

Trust in Society

SOCY 26

Winter 2007 12: MWF 12:30 – 1:35

X-hour: T 1-2 pm

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Office hours: M 2 – 5 pm, or by appointment

Course Description:

You trust your friend to repay the \$10 you loaned her last week; investors trust the stock market to accurately value corporate resources; you trust members of your class work group to complete their parts of the group project; patients trust doctors to inform them about the best treatments; you trust Amazon.com (and the internet) to protect and secure your credit card information when you purchase a CD on-line; waitresses trust patrons to tip them for good service; citizens trust the government to enforce laws fairly.

The word trust appears as a verb in each of these examples, but do we really mean the same thing by trust in each of these very different contexts? What exactly is trust anyway, and why does it matter? Social science and popular press literature of the past decade suggests that trust is the cause of many “good” things, such as the source of group cooperation, the basis of democracy, the foundation of the market economy, the source of national economic power, the key, even, to morality itself. Given its relation to all things good, it is not surprising that some commentators speak with alarm when they claim that “trust is declining” in society. What are the benefits of trust? Is trust declining? How would we know if it was?

In this course we will use our ‘sociological imaginations’ to explore the concept of trust. We will read and discuss theoretical and empirical research from across the social sciences. It is essential that students come to class prepared to discuss the reading material for that day’s class. Students will be expected to participate regularly in classroom discussions, and will be graded on class participation (**15% of course grade**). Because it is necessary to be in class to participate, **missing four class periods** will result in a C for your class participation grade. **Missing more than six class periods** (regardless of reason) will result in a zero for class participation.

In addition to class participation, students will write **4 short papers** (5-6 pages; 1500 words; **15% each** of course grade) throughout the term, analyzing a specific issue or aspect of trust (see specific **paper assignments** below, and the attached **policy on late papers**). Finally, students will hand in a **final term paper** (12-15 pages; 6,000-7,000 words; **25%**) on a topic discussed with and approved by me.

Course Requirements

The following materials are required, and can be purchased from the Dartmouth Bookstore or Wheelock Books. They are also available **on reserve in Baker/Berry library**, and selected articles/chapters on Blackboard and in the Sociology Department office (112 Silsby).

- 1) Cook, Karen, editor. 2001. Trust in Society. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- 2) Hardin, Russell. 2002. Trust and Trustworthiness. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- 3) R. Kramer and K. Cook, editors. 2004. Trust and Distrust in Organizations. NY: Russell Sage Foundation. ISBN: 0871544857
- 4) K.S. Cook, R. Hardin, M. Levi, editors. 2005. Cooperation Without Trust? (Russell Sage Foundation Series on Trust) (Hardcover) ISBN: 0871541645

***** Students with learning, physical or psychiatric disabilities who will be taking this course and may need disability-related classroom accommodations are encouraged to make an appointment to see me as soon as possible, and by the end of the second week of classes (January 12, 2007).** All discussions will remain confidential, although the Student Disability Services office may be consulted to discuss appropriate implementation of any accommodation requested. Also, stop by the Academic Skills Center in 301 Collis Center to register for support services. ***

*** For individual peer tutorial assistance with papers, research, and new media projects, students may use RWIT, the Student Center for Research, Writing, and Information Technology. Make appointments online at www.dartmouth.edu/~rwit, or drop by the Center in Baker-Berry Library, Level One, from 4 to 6 pm and 7 to 10 pm, S-Th. ***

Honor Principle and work in this course: You are encouraged to discuss the readings and your papers with other students in the class, or others outside of the class. You are also encouraged to edit and re-edit your papers before handing in to me. You should cite concepts and materials from course readings and other materials appropriately in your papers.

Questions to consider for each reading:

What is the causal argument? How are the key concepts in the argument defined? What are the flaws in the argument or definition of concepts? Is the author claiming necessary and/or sufficient conditions? How does this argument fit with others we have read? What questions do you have about the authors' argument/evidence?

Course Outline

Jan 5: Introduction to Course

Section I: Social Mechanisms and Benefits of Trust

Jan 8: Thinking sociologically, thinking about mechanisms.

READ: (1) Collins, Randall. 1998. "The Sociological eye and its blinders." *Contemporary Sociology* 27(1): 2-7. **BLACKBOARD AND**

(2) Hedstrom, Peter, and Richard Swedberg. 1998. "Social mechanisms" Pp. 1-31 in *Social Mechanisms*, edited by Peter Hedstrom and Richard Swedberg. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. **BLACKBOARD**

Jan 10: The benefits of trust

READ: Fukuyama, Francis. 1995. *Trust*. New York: The Free Press. chs. 1,3 **BLACKBOARD**
Hall, John A. 1992. "Trust in Tocqueville." *Policy Org & Society* Winter:16. **BLACKBOARD**

**Recommended January 10: TECH@TUCK: MANAGING CONSUMER DATA: Improving Service and Protecting Privacy in the Digital Age 4:40pm Ankeny Classroom, Murdough Center <http://mba.tuck.dartmouth.edu/digital/Programs/TechAtTuck/Identity.html>

Jan 12: Declining Trust?

READ: Putnam, Robert. 1995. "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital." *Journal of Democracy* 6.1: 65-78. **BLACKBOARD AND**
Knight, Jack. Chapter 12: "Social Norms and the Rule of Law" In *Trust and Society*

**Recommended January 12/13: Supervision at 8pm, The Moore Theater
<http://hop.dartmouth.edu/2006-07/070112-buildersassociation.html>

Paper assignment 1: What is trust and why do we care about it? What effect is trust purported to have: on individuals, on groups, in society in general? **DUE: MONDAY January 15 in my office by 5pm.**

Section 2: Trust and Related Concepts

Jan 15: Martin Luther King Jr. Day – NO class

Paper 1 Due

Recommended: **Keynote Speaker – Harry Belefonte, 7 p.m. Spaulding Auditorium
Also see other activities at: <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~ide/mlk>

Jan 16: X-hour

READ: R. Hardin, *Trust and Trustworthiness*, ch 3

Jan 17: READ: R. Hardin, *Trust and Trustworthiness*, chs. 1-2

Jan 19: READ: R. Hardin, *Trust and Trustworthiness*, chs. 4; 8

Section 3: Producing trust interpersonally: mechanisms I.

Jan 22: READ: Hardin: Ch 5 “Epistemology of Trust” AND
Cook, Hardin, Levy: ch 2 “Trustworthiness”

Jan 24: READ: Ensminger, Jean. “Reputations, Trust, and the Principal-Agent Problem.” Ch. 6 in *Trust in Society*. AND
Yamigishi, Toshio. “Trust as a form of social intelligence.” Ch. 4 in *Trust in Society*.

Jan 26: READ: Tyler, Tom. “Why do people rely on others? Social identity and social aspects of trust.” Ch. 9 in *Trust in Society*. AND
Nee, Victor, and Jimmy Sanders. “Trust in Ethnic ties: Social capital and immigrants.” Ch. 13 in *Trust in Society*.

Paper assignment 2: Compare and contrast the concept of trust to one other related concept: confidence, cooperation, familiarity, distrust, reciprocity, risk, trustworthiness, uncertainty. In your paper you must define what trust is. Since there are competing models of trust, you will want to choose one definition to discuss. Is trust an action, a decision, a belief, a moral judgment, a disposition, an expectation? **DUE: TUESDAY Jan 30 in my office by 5pm.**

Section 4: Producing trust institutionally: mechanisms II.

Jan 29: READ: Zucker, Lynne. 1986. “Production of trust: Institutional sources of economic structure, 1840-1920.” *Research in Organizational Behavior* 8:53-111. **BLACKBOARD** AND
Shapiro, Susan. 1987. “The Social Control of Impersonal Trust” *American J of Soc* 93:623-58
BLACKBOARD

Jan 31: READ: Heimer, Carol. “Solving the Problem of trust.” Ch. 2 in *Trust in Society*.

February 2: READ: Buskens & Raub. 2002. "Embedded Trust: Control and Learning"
BLACKBOARD
Discuss final paper topics

Section 4: Trust and Institutions continued

Feb 5: READ: Ch 12 in *Trust and Distrust in Organizations*

Feb 7: READ: Ch 5 in *Trust and Distrust in Organizations*

Feb 9: NO CLASS – Winter Carnival

Section 5: Trust and Institutions: The Case of health care

Feb 12: Trust in the doctor-patient relationship

READ: Mechanic, David. 1998. "The Functions and limitations of trust in the provision of medical care" *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 23:661. **BLACKBOARD**

Feb 14: Trust in health care organizations

READ: Hall et al. "Trust in Physicians and medical institutions" *The Milbank Quarterly* 79:613.
Mechanic & Meyer.2000. "Concepts of trust among patients with serious illness" *Social Science and Medicine* 51:657. **BLACKBOARD**

Feb 16: READ: Halbert et al. "Racial Differences in Trust in Health Care Providers." *Archives of Internal Medicine* 166:896. **BLACKBOARD**

Paper assignment 3: What does it mean to say that we trust doctors? Has our "trust" in medical care changed in the past decade? What factors might cause a change in the level of trust people feel for doctors, or for health care organizations? **DUE: TUESDAY Feb 20 in my office by 5pm.**

Section 6: Trust and institutions: The Case of the internet

Feb 19: What is trust again? How does it work online?

READ: Camp, Nissenbaum, McGrath. "Trust: Collision of Paradigms" **BLACKBOARD AND**
Cheshire, Coye & Karen Cook. 2004 "The Emergence of Trust Networks under Uncertainty: Implications for Internet Interactions" *Analyse & Kritik* 26:220. **BLACKBOARD**

Feb 21: READ: Bacharach, Micheal, and Diego Gambetta. "Trust in signs." Ch. 5 in *Trust in Society*. **AND**

Kollock, Peter. 1999. "The Production of Trust in Online Markets." *Advances in Group Processes*16: 99-123. **BLACKBOARD**

Feb 23: Is it really trust?

READ: Ch 7 in *Trust and Distrust in Organizations*

Paper assignment 4: How does the medium of the internet affect issues of trust? Are issues of trust different in the digital environment of email and e-commerce? How so? Why are signals relevant to trust? Can we signal trustworthiness? Do different situations call for different signals, why? **DUE: TUESDAY Feb 27 in my office by 5pm.**

Section 7: Alternatives to Trust

Feb 26: READ: Cook, Hardin, and Levi *Cooperation without Trust*, ch. 5 & 6

Feb 28: READ: Cook, Hardin, and Levi *Cooperation without Trust*, ch. 7 & 8

March 2: READ: Cook, Hardin, and Levi *Cooperation without Trust*, ch. 9 & 10

Final Week: What do we know about trust?

March 5: READ: J. Braithwaite. 1998. "Institutionalizing Distrust, Enculturating trust." Pp. 343-375 in *Trust and Governance*, edited by Valerie Braithwaite and Margaret Levi. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. **BLACKBOARD**

March 7: Last class

FINAL PAPERS DUE: Monday March 12, 5 pm.

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Policy on Late Papers

Short papers handed in any time after they are due will receive a full letter grade reduction. (Basically this means the highest possible grade you can get on a late paper is a B). I will deduct an additional half a letter grade for each additional class period your paper is late. **Any paper more than two weeks late will not be accepted.**

Extensions may be given for extreme individual circumstances. If you are having problems completing an assignment, for whatever reason, it is best to talk with me as soon as possible. Talk to me after class, come to see me in my office, or email me. I may be able to help you get the paper done on time, and I will be more sympathetic than if I hear of your problem the day before or day (!) the assignment is due. **Please note** that talking with me will not necessarily lead to an extension.

Also Note Well: Computer failure is never considered a justifiable excuse for a paper extension. Computers sometimes freeze or breakdown; power outages happen. The way to deal with these possibilities is to **SAVE YOUR WORK.**

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