 1-Pagers, Participation.* Do the reading, write a 1-page memo, show up to class, silence your phone. This is a relatively small class and will be run as a seminar rather than a lecture. Each week (after the first) you will write a 300 word memo (plus or minus 50 words) in response to some aspect of the week's reading. These memos should *not* be summaries or reading notes. They are for your questions about, objections to, or expansions on the reading material. There are nine weeks of assigned reading. You must write eight memos over the course of the semester. Memos are due by 9pm the night before class. You may write your memo for the Tuesday or Thursday class. However, over the course of the semester at least four of your memos must be submitted for the Tuesday class. Be prepared to discuss what you write about in your memos.

Attendance, weekly writing, and participation together will count for 25% of your final grade.

2. *In-Class Midterm Exam.* This will be worth 25% of your final grade.
3. *Group Presentation.* Worth 20% of your final grade. We will discuss topics, time slots, and other details in class. Attendance and participation during group presentations (not just your own) is required.
4. *Final Paper.* Due at the end of the semester (date TBA), worth 30% of your final grade.

Schedule

Assigned readings may change.

Week 1 (1/11). **Introduction**

Week 2 (1/16, 1/18). **Market Society**

Paul Seabright, *The Company of Strangers*, excerpts. Charles Lindblom,

The Market System, excerpts. Elizabeth Landes and Richard Posner, “The Economics of the Baby Shortage”. “In the Matter of Baby M” (E&W). Debora Spar, *The Baby Business*, excerpts. Susan Straight, “Making Babies, Just to Make Ends Meet”. Elizabeth Cohen, “Surrogate Offered \$10,000 to Abort Baby”.

Week 3 (1/23, 1/25). **Civilizing Markets**

Milton Friedman. *Capitalism and Freedom*, excerpts. Albert Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests*, excerpts. Nate Oman, *The Dignity of Commerce*, excerpts.

Week 4 (1/30, 2/1). **Destructive Markets**

Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (excerpts). Nicole Woolsey Biggart, *Charismatic Capitalism* (excerpts). Michael Walzer, “What Money Can’t Buy”. Karl Marx, “The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof.” “Wake Up Now” *This American Life* segment.

Week 5 (2/6, 2/8). **Crowding and Nudging**

Samuel Bowles, *The Moral Economy*. Bruno Frey et al., “The Old Lady Visits Your Backyard: A tale of morals and markets.” Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein, *Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness*, excerpts. Ruth Grant, *Strings Attached: Untangling the Ethics of Incentives*, excerpts. excerpts. Natasha Dow Schüll, *Addiction by Design*, excerpts.

Week 6 (2/13, 2/15). **Forbidden Exchanges**

Paul Bohannon, “Some Principles of Exchange and Investment amongst the Tiv”. Viviana Zelizer, *The Social Meaning of Money*, excerpts. Alvin Roth, “Repugnance as a Constraint on Markets”. Gabriel Rossman “Obscure Relational Work and Disreputable Exchange.”

Week 7 (2/20, 2/22). **Blood and Organs**

Richard Titmuss *The Gift Relationship* (excerpts). Kieran Healy, *Last Best Gifts* (excerpts). Kieran Healy and Kimberly Krawiec, “Custom, Contract, and Kidney Exchange”. Kenneth Arrow, “Gifts and Exchanges”. Peter Singer, “Altruism and Commerce”.

Week 8 (2/27, 3/1). **Eggs and Sperm** Rene Almeling, *Sex Cells*.

Week 9 (3/6, 3/8). **Midterm Exam (March 6th)**. No class Thursday March 8th.

Week 10 (3/13, 3/15) **Spring Break: No Class**

Week 11 (3/20, 3/22). **Care, Intimacy, Sex**

“For Love nor Money: The commodification of care”, Deborah Stone (E&W). Viviana Zelizer, *The Purchase of Intimacy* (excerpts). Melissa Gira Grant,

Playing the Whore (excerpts). Kimberly Kay Hoang, *Dealing in Desire*, excerpts.

Week 12 (3/27, 3/29). **Lives and Nature**

Cheris Sun-ching Chan, *Marketing Death*, excerpts. Frank Ackerman and Lisa Heizerling, *Priceless*, excerpts. Marion Fourcade, "Cents and Sensibility: Economic Valuation and the Nature of Nature."

Week 13 (4/3, 4/5). **In-Class Presentations.**

Week 14 (4/10, 4/12). **In-Class Presentations.**

Week 15 (4/17, 4/19) **In-Class Presentations.**

Week 16 (4/24) Catch-up day/Final paper review.

Duke community standard

Like all classes at the university, this course is conducted under the Duke Community Standard. Duke University is a community dedicated to scholarship, leadership, and service and to the principles of honesty, fairness, respect, and accountability. Citizens of this community commit to reflect upon and uphold these principles in all academic and nonacademic endeavors, and to protect and promote a culture of integrity. To uphold the Duke Community Standard you will not lie, cheat, or steal in academic endeavors; you will conduct yourself honorably in all your endeavors; and you will act if the Standard is compromised.