PRODUCTION & REPRODUCTION:
ECONOMIC ANTHROPOLOGY
ANTH 339a
Mon/Fri 2:40-4:00
Pettengill 116

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Anthropology Department
159 Pettengill Hall, x6082
Office Hours: Tu/Th 4-5; Wed 2:30-4; by appointment

Economic anthropology challenges the assumptions of conventional economics by analyzing economic behavior from a cross-cultural perspective. This course will look at the relationship between economy and society through a critical examination of neo-classical, substantivist, and neo-Marxist approaches in anthropology. The relative merits of these explanatory paradigms will be assessed as we engage ethnographic case material and carry out local community based research. We address such "economic facts" as production, exchange, property, marriage transactions, state formation, and social change in the modern world-system, always taking a comparative perspective. Despite the myriad ethnographic details with which you will necessarily become familiar, this has largely been a theory course, a history of social thought course. It is primarily intended for anthropology and economics majors and minors in their final college semesters, i.e., juniors and seniors. This is not a course in either "Economic Development" or "Globalization," although some issues may overlap.

The following course outline lists topics and assignments in their order of presentation, though not by specific dates (Lyceum may provide a hint about the pacing) and also note that readings related to our community based research will certainly be added as we go along. This is because I can neither pre-judge the mix or level of the participants nor the requisites of the service learning project. The reading is extensive and often complex—you should not expect to "get it" the first time through, but you do have to "get it" eventually, which means that you must tackle the material seriously, reviewing it as necessary. It is very important to read assignments in the order they are presented in the syllabus. This syllabus is subject to revision. Optional items are listed in square brackets. The following material is in the bookstore:

Acheson
Marx
The Lobster Gangs of Maine
Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations

Readings other than the two books to be purchased are already in your Lyceum account, and more will be added as we go.
Part of your responsibility is regular attendance and participation in class discussion. In order to ensure balanced discussion, each of you must do the reading before class and think about the issues raised ahead of time. Therefore, by 10 am on class days, each of you should have posted to our Lyceum discussion site either a thoughtful/thought-provoking question, one very concise essay, or an instructive response to someone else’s posting, addressing the reading for that day; even better, tying readings together or to our community based research project. You are expected to read and respond (in writing and in class) to your peers’ memos. If you do not turn anything in for a certain class, you cannot make it up, but everyone will be entitled to three ‘freebies’ during the semester and you are exempt on any presentation days as well. Although at first glance this appears to be a throwaway assignment, it is actually a critical aspect of the learning program of AN339. I am fully prepared to give out failing grades to students who do not produce thoughtful questions or a concise essay for every class (except your presentation days and your three freebies).

The nature of any presentations will be worked out later. Both of the longer essays will be based on topics and material covered in class, and tied to community based research results or processes. It is not impossible that from time to time I require attendance at relevant lectures and presentations outside of class. As of right now, the only one I know of is the two on money and morality offered by the multi-faith chaplain in October.

Criteria for Evaluation:

20% Regular attendance with positive and consistent contributions to discussion*
20% Timely and intellectually engaged completion of Lyceum memos*
20% Implementing and reporting on interest-free banking project
20% Presentations (in class and at Androscoggin Bank)
20% Two essays—perhaps on the 4th and 11th weeks

* The awarding of high participation points comes with good attendance and active, thoughtful, consistent class participation, the kind that reveals your thorough preparation and engagement with class material. This means contributing your own ideas as well as providing constructive responses to other students’ comments in both the oral and written discussion formats. B-level work means your participation may be of high quality, but inconsistent, or you share your own ideas frequently but may not pay much attention to other students’ comments. You would receive C-level points if your participation were thoughtful but infrequent, or regular but perfunctory, yet revealed a satisfactory level of preparation and competence when offered. Few points would be awarded if your participation were rare and/or revealed poor or careless preparation.
READING PROGRAM FOR PRODUCTION AND REPRODUCTION

All the material in the first undated section of Lyceum relates to our Sharia-compliant banking project. Take a look at it from time to time as the contents will change. There are pieces on research ethics, IRB compliance, interviewing techniques, Islamic banking, and the local immigrant population.

I. Introduction

a) The Anthropological Question Posed
   Read: Introduction to Plattner’s Economic Anthropology
   Watch: First Contact (on reserve)

b) An Early Classic
   Read: Malinowski on the Kula
   Watch: Trobriand Islanders (on reserve)

II. The Formalist-Substantivist Debate

a) Reciprocity
   Read: Mauss The Gift (excerpts)

b) Redistribution
   Read: Polanyi “The Economy as Instituted Process”
   Schwartz “The Paradox of Choice”

c) Exchange
   Read: Schneider "Economics in an East African Aboriginal Society”
   Massell "Econometric Variations on a Theme by Schneider"
   [Burling "Maximization Theories..."]
   [Cook "Obsolete Anti-Market Mentality"]

d) Overview of the Debate
   Read: Dalton “Economic Theory and Primitive Society”

e) Applications
   Watch: Ashanti Market Women
   Read: Schwartz “The Paradox of Choice”
   Eames “Navigating Nigerian Bureaucracies”
   [Sahlins “The Original Affluent Society”]
III. Mid-Semester Case Study

a) The Maine Lobster Industry
Read: Acheson *The Lobster Gangs of Maine*
Hardin's "Tragedy of the Commons"
http://www.friendsofthecommons.org
http://www.umaine.edu/mcsc/MPR/Vol9No2/LobMan.htm

IV. Production

a) Introduction to Marx
Read: [Hobsbawm's Introduction to the Marx volume]
Marx *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*
Wolf on Modes of Production
[Plattner on Marxism]
[Ruis *Marx For Beginners* optional on reserve]

V. Cultural Exchange Theory at mid-Century

a) The Politics of Potlatching
Read: Sahlins "Poor Man, Rich Man, Big Man, Chief"
[Harris "Life without Chiefs"]
[Rambo's "From Shells to Money"]
Watch: *The Kawelka: Ongka's Big Moka* (on reserve)

b) Spheres of Exchange and All-Purpose Money
Read: Bohannon "The Impact of Money"
[Douglas "Raffia Cloth Distribution among the Lele"]
Watch: *Money Man* (on reserve)

VI. Reproduction

a) Neo-Marxist Analyses and the Lineage Mode of Production
Read: Meillassoux "The Economy in Self-Sustaining Agricultural Communities"

VII. Synthesizing Case Studies

a) Bovine Mystique
Read: Ferguson "The Bovine Mystique" and "The Anti-Politics Machine"
b) Bitter Money  
Read: Shipton Bitter Money (film clip from Man-Made Famine in class)  
[Maurer “The Anthropology of Money”]  
Watch: Godfather III  

Watch: Advertising Missionaries on reserve  

VIII. Conclusion: Only Connect...  

Read: re-read Plattner's Introduction  
[Levin “Culture and Markets”]  

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Community Based Learning Project  
Fall 2009  

The goal of this year’s project is to gather information in the L/A community concerning the demand for and the requisite characteristics of possible Islamic banking products. Our community partner is Androscoggin Bank and students will develop a project to elicit information from constituents in the L/A community affected by the Islamic prohibition on usury and report their findings to the Project Team at the bank.

Next semester AN 228 will work on social marketing strategies for these projects, and in the fall of 2010, AN339 will probably work with legislators on regulatory reform.

Our contact at the bank is a Bates Alumna:

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Marketing Director  
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