AIM:
This course will offer students a sociological perspective on global finance and financial markets. It will give a broad introduction to key topics in the sociology of finance. We will consider: the research field and its roots in science studies; the architectures and technologies of markets; cognition, calculation and the role of theory in financial markets; the modern phenomenon of the private investor; the specific practices of measurement and calculation that precipitated the financial crisis of 2008; the relationship of financial markets, politics and economics; and alternative perspectives on markets and finance. Students will develop a deep understanding of the mechanisms that power financial markets and their relevance to the global political economy.

The aim of this course is to enquire into the complex array of theory, practices, technologies and human agents that constitute financial markets. Financial markets will be seen as historically situated, embedded entities. The course will de-centre the individual ‘trader’ or ‘banker’ in our understanding of financial markets, and develop a nuanced view of markets and politics, information and prices. It complements and contrasts traditional courses in finance, accounting and economics. The course is qualitative in content: it introduces complex theoretical material, but will not require students to use numbers.

METHOD OF TEACHING & LEARNING:
- One 2 hour interactive lecture/discussion session each week in Semester 2.
- Tutorials will be in weeks 4, 7, 8 and 10.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:
Students will develop a range of critical skills which they will use to analyse finance and financial markets. In particular, students will come to see financial markets (and other financial structures) as complex, historically situated, material entities that have developed over time. They will also be able to compare and contrast explanations of market behaviour.
based on human (ir)rationality with sociological accounts based on power, institutions, and calculation. The course will help learners to
- critically evaluate many of the arguments made in the mass media about financial events
- develop your ability to compare and contrast different sociological theories through the adoption of a comparative approach
- enhance your secondary and primary research skills and your reporting skills

INDICATIVE TOPIC OUTLINE:

Week 1: Introduction to the sociology of finance
Week 2: From Science Studies to studying finance
Week 3: The architectures of financial markets – pre-digital
Week 4: The architectures of financial markets – digital
Week 5: Thinking, calculating and understanding: financial cognition and rationality/
 Assessment briefing
Week 6: Independent learning week
Week 7: Did measurement make a crisis?
Week 8: Markets, mores and politics
Week 9: The rise and rise of the private investor
Week 10: Market possibilities (or, how to start a stock exchange)
Week 11: Summary and revision

ASSESSMENT:
Formative:
- A 2,500 word individual essay (30% of module mark). Students will produce a critical review of popular accounts of finance informed by the course material.

Summative:
- A two-hour written examination

CORE READING LIST:
There is no text-book for the course. Students will be given a list of core and further readings, and will be expected to read widely.