

Economics & Policy of networks

Lecture notes for the course of Economics and Policy of Networks

Prof. Fabio Sabatini

Sapienza University of Rome, Department of Economics and Law

Your teacher



- Email: fabio.sabatini@uniroma1.it
- Personal page at Uniroma1.it: <https://sites.google.com/a/uniroma1.it/fabiosabatini-eng/>
- Personal page at SCG: www.socialcapitalgateway.org/sabatini
- Google Scholar: <http://goo.gl/xGWqrf>
- Ideas: <https://ideas.repec.org/e/psa135.html>

Office hours

- During my teaching semester, every Wednesday and Friday by appointment.
- From June to February by appointment.
- Office: 6th floor, room 637

Main goals of this course

- The main goal of this course is to provide a comprehensive overview and synthesis of research on **social** and economic networks, drawing on studies by **economists**, sociologists, psychologists, computer scientists, and mathematicians.
- **The main focus will be on social networks.**

Main goals of this course

By the end of the course, students should have:

1. The ability to conduct **bibliographic researches** on specific topics in economics and other social sciences.
2. The ability to **understand and critically read research papers** in the field of networks from different disciplines (economics, but also sociology, computer science, and mathematics).
3. The ability to **present and discuss research papers**.
4. The ability to **assess the strengths and weaknesses of an academic paper**.
5. The ability **to formulate and develop a new research question** in the field.

Main target of this course

- This course targets students that are interested in the **academic literature in the field of networks – especially social networks – norms, and culture in a multidisciplinary perspective**, either because they plan to apply for a PhD in economics or other social sciences or because they want to be able to understand with a critical view the articles and papers available in their area of specialization instead of simply reading journalistic summaries of scientific reports.

Contents

This class consists in two chief parts:

1) Lectures

- Introduction to basic concepts (e.g. networks, norms, social capital).
- Presentation of a (short) series of seminal studies in the field.
- Presentation of a (longer) series of recent research papers. We will explore the frontier of empirical economic research in the fields of networks and culture.

Contents

2) Presentations

- Students will give presentations of a selection of published papers.
- In addition, small groups of students will be assigned a topic with the purpose of developing an original paper consisting in a review of the literature and/or in an empirical analysis based on survey data.

Several lectures will consist entirely of student presentations.

One goal of the course is to identify new research questions, which students will be invited to develop empirically and/or theoretically with the professor's assistance.

Readings

- **Lecture notes and research papers will be provided as the course progresses.**
- In the syllabus, three kinds of reading are listed:
 1. Readings that will be presented by the teacher.
 2. Readings that will be presented by students.
 3. Optional readings that can be useful to get a broader perspective of the topics discussed in each class.

It would be helpful to read the 1) and 2) types of paper *before* the class, in order to be able to actively participate to the discussion. Type 3) readings are optional.

Slides

- PowerPoint slides of the lectures will be made available in advance of each class meeting (generally the day before) on the teacher's website and or **via email**.

Newsletter

- Students are invited to subscribe to the course's newsletter by sending an email to fabio.sabatini@uniroma1.it with the subject "*Subscription to EconNet newsletter*". Please specify your previous areas of studies in the email's body.
- The newsletter will be used to notify the publication and url of the slides and for any other communication related to the course (e.g. changes in the class and office hours, information about exams, readings, interesting events at Sapienza and elsewhere, etc.).

Assignments

- From one point in the course (probably around April), students will be invited to undertake one or more of the following assignments:
 - 1) Presentation of a paper to be picked up in a reading list provided during the course.
 - 2) Development and presentation of an original paper on an assigned topic.
 - 3) Review of a book to be picked up in a reading list provided during the course.

Assignments 1 and 2 can be undertaken by small groups (from 2 to 5 students).

Highlights

- At the end of each lecture (starting from the third lecture), students will be invited to devote 10 minutes to write the highlights of the lecture.
- Highlights will consist of 1 to 5 bullet points (approximately 85 characters each).
- Consultation of teaching materials will be allowed.
- Highlights can – but not necessarily will – be subject to evaluation: basically, they could serve to complement the points obtained with the completion of the assignments and/or the exams.

Grading

- Students earn points for each assignment. The total number of points accumulated will determine the final evaluation. Points will be assigned as follows:
 - Paper presentation: up to **25** points
 - Development of an original paper: up to **35** points
 - Book review: up to **25** points
- Students will also have the possibility to earn further points through an optional written and/or oral exam, according to the following criteria:
 - Written exam: up to **10** points
 - Oral exam: up to **5** points
- Points will not be weighted and will equally contribute to the final grade. By reaching the **35 points threshold** students will earn the distinction (i.e. **30 *cum laude***).

Students' self-introduction

- Previous studies (here and elsewhere).
- Quantitative and non-quantitative skills (statistics, econometrics, mathematics, other social sciences. Econometric skills, as well as sociological and political science backgrounds are highly appreciated).
- Interests (e.g. preferred disciplines and topics, 1st level degree thesis' topic).
- Ambitions (e.g. anyone interested in a PhD?).

See you tomorrow, thank you!