

Trust in Society

SOCY 63

Fall 2009: MWF 10:00 – 11:05

X-hour: Th 12-1 pm

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Office hours: M 11:05 – 12noon; Th 1 – 3pm

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 is trust and what are its benefits? 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. After this course you should be able to: (1) define trust and analyze it according to the various theoretical frameworks about the role of trust in society; (2) distinguish trust from other related concepts such as cooperation, distrust and trustworthiness; (3) identify the pros and cons of different empirical measures of trust; (4) discuss the role of trust in specific social contexts; and (5) apply your knowledge of trust to a specific case or study in your own research paper.

Course Requirements

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 at best a “C” grade for class participation.

Missing more than six class periods (regardless of reason) will result in a zero for class participation. ****Getting sick with H1N1 or any other common illness should be more than accommodated with this policy.****

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 any topic of interest related to trust, discussed with and approved by me.

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.

- 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) K.S. Cook, R. Hardin, M. Levi, editors. 2005. Cooperation Without Trust? (Russell Sage Foundation Series on Trust)

***** 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 (October 9, 2009).** 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. ***

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 (comments from others encouraged) before handing in to me.

You should cite concepts and materials from course readings and other materials appropriately in your papers. You may use any citation method that you are familiar with (e.g., MLA or APA, see for more information: <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/sources/sources-citation.html>) so long as you are consistent.

Questions to consider for each reading (and generally for each paper):

What is the causal argument being made? 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? What evidence does the author provide to support the argument? How does the argument/concepts compare with others we have read? [Go back and read the Graff reading from the first day!]

Course Outline

Sept 23: Introduction to Course

READ: Graff, Gerald. 2009. "An Argument worth having." *New York Times*, Sunday September 6, 2009. Op-Ed Section, p.10.

Sept 25: 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**

Section I: What is Trust?

Sept 28: Trust and related concepts

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

Sept 30: READ: R. Hardin, *Trust and Trustworthiness*, chs. 3-4

Oct 2: READ: R. Hardin, *Trust and Trustworthiness*, chs. 5; 8

Oct 5: Benefits of trust?

READ: Fukuyama, Francis. 1995. *Trust*. New York: The Free Press. chs. 1,3

BLACKBOARD AND

Hall, John A. 1992. "Trust in Tocqueville." *Policy Org & Society* Winter:16. **BLACKBOARD**

Oct 7: Trust in society

READ: Rothstein and Uslaner, 2005. "All for all: Equality and Social Trust" **BLACKBOARD**
AND

Knight, Jack. Chapter 12: "Social Norms and the Rule of Law" In *Trust and Society*

Oct 9: Trust vs. Confidence; Declining Trust?

READ: Brownlie. 2008. "Conceptualizing trust and health" Pp. 17-32 in *Researching Trust and Health*. Edited by Julie Brownlie, Alexandra Greene, Alexandra Howson. New York: Routledge. **BLACKBOARD**

Putnam, Robert. 1995. "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital." *Journal of Democracy* 6.1: 65-78. **BLACKBOARD**

Paper assignment 1: What is trust and why do we care about it? What is the basis of trust? What effect is trust purported to have: on individuals, on groups, in society in general?

DUE: SUNDAY October 11 by 5pm to BLACKBOARD.

Section 2: Producing trust interpersonally

Oct 12: READ: Messick and Kramer, "Trust as a form of shallow morality" Ch.3 in *Trust in Society* AND

Cook, Hardin, Levy: ch 2 "Trustworthiness" in *Cooperation without Trust?*

REVIEW: Hardin: Ch 5 "Epistemology of Trust" [Again]

Oct 14: 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*.

Oct 16: 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: Thursday October 22, 5pm to BLACKBOARD**

Section 3: Producing trust institutionally

Oct 19: 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**

Oct 21: READ: Heimer, Carol. "Solving the Problem of trust." Ch. 2 in *Trust in Society*.

Oct 22: Paper 2 DUE

Oct 23: READ: Cook, Hardin, and Levi *Cooperation without Trust*, ch. 3
Discuss final paper topics

Section 4: Trust and institutions: The Case of the internet

Oct 26: NO CLASS – but you should do the reading!

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**

Oct 28: Reputation online

READ: Anthony, Smith, Williamson. "Reputation and reliability in collective goods" *R&S* 21:283. **BLACKBOARD** **AND**

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

Gueth, Werner, and Kliemt, Hartmut. 2004. "The Evolution of Trust(worthiness) in the Net" *Analyse & Kritik* 26:203. **BLACKBOARD**

Oct 30: Trust and security?

READ: Nissenbaum "Will security enhance trust online or supplant it" Ch 7 in *Trust and Distrust in Organizations* **BLACKBOARD** **AND**

Anthony, et al. "Internet exchange and forms of trust" **BLACKBOARD**

Paper assignment 3: 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 November 3, 5pm to BLACKBOARD**

Section 5: Trust and Institutions continued

Nov 2: READ: Bacharach, Micheal, and Diego Gambetta. "Trust in signs." Ch. 5 in *Trust in Society*.

Nov 3: Paper 3 DUE

Nov 4: READ: Bohnet, Baytelman. "Institutions and Trust" *Rationality & Society* 19:99-135. **BLACKBOARD**

Nov 6: READ: Oskarsson et al. "Power, trust and institutional constraints" *Rationality & Society* 21:171. **BLACKBOARD**

Section 6: Trust and Institutions: The Case of health care

Nov 9: Trust in doctors and health care organizations

READ: Hall et al. "Trust in Physicians and medical institutions" *The Milbank Quarterly* 79:613.

BLACKBOARD AND

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**

Nov 11: Patients' feelings of trust

READ: Solbjor, Marit. 2008. "You have to have trust in those pictures." *Researching Trust and Health* **BLACKBOARD AND**

Mechanic & Meyer. 2000. "Concepts of trust among patients with serious illness" *Social Science and Medicine* 51:657. **BLACKBOARD**

Nov 13: Differences in trust among patients

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

Stepanikova, et al. 2006 "Patients' Race, Ethnicity, Language, and Trust in a Physician" *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 47: 390-405

Paper assignment 4: 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 (or type) of trust people feel for doctors, or for health care organizations?

DUE: MONDAY Nov 23, 5pm to BLACKBOARD.

Section 7: Alternatives to Trust

Nov 16: READ: Cook, Hardin, and Levi *Cooperation without Trust*, ch. 5 & 6

Nov 18: READ: Cook, Hardin, and Levi *Cooperation without Trust*, ch. 7 & 8

Nov 20: READ: Cook, Hardin, and Levi *Cooperation without Trust*, ch. 9 & 10

Nov 23: Paper 4 DUE No Class – Happy Thanksgiving!

What do we know about trust?

Nov 30: 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**

Dec 2: Last class

FINAL PAPERS DUE: Wednesday December 9, 5 pm to BLACKBOARD.

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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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