

Spring '12 · Tu. & Th. 11:40am–12:50pm · Classroom: Gray 228 · Office: 276 Sociology/Psychology

Sociology 140 · Ethics 174

Taboo Markets

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Course Description and Objectives

This course is about taboo, stigmatized, or otherwise morally controversial markets. Examples include trade in alcohol and other drugs, sex work, gambling, baby-selling, paid domestic labor, care work, human blood, organs, eggs, sperm, genetic material, viaticals, and pollution rights. We will read empirical studies of and ethical arguments about these markets. We will also consider broader arguments about the scope and limits, if any, of the market as a social institution, and its relationship to other sorts of exchange.

Books

Two required texts are on order at the bookstore. You can also obtain them (probably more cheaply) from other sources. The books are:

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.)

Other readings will be made available through the course website. Access details will be given in class.

Requirements

You are required to attend; participate in class; write two short papers during the semester; and one longer final paper. During the first two weeks of class, you will **choose a good, service, or social practice** that you think is interesting enough to research during the semester and write a paper about. What you choose can be anything relevant to the class, as long as it meets these criteria: (1) Legal market exchange in this good, service, or practice is or has been the topic of strong moral controversy or conflict. (2) There has been at least some public writing or commentary about it. **Plan to say a few words about your choice** in class during Week

3.

Other requirements:

1. *Attendance and Participation.* Do the reading, show up to class, silence your phone. Be prepared to discuss the material and, if needed, what you were just doing on Facebook. There will be regular in-class quizzes and surveys. Cumulatively, these will be worth 10% of your final grade.
2. *First Paper.* (About 2,000 words.) Topics for the paper will be provided in class. This assignment is due on February 16th at 5:00pm and will be worth 25% of your final grade.
3. *Second Paper.* (About 2,000 words.) Topics for the paper will be provided in class. This assignment is due on March 22nd at 5:00pm and will be worth 25% of your final grade.
4. *Final Exam.* I will let you know the format of the final exam in advance. It will be worth 40% of your final grade.
5. *A note about turning in the papers:* All papers must be turned in via email by 5:00pm on their due date. You are welcome to turn them in early. Late papers will be subject to a grade penalty. Paper copies are not acceptable. Instead, email your paper to kjhealy@soc.duke.edu. **Make sure that it is in PDF format** (not Word, rtf, or anything else) and that the filename is of the form `Yourlastname-Yourfirstname.pdf`. It is your responsibility to get me the papers on time and in the right format. I will not entertain lame excuses asserting that your computer is a mysterious, magical object whose fickle temperament and capricious behavior is beyond your meager understanding or control.

Office Hours

To schedule a meeting with me, go to <http://tungle.me/kjhealy>, select an available 15-minute slot, and book the meeting.

Course Schedule

- Week 1 **Introduction: Taboo Markets**
- Week 2 **She's Selling a Baby** Elizabeth Landes and Richard Posner, "The Economics of the Baby Shortage". "In the Matter of Baby M" (E&W). Debra Spar, *The Baby Business*, excerpts.
- Week 3 **Civilizing Markets?** Paul Seabright, *The Company of Strangers*, excerpts. Milton Friedman. *Capitalism and Freedom*, Chapters 1, 2, 10. Deirdre McCloskey. *The Bourgeois Virtues: Ethics for an Age of Commerce*. Pp. 1-60.
- Week 4 **Destructive Markets?** Margaret Radin, *Contested Commodities* (excerpts in E&W). F.S. Michaels, *Monoculture* (excerpts). Debra Satz, *Why Some Things Should Not Be for Sale* (excerpts).
- Week 5 **Forbidden Exchanges** Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (excerpts). Al Roth, "Repugnance as a Constraint on Markets". Michael Walzer, "What Money Can't Buy".
- Week 6 **Blood and Organs** Alexander Berger, "Why Selling Kidneys Should Be Legal". Richard Titmuss *The Gift Relationship* (excerpts). Kieran Healy, *Last Best Gifts* (excerpts).
- Week 7 **Human Tissue and Processed Bodies** Scott Carney, *The Red Market* (excerpts). Nancy Scheper-Hughes, "The Global Traffic in Human Organs". Michel Anteby, "Markets, Morals, and Practices of Trade: Jurisdictional Disputes in the U.S. Commerce in Cadavers".
- Week 8 **Selling Eggs and Sperm** Rene Almeling, *Sex Cells*.
- Week 9 **Selling Vice** Jeffrey Sallaz, "The Making of the Global Gambling Industry". Tanya Katerí Hernández, "Sex in the [Foreign] City" (E&W). Ann Lucas, "The Currency of Sex" (E&W).
- Week 10 **Spring Break: No Class**
- Week 11 **Selling Care** "For Love nor Money: The commodification of care", Deborah Stone (E&W). Katherine Silbaugh, "Commodification and Women's Household Labor" (E&W). Teemu Ruskola, "Home Economics" (E&W).
- Week 12 **The Purchase of Intimacy** Viviana Zelizer, *The Purchase of Intimacy* (excerpts). Ruth Padawer, "Keeping Up With Being Kept". Arlie Russell Hochschild. "The Commodity Frontier."
- Week 13 **Crowding Out** Samuel Bowles, "Policies Designed for Self-Interested Citizens May Undermine 'The Moral Sentiments': Evidence from Economic

Experiments”. B.S. Frey, F. OberholzerGee and R. Eichenberger. “The Old Lady Visits Your Backyard: A tale of morals and markets.” Roger Lowenstein. “Walk Away from your Mortgage!”

Week 14 **Pricing Lives** Frank Ackerman and Lisa Heizerling, *Priceless: On knowing the price of everything and the value of nothing*, excerpts. Peter Ubel, *Pricing Life*, excerpts.

Week 15 **Open/Catch-up**