

Department of Anthropology
ANTH 2280G/650: Economic Anthropology
Distance Studies Online
COURSE OUTLINE
Winter 2017

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Organ-sharing: giving a gift or selling a commodity? What are the human costs of manufacturing? Is fair trade fair? We will address these and other questions in this course, which focuses on the economic lives of people across a variety of cultures. We will examine past and present theoretical approaches and debates in economic anthropology and the ways economies are linked to social and political institutions. In this context, we will discuss how neoliberal capitalism influences production, exchange, and consumption at the local level. Topics will include: social and political economy; production and labor; consumption and commodities; exchange and gifts; economics and morality; fair trade; concepts of land and mortgage; capitalism, development, and the environment; and migration and labor.

PREREQUISITE

Any 0.5 or 1.0 essay course in any faculty.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the prerequisite for this course. Unless you have either the requisite for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Recognize economies as valuable aspects of societies.
- Ask critical questions about the meaning and value of an economy according to different cultural understandings.
- Identify political, social, and cultural factors that shape economic systems.
- Appreciate local people as agents who actively respond to and resist unequal power relations in the contexts of production, exchange, and consumption.

WEBSITE

The course website (<https://owl.uwo.ca/portal>) will contain the discussion forums, assignment outlines, announcements, and additional information. Please check the website frequently and read carefully any announcements, postings, and outlines.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact us anytime. Please give us at least 24 hours (Monday to Friday until 5:00pm) to respond to your message; if you do not receive a reply, send it a second time. We will respond to weekend emails early in the next week. I, the instructor, am also available for consultation via skype; please email me to make an appointment for a session.

ESSAY REQUIREMENT

This is an essay course. Therefore, you need to receive **at least 50% for each of the essay components** (prior to any mark reductions for late submission) in order to pass this course. Essay components are the short paper and the response paper.

COURSE EVALUATION

Discussion Forum Postings	Ongoing	35%
Short Paper	February 6	15%
Response Paper	March 27	30%
Exam	TBA	20%

**** Detailed assignment outlines (including format guidelines, style of citation etc.) will be posted on the course website throughout the term.***

DISCUSSION FORUM POSTINGS 35%

The purpose of the online discussions is to make the learning process interactive and collaborative: The discussions provide us with the opportunity to learn from and interact with each other. All students are required to make **at least 2 substantial contributions**, based on the readings and films, to the discussion forums **each week** (starting with week 2). “Substantial” means that you post well-developed comments and questions of no more than two paragraphs, such as: comments on the readings and films; discussions of the concepts and theoretical approaches presented in the readings; questions that you think might be useful for reflecting on the arguments made by the authors; or reflections on your experiences with issues discussed in this course.

You can choose if your weekly postings are **original postings**, which should include questions for discussion, and/or responses to other participants’ questions. “Original postings” refers to postings that are not branches from other messages. At least 6 of all your submissions should be original postings, and at least 6 of all your submissions should be responses to other participants’ questions. You cannot substitute postings (e.g., submitting only 1 posting in week

X but making 3 contributions in week Y “to catch up”). You need to submit at least 2 postings per week; otherwise it will negatively affect your mark.

You are encouraged to make contributions throughout the week. You should have completed your weekly postings by **Friday (midnight)**. Your mark for the forum postings will be based on both the quantity and quality of your online participation. You will receive an estimate of your mark at the beginning of week 9.

Submit your postings, including late ones, via “Forums” on the OWL course website. The **penalty for late submission** is 1% per weekday per posting.

SHORT PAPER (February 6) 15%

Imagine you are writing a blog or an article for a popular magazine critically discussing one of the topics or issues of this course. Alternatively, you can also draw on an already published magazine article that addresses a topic discussed in this course and critically respond to this article. Whether you choose to write an original blog/article or a response, you are required to **use at least 2 class readings**.

This paper should be about 500 to 700 words in length (excluding the reference list) and written for a **non-academic** audience (i.e., explain concepts and theories, and avoid jargon). Although this paper is supposed to be written in the form of a popular article or blog, you need to properly acknowledge other authors’ ideas by providing **in-text citations** and by including a reference list.

The objectives of this assignment are to foster your critical thinking skills and to practice communicating theoretical concepts and anthropological research to a wider audience.

Submit an electronic copy of your paper via “Assignments” on the OWL course website.

RESPONSE PAPER (March 27) 30%

The response paper is expected to be 2,000 to 2,200 words in length (excluding the reference list). In this paper, you are asked to critically discuss issues raised by the authors we read in this course. I will provide a list of possible topics later in the term.

You are expected to incorporate concepts, ideas, and/or issues from **at least 8 of the class readings**. You are allowed to draw on the films and on sources that are not class readings; however, your paper should mainly be based on the class readings. When evaluating this assignment, I will pay special attention to evidence showing that you have understood and critically thought about the concepts and issues covered in the course readings.

This paper is an exercise in reflexive thinking, in developing a thesis/an argument, in synthesizing scholarly sources, and in properly acknowledging the ideas, wording, and data of other authors.

Submit an electronic copy of your paper via “Assignments” on the OWL course website.

LATE SUBMISSIONS (SHORT PAPER AND RESPONSE PAPER)

Make sure you keep extra copies of your assignments (in electronic form).

The **penalty** for late submission of papers is **2% per weekday**. I will **not** accept papers **more than 8 days** after the due date. Submit late papers via “Assignments” on the OWL course website.

It is your responsibility to make sure that I receive your paper if you submit it late. If you submit your paper more than 8 days late or if you fail to hand in an assignment (without academic accommodation), I will assign a mark of zero (0) for that assignment. There will be no make-up assignment.

EXAM (TBA, between April 9 and 30)

20%

The exam consists of multiple choice, short answer, and short essay questions. It will cover all the course material from weeks 1 to 14. The short essay should be about 600 words in length. Your response should be clearly argued, well documented, and critical, demonstrating that you have read and thought about the course material.

If you miss the exam without having been granted academic accommodation, I will assign a mark of zero (0) for this exam. There will be no make-up exam.

No electronic devices of any kind (including laptops, cell phones, blackberries, tablets, MP3 players, voice recorders etc.) will be allowed during examinations.

ACCOMMODATION FOR MEDICAL ILLNESS AND NON-MEDICAL ABSENCES

If you miss the exam or assignment deadlines due to medical illness or non-medical reasons (i.e. reasons of compassionate grounds), you have to contact and submit appropriate documentation to Academic Counseling of your Faculty, not to the instructor. If accommodation is warranted, you will be eligible to write a make-up exam or receive an extension on the respective assignment deadline. (For more information on medical accommodation, please read the following document:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.)

SCHOLASTIC OFFENCES AND PLAGIARISM, ACCESSIBILITY AT WESTERN, AND MEDICAL ACCOMMODATION

All students should familiarize themselves with Western's current academic policies regarding accessibility, plagiarism and scholastic offences, and medical accommodation. These policies are outlined (with links to the full policies) at:

http://anthropology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/course_information/academic_policies.html.

FILMS

You are asked to watch a number of documentaries throughout the term, which you can access through the OWL course website. You may post comments and questions regarding the films in the online forums. *Please note that films might be subject to change depending on availability.*

REQUIRED READINGS

Wilk, Richard R., and Lisa Cliggett. 2007. *Economies and Cultures: Foundations of Economic Anthropology*. Second edition. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

The book is available for purchase at The Bookstore at Western. For more information, please see the store's website (<https://bookstore.uwo.ca/>) or contact the store directly (phone: 519-661-3520).

You are also required to read a number of **journal articles and other book chapters**, which you can access through the OWL course website (click on "Course Readings").

COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Week 1 (January 5 - 6): Introduction to the Course

We will use the first two days of this course to get to know one another, to practice using the Discussion Forum, and to begin reading.

Week 2 (January 9 - 13): Introduction to Economic Anthropology

Wilk and Cliggett 2007: Chapter 1 (Economic Anthropology)

Wilk and Cliggett 2007: Chapter 2 (Economics and the Problem of Human Nature)

January 13: Discussion Forum Postings for week 2 due

Week 3 (January 16 - 20): Neoclassical Microeconomics and Ethnographic Research

Wilk and Cliggett 2007: Chapter 3 (Self-Interest and Neoclassical Microeconomics)

Rothstein, Frances A. 2014. "I Found Work!: Forty Years of Research on Work in Rural Mexico." *Anthropology of Work Review* 35 (1): 40-44.

January 20: Discussion Forum Postings for week 3 due

Week 4 (January 23 - 27): Social and Political Economy

Wilk and Cliggett 2007: Chapter 4 (Social and Political Economy)
Millar, Kathleen. 2008. "Making Trash into Treasure: Struggles for Autonomy on a Brazilian Garbage Dump." *Anthropology of Work Review* 29 (2): 25-34.

January 27: Discussion Forum Postings for week 4 due

Week 5 (January 30 - February 3): Production and Labor

Feng, Xianghong. 2013. "Women's Work, Men's Work: Gender and Tourism among the Miao in Rural China." *Anthropology of Work Review* 34 (1): 2-14.
Lazar, Sian. 2012. "A Desire to Formalize Work?: Comparing Trade Union Strategies in Bolivia and Argentina." *Anthropology of Work Review* 33 (1): 15-24.
Karim, Lamia. 2014. "Disposable Bodies." *Anthropology Now* 6 (1): 52-63.

Film: *Poto Mitan: Haitian Women, Pillars of the Global Economy* (2009)

February 3: Discussion Forum Postings for week 5 due

Week 6 (February 6 - 10): Exchange and Gifts

February 6: SHORT PAPER DUE

Wilk and Cliggett 2007: Chapter 6 (Gifts and Exchange)
Walsh, Andrew. 2009. "The Grift: Getting Burned in the Northern Malagasy Sapphire Trade." In *Economics and Morality: Anthropological Approaches*, ed. Katherine E. Browne and B. Lynne Milgram, 59-76. Lanham, MD: Altamira Press.
Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 2007. "The Tyranny of the Gift: Sacrificial Violence in Living Donor Transplants." *American Journal of Transplantation* 7: 507-511.

February 10: Discussion Forum Postings for week 6 due

Week 7 (February 13 - 17): Consumption and Commodities

Wallace, Richard H. 2009. "Commoditizing Culture: The Production, Exchange, and Consumption of *Couro Vegetal* from the Brazilian Amazon." *Ethnology* 48 (4): 295-313.
Oka, Rahul Chandrashekhar. 2014. "Coping with the Refugee Wait: The Role of Consumption, Normalcy, and Dignity in Refugee Lives at Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya." *American Anthropologist* 116 (1): 23-37.

Film: *The Story of Stuff* (2007)

February 17: Discussion Forum Postings for week 7 due

Week 8 (February 20 - 24): Reading Week

No class and no postings due

Week 9 (February 27 - March 3): Economics and Morality

Wilk and Cliggett 2007: Chapter 5 (The Moral Human: Cultural Economics)

Peterson, Nicolas, and John Taylor. 2003. "The Modernising of the Indigenous Domestic Moral Economy: Kinship, Accumulation and Household Composition." *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 4 (1 & 2): 105-122.

March 3: Discussion Forum Postings for week 9 due

Week 10 (March 6 - 10): Fair Trade

Lyon, Sarah. 2007. "Maya Coffee Farmers and Fair Trade: Assessing the Benefits and Limitations of Alternative Markets." *Culture & Agriculture* 29 (2): 100-112.

Besky, Sarah. 2008. "Can a Plantation be Fair?: Paradoxes and Possibilities in Fair Trade Darjeeling Tea Certification." *Anthropology of Work Review* 29 (1): 1-9.

Moberg, Mark. 2014. "Certification and Neoliberal Governance: Moral Economies of Fair Trade in the Eastern Caribbean." *American Anthropologist* 116 (1): 8-22.

Film: *El Cacao: The Challenge of Fair Trade* (2015)

March 10: Discussion Forum Postings for week 10 due

Week 11 (March 13 - 17): Capitalism, Development, and the Environment

Brett, John A. 2006. "'We Sacrifice and Eat Less': The Structural Complexities of Microfinance Participation." *Human Organization* 65 (1): 8-19.

Schuller, Mark. 2016. "Haiti's Unnatural Disaster: Neoliberalism." In *Humanitarian Aftershocks in Haiti*, 19-44. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

March 17: Discussion Forum Postings for week 11 due

Week 12 (March 20 - 24): Land and Mortgage

Shipton, Parker. 2009. "Introduction." In *Mortgaging the Ancestors: Ideologies of Attachment in Africa*, 1-22. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Stout, Noelle. 2016. "Petitioning a Giant: Debt, Reciprocity, and Mortgage Modification in the Sacramento Valley." *American Ethnologist* 43 (1): 158-171.

March 24: Discussion Forum Postings for week 12 due

Week 13 (March 27 - 31): Migration and Labor

March 27: RESPONSE PAPER DUE

Sanchez, Teresa Figueroa. 2013. "Californian Strawberries: Mexican Immigrant Women Sharecroppers, Labor, and Discipline." *Anthropology of Work Review* 34 (1): 15-26.

Rodkey, Evin. 2016. "Disposable Labor, Repurposed: Outsourcing Deportees in the Call Center Industry." *Anthropology of Work Review* 37 (1): 34-43.

Film: *El Contrato* (2003)

March 31: Discussion Forum Postings for week 13 due

Week 14 (April 3 - 7): Conclusion

Wilk and Cliggett 2007: Chapter 7 (Conclusions: Complex Economic Human Beings)

April 7: Discussion Forum Postings for week 14 due

USEFUL WEBSITES

- A range of student services is available at: <https://student.uwo.ca>
- Student Services in UCC: <http://westernusc.ca/services>
- Anthropology Department: <http://anthropology.uwo.ca>
- Office of the Registrar: <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>
- Student Development Services: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca>
- Writing Support Centre: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing/>
- Plagiarism and Citing Sources: www.lib.uwo.ca/essayhelp