

Sociology 470: Sociology of Money

Professor Alvarez

Tuesdays 4:00 – 6:45 pm H514



In this course we explore the relationship between society, money and the economy. We will apply sociological perspectives to what is commonly thought of as “economic” behavior and phenomena. This requires no math! Instead, we will focus on understanding qualitatively what sociology can tell us about economic processes. We will focus on how key sociological concepts such as race, gender, class, networks, power, and inequality impact how people save and spend, the functioning of markets and the decision-making of consumers.

Through lectures, readings, class discussions, podcasts, and videos, we will explore the following questions:

- Why is it ok to for men to sell their sperm, but illegal for women to sell their eggs? How is this linked to ideas about gender and motherhood?
- When does providing a sexual partner a cash gift become prostitution? How do we understand the role of money in relationships?
- What is a market? Are all markets the same?
- Where do prices come from? How does the fashion industry determine the value of “beauty”?