

ANTH 5390
Spring 2021
Wednesday: 6:30 – 8:15 PM (Lecture)
Wednesday: 8:30 – 9:15 PM (Tutorial)
Venue: TBD

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Office Hours: TBA

ECONOMY, CULTURE AND POWER

What is the economy? The answer today is mostly markets, choice, investment, and profit. Yet, this seemingly universal definition tells us more about the power of capitalism and contemporary economics than the specific, diverse, and complex relations between economy and society, markets and culture, power and domination. This course enables students to understand, go beyond, and critique such narrow visions of the economy through an introduction to economic anthropology. Based on the classical foundations from Marcel Mauss, Karl Marx, to Karl Polanyi, the anthropological perspective on economy focuses on how people in different places produce, circulate, and consume things to make a living. This living is not just a pay check, it is everything, it is society, family, intimacy, struggle, belonging, and alienation.

This course provides an overview of these key concepts and debates across time and space by focusing on things, how they hold value, how they become commodities, and how commodification turns labour, land, or money into things. Each week of this course introduces a different thing or commodity from shells, cotton, fashion designs, cocktails, land, mobile money, credit, water, sugar, papayas, mushrooms, to life itself. Through things, this course provides a different, critical perspective on contemporary issues of economy, culture, and power from financialization, branding, global commodity chains, work, outsourcing, uneven development, to environmental degradation, and neoliberalism.

Learning Outcomes:

Students taking this course will:

- 1) learn to see the cultural nature of the economy and of power;
- 2) be able to understand how economic behavior that seems irrational in market capitalist contexts can make sense in other cultural contexts;

- 3) learn how to combine universalizing theories and ethnographic understanding of particular cultures;
- 4) understand the way the culture of capitalism shapes the way we see the world and affects our behavior;
- 5) be aware of the history of capitalism, consumerism, globalization, neoliberalism, commodification, branding, the changing forms of work and craft, and see how they are related to each other.

Readings:

This course is based on primary texts (articles, book chapters) to access the depth and complexity of economic anthropological thought, theory, and ethnography. All required readings will be available as PDF on blackboard.

I have included two helpful economic anthropology readers (Hann/Hart + Wilk/Cligert) in the introduction/first class session (and some chapters in the recommended readings). These readers provide an introduction to the field of economic anthropology, but they are not required to be purchased for this course.

Course Format:

This course is conducted in lecture and tutorial format. The lecture will discuss and introduce the required readings, but it will not give a detailed summary of the readings. It is therefore essential that you do the required readings before class and come prepared with questions and comments. There will be no transcript of the lecture provided afterwards, so please take notes. The lecture will be interactive with room for your questions and discussion. The tutorial is an extension of the lecture based on the student's needs and interest. The tutorial is further meant to facilitate questions of clarification of concepts and to engage more in-depth with the specific readings.

You are expected to come to all lectures and tutorials. I strongly encourage you to ask questions and participate in discussion. You are also welcome to e-mail me questions or comments before class if you feel uncomfortable in this format. In case you have to miss class, please also e-mail

me beforehand. It is your responsibility to obtain notes from your fellow students about the missed sessions.

Requirements and Assessment:

The following are the required assignments that will be graded.

- 1. Out-Of-Class Assignments + Participation (20 %):** You are expected to do the readings and come to all lectures and tutorials. I strongly encourage you to ask questions and participate in discussion. You are also welcome to e-mail me questions or comments before or after class.

To help you apply the topics and readings to contemporary problems and issues, you will have to finish **two** out-of-class assignments and may be asked to present and discuss them during class. For these assignments you have to find sources that can be understood or investigated through the specific concepts, theories or problems discussed in the readings of that week. You are free in your selection, but please **do not use academic articles or books!** Sources instead could be a newspaper article, 'you-tube' clip, blogpost, movie, advertisement, song, etc. The source you chose has to be in English (or with English subtitles) and made available for all students (online link or PDF). As part of this assignment you will have to write a short accompanying note, in which you explain why the source you chose is related to the class readings of the week, what anthropological questions or problems it raises, or answers it provides. This note should be about 200 words. Please post this note and the source before the class session (**on Tuesday**) on blackboard (in the discussion forum). Please be prepared to present and discuss your idea and thoughts during the lecture or tutorial. Your 'Out-Of-Class' assignment has to be for the **reading of the specific class session**, it can not be for previous or upcoming weeks! You will have to submit two of these assignments for the semester. You can choose which week, but **one has to be submitted before and after the Midterm Exam**. Please note that you will have to submit your own assignment, no group work!

- 2. Midterm Paper (40 %):** The Midterm-Exam will consist of 4 questions discussing the readings and lectures of the first half of the course (including week 8). The questions will be handed to you in class (8th week: March 3). The mid-term exam should answer each of these question separately. The total exam length is 2000 - 2500 words (excluding references). Please send your answers as a word-document from your CUHK e-mail account to the instructor. The deadline for the instructor to receive the e-mail is **Tuesday, March 17th by midnight**. Please label the document: "LastName_FirstName_Midterm."
- 3. Final Exam (40 %):** The Final Exam consists of three questions which will ask you to either apply the theories to current issues or provide extensions. The questions will be handed to you in the last class (15th week: April 21). The total exam length is **2000 – 2800 words** (excluding references). E-mail your exam answers as a word-document from your CUHK e-mail account to the instructor. The final exam is due on **Monday, May 10th before midnight** via e-mail to the instructor. Please label the document: "LastName_FirstName_Midterm."

VeriGuide requirements: Students are required by university policy to submit all exam papers to VeriGuide (https://academic.veriguide.org/academic/login_CUHK.aspx). An exam (midterm and final) assignment without a signed declaration from VeriGuide will not be graded.

Grade Descriptors:

- A:** Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.
- A-:** Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.
- B:** Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.
- C:** Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.
- D:** Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes.
- F:** Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.

Policies and Support:

- **Educational Technology:** This class relies on the use of Blackboard. All required class readings, the out-of-class assignment submissions, as well as announcements will be done through it. Note that it uses the email address assigned to you by the University, so it is your responsibility to have an electronic mail forwarded to your main email address.
- **Respectful Conduct and Discussion Rules:** We will discuss many interesting and important topics. While I encourage thoughtful, engaged, and controversial discussion, I expect you to be polite and respectful of your classmates' opinions, limit your statements to academic (not emotional) arguments, and not use offensive language or judgmental statements. Please give each other time to talk, do not interrupt, and most importantly listen to each other.
- **Late Submission:** Late submission will suffer a fraction of a grade per day. For example, an A will become an A-.

- **Academic Honesty and Plagiarism:** Academic honesty is crucial and plagiarism is a serious offense. The university has recently updated its policies on Academic Integrity and the penalties for plagiarism and cheating:
http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/Eng_htm_files_%282013-14%29/p06.htm. You are required to cite properly (guidelines: <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/ant/tstyle.doc> and http://www.ilc.cuhk.edu.hk/english/resource/referencing_avoidingplagiarism1.pdf) to avoid plagiarism. Please do not hesitate to talk to me and ask questions about this.
- **Technology Use:** While technology is an important tool to aid learning, please be respectful and do not distract yourself and your fellow students. Students are only allowed to use their tablets or laptops in class to take notes. Please do not use your devices for non-class related activities (e-mail, social media, etc.) Mobile phones must be turned on silent (not vibrate) and kept in your bags.
- **Independent Learning Center:** If you need help with communication and learning skills, the University has a great resource for you. You can schedule a consultation or attend workshops on various strategies for improving learning outcomes
<https://www.ilc.cuhk.edu.hk/EN/mission.aspx>
- **Special Accommodation:** If you need special accommodations or classroom modifications, you need to notify both me and the University's Wellness and Counseling Center (<https://www2.osa.cuhk.edu.hk/disability/en-GB>) no later than the third week of class.

Part I: Introduction and Foundations

Week 1 (Jan 13): Introduction and Overview

Recommended:

Hann, Chris and Keith Hart. 2011. "Chapter 1: Introduction" (until p. 15). In: C. Hann and K. Hart. *Economic Anthropology: History, Ethnography, Critique*. Pp. 1- 17. Cambridge: Polity.

Wilk, Richard R., and Lisa Cliggett. 2007. "Chapter 2: Economics and the Problem of Human Nature". In: R. Wilk and L. Cliggett. *Economies and Cultures: Foundations of Economic Anthropology* (2nd edition). Pp. 31 – 48. Boulder: Westview Press.

Week 2 (Jan 20): Gifts, Circulation, and Value

Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1920. "Kula: The Circulating Exchange of Valuables in the Archipelagoes of Eastern New Guinea". *Man*, Vol. 20, pp. 97-105.

Mauss, Marcel. 2016 [1925]. "The Gift" (Part II: Introduction & Chapter 1). In: M. Mauss. *The Gift: Expanded Edition*. Translated by Jane I. Guyer. Expanded edition. Pp. 55 – 84. Chicago: HAU.

Munn, Nancy D. 1992. "Chapter 3: Food Transmission and Food Consumption". In: N. D. Munn. *The Fame of Gawa: A Symbolic Study of Value Transformation in a Massim (Papua New Guinea) Society*. Pp. 49 – 73. Durham: Duke University Press.

Recommended Readings:

Wilk & Cliggett. Chapter 6 "Gifts and Exchange." Pp. 153-198.

Graeber, David. 2001. "Chapter 1: Three Ways of Talking about Value". In: D. Graeber. *Toward An Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of Our Own Dreams*. Pp. 1 – 22. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Munn, Nancy D. 1992. "Part I: Introduction". In: N. D. Munn. *The Fame of Gawa: A Symbolic Study of Value Transformation in a Massim (Papua New Guinea) Society*. Pp. 3 – 48. Durham: Duke University Press.

Week 3 (Jan 27): Markets and Economy

Polanyi, Karl. 2001 [1944]. Chapters 4, 5, 6. In: K. Polanyi. *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. Pp. 45 – 80. Boston: Beacon Press.

Caliskan, Koray. 2010. "Introduction: How to Study a Global Market". In: K. Caliskan. *Market Threads: How Cotton Farmers and Traders Create a Global Commodity*. Pp. 1 -21. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Recommended Readings:

Hann, Chris and Keith Hart. 2011. "Chapter 4: The Golden Age of Economic Anthropology". In: C. Hann and K. Hart. *Economic Anthropology: History, Ethnography, Critique*. Pp. 55 - 71. Cambridge: Polity

Caliskan, Koray. 2010. *Market Threads: How Cotton Farmers and Traders Create a Global Commodity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Polanyi, Karl. 2001 [1944]. *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Part II: Fictitious Commodities –Labor, Land, Money

Week 4 (Feb 3): Labor, Time, and Alienation

Thompson, Edward Palmer. 1967. "Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism." *Past & Present* Vol. 38 (1): Pp. 56-97.

Nadeem, Shehzad. 2009. "The Uses and Abuses of Time: Globalization and Time Arbitrage in India's Outsourcing Industries." *Global Networks* Vol. 9 (1): 20–40.

Stallybrass, Peter. 1998. "Marx's Coat." In: Spyer Patricia Border, ed. *Fetishisms: Material Objects in Unstable Spaces*. Pp. 183–207. New York: Routledge.

Recommended Readings:

Wilk & Cliggett. Chapter 4 "Social and Political Economy." Pp. 83 -116.

Carrier, James. 1992. "Emerging alienation in production: a Maussian history." *Man* Vol. 27 (3): Pp. 539-558.

Marx, Karl. 1844. "Estranged Labour". In: K. Marx. *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/labour.htm>

Week 5 (Feb 10): Labor and Craft

Chu, Nellie. 2016. "The Emergence of 'Craft' and Migrant Entrepreneurship along the Global Commodity Chains for Fast Fashion in Southern China". *The Journal of Modern Craft* Vol. 9 (2): Pp. 193–213.

Ocejo, Richard. 2017. "Introduction: A Stroll through the Market" + "Chapter 3: Working on Men". In: R. Ocejo. *Masters of Craft: Old Jobs in the New Urban Economy*. Pp. 1 – 21, pp. 76 – 100. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Recommended Readings:

Grimes, K. and B. L. Milgram (2000) "Introduction: Facing the Challenges of Artisan Production in the Global Market." In *Artisans and Cooperatives: Developing Alternate Trade For the Global Economy*. Pp. 3-10. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press.

Curtin, Michael, and Kevin Sanson, eds. 2017. *Voices of Labor: Creativity, Craft, and Conflict in Global Hollywood*. Oakland: University of California Press.

+++ **Week 6 (Feb 17): No class due to Lunar New Year** +++

Week 7 (Feb 24): Land and Property

Carrier, James. 1998. "Property and social relations in Melanesian anthropology". In: C. Hann, ed. *Property Relations*. Pp. 85 – 103. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Verdery, Katherine. 1998. "Property and power in Transylvania's decollectivization". In: C. Hann, ed. *Property Relations*. Pp. 160 - 180. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wagoner, Paula L. 1998. "An unsettled frontier: property, blood and U.S. federal policy". In: C. Hann, ed. *Property Relations*. Pp. 124 – 141. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Recommended Readings:

Hann, Chris (1993). "From Production to Property: Decollectivization and the Family-Land Relationship in Contemporary Hungary." *Man* Vol. 28 (2): Pp. 299-320.

Taussig, Michael. 1977. "The genesis of capitalism amongst a South American peasantry: Devil's labour and the baptism of money." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* Vol. 19 (2): 130-55.

Verdery, Kathrine. 2003. *The Vanishing Hectare: Property and Value in Postsocialist Transylvania*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Week 8 (March 3): Money, Mobile Money, and Social Relations

Kusimba, Sibel. Gabriel Kunyu, and Elizabeth Gross. 2018. "Social Networks of Mobile Money in Kenya". In: *Money at the Margins: Global Perspectives on Technology, Financial Inclusion, and Design*. B. Maurer, S. Musaraj, and I. Small, eds. Pp. 179-199. London: Berghahn Books.

Kwon, June Hee. 2015, "Love and Money in a Korean Chinese Transnational Migration". *Cultural Anthropology*. Vol. 30 (3): 477-500.

Maurer, Bill. 2015. "Chapter 4: The Evolution of Money". In: B. Maurer. *How Would You Like to Pay?: How Technology Is Changing the Future of Money*. Pp. 63 -78. Chapel Hill: Duke University Press.

+++ *Handing out questions for midterm exam paper (due on March 9th)* +++

Recommended Readings:

Bandelj, Nina, Frederick Wherry, and Viviana Zelizer. 2017. "Introduction: Advancing Money Talks". In: *Money Talks*. N. Bandelj, F. Wherry, and V. Zelizer, eds. Pp. 1 – 24. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Maurer, Bill. 2015. "Chapter 6: What's in your Wallet". In: B. Maurer. *How Would You Like to Pay?: How Technology Is Changing the Future of Money*. Pp. 95 -106. Chapel Hill: Duke University Press.

Week 9 (March 10): Finance and Crisis

In Class Movie: The Big Short (selections)

No readings because of midterm exam due before class on March 9th !!!

Week 10 (March 17): Finance and Debt

Graeber, David. 2011. "On the Experience of Moral Confusion". In: D. Graeber. *Debt: The First 5000 Years*. Pp. 1 - 20. Brooklyn: Melville House.

Ho, Karen. 2009. "Chapter 6: Downsizers Downsized: Job Insecurity and Investment Banking Corporate Culture". In: K. Ho. *Liquidated: An Ethnography of Wall Street*. Pp. 213-248. Durham: Duke University Press Books.

Listen: David Graeber, "What is Debt?": <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b054420y>

Recommended Readings:

Peebles, Gustav. 2010. "The Anthropology of Credit and Debt." Annual Anthropology Review. Vol. 39: 225-240.

Roitman, Janet. 2003. "Unsanctioned Wealth; or the Productivity of Debt in Northern Cameroon". *Public Culture* Vol. 15 (2): Pp. 211-237.

Zaloom, Caitlin. 2004. "The Productive Life of Risk". *Cultural Anthropology* Vol. 19 (3): Pp. 365-391.

Part III: Things, Commodities, and Commodification

Week 11 (March 24): Things and Commodities

Kopytoff, Igor. 1988. "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process". In: A. Appadurai, ed. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in a Cultural Perspective*. Pp. 64-94. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Weiner, Annette. 1985. "Inalienable Wealth". *American Ethnologist* Vol. 12 (2): Pp. 210-227.

Recommended Readings:

Appadurai, Arjun. 1988. "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value". In: A. Appadurai, ed. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in a Cultural Perspective*. Pp. 3-63. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Week 12 (March 31): Branding and the Public Good

Mazzarella, William. 2010. "Branding the Mahatma: The Untimely Provocation of Gandhian Publicity," *Cultural Anthropology* Vol. 25 (1): 1-39

Wilk, Richard. 2006. "Bottled Water: The Pure Commodity in the Age of Branding," *Journal of Consumer Culture* Vol. 6 (3): Pp. 303-25

Recommended Readings:

Aronczyk, Melissa. 2008. "'Living the Brand': Nationality, Globality, and the Identity Strategies of Nation Branding Consultants." *International Journal of Communication* Vol. 2: Pp. 41–65.

Greenberg, Miriam. 2008. *Branding New York: How a City in Crisis Was Sold to the World*. New York: Routledge.

Week 13 (April 7): Commodity Chains and Power

Cook, Ian. 2004. "Follow the Thing: Papaya," *Antipode* Vol. 36 (4): Pp. 642-64

Mintz, Sidney. 1985. "Chapter 1: Food, Sociality, and Sugar" and "Chapter 4: Power." In: S. Mintz. *Sweetness and Power*. Pp. 3 -18, Pp. 151 – 186. New York: Viking.

Recommended Readings:

Bowen, Sarah, and Marie Sarita Gaytán. 2012. "The Paradox of Protection: National Identity, Global Commodity Chains, and the Tequila Industry." *Social Problems* Vol. 59 (1): Pp. 70–93.

Mintz, Sidney. 1985. "Chapter 2: Production" and "Chapter 3: Consumption." In: S. Mintz. *Sweetness and Power*. Pp. 19 – 150. New York: Viking.

Moor, Liz and Jo Littler. 2008. "Fourth Worlds and Neo-Fordism: American Apparel and the Cultural Economy of Consumer Anxiety". *Cultural Studies* Vol. 22 (5): Pp. 700 – 23.

Week 14 (April 14): Commodities, Environment, and the Anthropocene

Tsing, Anna. 2015. "Enabling Entanglement", "Prologue" + "Chapters 1,2,3, 5, 9". In: A. Tsing. *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the possibility of life in capitalist ruins*. Pp. vii – 44. 73 – 84, 121 – 130. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Recommended Readings:

Howe, Cymene and Dominic Boyer. 2016. "Aeolian Extractivism and Community Wind in Southern Mexico". *Public Culture* Vol. 28 (2): Pp. 215-235.

Steffen, Will, Paul J. Crutzen, and John R. McNeill. 2007. "The Anthropocene: Are humans now overwhelming the great forces of nature". *Ambio: A Journal of the Human Environment* Vol. 36 (8): Pp. 614-621.

Haraway, Donna. 2015. "Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making kin". *Environmental Humanities* Vol. 6 (1): Pp. 159-165.

Week 15 (April 21): The Economization of Life + Conclusion

Murphy, Michelle. 2013. "Economization of Life: Calculative Infrastructures of Population and Economy". In: P. Rawes, ed. *Relational Ecologies: Subjectivity, Sex, Nature and Architecture*. Pp. 139 – 155. London: Routledge.

Caliskan, Koray and Donald MacKenzie. 2020. "Of Viruses and Men." *Eurozine*:
<https://www.eurozine.com/of-viruses-and-men/>

In Class Movie: *Moneyball* (beginning sequences)

+++ *Final discussion + handing out questions for final exam paper (due May 10)*+++