

Course Syllabus

Introduction to the Social Sciences

2021-2022

ECB1ISS

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Course aims

The aim of this course is to introduce students to important theories from psychology and sociology that are relevant to economics.

At the end of the course the student is able to:

- Understand concepts and methods used in psychology, sociology and economics.
- Situate these theories and models in a wider interdisciplinary context.
- Assess the common ground and complementarity of theories and models in psychology, sociology and economics.
- Adopt an integrated approach of different disciplines to social problems.

More broadly, students will have practiced with reading, presenting, discussing, and reflecting on scientific work in the social sciences that is relevant to economics.

Format

The course consists of lectures and tutorials. All lectures and tutorials take place on campus. Note that all times mentioned in this syllabus are Amsterdam time zone.

Lectures

In the lectures, the lecturers present key aspects of psychology and sociology that are relevant to economics. The lectures will be recorded and posted on Blackboard afterwards. The psychology classes (first part) cover and expand content of a book by Daniel Kahneman. The sociology classes (second part) cover and expand content of a book by Frank van Tubergen. These two books form the substantial basis of the lectures.

Tutorials

The aim of the tutorials is fourfold:

- To engage with a wider range of scholarship than presented during the lectures.
- To learn how to present social science research.
- To learn how to discuss and critique social science research.
- To get experiential knowledge on the (experimental) paradigms and procedures used in social science research.

Tutorials consist of two parts. In the first half of the meeting, two scientific papers are presented. During the entire course, each student takes the role of *presenter* once. Students subscribe to the paper they would like to present on a first-come, first-served basis via Blackboard. The content of each paper is presented by one group of up to two students. All students that do not present a paper in a particular week are required to prepare the content of the two papers of that week as *discussants*. The aim is for the entire class to discuss the papers in an interactive manner in the tutorial. The second half of the tutorial meetings is dedicated to a more in-depth, interactive, and critical examination of the presented materials, and/or to more practical applications of the study topics. Tutorials are not recorded. Tutorial presentations are explained in more detail on pages 7-11 of the manual.

Effort requirement

Students are required to (1) attend the first tutorial session on April 28, (2) attend at least 80% of the lectures and tutorials live, (3) present a paper, (4) submit discussion questions on the papers they do not present (submission records will be kept for every student), (5) do the final written exam. Failing these requirements will eliminate their option to take part in the re-take exam. If students chose to present a paper in a tutorial they cannot attend, it is *their* responsibility to find a solution (e.g., switch with someone and make sure all parties affected are informed).

Grading

The final grade will be communicated at the end of the course. Your final grades will be a weighted average of the following three components:

1. *A final written exam* (60% of final grade). The exam covers chapters 1-18, 25-27, 29, 31, 34, and Appendix A from the Kahneman book, chapters 1, 2, 6, 7, and 9 from the Van Tubergen book, all material from the lectures, and all articles that are presented in the tutorials. The exam will consist of a mixture of multiple choice questions, closed questions (e.g., yes/no, true/false) and open-ended, essay questions. More details and some example questions are presented during the lectures.
2. *Performance as a presenter* (25% of final grade). Tutorial lecturers will assess the content and style of your presentation and your ability to handle questions. Content aspects are, for example, whether you presented the most relevant points and whether you explained them clearly. Style is, for example, clarity of language and coherence of the story. Content weighs more than style. It is not expected that presenters can answer all questions (some are intrinsically hard to answer). Tutorial lecturers will communicate presenters' grades within a week after the presentation. See page 8/9 and 11 for details on how presentations are graded.
3. *Quality of discussion questions* (15% of final grade). Students' submitted questions will be graded at two occasions, once in the psychology part of the course (first four weeks) and once in the sociology part (second four weeks). The respective question grades will be communicated at the end of each part. Generally, a higher grade will be given if questions show a good understanding of the articles and address the following points: (1) The motivation for asking the question. (2) The part of the article the question refers to. (3) The relevance of the question (to you). Failing to submit questions more than twice or obviously lighthearted submissions will result in an insufficient grade (< 5,5) for this component.

Prerequisites

Students should be enrolled as full-time students for Economics and Business Economics.

Schedule

Tuesday lectures:

Time	Location	Lecturer week 17-20	Lecturer week 22-25
9:00-10:45	Ruppert Rood	van de Vijver	Damman

Note: 7 June in Ruppert 038!

Thursday tutorials:

Time	Location	Group	Lecturer week 17-22	Lecturer week 23-25
13:15-15:00	ICU Spinoza 105	1	Chota	Vromans
15:15-17:00	ICU Spinoza 105	2	Chota	Vromans
13:15-15:00	ICU Spinoza 109	3	Weindel	Cinjee

Day	What	Content	Literature (read before meeting)
Week 17			
26/4	Lec 1	van de Vijver: Introduction to psychology	none (lecture material only)
28/4	Tut 1	Introduction, judgment under uncertainty	Kahn appendix A
Week 18			
03/5	Lec 2	van de Vijver: Two systems	Kahn chapter 1-9
05/5		No tutorial (Liberation day / Bevrijdingsdag)	
Week 19			
10/5	Lec 3	van de Vijver: Heuristics and Biases	Kahn chapter 10-18 + Appendix A
12/5	Tut 2	Psychology: Social priming	1. Bargh et al., 1996 2. Doyen et al., 2012
Week 20			
17/5	Lec 4	van de Vijver: Choices	Kahn chapter 25-27, 29, 31, 34
19/5	Tut 3	Psychology: Frontal cortex and individual differences	3. Knoch et al., 2006 4. Cools et al., 2003
Week 21			
24/5		No lecture	
26/5		No tutorial (Ascension day / Hemelvaart)	
Week 22			
31/5	Lec 5	Damman: Questions and theories	FvT: Chapter 1-2 FvT: Chapter 3-4 (optional)
2/6	Tut 4	Psychology: Framing and context	5. Benjamin & Robbins, 2007 6. Henninger et al., 2010
Week 23			
07/6	Lec 6	Damman: Norms	FvT: Chapter 6 FvT: Chapter 5 (optional)
9/6	Tut 5	Sociology: Norms	7. Van Houdt et al., 2018 8. Horne et al., 2013
Week 24			
14/6	Lec 7	Damman: Networks	FvT: Chapter 7 FvT: Chapter 8 (optional)
16/6	Tut 6	Sociology: Networks	9. Christakis & Fowler, 2010 10. McPherson et al., 2006
Week 25			
21/6	Lec 8	Damman: Stratification and mobility	FvT: Chapter 9 FvT: Chapter 10 (optional)
23/6	Tut 7	Sociology: Stratification and mobility	11. Blommaert et al., 2014 12. Hainmueller et al., 2016
Week 26			
28/6	Exam	8.30 - 10:30h, Educatorium Alfa / Ruppert 042 (special facilities)	

Kahn = Kahneman book, FvT = van Tubergen book

Literature

Lectures

For the lectures, we will use these books:

- Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2011. (Note: Dutch versions and English versions of this book are available. Students can choose which one to read, the lecturer will use the English version.)
- Frank van Tubergen (2020). *Introduction to Sociology*. London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351134958>.

Tutorials

For the tutorial sessions a selected set of papers will be used. Please follow the links to download the paper. Note that access to these papers may only be possible from within Utrecht University or via the Lean Library browser extension: <https://www.uu.nl/en/university-library/help-in-searching/online-access/lean-library>.

List for psychology:

1. Bargh, J.A., Chen, M., & Burrows, L. (1996). Automaticity of social behavior: Direct effects of trait construct and stereotype activation on action. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 71(2), 230-244. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.71.2.230>
2. Doyen, S., Klein, O., Pichon, C.-L., & Cleeremans, A. (2012). Behavioral priming: It's all in the mind, but whose mind? *PLoS ONE*, 7(1), 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0029081>
3. Knoch, D., Gianotti, L.R.R., Pascual-Leone, A., Treyer, V., Regard, M., Hohmann, M., & Brugger, P. (2006). Disruption of right prefrontal cortex by low-frequency repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation induces risk-taking behavior. *Journal of Neuroscience*, 26(24), 6469-6472. <https://doi.org/10.1523/JNEUROSCI.0804-06.2006>
4. Cools, R., Barker, R.A., Sahakian, B.J., & Robbins, T.W. (2003). L-Dopa medication remediates cognitive inflexibility, but increases impulsivity in patients with Parkinson's disease. *Neuropsychologia*, 41, 1431-1441. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0028-3932\(03\)00117-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0028-3932(03)00117-9)
5. Benjamin, A.M., & Robbins, S.J. (2007). The role of framing effects in performance on the Balloon Analogue Risk Task (BART). *Personality and Individual Differences*, 42, 221-230. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2006.11.026>
6. Henninger, D.E., Madden, D.J., & Huettel, S.A. (2010). Processing speed and memory mediate age-related differences in decision making. *Psychology & Aging*, 25(2), 262-270. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0019096>

List for sociology:

7. Van Houdt, K. Kalmijn, M., & Ivanova, K. (2018). Family complexity and adult children's obligations: The role of divorce and co-residential history in norms to support parents and step-parents, *European Sociological Review*, 34(2), 169–183. <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcy007>
8. Horne, C., Dodoo, F. N.-A., & Dodoo, N. D. (2013). The shadow of indebtedness: Bridewealth and norms constraining female reproductive autonomy. *American Sociological Review*, 78(3), 503-520. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122413484923>
9. Christakis, N. A., & Fowler, J. H. (2010). Social network sensors for early detection of contagious outbreaks. *PLoS ONE*, 5(9), e12948. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0012948>
10. McPherson, M., Smith-Lovin, L., & Brashears, M. E. (2006). Social isolation in America: Changes in core discussion networks over two decades. *American Sociological Review*, 71(3), 353-375. <https://doi.org/10.1177/000312240607100301>
11. Blommaert, L., Coenders, M., & Van Tubergen, F. (2014). Discrimination of Arabic-named applicants in the Netherlands: An internet-based field experiment examining different phases in online recruitment procedures. *Social Forces*, 92(3), 957-982. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/sot124>
12. Hainmueller, J., Hangartner, D., & Lawrence, D. (2016). When lives are put on hold: Lengthy asylum processes decrease employment among refugees. *Science Advances*, 2(8), e1600432. <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.1600432>

Presentations

(1) *Presenters* prepare a presentation of about 15 minutes (excl. question time) that lays out the key ideas and concepts of the paper in a way that is understandable and interesting to their peers. The presenters should also be prepared to answer questions from their fellow students. If they so wish, presenters can discuss ideas for their presentation with the tutorial lecturer in due time (i.e., at least one week before their presentation). Presenters are required to send a draft version of their presentation to the tutorial lecturer by 7 pm (evening) on the day before their presentation (see “Guidelines for preparing your presentation” below).

(2) *Discussants* prepare questions and contribute to an interesting discussion following the presentations. Every week, discussants (individually) submit one good question per paper (two questions in total). The questions must be submitted by midnight on Wednesday (the day before the tutorial) on the dedicated Blackboard discussion forum (see the “Guidelines for submitting your questions” at the end of this document). Discussants should be prepared to pose their questions during the discussions following the presentations (see “Guidelines for submitting your questions” below).

Guidelines for preparing your presentation

In your presentation, you should answer the following questions:

- What is the paper about? What is the core argument/hypothesis?
- What is the author's line of reasoning?
- What's the author's approach/method? For example: experiment; observation; logical inference; theoretical analyses.
- What is the paper's conclusion/take-home message? What are the results?
- What makes the content of the paper relevant to economics? For example, what are the implications for economic theory and/or practice?
- What are the aspects that could be discussed in class? What do you think about the paper? What was interesting about it and why?

Some practical tips:

- Not more than 10 slides (your presentation must not last longer than 15 minutes).
- Do not put too much text on each slide (the slides are meant to illustrate what you speak about).
- Try to speak freely (i.e., without any written out sentences, do not learn entire paragraphs of text by heart).
- Make use of visuals and examples to illustrate what you talk about.
- Prepare for the presentation with your partner (e.g., rehearse in front of your housemates, the mirror, or your cat).
- Be prepared to answer questions. Although we do not expect you to have an answer to every question, it should be clear that you have read and understood the material beyond the aspects that you presented.
- Send a draft version of your presentation to the tutorial lecturer by 7 pm (evening) on the day before the presentation.

Important! E-mail your presentation to the tutorial lecturer by 7 pm on the evening before the day of your presentation. Note that tutorial lecturers may differ depending on the week and the group you are in. The subject field of your e-mail should contain the phrase "ISS 2022 Presentation". Please mention in your e-mail the title of the paper you present, the names of both presenters and both student numbers. Note that before your presentation, you should have checked the Blackboard forum to prepare for possible questions from your fellow students.

Grading of presentations

We provide an overall, general impression on four aspects:

1. Presentation style / Communication / Language,
2. Slides / Presentation material,
3. Content, and
4. Questions and Interactions.

For each aspect we also rate subskills / -points, but these do not necessarily add linearly to the overall impression. The complete score sheet can be found in Appendix A.

Based on the four general impressions, we determine your final grade. The ratings we use are poor (--), unsatisfactory (-), satisfactory (o), good (+), and excellent (++). "Satisfactory" is the overall expected level, excellent is reserved for aspects that far exceed expectations. Based on your main grades in the four categories, we will assess what your average performance is. Each score has a grade attached to it (5, 6, 7, 8, 9). Typically, your grade will be the average of this grade; however, the lecturer has the freedom to deviate from this score. This is to distinguish relatively good from relatively poorer performance within the same margin.

Feedback on presentation

It is students' own responsibility to prepare their presentations and discussion questions for the tutorials in a timely and professional manner. The lecturers are available to guide you in the preparation. For example, you can discuss any questions you might have about the paper, or get an opinion about the planned presentation format or content. Meetings must be arranged via e-mail. Note that midway the course, the lecturers switch.

Guidelines for submitting your questions

When formulating and submitting your questions, please take the following into account:

1. Run a spellcheck on your questions before submitting them. Ungrammatical questions or questions with a lot of typing errors are hard to understand.
2. You may want to explain what brought you to this question. What part of the paper (e.g., page, section) does your question relate to? Do you have some idea of what the answer might be for this question?
3. Due to the relatively large number of students, the lecturer cannot provide feedback to each of your questions (but see below). However, you can get value out of your questions by posing them in the dedicated discussion forum. Your fellow students may use your questions to have an interesting discussion.

Important! Post your questions (at least one per paper) in a new thread on the Blackboard forum for that tutorial paper by midnight on the day before the tutorial. The subject field of the thread should read: "last name, first name". Note that only after posting your question, you will be able to see other students' questions.

Grading of questions

The lecturers will grade questions at two occasions (two questions per occasion). The first two questions are selected from the psychology part of the course (first four weeks), and the second two questions are selected from the sociology part (second four weeks). Each question will be graded on a 10-point scale. Lecturers have the following guidelines for grading questions:

- 10: question is substantial, well-motivated and goes beyond the paper content
- 9: question is substantial and well-motivated
- 8: question is substantial
- 7: question of understanding or clarification question
- 6: question that can be answered with a yes or no
- < 5.5: question unrelated to the paper

The grade for this component will be the average of the four question grades. Note that failing to submit questions at more than two occasions means you fail the course requirements.

Appendix A. Score sheet for Introduction to Social Sciences (ECB1ISS)

Presenter 1:

Lecturer:

Presenter 2:

Date:

Topic:

Final grade:

Presentation style / communication / language	--	-	0	+	++
General impression:					
Clarity of language					
Presentation forms a coherent story					
Method of interacting with class is engaging ¹					
Both speakers are involved roughly equal ²					

Slides / presentation material	--	-	0	+	++
General impression:					
Slides are not too text heavy					
Slides support argument instead of inverse					
Accurate use of visuals (graphs/videos/pictures/demos/..)					
Content is presented clear, compelling & non-distracting ³					

Content	--	-	0	+	++
General impression:					
Presentation covers core argument of paper. ⁴					
Argumentation is sound					
Examples are used effectively ⁵					
Talk provides solid basis for further discussion in class					
Relevance to economics & business is clearly articulated					

Questions and interaction	--	-	0	+	++
General impression:					
Questions are handled well and intelligible. ⁶					
Both presenters are able to answer questions					
Presenters can handle questions that they do not know an immediate answer to					
Question handling demonstrates that content is understood beyond what was presented in main talk					

Open feedback by lecturer (positives as well as critical notes):

¹ e.g., not hiding behind notes; truly interacting with the group

² guideline: each speaker presents about half of the presentation. Both address questions

³ e.g., font size, color use

⁴ Boils down to a central puzzle/question/theme that is addressed in this research line.

⁵ e.g., to communicate (abstract) principles

⁶ For example, questions are reworded when they are not clear immediately, questions are used to provoke discussion, questions are used to further clarify materials.

Appendix B. Content tutorial meetings sociology

Tutorial 5: Norms (9 June)

In Lecture 5, you will start to learn to think like a sociologist. You will learn about the types of questions sociologists ask, and about key elements of sociological theories. This general start, is followed by an introduction to the topic of norms, in Lecture 6. During this tutorial, you will learn about the topic of norms more in depth. In two presentations, you will hear about ways to study social norms in the family domain by means of vignette studies. Next, you as a group will work on study questions, in which you apply insights from the chapters about questions, theories, and norms.

After this tutorial you will be able to:

- explain what a vignette experiment is, and how it can be used to study social norms.
- describe advantages and disadvantages of using vignette experiments to study social norms.
- apply different sociological procedures related to the chapters about questions, theories, and norms.

Papers presented in this tutorial meeting:

7. Van Houdt, K. Kalmijn, M., & Ivanova, K. (2018). Family complexity and adult children's obligations: The role of divorce and co-residential history in norms to support parents and step-parents, *European Sociological Review*, 34(2), 169–183.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcy007>
8. Horne, C., Dodoo, F. N.-A., & Dodoo, N. D. (2013). The shadow of indebtedness: Bridewealth and norms constraining female reproductive autonomy. *American Sociological Review*, 78(3), 503-520. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122413484923>

Tutorial 6: Networks (16 June)

In Lecture 7, you will learn about personal networks, network characteristics, and the small-world phenomenon. This tutorial will focus on achieving more in-depth insights regarding social networks and the contagion taking place in networks. In the presentations, you will hear about how core discussion networks have developed over time, and about the role social network position plays in a contagious outbreak of the flu. After that, you will experience the spread – this time not of the flu, but of beliefs and behaviors – yourself by using a series of simulations using social networks.

After this tutorial you will be able to:

- describe the friendship paradox and its potential relevance for early detection of contagious outbreaks.
- list changes in core discussion networks in the US over time and link those to the 'loss of community?' section of the book (7.6).
- explain the difference between simple and complex contagion, and discuss their implications for the spread in networks.

Papers presented in this tutorial meeting:

9. Christakis, N. A., & Fowler, J. H. (2010). Social network sensors for early detection of contagious outbreaks. *PLoS ONE*, 5(9), e12948.
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0012948>
10. McPherson, M., Smith-Lovin, L., & Brashears, M. E. (2006). Social isolation in America: Changes in core discussion networks over two decades. *American Sociological Review*, 71(3), 353-375. <https://doi.org/10.1177/000312240607100301>

Tutorial 7: Stratification and mobility (23 June)

Lecture 8 concentrates on the sociological study of stratification and social mobility. Amongst other things, the status attainment model is discussed, which focuses on the role that both ascription and achievement play for understanding inequalities on the labor market. In this tutorial two papers will be presented that focus on other processes taking place on the labor market, such as ethnic discrimination in recruitment. Next, you as a group will work on a recap of the materials from the sociology part of this course.

After this tutorial you will be able to:

- describe different mechanisms resulting in labor market inequalities.
- summarize key concepts, theories, and procedures from one of the sociological sub-themes addressed in this course.
- identify which sociological concepts, theories, and procedures you already can adequately describe, explain, and apply, and for which some further studying may still be necessary.

Papers presented in this tutorial meeting:

11. Blommaert, L., Coenders, M., & Van Tubergen, F. (2014). Discrimination of Arabic-named applicants in the Netherlands: An internet-based field experiment examining different phases in online recruitment procedures. *Social Forces*, 92(3), 957-982.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/sot124>
12. Hainmueller, J., Hangartner, D., & Lawrence, D. (2016). When lives are put on hold: Lengthy asylum processes decrease employment among refugees. *Science Advances*, 2(8), e1600432. <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.1600432>