

Anth 4900/6900: Economic Anthropology

University of Georgia, Fall Semester 2005
Tues, Thurs 9:30 – 10:45 am, room G20 Baldwin Hall

Instructor: Dr. Bram Tucker

Graduate assistant: Tammy Watkins

Office: 259 Baldwin Hall
Office hours: Tue, Thu 2:00 – 3:30 pm
Contact: bram@bramtucker.us
542-1483

251A Baldwin Hall
Tue, Thu 10:45 – 12:00
tywatkins@gmail.com

N.B.: The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

I. Course description:

Anthropology is the study of human diversity; *Economics* is the study of how people make decisions about resources. *Economic anthropology* examines the diversity of peoples' preferences, choices, behaviors, habits, activities, customs, and institutions relating to resources.

College courses in economics are often limited to business applications, which is to say, economic behavior under capitalism. *Economic anthropology* is equally interested in how hunter-gatherers decide which prey to exploit, how peasants reduce risk, why people give gifts and host feasts, and why rural villagers cooperate to achieve communal goals. Economic anthropology addresses classic questions within anthropology, such as whether societies have structure, and how culture as a collective phenomenon influences the actions of individuals. It is also concerned with classic questions within economics, such as the origins of wealth, market value, and social inequality, and how best to “develop” poor countries.

Because of its international and comparative scope, economic anthropology is well-positioned to offer critiques of our capitalist system. Two critiques in particular will be developed in this course. First, capitalism offers an unprecedented degree of individualism; is this eroding cooperation within communities, and thus the very structure of society? Second, capitalism generates and maintains social inequalities: bourgeois and proletariat, white collar and blue collar, First World consumer and Third World laborer. Is this inevitable? What can we do about it?

This course is divided into three parts; it addresses questions related to three themes within economic anthropology.

Part 1: The value of things: individual choice versus social structure

- How do we decide how much something is worth?
- How do we compare the worth of two dissimilar things (apples versus oranges? the color purple versus spaghetti)?
- Are people necessarily “rational” when it comes to judging value? Does “rational” mean the same thing to everyone in the world?
- Do non-Western people value things the same way as Western people?
- Why is it customary in some societies to give wealth away, while in other societies wealth is hoarded?
- Why do people give gifts? What does it mean to receive a gift?
- How did people exchange things before money and markets?
- How does money change the way things are valued?

Part 2: Individuals, groups, and cooperation

- How does the group influence the decisions of the individual?
- Do individuals make decisions at all, or simply do what the group accepts as normal?
- Why does evolutionary theory predict that we should all be selfish decision-makers? Given this prediction, why do we so frequently cooperate, and work for the good of others?
- Why do we get so angry when we see people cheat (cut in line, pollute, etc.)?
- How do groups stop individuals from cheating?
- How do groups manage common property, such as natural resources?
- Why do hunter-gatherers share food?

Part 3: Foragers, farmers, and capitalists

- If hunter-gatherers satisfy their needs with limited resources despite a lack of material wealth, are they in fact poor?
- Do hunter-gatherers and peasant farmers strive to maximize profits?
- Is it better to work hard for high gains, or work little, spend little, and enjoy more leisure time?
- Who is more wealthy: someone with lots of money and things, or someone with a strong network of friends and allies?
- Why are there peasants in the world?
- Why, in the words of Mel Brooks, are the peasants “revolting?” Why don’t peasants behave the way governments and international aid groups expect them to?
- What was political power like in pre-capitalist societies? How does this differ from power under capitalism?
- What is the experience of capitalism in the Third World?
- Is differentiation into social classes inevitable?
- Is social class important in America today?

II. The grade

Student’s grades will be calculated as follows:

Exam 1:	20	Thu, 22 Sep
Exam 2:	20	Thu, 20 Oct
Exam 3 (Final):	20	Thu, 15 Dec at 8:00 am
Term paper:	30	several due dates (see below)
Attendance:	<u>10</u>	Every class meeting = 1/3 pt
TOTAL:	100	

Midterm and final exams: The format of exams will be short answer / essay. Exams will occur in class. The final exam may require cumulative knowledge from the course. 4900 (undergraduate) and 6900 (graduate) students will take somewhat different exams, commensurate with their additional readings and higher expectations.

Can I take an exam late? Not unless you have a really good reason—trouble with the law, unforeseen illness or death, savage attack by wild penguins, etc. If you are savaged by penguins, I require a note signed by the lead penguin or one of his high-ranking lackeys. Whether a make up exam will be permitted, and the format of a make up exam, are at the discretion of the instructor. If at all possible, please contact the instructor *before* the exam date, or alternatively, within the 24 hours following the exam.

Term paper: The term paper offers students (1) the opportunity to explore a topic of their choosing in greater depth, and (2) an exercise in anthropological writing. Topics should pertain to economic anthropology. Further instructions will be provided on a separate handout. The paper is something you should be working on throughout the quarter. The assignment will have several parts and due dates.

Part 1: Paper idea	5%	Tue, 30 Aug
Part 2: Annotated bibliography	5%	Tue, 13 Sep
Part 3: Full-sentence outline	8%	Tue, 11 Oct
Part 4: Final paper	12%	Thu, 1 Nov
Part 5: Revised final paper (optional)	<u>12%</u>	Thu, 17 Nov
	30%	

Attendance: Class attendance is very important, both for individual benefits (i.e., encountering all the material) and for the collective social benefits that come from class discussion. As an added incentive to participate, 1/3 pt will be earned for each class attended. Doctors’ notes, obituaries, and attendance to academic conferences are the only justifiable excuses for missing class. If weather, vehicle maintenance, heartache, savage attack by pterodactyls, etc. cause you to miss class, the instructor will be sympathetic, but you will not earn the attendance points.

III. Academic Misconduct

“**Academic honesty**” means performing all academic work without plagiarism, cheating, lying, tampering, stealing, receiving unauthorized or illegitimate assistance from any other person....” http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/academic_honesty/ah.pdf

All academic work must meet the standards contained in “A culture of honesty.” Each student is responsible to inform themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. Don’t be a jerk; do your own work!

IV. Course reading list

All are available online through online course reserves. The password is, “econanth.”

Mandatory readings for all students:

Axelrod, R., & W. D. Hamilton (1981). The evolution of cooperation. *Science*, 211, 1390-1396.

Bohannan, P., & Glazer, M. (1988). Marcel Mauss. In: *High Points in Anthropology*, 2nd ed. (pp. 264-266). New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Bohannan, P. (1997 [1955]). Some principles of exchange and investment among the Tiv. In: R. R. Grinker & C. B. Steiner (Eds.), *Perspectives on Africa* (pp. 119-128). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Canclain, F. (1989). Economic behavior in peasant communities. In: S. Plattner (Ed), *Economic Anthropology* (pp. 127-170). Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Dugatkin, L. (1999). The four paths to cooperation. Introduction in: *Cheating monkeys and citizen bees: The nature of cooperation in animals and humans* (pp. 1-37). New York: Free Press.

Earle, T. (1997). Introduction: The nature of political power. Chapter 1 in: *How Chiefs Come to Power* (pp. 1-18). Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Ellis, F. (2000). A framework for livelihood analysis. Chapter 2 in: *Rural Livelihoods and Diversity in Developing Countries* (pp. 28-51). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hardin, G. (1968). The tragedy of the commons. *Science*, 162, 1243-1248.

Hawkes, K., O’Connell, J. F., Hill, K., & Charnov, E. L. (1985). How much is enough? Hunters and limited needs. *Ethology and Sociobiology*, 6, 3-15.

Henrich, J., Boyd, R., Bowles, S., Camerer, C., Fehr, E., Gintis, H., McElreath, R., Alvard, M., Barr, A., Ensminger, J, Smith Henrich, N., Hill, K, Gil-White, F., Gurven, M., Marlowe, F., Patton, J. Q., & Tracer, D. (in press). ‘Economic Man’ in cross-cultural perspective: Behavioral experiments in 15 small-scale societies. *Behavior and Brain Science*.

Henrich, J. (2002). Decision-making, cultural transmission, and adaptation in economic anthropology. In: J. Ensminger (Ed.), *Theory in Economic Anthropology* (pp. 251-295). Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.

Kahneman, D., & Tversky, A. (2000). Choices, values, and frames. In: D. Kahneman & A. Tversky (Eds.), *Choices, Values, and Frames* (pp. 1-16). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Lee, R. B. (2003). Insulting the meat, work effort and caloric returns, Hxaro exchange. In: *The Dobe Ju/’hoansi*, 3rd ed. (pp. 51-58; 118-123). Wadsworth Thomson Learning.

Marx, K. (1993 [1867]). The values of commodities, and The Fetishism of commodities. In C. Lemert (Ed), *Social Theory: The Multicultural and Classic Readings* (pp. 58-67). Boulder: Westview Press.

Marx, K., & Engles, F. (1993[1848]). Class struggle. In C. Lemert (Ed), *Social Theory: The Multicultural and Classic Readings* (pp. 43-47). Boulder: Westview Press.

Mauss, M. (2000[1954]) Distribution of the system: Generosity, honour, and money. Chapter 2 in: *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (pp. 17-45). W.D. Halls, trans. London: W.W. Norton & Company, Ltd.

McCloskey, D. N. (1991). The prudent peasant: New findings on open fields. *The Journal of Economic History*, 51, 343-355.

- Narotzky, S. (1997). Distribution and exchange. Subsection of chapter 2 in: *New Directions in Economic Anthropology* (pp. 58-75). Chicago: Pluto Press.
- Netting, R. McC. (1993). Epilogue: Does the smallholder have a future? In: *Smallholders, Householders: Farm Families and the Ecology of Intensive, Sustainable Agriculture* (pp. 320-334). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Ong, A. (1987). Sungai Jawa: Differentiation and Dispersal. Chapter 4 in: *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline: Factory Women in Malaysia* (pp. 37-56). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Sahlins, M. (1968). Notes on the original affluent society. In: R. B. Lee & I. Devore (Eds), *Man the Hunter* (pp. 85-89). New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Sahlins, M. (1972). On the sociology of primitive exchange. Chapter 5 in: *Stone Age Economics* (pp. 185-230). Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Schneider, H. K. (1974). Elements of microeconomics for anthropologists. Chapter 3 in: *Economic Man: The Anthropology of Economics* (pp. 43-96). Salem, WI: Sheffield Publishing Company.
- Trivers, R. L. (1971). The evolution of reciprocal altruism. *Quarterly Review of Biology*, 46, 35-57.
- Tucker, B. (in prep). Do time and risk preferences differ by economic strategy? Choice experiment results in the mixed economy of the Mikea, Madagascar.
- Winterhalder, B. (1996). Social foraging and the behavioral ecology of intragroup resource transfers. *Evolutionary Anthropology*, 5, 46-57.
- Additional readings for graduate students, so they may slake their ravenous thirsts for knowledge:
- Binswanger, H. P. (1980). Attitudes toward risk: Experimental measures in rural India. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 62, 395-407.
- Boyd, R., & Richerson, P. J. (1992). Punishment allows the evolution of cooperation (or anything else) in sizable groups. *Ethology and Sociobiology*, 13, 171-185.
- de Janvry, A., Fafchamps, M., & Sadoulet, E. (1991). Peasant household behaviour with missing markets: Some paradoxes explained. *The Economic Journal*, 101, 1400-1417.
- Giddens, A. (1971). The relations of production and class structure. Chapter 3 in: *Capitalism & Modern Social Theory* (pp. 35-45). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Grierson, P. (1978). The origins of money. *Research in Economic Anthropology*, 1, 1-35,
- Kelly, R. L. (1995). Foraging and subsistence. Chapter 3 in: *The Foraging Spectrum* (pp. 65-110). Washington: Smithsonian Press.
- McCay, B. J., & Acheson, J. M. (1987). Human ecology of the commons. In: B. J. McCay & J. M. Acheson (Eds.), *The Question of the Commons: The Culture and Ecology of Communal Resources* (pp. 1-34). Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Shipton, P. (1997 [1989]). Bitter money: Forbidden exchange in East Africa. In: R. R. Grinker & C. B. Steiner (Eds.), *Perspectives on Africa* (pp. 163-189). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Smith, E. A., Bliege-Bird, R., & Bird, D. (2003). The benefits of costly signaling: Meriam turtle hunters. *Behavioral Ecology*, 14, 116-126.
- Wolf, E. R. (1986). Vicissitudes of the Closed Corporate Peasant Community. *American Ethnologist*, 13, 325-329.
- Winterhalder, B. (1996). A marginal model of tolerated theft. *Ethology and Sociobiology*, 17, 37-53.

V. Course schedule

This schedule is subject to change at the instructor's discretion. All schedule and reading changes will be announced in class.

PART 1: THE VALUE OF THINGS: INDIVIDUAL CHOICE VERSUS SOCIAL STRUCTURE

DATE	TOPIC / EVENT	READING ASSIGNMENT
18 Aug, Thurs	Course introduction	<i>No reading assignment; get started on next week's readings</i>
23 Aug, Tues	Formalist theory part 1: The marginalist revolution and neoclassical models of choice	Schneider (1974), pages 43–52.
25 Aug, Thurs	Formalist theory part 2: Indifference, preference, and the search for equivalency	Schneider (1974), pages 53-91. Grad students: Winterhalder (1995)
30 Aug, Tues	Preferences for risk and delay PAPER IDEA DUE	Tucker (in prep) Grad students: Binswanger (1980)
1 Sep, Thurs	Critiques of Rational Choice: Prospect theory and bounded rationality	Kahneman & Tversky (2000)
6 Sep, Tues	Substantivist theory part 1: Structural-functionalist approaches to exchange reciprocity	Sahlins (1972), pages 185-230.
8 Sep, Thurs	Substantivist theory part 2: The giving and receiving of gifts	Bohannan & Glazer (1988: 264-266) Mauss (1967 [1920]: 17-45)
13 Sep, Tues	From primitive valuables to modern money ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE	Narotzky (1997: 58-75) Grad students: Grierson (1978)
15 Sep, Thurs	Substantivist behavior in markets: Some African examples	Bohannan (1997 [1955]) Grad students: Shipton (1997 [1989])
20 Sep, Tues	The labor theory of value and commodity fetishism	Marx (1967)
22 Sep, Thurs	EXAM 1	

PART 2: INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND COOPERATION

DATE	TOPIC / EVENT	READING ASSIGNMENT
27 Sep, Tues	Evolution of altruism and cooperation: Mutualism, kin selection, and reciprocal altruism	Dugatkin (1999)
29 Sep, Thurs	Reciprocal altruism and the problem of cheaters	Trivers (1971) Grad studnts: Boyd & Richerson (1992)
4 Oct, Tues	Cooperation and defection: The prisoner's dilemma	Axelrod & Hamilton (1981)
6 Oct, Thurs	Public goods: The tragedy of the commons	Hardin (1968) Grad studts: McCay & Acheson (1987)
11 Oct, Tues	Social norms of fairness: Dictator and Ultimatum games FULL SENTENCE OUTLINE DUE	Henrich et al. (in press)
13 Oct, Thurs	Cultural inheritance and decisions	Henrich (2002)
18 Oct, Tues	Hunter-gatherer food sharing	Winterhalder (1996) Grads: Smith, Bliege-Bird, & Bird (2003)
20 Oct, Thurs	EXAM 2	

PART 3: FORAGERS, FARMERS, AND CAPITALISTS

DATE	TOPIC / EVENT	READING ASSIGNMENT
25 Oct, Tues	Hunter-gatherers: Original affluence, or persistent penury?	Lee (2003: 51-58; 118-123) Sahlins (1968)
27 Oct, Thurs	FALL BREAK, no class meeting	<i>Great chance to catch up on reading, or read ahead!</i>
1 Nov, Tues	Hunter-gatherers: Optimal foraging theory FINAL PAPER DUE	Hawkes et al. (1985) Grad students: Kelly (1995)
3 Nov, Thurs	Extensive versus intensive cultivation	Reed (2003)
8 Nov, Tues	Origin and social organization of peasants	Canclain (1989) Grad students: Wolf (1986)
10 Nov, Thurs	“The peasants are revolting:” Why peasant behavior deviates from expectations	Netting (1993) McCloskey (1991)
15 Nov, Tues	Peasant Livelihoods	Ellis (2000)
17 Nov, Thurs	Political power before capitalism OPTIONAL FINAL PAPER REWRITE DUE	Earle (1997)
22 Nov, Tues	Capitalism: The invisible hand versus differentiation	Marx & Engles (1848) Giddens (1971)
24 Nov, Thurs	THANKSGIVING BREAK, no class	<i>Celebrate American colonialism by consuming turkey</i>
29 Nov, Tues	Market integration	Godoy et al. (2004) Grad students: de Janvry et al. (1991)
1 Dec, Thurs	Social class in America: Film, <i>People Like Us</i>	No reading.
6 Dec, Tues	Discussion, <i>People Like Us</i>	No reading.
8 Dec, Thurs	Global capitalism: The experience of capitalism in the Third World	Ong (1987)

FINAL EXAM: Thursday, Dec 15, 8:00 - 11:00 am