Course Overview
This course addresses some of the most pressing questions that many students have about basic economic issues, questions like:

1) How do I find a good job?
2) How can I move my career forward when I’m stuck in a job that seems to be going nowhere?
3) Will all this time, money and effort I’m putting into my degree pay off?

Along the way, the course also takes up some larger questions about how economies work, both in the United States today and in other times and places. For example, when will we all be able to buy electric cars without having to win the lottery first? And what does this have to do with the nature of capitalism? What is economic globalization, and why should I care? Are “big corporations” best understood as the root of all evil, as an indispensable economic institution or as a leftover from our industrial past? The course approaches each of these questions—and many more—from a sociological perspective. So even though this is a course that is largely about “the economy,” it’s not an economics course. What that means is that it’s not a good substitute for taking courses in economics. What it will do for you is give you a perspective on economic life that emphasizes social institutions—things like families and legal systems—and social relationships—such as those between members of the same family, close friends and acquaintances—more than most basic courses in economics do. In other words, it will not only help you understand some of the specific questions you may have about the economic aspects of human societies, but will also give you a fresh perspective on what economies are and how they work that you aren’t likely to get from reading business news articles or taking courses in economics and accounting.

Course objectives:
1) By the end of the course, students should be able to develop a written argument about how social relationships and institutions affect economic behavior using examples from specific arenas such as labor markets, consumer behavior, industrial organization and housing markets.

2) The course aims to give students the opportunity to think systematically about their own career goals and about the role that social relationships may play in attaining those goals. In the process, students should gain insights into how to reconcile their career goals with some of the other social roles they will play in their lives—as family members, consumers, and citizens.

3) Completing the course should help students progress in their ability to function as confident, articulate, and critical consumers of news reporting on business and “the economy.”
Required Materials, Skills & Resources

Required Materials

*Note:* The assigned portions of this text will be available in electronic form (i.e., as PDF files) on the course website for your convenience. Nonetheless, I encourage you to purchase your own hard copy of the book. You can order a copy through the UWM Virtual Bookstore if you wish. Alternatively, it is widely available from booksellers such as Amazon.com for around $20 - $30. For a few extra bucks, you should also be able to get a copy directly from the publisher, the University of Chicago Press. A hard copy is also available at the UWM Library on 2-hour course reserve.

Optional Text (Extra Credit!)
Min, Pyong Gap. 2008. *Ethnic Solidarity for Economic Survival: Korean Greengrocers in New York City*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. (This text is also available through the UWM Virtual Bookstore. Alternatively, it is available for about $25 from Amazon.com and the Russell Sage Foundation, among other booksellers. A copy is also available at the UWM Library on 2-day course reserve.)

All other assigned and extra credit readings will be available in electronic form (i.e., as PDF or HTML files) on the course website.

Required Computer Skills & Resources

*Skills:* You will need basic word processing skills, the ability to send and receive e-mail, and a simple understanding of how to access and browse websites, including the course website on Desire2Learn (D2L). You will have to be able to receive email via your UWM email account, but you can if you wish forward your UWM email to another account. Just a word of caution: Checking your e-mail and D2L regularly is very important to your ability to do well in this course.

*Resources:* You will need routine access to a computer that has a broadband connection or a campus network connection to the Internet. If you don’t have your own computer, you will need to use one of the campus lab computers, or perhaps a computer in a public library. You are welcome to use a smart phone or similar device to log onto the course website. However, it may be safer to use a desktop or laptop computer, especially for taking quizzes and exams and submitting assignments (see below), in order to avoid compatibility issues. *Be warned:* Failing to recognize that an assignment, quiz or exam was due because you did not receive a notification on your smart phone or similar device will NOT constitute a legitimate grading grievance and will NOT prevent you from receiving a zero on the assignment, quiz or exam if you do not complete it by the posted deadline (see “Grading Grievances Process” below on p. 7).

The computer (or other device) you use must have a basic word processing package such as Microsoft Word or Open Office. You will also have to be able to view PDF files.
Budgeting Time for this Course

Given that this is a three credit course, you should expect to spend about 18 hours per week on the course, including doing the assigned readings, viewing lecture slides, watching and taking notes on film clips, taking quizzes, participating in on-line discussions, completing other assignments, and studying for and taking exams. As such, you should expect to spend no fewer than 144 hours on the course during the semester, consistent with the UWM Credit Hour Policy.

Readings, Lectures & Film Screenings

Readings: During each week of the course, you will need to download one or more readings in PDF or text format and, in some cases, access relevant web pages. These readings will typically comprise 50 to 100 pages total, though occasionally slightly more or less. In general, you should plan on spending about six hours per week obtaining and doing the readings and taking detailed notes on what you have read.

Lectures: All lectures will be available in PDF and rich-text (RTF) formats on D2L. (The PDF versions include some diagrams and other images that are omitted from the RTF versions. I recommend reviewing and taking notes from the PDF versions, but, if you want to print the lectures economically, use the RTF versions, which can be opened with any standard word processing program.) Be prepared to spend up to two hours each week viewing and taking notes on one or two lecture files.

Film Screenings. Most of the required film clips are relatively brief (under 30 minutes), and all are readily available on D2L. During Week 4, we will view a somewhat longer (about 1 hour) set of clips from the films, Who Killed the Electric Car? and Revenge of the Electric Car.

Assignments

All assignments for this course must be completed on time (see below and check the Content and Discussion sections of the course D2L site for due dates). Late assignments (including discussion posts) will not receive course credit.

Weekly Assignments

Quizzes: Sixteen percent of your grade for this course (see Grading below) will be determined by weekly quizzes that will test your familiarity with and understanding of the lecture material, film clips, and assigned readings listed in the weekly course schedule below and in the Content section of D2L. You will need to complete an on-line quiz by 11:59 pm on Sunday of each week during the course, except during Weeks 4 and 8, when you will take a somewhat longer exam (see “Exams” below). You are welcome to work ahead on quizzes if you wish. Each quiz will comprise 10 questions (5 true/false and 5 multiple choice) about the assigned materials for the corresponding week (questions are worth one point each toward your final grade—see below). Expect to spend about two hours each week preparing for and taking a quiz. Once you have activated each quiz, you will have 8 minutes to complete all questions. SAVE EACH ANSWER AS SOON AS YOU HAVE ENTERED IT.
Participation in On-line Discussions. You will be expected to participate in on-line discussions with your classmates in several different capacities, each of which are detailed below:

- **Personal Introduction.** See the Discussions section of D2L for details.

- **Discussion Assignments.** There will be six discussion assignments during the summer. In these assignments, you will be required to post at least one comment of a minimum length (typically 150 words) by 11:59 pm on Friday of the corresponding week. I strongly recommend that you write your comment off-line in a word processing program and then copy it into the discussion forum once you have carefully reviewed your work and checked for spelling and grammatical errors. (NOTE: Please do NOT post your comment as an attachment.) In addition, I strongly encourage everyone in the class to post thoughtful, respectful and—where appropriate—critical replies to the comments posted by their fellow students during each discussion. While you will not be penalized if you do not comment on other students’ posts, you may be able to score extra credit points if you do (see Grading below). If another student (or the instructor) responds to your initial post before 11:59 pm on Friday, you are required to respond to any questions asked and/or critiques offered by 11:59 pm on Sunday of that week (i.e., before the discussion forum closes for the week) in order to receive full credit.

- **Group Post: “Social Class is on the Menu”:** This assignment will require working closely with the members of the group to which you have been assigned (see “Groups” on D2L). I recommend getting in touch with the other members of your group during the first week of the semester to begin coordinating your work. See the Discussions section of D2L (Week 3) for detailed instructions.

While the amount of time you will need to devote to on-line discussions will vary somewhat from week to week, you should expect to spend up to six hours per week posting comments, reading comments posted by your fellow students and the instructor, and responding to others’ posts. Remember that you are not devoting time to travelling to campus and physically attending a classroom meeting for this course.

**Career Paper**

For this assignment, you will write a six-page paper in which you critically review Granovetter’s analysis of the role of contacts in careers as applied to a specific career goal that you have set for yourself. (If you have no idea what sort of career you would like to pursue, consider looking through the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*. The OOH is not a bad place to start even if you already have a career goal in mind. If all else fails, make something up!) Drawing on popular and scholarly articles, you will provide a brief sketch of an industry or occupation in which you think you would like to work (or perhaps are already working!). You will then develop an argument that draws on the evidence you have collected on this field/industry/profession to assess the applicability of Granovetter’s analytical approach. For example, you might discuss some of the contexts in which Granovetter might expect you to make contacts that would help you achieve your career goal or some of the social structural barriers that might prevent you from
landing a job in your chosen field. Alternatively, you might argue that social ties and networks are not likely to affect your career path as much as Granovetter leads us to believe. If you take this latter approach, you should be sure to anticipate any counterarguments he could be expected to make. Make an effort to consider not only the factors that would be likely to affect your ability to get your first job in your chosen field (or your next job if you are already working in this field), but also how this outcome might shape your long-term career trajectory. See the instructions for this assignment in the Content section of D2L for additional details. The career paper will be due at the end of Week 5 (see the Weekly Schedule below).

Exams

I recommend setting aside four hours per week during each week of the course to review and study for exams. Regularly reviewing the materials throughout the semester will produce much better results than last minute cramming!

Midterm exam: The midterm exam will cover the course materials for Weeks 1 through 4 and will be similar in format to the weekly quizzes, except that the midterm will consist of 15 true/false and 15 multiple choice questions (worth 3 points each), rather than five of each. Once you begin the exam, you will have 40 minutes to complete all 30 questions. SAVE EACH ANSWER AS SOON AS YOU HAVE ENTERED IT. A portion of the questions will be randomly selected from the quizzes from Weeks 1 through 3, but the midterm will also include several new questions. See the page on “Viewing Quiz Results” under “Assignments Instructions and Grading” in the “Basic Course Information” area at the top of the Content section on D2L. You will need to be able to view your quiz results in order to study effectively for the midterm.

Final exam: The final exam will be comprehensive, covering material from the assigned readings, lectures, and film screenings throughout the semester. The exam will consist of two main components. Two-thirds of your final exam grade will be determined by answering true/false and multiple-choice questions. The format for this portion of the exam will be very similar to the format for the quizzes. Once you have begun this portion of the exam, you will have 50 minutes to answer all 40 questions (20 true/false and 20 multiple choice, four points per question). Accordingly, you should plan to spend several hours carefully reviewing the course materials before starting this portion of the exam. As with the midterm, a portion of the questions will be randomly selected from the quizzes you have taken earlier in the semester (INCLUDING the portion of the semester covered by the midterm). This portion of the final exam will also include some new questions, primarily on the materials covered in Weeks 5 through 7. The final third of your final exam grade will be determined by a short essay (four pages, double-spaced, 12-point font) in which you develop an argument about how social relationships, networks and/or institutions shape economic life, drawing on specific examples from the course materials.
Grading

Discussion & Participation  20% of your final grade

Components
Personal Introduction  5 points
6 Discussion Assignments (20 points each)  120 points
Group Discussion Post  25 points
Total  150 points

Career Paper (150 points)  20% of your final grade

Quizzes  16% of your final grade

Components
6 quizzes (20 points each)  120 points total
extra credit quizzes (10 or 20 points each)  40 possible extra credit points

Midterm Exam (90 points)  12% of your final grade

Final Exam  32% of your final grade

Components
True/False & Multiple Choice  160 points
Short Essay  80 points
Total  240 points

Your final grade will be assigned based on the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>720 – 750+</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>548 - 577</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>675 – 719</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>525 - 547</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>653 – 674</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>503 – 524</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>623 - 652</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>473 – 502</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>600 - 622</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>450 – 472</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>578 – 599</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>449 or less</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extra Credit

Discussion Assignments. As indicated above, you can earn extra credit in each of the six discussion assignments. Comments on other students’ posts MAY earn extra credit. I will typically award extra credit only for responses that do two or more of the following:

1) raise thoughtful questions;
2) pose respectful, well-reasoned critiques;
3) make interesting connections between comments made by other students; and/or
4) cite specific evidence or examples from readings, lectures, and/or other class materials.

With this in mind, you will be able to earn up to 30 extra credit points during the semester (i.e., 5 extra credit points per discussion assignment). In order to be eligible for the full 5 extra credit points, your comment must be posted by Friday at 11:59 pm. I will award partial credit, however, for comments on other students’ posts submitted at any time before the discussion forum closes for the week on Sunday at 11:59 pm.

Extra credit quizzes: You will have the opportunity to take up to three optional quizzes for extra credit during the semester. The first quiz will test your knowledge of the extra credit lecture for on “Gender & Employment.” The second quiz will pose questions about the extra credit reading entitled “Fast Food in France.” Each of these quizzes will allow you to earn up to 10 extra credit points. The third quiz will consist of questions about the optional text listed above, Ethnic Solidarity for Economic Survival. This quiz will be worth up to 20 extra credit points. NOTE: As indicated above, you will need to purchase a copy of the book for this quiz from the UWM Bookstore, an on-line retailer or the publisher well in advance in order to ensure that you have the opportunity to read it before taking the quiz, which will cover material from the entire book (ca. 200 pages). You may take each of these quizzes any time during the semester before the last day of the semester. There is absolutely no penalty for performing poorly on an extra credit quiz—getting all the questions wrong will not affect your final grade in any way. So do yourself a favor and give the extra credit quizzes a shot!

Grading Grievance Process

A quiz or exam question may occasionally have two or more equally good answers, and I may occasionally overlook a legitimate point that you have clearly stated in a discussion post or paper assignment. If you believe that a quiz, test or assignment was incorrectly graded, please follow this procedure:

Within one week of receiving your grade, e-mail a written "appeal" describing the basis for your opinion (e.g., citing a passage from the text that supports your choice of an answer) to me, Professor Britton (britton@uwm.edu). This appeal need not be lengthy—a short paragraph will often do. In appealing a grade, it is not sufficient to argue that your answer on a quiz or exam was reasonable given your implicit assumptions. You must convince me that the answer you chose was as good as or superior to the one identified as correct or that the argument you made was clear and logically sound, consistent with assignment instructions, etc.

Getting Help

There are lots of ways to get help with the stuff you will encounter in this course, including both the course materials and the technology you will need to use to access those materials and complete your assignments.

For technical issues that arise with D2L, network access, and related matters, contact the UWM Help Desk. You can call them, submit a help request on-line, or (if you live somewhere on or
near campus) just stop by—see the page on Using UW-Milwaukee Desire2Learn (D2L) course web sites on the second-to-last page of the syllabus, which also has some tips on using D2L itself.

For questions about course materials, assignments and other matters related to the course, I have created several forums in the Discussions section of the course D2L site. Please err on the side of posting your questions there (and checking to see if anyone else has posted the same question) before sending an e-mail to me. That said, if you have questions or concerns of a more personal or idiosyncratic nature, e-mail is the best way to reach me (britton@uwm.edu). I will make every reasonable effort to respond to your messages within 12 hours or so, but messages do occasionally get lost in the jumble. So if you don’t hear back from me within a day or so, feel free to send another message to make sure I’m aware of your question or concern.

Office Appointments and Telephone Calls: I will be happy to meet with students in-person in my office in Bolton Hall (see my contact info and schedule of office hours at the top of the first page). If you would like to meet with me, please send me an e-mail to that effect, and I will schedule a mutually convenient appointment; you are also welcome to drop by during my office hours. You may also contact me by phone. However, you should be aware that I do NOT check my voicemail regularly. Therefore, if you have a concern that is of a personal, sensitive or urgent nature, you may have more success reaching me via e-mail.

Here are a few other resources that some students may find helpful:

- For help with writing, I strongly recommend consulting the UWM Writing Center. You can make an appointment at the center at this web address:
  
  o http://uwm.mywconline.com

- For help with note-taking skills and anxiety about taking quizzes and tests, you can refer to the following web sites:
  
  o http://www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/success/notes.html (for note taking skills)
  o http://www.clayton.edu/cas/Study-Strategies/Test-Anxiety (reducing test anxiety)

- It is University policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. If you need accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements of this course, please contact me as soon as possible (britton@uwm.edu).

WEEKLY SCHEDULE (see the weekly checklists on D2L for additional information)

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION, PROPERTY & WEALTH (6/27 – 7/3)

Introduction

Lecture: Course Overview


Lecture: Key Concepts

Property & Wealth

Screening: “Boundary Issues”

Lecture: Property & Wealth


JULY 4TH: HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY!!!

WEEK 2: WORK & EMPLOYMENT (7/5 – 7/10)

Lecture: Work, Employment & Contacts

Lecture: Entrepreneurship

Lecture: Employment Systems

Extra Credit Lecture: Gender & Employment

Reading: Getting a Job, Introduction & Chapters 1 - 3


Reading: Getting a Job, Chapters 5, 6 (Chapter 9 recommended, but optional)

WEEK 3: CONSUMPTION & CONSUMERISM (7/11 – 7/17)

Lecture: Consumption & Consumerism

Lecture: Class & Consumption

Screening: “Basic Training”
Screening: Joel Waldfogel on *Scroogenomics*

Screening: *People Like Us: Social Class in America*


WEEK 4: COMMODIFICATION, MONEY & CREDIT (7/18 – 7/24)

Lecture: Commodification

Lecture: Money & Credit

Audio: “The Thriving Market in Human Body Parts”

Screening: Clips from *Who Killed the Electric Car?* and *Revenge of the Electric Car*


WEEK 5: ECONOMIC GLOBALIZATION (7/25 – 7/31)

Lecture: Economic Globalization


WEEK 6: FIRMS, CORPORATIONS & INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION (8/1 – 8/7)

Lecture: Firms & Corporations

Lecture: Markets & Industries

Screening: Selections from The Corporation


WEEK 7: INFORMAL & ILLEGAL ECONOMIES; FAMILIES & ECONOMIES (8/8 – 8/14)

Informal & Illegal Economies

Lecture: Informal & Illegal Economies


http://datatools.urban.org/features/theHustle/index.html

Families & Economies

Lecture: Families & Economies

Screening: Clips from That 70s Show, Episode 33


NOTE: You do NOT need to understand the details of Brines statistical analysis (pp. 666-679 and the Appendix on pp. 684 and 685). However, do examine carefully her discussion of her findings beginning in the last full paragraph of page 677 and extending through page 681, as well as the graphs summarizing her key findings on pages 680 and 681.


WEEK 8: FINAL EXAM (8/15 – 8/21)
Using UW-Milwaukee Desire2Learn (D2L) course web sites

Materials for this course are available on a Desire2Learn (D2L) course web site. Students may see these materials there anytime using a standard web browser.

**Recommended browsers:** A complete and up-to-date list of recommended browsers and settings can always be found at: [http://kb.wisc.edu/helpdesk/page.php?id=3210](http://kb.wisc.edu/helpdesk/page.php?id=3210). Please contact the UWM Help Desk, as described at the bottom of this page, with any questions about these requirements.

**To find and browse the D2L course web site:**

1. Go directly to the D2L Landing page at [http://D2L.uwm.edu](http://D2L.uwm.edu).
2. On the D2L Landing page, choose the gold button labeled [UWM ePanther].
3. On the next page, type your ePanther **Username** (your UWM campus email address, without the “@uwm.edu”) and **Password** (same password you use for UWM e-mail account and PAWS). Then hit [Login].
   - You may bookmark the D2L.UWM.edu landing page, if you wish.
   - To prevent failed log-ins, please DO NOT BOOKMARK the UWM ePanther login page.

4. On the D2L MyHome screen, find the area called **My Courses**. You’ll see your active courses here, arranged by Semester, with the newest semester at the top.
   - You may need to click the gray arrow to the far right of the semester title to open the list.
   - You may also need to click the gray arrow to the right of the department title to reveal course links.

5. Click any course title to see the Course Home page. Click [Content] in the navigation bar to begin exploring the site.
   - If you have any difficulty getting into the course web site, please close down your web browser completely and open it up again. Try logging on again, using the instructions above. If you do not know your ePanther username or password, please get help as indicated below.
   - When you are finished looking at your D2L course sites, always click on [Logout]. This is especially important if you are in a computer lab. Otherwise, the next person who uses the machine will be using your D2L account!

**What to do if you have problems with Desire2Learn (D2L)**

If you have any difficulties with D2L, including problems with your login (e.g., you forgot your password, or if you just can’t get on), please contact the UWM Help Desk as follows:

- Report the problem via online web form at [GetTechHelp.uwm.edu](http://GetTechHelp.uwm.edu)
- Call the UWM Help Desk at 414.229.4040 if you are in Metro Milwaukee
- Go to Bolton 225 (this lab is not open all day or on weekends – call 414.229.4040 for specific hours)
- From outside the 414 or 262 area codes, but from within the USA, you may call the UWM Help Desk at 1.877.381.3459
UNIVERSITY AND SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT POLICIES

The Secretary of the University maintains a web page that contains university policies that affect the instructor and the students in this course, as well as essential information specific to conduct of the course. The link to that web page is: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/SyllabusLinks.pdf

**Students with Disabilities.** Verification of disability, class standards, the policy on the use of alternate material and test accommodations can be found at the following: http://www4.uwm.edu/sac/

**Religious Observances.** Policies regarding accommodations for absences due to religious observance are found at the following: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S1.5.htm

**Students called to active Military Duty.** Accommodations for absences due to call-up of reserves to active military duty are found at the following: http://www4.uwm.edu/current_students/military_call_up.cfm

**Incompletes.** You may be given an incomplete if you have carried a course successfully until near the end of the semester but, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond your control, have been unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of course work. An incomplete is not given unless you prove to the instructor that you were prevented from completing the course for just cause as indicated above. The conditions for awarding an incomplete to graduate and undergraduate students can be found at the following: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S31.pdf

**Discriminatory Conduct** (such as sexual harassment). Discriminatory conduct will not be tolerated by the University. It poisons the work and learning environment of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience and well-being of students, faculty and staff. Policies regarding discriminatory conduct can be found at: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S47.pdf

**Academic Misconduct.** Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others’ academic endeavors. Policies for addressing students cheating on exams or plagiarism can be found at the following: http://www4.uwm.edu/osl/dean/conduct.cfm

**Complaint Procedures.** Students may direct complaints to the Sociology Department Chair or the Associate Dean for Social Sciences in the College of Letters & Sciences. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the Sociology Department Chair, the Associate Dean for Social Sciences in the College of Letters & Sciences, or to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy. Policies may be found at: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S49.7.htm

**Grade Appeal Procedures.** A student may appeal a grade on the grounds that it is based on a capricious or arbitrary decision of the course instructor. Such an appeal shall follow the established procedures adopted by the department, college, or school in which the course resides or in the case of graduate students, the Graduate School. These procedures are available in writing from the respective department chairperson or the Academic Dean of the College of Letters & Science. Procedures for undergraduate student grade appeal can be found at http://www4.uwm.edu/letsci/upload/grievance_procedure.pdf

Procedures for graduate student grade appeal can be found at http://www.graduateschool.uwm.edu/students/policies/

**Final Examination Policy.** Policies regarding final examinations can be found at the following: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S22.htm

**Book Royalties.** In accord with Department of Sociology policy, the royalties from the sale of faculty-authored books to students in their classes are donated to a UWM Foundation/Sociology Account to support future awards and activities for UWM students in Sociology.

Update 08/2015