Anthropology 527 Economic Anthropology  
Fall 2010 Syllabus

Class Time/Location: 9:30-10:44 a.m. Tuesday, Thursday; 206 Stevens Building  
Instructor: Professor Susan Russell (e-mail: srussell1@niu.edu)  
Office Hours/Location: 11:00-12:00 Tuesday and Thursday, or by appointment; 207a Stevens Building  
Phone: 753-0246

E-Mail: srussell@niu.edu  Note: I am happy to answer questions regarding my lectures or your readings for this class by e-mail. Please use the subject heading ‘STUDENT QUERY’ so that I know to answer it right away.)

Course Description: This course is concerned with the way that economic anthropology contributes to a broad understanding of human behavior. The first part of the course introduces you to the key issues and dilemmas of globalization and its impacts around the world. Such a perspective is key to understanding how economic anthropology constructs projects that are interdisciplinary and relevant to the world today. The second part of the course discusses the historical development of economic anthropology from a relatively materialistic form of anthropology to a rapidly maturing and widely used theoretical perspective that informs a wide variety of critical cultural and economic analyses today. The third part of the course is designed to evaluate the way in which these theoretical perspectives can and should be applied in ethnographic research with people in different cross-cultural economies. Case studies focus on how theoretical perspectives are applied in understanding market behavior in both U.S. and non-U.S. contexts.

The major purpose of this course is to expose you to the issues raised in globalization studies and the variety of theoretical approaches in economic anthropology today. Rote memorization of texts is discouraged in favor of learning basic concepts, approaches, and the problematic aspects of accurately portraying ourselves and others as products of different economic systems and cultural backgrounds. There will be class lectures, but the goal is to encourage critical discussion of the readings in class.

In order to participate in class discussions, it is necessary for you to keep up with the readings. Be prepared to discuss the assigned readings before they are due. Keep a list of comments or questions you have about each reading (see guidelines below) so that we can discuss them at the beginning of each class. If we fall behind in the reading schedule, we will make appropriate adjustments in assignments as the semester proceeds.

There are about 300 members of the professional Society for Economic Anthropology, which has its own website: https://seawiki.wikidot.com/ and hosts an annual meeting each spring.
**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

There are two essay examinations in this course, each worth 25 percent of your final grade. A research paper is worth 25 percent, written comments on weekly readings are worth 20%, and the final 5 percent of your grade is based on class participation and attendance. **Attendance is required in this course.** If you miss more than 3 classes without a written excuse from a physician or without permission, your participation grade will be marked down for each class missed.

**TEXTBOOKS:**
The 5 required texts are:

Other books and readings on reserve are marked on the syllabus.

**Comments on Weekly Readings:**
Weekly comments on the readings should touch on each article and should not exceed one-page per week (minimum 12-point font, single spaced, 1.5 inch margin). Please try to evoke in your comments:

a. What do the articles contribute to theory or to data?
b. What are the interesting hypotheses or research questions in the articles?
c. Vis-à-vis your own interests, what do you find surprising, new and interesting in the articles, and why?
d. What are some strengths and shortcomings of the articles?
e. Compare and contrast the arguments or theoretical positions of the paper where possible.
f. What was incomprehensible to you in the articles? What did you not understand?

In short, this assignment is designed so that you come in with good discussion questions grounded in the readings. **One paragraph per article is enough; one page is maximum. I will collect these on Tuesday of each week’s assignments.**

**Research Paper/Oral Presentation:**
In this assignment, you will conduct a short fieldwork project related to a topic within economic anthropology or globalization. The books ordered for this class, especially the ones by Richard Wilk and Scott Sernau may help give you some ideas for your topic. We also will discuss topics for research during class periods. In your paper, you should provide an assessment of how your fieldwork or survey data contribute or qualify the
theoretical, substantive or methodological contributions of the authors on a particular topic. (see handout “Research Paper for Applied Anthropology & Economic Anthropology” for more details and some suggested topics).

The research paper length will be 10 pages (double-spaced, minimum 12-point font) for undergraduates; 15 pages for graduate students. The research paper is due at the beginning of class on Tuesday, November 23 with no exceptions.

Late papers will automatically be downgraded BY ONE LETTER GRADE each day they are late. Oral presentations will occur the last week of class. Depending on the number of students in class, this date may be adjusted. This course is part of the graduate Applied Anthropology Certificate program at NIU (see http://www.niu.edu/anthro/undergrad/Applied%20certificate/AppliedCert.shtml).

Please submit one paragraph describing your intended project by week five of class, September 23. Please specify your research question or case to be studied, and why it is important or interesting. Please also include a methodology regarding your research project, e.g., number of people to be interviewed, where they will be found, why this group is relevant for the research topic, and any sources to be consulted.

Please submit a draft outline of your project by the eleventh week of class, Nov. 2. I will provide limited feedback. The final paper is due on Thursday, November 23.

In addition to a longer research paper, graduate students have an additional methodology reading for the week of Nov. 15.

Exam Policy:
If you have a legitimate written excuse for missing an exam (e.g., hospitalization, death in the immediate family) and this excuse is verified, then you may take a makeup exam at a time designated by me. Otherwise, makeup exams are not allowed. Also, anyone arriving over ten minutes late for an examination may not take the exam. You must complete all course requirements in order to pass this course.

Cheating and Plagiarism Policy: No summarizing of published work without a full citation of sources (including Internet sites) is allowed. Failure to follow this rule will result in failure of the course.

Note: NIU abides by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which mandates reasonable accommodations be provided for qualified students with disabilities. If you have a disability and may require some type of instructional and/or examination accommodation, please contact me early in the semester so that I can provide or facilitate in providing accommodations you may need. If you have not already done so, you will need to register with the Center for Access-Ability Resources (CAAR), the designated office on campus to provide services and administer exams with accommodations for students with disabilities. The CAAR office is located on the 4th floor of the University Health Services building (815-753-1303).

READING ASSIGNMENTS
Week of:


Aug. 23       Ch. 1 and 2 of Scott Sernau, *Global Problems*
Aug. 30       Scott Sernau, *Global Problems*, Chs. 3-7
Sept. 6       Scott Sernau, *Global Problems*, Chs. 8-12 and the Conclusion

Theoretical Approaches in Economic Anthropology.

Sept. 13    Introduction: the Formalist/Substantivist Debate
            Read Ch. 1 and 2 of Wilk & Cliggett, *Economies and Cultures*

Cultural Economy Approaches:

Sept. 20    Chapter 5 of Wilk & Cliggett, *Economies and Cultures*
            **One paragraph description of project due on Sept. 23**

Sept. 27    “Introduction: money and the morality of exchange”, by M. Bloch and J. Parry (article on reserve)
            “Cooking money: gender and the symbolic transformation…” by Janet (article on reserve)

Decision Making Approaches.

Oct. 4       Ch. 3 of Wilk & Cliggett, *Economies and Cultures*
            Ch. 8 in *Economic Anthropology*, by Stuart Plattner (book on reserve)
            “Middlemen and moneylending”, by Sue Russell (article on reserve)

            Richard Wilk, “Houses as Consumer Goods: Social Processes and Allocation Decisions” (article on reserve)

Oct. 18       **Exam One on October 19**

Institutional Economic Approaches:

October 25    Ch. 13 of *Economic Anthropology*, by S. Plattner (book on reserve)
            “Institutionalizing Opportunism” by Sue Russell (article on reserve)
            “Welcome to Nobel Country” by J. Acheson (article on reserve)
Political Economy Approaches:

Nov. 1          Ch.4 and 6 of *Economies and Cultures*, by R. Wilk & Cliggett
                *Recommended:* Ch. 14 of Economic Anthropology, by S. Plattner
                (book on reserve)
                Draft outline of your research paper due on Tuesday, Nov. 2

Methods/Globalization Perspectives:

Nov. 8          “Barter and cash sale on Lake Titicaca”, by B. Orlove. (article on reserve)
                “Time allocation in a Machiguenga community.” by Alan Johnson.
                (article on reserve)
                James Eder, *Migrants to the Coast* (whole book)

                *Graduate Students:* Ian Scoones, “Sustainable Rural Livelihoods: A Framework for Analysis” (article on reserve for Anth 527)

Nov. 22         Research papers due on Nov. 23 at beginning of class.
                No class on Nov. 25—Thanksgiving holiday

Student Presentations:

Nov. 29         Oral Presentations; Review for Final Exam

Final Examination on Thursday, Dec. 9, 10:00-11:50 p.m.

*******************HAVE A GREAT WINTER BREAK*******************