

ANTH 314

INTRODUCTION TO ECONOMIC ANTHROPOLOGY

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Melissa Gauthier

Course Description and Objectives

This course provides an introduction to the anthropological study of human economies, past and present. It aims at challenging the assumptions of conventional economics by analyzing economic realities from a cross-cultural perspective and assessing the relevance of economic anthropology for understanding the contemporary global economy. Several topics are explored including gift-giving, markets, wealth, value, debt, mobile money, finance, mass consumption, waste, fair trade, micro-credit. By the end of the course students should develop:

- a degree of familiarity with the variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives in the anthropological study of economic processes in various contexts.
- a critical perspective vis-à-vis basic assumptions about the economy.
- a greater awareness of the embeddedness of the economy in culture.
- the ability to apply economic anthropology theories and concepts to the study of contemporary economic issues and realities in a globalized world.

Skills Development

Critical analysis and discussion of case studies and theoretical articles will build anthropological skills in evaluating the strengths, weaknesses and applicability of different approaches in the sub-field of economic anthropology. Drawing from ethnographies and anthropological theory this course equips students to contextualize a variety of economic phenomena and critically engage with the vastly uneven worlds that consumers and producers inhabit. Critical reading, academic writing and discussion skills will be enhanced.

NOTE: Non-anthropology majors are allowed and encouraged.