

PRODUCTION & REPRODUCTION: ECONOMIC ANTHROPOLOGY

ANTH 339a

Wed/Fri 1:10-2:30

Pettengill 116

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Office Hours: Tues, Wed, Fri 2:30-4 or 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 service learning in the local community. 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 been a theory course, a history of social thought course. It is intended for anthropology, economics, environmental studies or women & gender studies majors in their final college semesters, i.e., juniors and seniors. This is not a course in "Economic Development" or "Globalization," although some issues may overlap.

I am reintroducing and beefing up the service-learning aspect of AN339: We will be following up on the recent Department of Labor report on Somali Employment Trends in Lewiston. Note that I will adjust the reading load accordingly, and re-adjust as necessary. The following reading outline lists topics and assignments in their order of presentation, though not by specific dates, and service learning-related readings will 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 neither expect to "get it" the first time through, nor simply memorize material. But you do have to "get it" eventually, which means that you must tackle the material seriously, reviewing it as necessary. Optional readings [enclosed in square brackets] indicate what has been set aside to help us focus on our major service learning project this fall. It is important to read assignments in the order they are presented in the syllabus. This syllabus is subject to revision. The following material is in the bookstore:

Acheson	<u>The Lobster Gangs of Maine</u>
Marx	<u>Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations</u>

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 two thoughtful/thought-provoking questions, one very concise essay, or an instructive response to someone else's posting, addressing the reading *for that day*, even better, tying reading to service learning. 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. (You are exempt on your 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. 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 the presentations will be worked out later. Both of the longer essays will be based on topics and material covered in class, and tied to service learning results or processes. I may from time to time require attendance at relevant lectures and presentations outside of class.

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 Somali Employment research
- 20% Presentations (in class and at the Chamber of Commerce)
- 20% Two essays—probably 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

I. Introduction

Department of Labor Report: <http://mainegov-images.informe.org/labor/lmis/pdf/Lewiston%20Migrant%20Report.pdf>.
Colby's Somali Bantu site: <http://www.colby.edu/somalibantu>.
Mainewatch: <http://www.mpbn.net/mainewatch/maine+somali+bantu.html>
Handout: "Labor Force Realities: Is Your Business Ready?" from HR Times

a) The Anthropological Question Posed

Read: Plattner Introduction to Economic Anthropology
[Beneria "Conceptualizing the Labor Force"]
[Sharp "Steel Axes for Stone Age Australians"]
[Schneider Economic Man, Ch 3 for those with no prior econ.]
[Listen: Botswana Case Study from BBC/NPR's Consumerism Series]
[www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/specials/145consumerism/page6.shtml]
Watch: [*First Contact* (on reserve)]
Rain in a Dry Land (on reserve)

b) An Early Classic and Some Interpretations

Read: Malinowski on the Kula
Mauss The Gift (excerpts)
Eames "Navigating Nigerian Bureaucracies"
Watch: *Trobriand Islanders* (on reserve)

II. The Formalist-Substantivist Debate

a) Overview of the Debate

Read: Dalton "Economic Theory and Primitive Society"

b) Formalist Approach

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"]
Film: *Ashanti Market Women*

c) Substantivist Approach

Polanyi "The Economy as Instituted Process"
Schwartz "The Paradox of Choice"
[Sahlins "The Original Affluent Society"]

d) Case Study: 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>

III. 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]

IV. Exchange Theory: The Politics of Potlatching

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

V. Exchange Theory: Spheres of Exchange

Read: Bohannon "The Impact of Money"
[Douglas "Raffia Cloth Distribution among the Lele"]
[Film: *Money Man* (on reserve)]

VI. Neo-Marxist Analyses: The Lineage Mode of Production

Read: Meillassoux "The Economy in Self-Sustaining Agricultural Communities"
[O'Laughlin "Why Mbum Women Do Not Eat Chicken"]

VII. Case Studies in Social Change

Read: Ferguson "The Bovine Mystique" [and "*The Anti-Politics Machine*"]
Shipton Bitter Money (film clip from *Man-Made Famine* in class)
[Hutchinson "The Cattle of Money and the Cattle of Girls"]
[Geschire "Kinship, Witchcraft, and the Market"]
http://speakingoffaith.publicradio.org/programs/business_of_good/index.shtml
[Film: *Godfather III; Pig Tusks & Paper Money; Advertising Missionaries; Black Harvest; Black Gold*]

VIII. Conclusion: Only Connect

Read: re-read Plattner's Introduction

AN 339: Production and Reproduction Community Based Learning Project

The goal of our project is to gather information in the L/A community expanding, updating and enriching the information contained in the recently released Maine Department of Labor Report entitled “Analysis of the Employment Patterns of Somali Immigrants to Lewiston from 2001 to 2006.”

Students in the course will research and develop a focus group project to elicit information from constituents in the L/A community that affect and are affected by Somali employment. Students will develop questions and, with the help of a TA and other community partners, organize and run the focus groups. In addition, they will transcribe and, as appropriate, interpret their data, reporting back to the community.

The course will partner with other community organizations in organizing the focus groups. Proposed focus group topics and community partners who will provide help organizing the groups (in parentheses) include:

- Current employers of Somalis (Chamber of Commerce)
- Past employers of Somalis (Chamber of Commerce)
- Currently employed Somalis (Individuals and organizations that work on Somali employment issues)- one female group meeting, one male
- Currently unemployed Somalis (same)- one female group meeting, one male
- Somali youth engaged in aspirations programs at LHS and LMS- one female and one male group (LHS, LMS and Hillview aspirations programs)

This is a total of 8 proposed focus groups. Research and development of focus group questions and organization of group meetings will take place during the month of September.

Focus groups will be run during the month of October (2 or 3 a week).

Information will be transcribed and interpreted during the month of November and reported to a Chamber of Commerce Breakfast the third week in November. If the process is not completed by the end of the semester, we may continue in AN 228 with possible additional focus groups.

Students will be encouraged to research current work with Somali refugee employment in other contexts such as Australia, the U.K. and Minneapolis/St. Paul.

The TA or TA's will work to connect students to community groups and help to arrange focus groups including facilitating the use of necessary equipment and materials.

The city administrator, Phil Nadeau, is apprised of the work, and will be kept informed.

[Very] Tentative Schedule:

September: evaluate Department of Labor Report; figure out what questions we could legitimately hope to answer in a semester project and with what materials we should become familiar.

Sept 5th: Mary LaFontaine and Aimee Parker on the H.R. professional's P.O.V.

Sept. 10th: Chip Morrison discusses the Chamber of Commerce's role

Sept. 26th: Ismail Ahmed will help us understand the refugees' perspective on formal employment in Maine.

October: with the help of TA's and local organizations, run the eight distinct focus groups and decide what follow-up will be necessary, feasible or useful

November: analyze the data generated; report it out to the relevant communities

Nov. 18th: Presentation of findings to November's Chamber of Commerce Breakfast

We will find a way to ensure that our Class Sessions, Lyceum Posts, and Longish Essays consistently reflect this ongoing Community Based Research Project.