



# ANTH731

## Wealth, Poverty and Consumption

S2 Evening 2014

*Anthropology*

### Contents

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<u>General Information</u>	2
<u>Learning Outcomes</u>	2
<u>General Assessment Information</u>	3
<u>Assessment Tasks</u>	4
<u>Delivery and Resources</u>	8
<u>Unit Schedule</u>	9
<u>Policies and Procedures</u>	17
<u>Graduate Capabilities</u>	18

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## General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

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Credit points

4

Prerequisites

Admission to MRes

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

Since the fall of the Soviet Bloc and the move of China toward an open market, 'capitalism' looks to many people like the inevitable outcome of unbending human nature. In fact, humans have found many ways to organise production, distribution, and consumption; even within free markets, certain spheres of life follow different logics. Market-based economies have faced many alternative forms of organisation, and they make very specific, peculiar demands of participants. This course examines the cultural dimensions of capitalism, exploring issues such as forms of wealth, the value of money, customs of trade, the implications of commoditisation, the corporation as social organisation, forms of distribution, the creation of human 'needs', globalisation and everyday life, investment and anticipation of the future, advertising as meaning-making, and the forms of irrationality that exist in diverse economies. Some critics have argued that commoditisation spells the end of authentic culture, that the human capacity for creativity is replaced by the cultural industries' ability to mass produce images for passive consumption. This unit, instead, argues that the human capacity to make meaning, forge individual identity, build relationships, and distinguish ourselves from others remains, often by hijacking the products of capitalism.

## Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

Better understand basic economic terms and concepts from an anthropological perspective.

Use anthropological concepts to enrich your understanding of the variability in human systems for production, consumption and distribution.

Recognize the potential to use anthropological methods, concepts, and analytical frameworks in 'economic' settings

Improve discussion skills through participation in tutorials

Improve research, critical reasoning skills, and writing through essays

Have greater respect for cultural variation and the diverse ways humans organize themselves

Be better prepared for a future in which one will be called upon to evaluate arguments made on the basis of 'economic' logic, in public and personal life

Better appreciate how odd and intriguing very basic, everyday aspects of our economic lives are.

## General Assessment Information

### ESSAY SUBMISSION THROUGH TURNITIN:

Each essay must go through a submission process.

ALL essays MUST be electronically submitted by students to the Turnitin plagiarism system. Go to <http://www.lib.mq.edu.au/infoethics/plag.html> for information about how to submit through Turnitin.

NOTE: Assignments will NOT be marked unless processed by the Turnitin system.

### FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS:

Your essay must be typed in 12-point font and double spaced. Make sure all of the pages are numbered.

Please include the essay title, your name, student I.D. number, class number (e.g ANTH831, 731), the essay question you have chosen to answer, and word count.

Correct grammar and spelling is required and part of the assessment for your written work will reflect this.

### **Extensions and penalties**

#### LATE SUBMISSIONS:

Late submissions will incur a penalty, unless the unit convenor has granted an extension due to certificated medical problems or to 'unavoidable disruption' (see Undergraduate Student Handbook).

#### ESSAY WORD LIMIT:

There is a **word limit** for each essay task, and you **must include the word count for your paper on the cover page**. Papers that exceed the word limit will be deducted 1 percentage point for each 10 words over the limit. Please take the word limit very seriously and try to make your

argument concisely and clearly. The word limit is designed to level the essay-writing field, so to speak: it is unfair to fellow students if one person has much more space to argue their case while another student sticks firmly to the length guidelines. If you fail to provide a word count, you will be deducted 1 percentage point and the assessor will estimate length and mark accordingly.

While there is a penalty for *exceeding* the word limit, there is no penalty for going *under* the recommended essay length.

### PLAGIARISM:

The University defines plagiarism in its rules: "Plagiarism involves using the work of another person and presenting it as one's own." Plagiarism is a serious breach of the University's rules and carries significant penalties. You must read the University's definition of plagiarism and its academic honesty policy. These can be found in the Handbook of Undergraduate studies or on the web at: <http://www.student.mq.edu.au/plagiarism/> and [http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic\\_honesty/policy.htm](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.htm) The policies and procedures explain what plagiarism is, how to avoid it, the procedures that will be taken in cases of suspected plagiarism, and the penalties if you are found guilty. Penalties may include a deduction of marks, failure in an assignment, failure in the unit, and/or referral to the University Discipline Committee.

## Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
<a href="#"><u>Minor Essay</u></a>	20%	22/08/14
<a href="#"><u>Major Essay</u></a>	40%	31/10/14
<a href="#"><u>Tutorial Participation</u></a>	20%	Week to week
<a href="#"><u>Final Exam</u></a>	20%	21/11/14

### Minor Essay

Due: **22/08/14**

Weighting: **20%**

The length of the minor essay is 1000 words. It is due Friday August 22nd.

In order to allow students the chance to summarise and analyse key material, students are asked to write an essay on the following sentence:

**Individuals engage in economic activity only to maximize resources. Discuss.**

*Please use only the tutorial and recommended readings from the first 3 tutorials to write this essay.*

I will heavily edit this first short piece of writing. You will receive feedback from the minor essay that should help you improve your expression, essay structure and the coherence of your

argument for the major essay. The minor essay gives you the opportunity to develop and express an argument in a concise fashion.

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## Major Essay

Due: **31/10/14**

Weighting: **40%**

*Essay Questions will be posted on iLearn in Week 4.*

**Format:** Your assignments should follow the standard essay format and referencing system required in anthropology. Please look up the writing guidelines on the Anthropology home page if you are unsure what this entails, but it basically requires in-text citation and a 'references cited' list at the end (with only those materials actually cited in the paper).

**Evaluation Criteria:** Essays will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Clarity: does the essay make specific points that are clearly communicated?
- Accuracy: does the author do a good job of answering (and understanding) the key issues posed in the question?
- Effectiveness: does the essay communicate the material and the argument well (e.g., are case studies used and do they develop the arguments contained in the essay, are visual aids used, like pictures or graphs, and employed with good effect)?
- Organization: does the essay make sense, work within the word limit, and effectively engage with all the cited (and/or recommended) readings?
- Compelling: is the argument memorable, either due to good examples, effective

organization, or other devices?

Please note: 2500 words is not very long, so you need to be direct and to the point. You will not be penalized if you are below the limit; and you will **not** be deducted marks if you exceed the word limit by **no more than 10%** (so, an acceptable margin in this instance is 250 words over the word limit). Yet you will be deducted 10% of your overall mark for each time that you use any portion of an additional 500 words above the word limit (e.g., being 300 words over would attract a 10% penalty, while 900 words over the limit would attract a total penalty of 20%).

**Extensions:** Any extension must be requested in writing with valid documentation of their necessity (e.g. a doctor's certificate). And work that is submitted after the due date without an extension will be penalized: within one week of the due date (20%); within two weeks of the due date (40%). Beyond two weeks, the essay will not be accepted. Granting an extension will depend upon a student's attendance at tutorials.

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## Tutorial Participation

Due: **Week to week**

Weighting: **20%**

Tutorial readings are intimately connected to the topics under discussion in the two-hour lecture/seminar session. Sometimes the tutorial material approaches the issues explored in the lecture from a contrary direction; sometimes it places those issues in a different context or summarizes key themes. Students are expected to attend all tutorials and to be familiar with the assigned material, as well as participate in small group discussion or larger tutorial activities (**see below**).

Tutorial preparation involves a couple of hours of pleasurable (!) reading each week. To facilitate tutorial discussion, you are required to submit a **one-page typed** provisional answer to the tutorial question for that week (see lecture and tutorial programme below). Secondly, you are

required to write one succinct sentence capturing the reading's overall theme. **Answers can only be submitted at the tutorial in which the reading is to be discussed.** The tutorial mark will be awarded both on the submission of the written work (10%), as well as on the quality and frequency of tutorial participation (10%).

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## Final Exam

Due: **21/11/14**

Weighting: **20%**

The final exam will ask to write two (2) 1000 word essays. You will have a choice of several questions; all will relate specifically to material discussed in the lectures and the required readings. The exam is cumulative and potentially covers all of the material from the unit.

The only exception to not sitting an examination at the designated time is because of documented illness or unavoidable disruption. In these circumstances you may wish to consider applying for Special Consideration. Information about the Special Consideration process is found below under "extensions and penalties."

If a Supplementary Examination is granted as a result of the Special Consideration process, the make-up exam will be scheduled after the conclusion of the official examination period.

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## **Delivery and Resources**

### **Lectures**

Lectures are NOT recorded for the post-graduate course. Attendance is compulsory.

### **UNIT WEB PAGE**

The Unit Homepage can be accessed through iLearn.

For information on the use of the Web site (e.g. username and password, bulletin board, calendar) access: [ilearn.mq.edu.au](http://ilearn.mq.edu.au)

For information for online training and technical problems see Library Homepage: <http://www.lib.mq.edu.au/> ('Support Services').

### **Course Readings**

All readings are available online. You can find them in E-reserve. There is no hard-copy booklet for this course.

### **Returning Assignments**

Student work will usually be marked and returned with feedback within two weeks after the due date, while late submissions are marked within two weeks of submission. The essay will be available online for your perusal.

### **Feedback and unit evaluation**



The Faculty of Arts values student feedback and seeks to continually improve its teaching. At present, the Faculty collects student feedback in two ways:

1. Anonymous evaluation surveys which are disseminated at the completion of each unit.
2. Student feedback meetings which are held twice a year in the Faculty of Arts. These meetings are advertised on campus and all students are encouraged to attend.

We also warmly welcome ongoing student feedback via less formal media. Please, if you have a word of compliment or a suggestion for improvement during the semester, don't wait until the end of the year to convey this feedback to the unit convenor. Feel free to write me during consultation hours, send an e-mail, or post your comment to the Blackboard Discussion Board.

## Unit Schedule

### LECTURE AND TUTORIAL PROGRAM

This unit outline includes a short description of each lecture, the tutorial question for that week, followed by a listing of the readings; core tutorial readings are available online.

#### **WEEK ONE: What is Economic?**

What do we mean by 'economic'? What types of human activity do we call economic? And what might anthropology have to say about the economic activities of human beings? Do people everywhere behave in a relatively consistent fashion when deciding how to allocate resources, produce the necessities of life, or distribute what they make? What sorts of economic systems have anthropologists encountered in cultures around the world?

The introductory lecture will discuss the history of relations between anthropology and economics, the goals and requirements of this unit, and an introduction to the topics we will be discussing in this course.

NO TUTORIALS THIS WEEK

#### **WEEK TWO: Rationality and Society: Understanding the 'Economy'**

The dominant model in neo-classical economics makes certain assumptions about what motivates human beings and how they make decisions. It supposed especially that individuals use a means-ends calculation when making decisions that economists call 'rationality'. Anthropologists have disagreed, both with each other and economists, about whether or not these traits (such as rationality, utility maximization, and profit seeking etc.) exist amongst all people, or if the terms are just too general. Some have argued that the terms are circular – for example, by definition, you are pursuing 'utility' with every decision you make to allocate your resources; therefore, we can be confident that you will always choose the option that gives you

the most utility (rather than act out of fear, loyalty, morality, laziness, short-sightedness, habit, etc).

In this lecture, we will discuss some of the basic assumptions of economics as well as consider the polarised anthropological responses to neo-classical economic assumptions. We will ask if the economic model of 'markets' resembles actual markets or daily economic activity; in particular, we will ask if market economics describes non-economic behaviour.

### ***Tutorial Question***

What do economists treat as universal human traits? What sorts of factors might shape your decisions about how to spend money, what occupation to pursue, how to invest time and resources, and other economic choices?

### ***Tutorial Readings***

Smith, Adam, 1910 (1776) Excerpt from *An Inquiry in the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Volume One. Pp. 4-19. London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd.

Antonioni, P and Sean Masaki Flynn, (2007) Getting to Know Homo Economicus, The Utility Maximizing Consumer. In *Economics for Dummies* Pp. 191-209

### ***Recommended***

Granovetter, M., 1985 Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness. *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 91, No. 3, Pp. 481-510

Ortiz, S., Decisions and Choices: The Rationality of Economic Actors. In *A Handbook of Economic Anthropology*. Carrier, J.G., 2005, Pp. 59-77

## **WEEK THREE: Irrationality**

If we are all rational actors, as some economic theories seem to argue, what are we to make of crazy, hare-brained get-rich-quick schemes? For instance, every year, millions of dollars are defrauded from westerners as a consequence of Nigerian 4-1-9 scams. Despite the obvious risk of sending large sums of money to persons who explicitly introduce themselves as corrupt African bureaucrats, such scams are efficacious largely because they play off the distorted understandings about Africa that some westerners hold.

Likewise, traditional societies in the South Pacific follow religions characterised by a seemingly 'irrational' use of resources. Following World War II, a number of groups in the pacific islands became the cradle of religious movements that awaited the return of yankee G.I.s who had brought material wealth during the war. Called Cargo Cults because they awaited goods from abroad, these groups are an example of how people who have not fully understood the economic processes around them and yet have tried to harness economic power.

And finally what are we to make of the billions of dollars that move between migrants in developed countries and their friends and family in developing countries in the form of remittances? The total sum of such flows eclipses the total sum of money poured into official development and relief projects. This lecture looks at the role of irrational forces in the economic

behaviours of social actors; special attention is given to my research into the motivations of resettled refugees to support their friends and family living in refugee camps in West Africa.

### **Tutorial Question**

How are cargo cults like John Frum's similar to Nigerian 419 scams? What part does faith and trust play in cargo cults, 419 schemes, and in our own economic confidence? Are such phenomena exemplary of 'rationality' in socio-economic exchanges?

### **Tutorial Readings**

Smith, D 2007: 'Urgent Business Relationship': Nigerian E-Mail Scams, in *A Culture of Corruption: Everyday forms of Deception and Popular Discontent in Nigeria*, Pp. 53-88, Princeton University Press

Raffaele, P, 2006. In John They Trust. *Smithsonian Magazine* 36 (11) (February 2006): 70-77

## **WEEK FOUR: The Gift**

In his book *The Gift*, French anthropologist and sociologist Marcel Mauss famously contrasted gifts with commodities. He asked: what power is in the gift that compels the recipient to give a gift in return? Ironically, he concluded that gifts were ultimately inalienable, that is, they retain a connection to their giver, building a relationship of reciprocity.

During this week's lecture and discussion, we will think more about the rules of gift giving in our own and others' cultures, as well as how exchanges of money, objects and assistance form an important part of our social relationships. Although economic models tend to assume that transactions are determined only by rational consideration of one's own benefit, the relationships we actually observe often involve many other social considerations. We will look at different forms of reciprocity across a variety of cultures.

### **Tutorial Question**

To whom do you give gifts, and what sorts of gifts do you give? What are the 'rules' of the gift in our society?

### **Tutorial Readings**

Mauss, M. 1967 The Gift and Especially the Obligation to Return It. *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Society*. Pp. 1-16. New York and London: W. W. Norton.

Zelizer, V. 1996, Payments and Social Ties. *Sociological Forum* 14 (3) 481-495.

### **Recommended**

Ruth, J A., Otnes CC, Brunel F. F., 1999. Gift Receipt and the Reformulation of Interpersonal Relationships. *Journal of Consumer Research* 25: 385-402

## **WEEK FIVE: Wage Labour and Resistance**

This lecture examines the ways in which 'work' has been conceptualised by leading philosophers

and anthropologists. We will consider the different functions of production, the organisation of production in 'traditional' and capitalist societies, and the consequences of such modes of organisation upon our experience of work.

We will also consider the forms of resistance to wage labour that have emerged in different workplaces, in both western and traditional societies. Far from being passive objects that are manipulated by employers, workers around the world have developed innovative ways of expressing discontent with prevailing work conditions. The so-called 'weapons of the weak' are explored in this lecture.

### **Tutorial Question**

How important is control over time to the experience of work? How do workers respond to, negotiate and resist social and organizational relations of workplaces?

### **Tutorial Readings**

Ong, A. The Production of Possession: Spirits and the Multinational Corporation in Malaysia. *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 15 no. 1.

Edwards, P., Collinson, D., & Della Rocca, G., 1995. Workplace Resistance in Western Europe: A preliminary Overview and Research Agenda, *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, 1995, 283-316

## **Week Six: Livelihoods and Identity Work**

Amongst other things, economic anthropology examines how people engage with their environment in order to eek out a living. Building on the core concept of 'embeddedness', this lecture examines the concept of 'livelihoods' as a means of understanding 'production'. I will discuss the notion of 'identity work' in order to explore the ways in which livelihoods are attained under conditions of extreme hardship. Drawing on my fieldwork experience in the internet cafes of Buduburam refugee camp, I will describe how performances of 'refugee identity' in online chat rooms enable Liberians in exile to elicit resources from distant – often unfamiliar – others.

### **Tutorial Question**

In what ways is the notion of livelihoods useful for the analysis of economic activities, in particular the concept of work? Why, do you think, has the notion been popular in refugee studies?

### **Tutorial Readings**

Porter, G., Hampshire, K., Kyei, P., Adjaloo, M., Rapoo, G., Kilpatrick, K., 2008., Linkages Between Livelihood Opportunities and Refugee-Host Relations: Learning From The Experiences Of Liberian Camp-Based Refugees in Ghana. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press Pp. 230-252

Black, R., Livelihoods Under Stress: A Case Study of Refugee Vulnerability in Greece. *Journal of Refuge Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 4. 1994. pp. 360-377.

## WEEK SEVEN: Commodities and Consuming

Commodity fetishism, described by Marx and discussed by many theorists, has been an important concept for understanding the 'illusions' created by market relations. That is, many economists argue that the market and market transactions are a model for transparent social relations; Marx argues that the form of the commodity conceals more than it reveals, hiding the social relations and conditions of its production. In the end, Marx argues, commodities seem to have the qualities of people, as if the objects were themselves animated. This lecture considers both classical and Marxist theories of commodities, how they are given prices, and what effect this has on the price of labour, part of a person's life.

If the commodity fetish helps us understand the ways that social relations of production are concealed by the market, under contemporary capitalism it is clear that many people see themselves as constituted in their acts of consumption. That is, what we buy and consume is often treated as our truest and freest expression of our essential self. Material restrictions, demands that we work, and social constraints, from this perspective, are all inauthentic obstacles to our self-expression in buying.

During this week's lecture, we will talk about theorists who argue that our choices of what we consume are shaped by powerful cultural and structural systems. Instead of being an expression of a purely individual independent self, these theorists argue that consumption obeys various logics. Some acts of consumption may resist dominant frameworks of meaning for things, but others merely reproduce forms of distinction among people. That is, we try to create difference in part through what we consume, defining the kind of people we are or are not through showing our good 'taste'.

### **Tutorial Question**

What does Marx mean when he writes about the commodity as a fetish? Do we live to consume, or consume to live? Basing your opinion on Robbin's discussion, what was distinctive about the 20th century's relationship to goods and their consumption?

### **Tutorial Readings**

Marx, K. 1867. Section 4. The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof. In *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Vol. 1 Pp. 76-87. New York

Robbins, R H. 2005 Constructing the Consumer. In *Global Problems and the Culture of Capitalism*. Third Edition. Pp. 13-38. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

### **Recommended**

Koptyoff, I The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as a Process. In *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Arjun Appadurai, ed. Pp. 64-91. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

## WEEK EIGHT: 'Volunteer' Work: Bridging Exchange, Consumption and Production

Volunteer work is an activity that overlaps with forms of consumption, production, and exchange. Volunteer tourism is the booming sector of the tourist industry. This week's lecture discusses the various ethical positions that international volunteers - e.g., aid workers, volunteer tourists, and NGO interns - have come to occupy in the local economies of recipient countries. Volunteers have been framed by academics and policy makers as: a means by which the wealth of western nations may be redistributed and as a force for the production of social capital for 'isolated' groups (i.e., socio-economic exchange). However, the industry clearly accommodates those who would act as 'consumers of poverty', as well as to those who would volunteer for personal purposes (e.g., their latent or explicit interests in building CVs).

Yet, western societies have developed other forms of volunteer work in the contemporary market, exemplified by the phenomena of the unpaid internship (such as Macquarie's 'PACE' program) and reality TV shows. By looking at the industry of volunteer work alongside the emergence of other forms of volunteer work in the west, this week's lecture explores the nuanced ways in which free labor is being mobilized around the globe for profit, the adverse and positive impacts of such movements, and consider the degree to which volunteer work embodies neo-liberal values and agendas.

### **Tutorial Question**

In what ways can volunteer work be regarded as an economic activity? What positive and negative impacts might 'voluntourism' have on local economies?

### **Tutorial Readings**

Guttendag, D., 2009 The Possible Negative Effects of Volunteer Tourism. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 11. Pp. 537-551

Simpson, K., 2004 Doing Development, the Gap Year, and a Popular Practice of Development. *Journal of International Development*. 16, Pp. 681-692

## **WEEK NINE: Money (it's a crime)**

Classical philosophical studies of money have described it as both a kind of social acid and an economic lubricant. On the one hand, money dissolved previous social ties, just as wage labour eventually undermined serfdom and slavery; on the other, money made transactions easier, smoother, and faster, so that trade did not have to wait for the slower price of barter. We tend to see money as transparent; our day-to-day activities demand that we have confidence in the concrete value of coloured paper notes.

In fact, money takes many forms across cultures. Its ubiquity in our lives makes us unaware of the extraordinary social accomplishment that money represents. In this lecture, we will talk about some of the different forms that money can take, and what these unusual forms teach us about the almost magical properties of our own currencies, including new forms of money generated by financial markets, electronic banking, credit cards, and other technological innovations.

### **Tutorial Question**

Is money a universal means of exchange? What is meant by special purpose moneys and why

are anthropologists interested in them? Are there any special purpose moneys in your life?

### **Tutorial Readings**

Bohannon, P., 1959 The Impact of Money on an African Subsistence Economy. *The Journal of Economic History* 19 (4): 491-503

Walsh, A., 2003 "Hot money" and daring consumption in a northern Malagasy sapphire-mining town. In *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 30. No. 2, 290-305

### **Recommended Reading**

Parry, J.P. On The Moral Perils of Exchange in Parry, J.P., and Bloch M., *Money and The Morality of Exchange*. Cambridge University Press pp., 64-93

## **WEEK TEN: Poverty, Society, and (Structural) Violence**

The gap between the rich and the poor is immense. For many of us in the developed world – or in the middle and upper classes of the developed world – it is almost inconceivable that anyone could survive on less of a daily income than we might spend on a cup of coffee.

During this lecture, we will consider the objective measures of poverty in the world, together with the social causes and consequences of extreme inequality. Although we tend to think of deprivation as the outcome of a simple lack (i.e., a 'scarcity' of money, of resources, of skills), some societies are structured so as to deny opportunities to some members; for example, we will consider economist Amartya Sen's discussion of 'entitlement problems' and the possibility of famine, as well as the controversial theory that a 'culture of poverty' engenders socio-economic deprivation. Finally, we look also at the ways in poverty is related to affluence, mapping out the precise nature of the social relationships that engender deprivation.

### **Tutorial Question**

What social and political phenomena produce poverty? What measures, do you think, would be required to challenge – or indeed disrupt - the 'structural violence' that poverty entails?

### **Tutorial Readings**

Farmer, P., 2004, On Suffering and Structural Violence: A View From Below. Chapter 1, in *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights and the New War on the Poor*, University of California Press, 2005, pp29-50

## **WEEK ELEVEN: Reading week**

## **WEEK TWELVE: Experiencing Poverty**

Turning our attention away from the scholarly and the institutional understandings of poverty, as well as its social causes and their consequences, this lecture explores the ways in which poverty is experienced. We look first at the ways in which poverty is represented in the popular media.

Then, we explore a sample of the ways in which experience has been theorised, and the extent to which the notion of experience is relevant to a better understanding the struggles of the poor. Finally, we look at the espoused answers to deprivation and poverty, and question the degree to which the poor's perspectives, needs and experiences are addressed by such solutions.

### **Tutorial Question**

What is it like to be really poor?

### **Tutorial Readings**

Abhijit, B., and Duflo, E., 2006. The Economic Lives of the Poor. *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 21 (1): 141-167

## **WEEK THIRTEEN: Economies in Crisis and Conflict**

Contemporary neo-Liberal theory proposes that 'free trade' is essential to national security and common prosperity. At the same time, liberal thinkers believe that 'non-liberal' economies and black markets foster crisis, as well as constituting a threat to national and international peace.

Particular kinds of economies – and the so-called 'weak states' in which they are 'embedded' – are thus linked to disorder, crisis and conflict, both at home and abroad.

Such understandings do not acknowledge the ways that contemporary forms of liberalism may promote insecurity and conflict; nor how non-liberal and black markets in the midst of conflict zones may express the failings of free-trade, or function to re-structure and re-organize the inequalities latent in the prevailing socio-economic system. Put differently, neo-liberal philosophy has yet to grapple with the ways that economies in conflict zones produce – and express – certain kinds of 'order'.

This lecture looks at economies in the midst of crisis from a macro- and micro-economic perspective. It raises questions about the actual relationships between 'weak states' and capitalism, as well considers the ways that persons within conflict zones behave in the market under conditions of extreme scarcity.

### **Tutorial Question**

In what ways do conditions of extreme scarcity – as well as limited social mobility – cause eruptions of conflict? What economic possibilities does conflict facilitate for combatants in conflict zones?

### **Tutorial Readings**

Outram, Q., 2007 Its terminal either way: An Analysis of Armed Conflict in Liberia, 1989-1996. *Review of African Political Economy*, 24:73, Pp. 355-371

Schetter, O., 'The Bazaar economy of Afghanistan' access online at [http://www.zef.de/fileadmin/webfiles/downloads/conferences/Bazar\\_Economy\\_of\\_Afghanistan.pdf](http://www.zef.de/fileadmin/webfiles/downloads/conferences/Bazar_Economy_of_Afghanistan.pdf)



## Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy [http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic\\_honesty/policy.html](http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html)

Assessment Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Grievance Management Policy [http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grievance\\_management/policy.html](http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grievance_management/policy.html)

Disruption to Studies Policy [http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption\\_studies/policy.html](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html) *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

## Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: [https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student\\_conduct/](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/)

## Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

## Learning Skills

Learning Skills ([mq.edu.au/learningskills](http://mq.edu.au/learningskills)) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

## Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

## Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at [ask.mq.edu.au](http://ask.mq.edu.au)

## IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit <http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/>.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

## Graduate Capabilities

### PG - Discipline Knowledge and Skills

Our postgraduates will be able to demonstrate a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content knowledge in their chosen fields.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### Learning outcomes

- Better understand basic economic terms and concepts from an anthropological perspective.
- Use anthropological concepts to enrich your understanding of the variability in human systems for production, consumption and distribution.
- Recognize the potential to use anthropological methods, concepts, and analytical frameworks in 'economic' settings
- Improve discussion skills through participation in tutorials
- Improve research, critical reasoning skills, and writing through essays
- Have greater respect for cultural variation and the diverse ways humans organize themselves
- Be better prepared for a future in which one will be called upon to evaluate arguments made on the basis of 'economic' logic, in public and personal life
- Better appreciate how odd and intriguing very basic, everyday aspects of our economic lives are.

### Assessment tasks

- Minor Essay
- Major Essay
- Final Exam

## PG - Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

Our postgraduates will be capable of utilising and reflecting on prior knowledge and experience, of applying higher level critical thinking skills, and of integrating and synthesising learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments. A characteristic of this form of thinking is the generation of new, professionally oriented knowledge through personal or group-based critique of practice and theory.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### Learning outcomes

- Better understand basic economic terms and concepts from an anthropological perspective.
- Recognize the potential to use anthropological methods, concepts, and analytical frameworks in 'economic' settings
- Improve discussion skills through participation in tutorials
- Improve research, critical reasoning skills, and writing through essays
- Have greater respect for cultural variation and the diverse ways humans organize themselves
- Be better prepared for a future in which one will be called upon to evaluate arguments made on the basis of 'economic' logic, in public and personal life

### Assessment tasks

- Minor Essay
- Major Essay
- Final Exam

## PG - Research and Problem Solving Capability

Our postgraduates will be capable of systematic enquiry; able to use research skills to create new knowledge that can be applied to real world issues, or contribute to a field of study or practice to enhance society. They will be capable of creative questioning, problem finding and problem solving.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### Learning outcomes

- Use anthropological concepts to enrich your understanding of the variability in human systems for production, consumption and distribution.
- Recognize the potential to use anthropological methods, concepts, and analytical frameworks in 'economic' settings
- Improve discussion skills through participation in tutorials

- Improve research, critical reasoning skills, and writing through essays
- Be better prepared for a future in which one will be called upon to evaluate arguments made on the basis of 'economic' logic, in public and personal life
- Better appreciate how odd and intriguing very basic, everyday aspects of our economic lives are.

### **Assessment tasks**

- Minor Essay
- Major Essay
- Final Exam

## **PG - Effective Communication**

Our postgraduates will be able to communicate effectively and convey their views to different social, cultural, and professional audiences. They will be able to use a variety of technologically supported media to communicate with empathy using a range of written, spoken or visual formats.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### **Learning outcomes**

- Improve discussion skills through participation in tutorials
- Improve research, critical reasoning skills, and writing through essays

### **Assessment tasks**

- Minor Essay
- Major Essay
- Tutorial Participation
- Final Exam

## **PG - Engaged and Responsible, Active and Ethical Citizens**

Our postgraduates will be ethically aware and capable of confident transformative action in relation to their professional responsibilities and the wider community. They will have a sense of connectedness with others and country and have a sense of mutual obligation. They will be able to appreciate the impact of their professional roles for social justice and inclusion related to national and global issues

This graduate capability is supported by:

### **Learning outcomes**

- Have greater respect for cultural variation and the diverse ways humans organize themselves

- Be better prepared for a future in which one will be called upon to evaluate arguments made on the basis of 'economic' logic, in public and personal life

## **Assessment task**

- Tutorial Participation

## **PG - Capable of Professional and Personal Judgment and Initiative**

Our postgraduates will demonstrate a high standard of discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgment. They will have the ability to make informed choices and decisions that reflect both the nature of their professional work and their personal perspectives.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## **Learning outcomes**

- Better understand basic economic terms and concepts from an anthropological perspective.
- Use anthropological concepts to enrich your understanding of the variability in human systems for production, consumption and distribution.
- Recognize the potential to use anthropological methods, concepts, and analytical frameworks in 'economic' settings
- Improve research, critical reasoning skills, and writing through essays