



ANTH222

Stuff Happens: Anthropological Approaches to Global Capitalism

S2 Day 2019

Dept of Anthropology

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

Chris Vasantkumar

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AHH North, W32

Tuesdays 11-1, Piccolo Me, AHH

Credit points

3

Prerequisites

ANTH150 or (12cp at 100 level or above) or admission to GDipArts

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

From smartphones to t-shirts to the coffee beans in our lattes, our lives are filled with stuff. But who made (or grew) this stuff and how did it get here? This course will trace the often extraordinary human connections that together comprise the global chains of production, distribution, consumption, and destruction that make possible the consumption of everyday commodities. Drawing on recent exciting work devoted to “following the thing” through global value chains, we will strive to put a human face on often anonymous networks. In addition we will question the ethical basis of such anonymity in the first place. We will do so via a sustained focus on the strangeness of familiar objects, tracing the connections that have linked distant and different peoples in emergent global economic institutions. We will both attend to the inequalities of wealth and poverty in contemporary global economic formations and seek to illuminate more equitable potential forms such institutions might take in the future. In all this, we will use today's global economy as a lens to peer into classic and contemporary anthropological understandings of the relationship between culture and economics, two terms that are not the opposites they first appear to be.

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:

Develop familiarity with anthropological approaches to economic institutions and transactions.

Develop the ability to assess received understandings of economic discourses and practices using anthropologically informed holistic and relativistic descriptions of cultural practices.

Question commonly held and taken for granted assumptions about what is 'natural' or 'normal' human economic experience.

Apply a critical, anthropologically informed understanding of economic transactions and institutions to real world situations and phenomena.

Describe how global interconnectedness shapes contemporary practices of consumption and structures of inequality.

Improve writing skills, especially structuring of argument, organization, and use of supporting evidence and data.

Produce in cooperation with other students an effective presentation about a conflict in economic anthropology-related materials, improving presentation skills and teamwork.

General Assessment Information

EXTENSIONS, PENALTIES, AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

University Late Assessment Policy Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests.

Word Limits You will be deducted 1 percentage point for each 25 words (short essays) or 100 words (research essay) by which you **exceed the word limit**. Please take the word limit very seriously and try to make your argument concisely and clearly. 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. The word limit is designed to level the essay-writing field, so to speak. **You must provide a word count beneath the title when you submit your work.** If you fail to provide a word count, you will be deducted 1 percentage point and the assessor will estimate length and mark accordingly. The word limit excludes end-of-text references but it includes footnotes and in-text citations.

Failure to reach the minimum word count for an assessment will result in a penalty determined by calculating the percentage of the required word total you were able to complete. For example, if you wrote an essay 734 words in length for an assessment with a minimum word count of 1000 words, your mark would be penalized by 26.6% because you only completed 73.4% of the assessment. Example: your work would have received a 77D had it been 1000 words long, you wrote 734 words, your final mark would be $77 * 0.734 = 56$ P.

Plagiarism The fundamental principle of the University's Academic Honesty Policy is that all

staff and students act with integrity in the creation, development, application and use of ideas and information. This means that:

- All academic work claimed as original is the work of the author making the claim.
- All academic collaborations are acknowledged.
- Academic work is not falsified in any way
- When the ideas of others are used, these ideas are acknowledged appropriately.

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 [here](#). 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. In this class I use *turnitin* to detect plagiarism and I take it very, very seriously.

Plagiarism may result in a mark of zero for that assignment and, depending on the severity of the plagiarism, may also result in failing the unit and/or referral to the University Discipline Committee.

No consideration for lost work or technology issues

It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy (electronic or otherwise) of all written work submitted for each unit. No consideration will be given to claims of 'lost work' or technology issues no matter what the circumstances. It is your responsibility to ensure that your computer is fully compatible with iLearn during exam periods.

Extensions and Special Consideration:

Please view the Special Consideration Policy at: <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/my-study-program/special-consideration>

All Disruption to Studies notifications are to be made online via the University's Ask MQ system.

Remember, the University has determined that some circumstances routinely encountered by students **are not acceptable** grounds for claiming Disruption of Studies. These grounds include, but are not limited, to:

- Routine demands of employment
- Routine family problems such as tension with or between parents, spouses, and other people closely involved with the student
- Difficulties adjusting to university life, to the self-discipline needed to study effectively, and the demands of academic work
- Stress or anxiety associated with examinations, required assignments or any aspect of academic work
- Routine need for financial support
- Routine demands of sport, clubs and social or extra-curricular activities

Conditions existing prior to commencing a unit of study are not grounds for Special Consideration. The student is responsible for managing their workload in light of any known or anticipated problems. The student is responsible for contacting Student Support Services if they have a chronic condition.

Remember that you can **miss one tutorial** without having to complete the Special Consideration process. This allowance is to limit the documentation burden for you, the convenor, and your tutors.

Re-mark of Work During the Semester:

A re-mark will be considered only on the following grounds:

1. Administrative error
2. The feedback provided on the assessment does not justify the grade awarded

Student Procedure:

1. The student must contact the original marker of the assessment (usually your tutor) to discuss the mark or resolve the administrative error.
2. If the marking issue cannot be resolved by the original marker, the student will email the unit convenor. This email must clearly detail the marking issue at hand.

Grade Appeals

The Macquarie Grade Appeal Policy is available here: <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Lecture Engagement	10%	No	Weekly
Tutorial Participation	20%	No	Weekly (Commencing in Week 2)
Group Tutorial Presentation	20%	No	Weeks 4, 5, 6, 9, 10
Short Creative Essay	10%	No	18 August
Short Scholarly Essay	15%	No	6 October
Research Essay	25%	No	3 Nov

Lecture Engagement

Due: **Weekly**

Weighting: **10%**

Details: You must either attend lecture or email the convenor a 1 page summary of lecture topics within 72 hours of its delivery.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Develop familiarity with anthropological approaches to economic institutions and transactions.
- Describe how global interconnectedness shapes contemporary practices of consumption and structures of inequality.

Tutorial Participation

Due: **Weekly (Commencing in Week 2)**

Weighting: **20%**

Details: Tutorial attendance is mandatory. See iLearn for details on how participation is assessed.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Develop familiarity with anthropological approaches to economic institutions and transactions.
- Develop the ability to assess received understandings of economic discourses and practices using anthropologically informed holistic and relativistic descriptions of cultural practices.
- Describe how global interconnectedness shapes contemporary practices of consumption and structures of inequality.

Group Tutorial Presentation

Due: **Weeks 4, 5, 6, 9, 10**

Weighting: **20%**

Details: During weeks indicated on unit iLearn page, groups of four students will do 20 to 30 minutes of presentation (2 x 10-15 minutes for pairs), followed by discussion within the class. See Unit iLearn page for topics and further details.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Develop the ability to assess received understandings of economic discourses and practices using anthropologically informed holistic and relativistic descriptions of cultural practices.
- Question commonly held and taken for granted assumptions about what is 'natural' or

'normal' human economic experience.

- Apply a critical, anthropologically informed understanding of economic transactions and institutions to real world situations and phenomena.
- Produce in cooperation with other students an effective presentation about a conflict in economic anthropology-related materials, improving presentation skills and teamwork.

Short Creative Essay

Due: **18 August**

Weighting: **10%**

400-600 word Creative Essay on the topic "100% Australian" (written in the style of Ralph Linton's "100% American"). See iLearn Page for further details. To be submitted via turnitin (link on Unit iLearn page) by 23:59 on the due date.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Develop familiarity with anthropological approaches to economic institutions and transactions.
- Describe how global interconnectedness shapes contemporary practices of consumption and structures of inequality.
- Improve writing skills, especially structuring of argument, organization, and use of supporting evidence and data.

Short Scholarly Essay

Due: **6 October**

Weighting: **15%**

Scholarly Essay of 600-800 words in the form of a Film Review, comparing two movies on global economic inequality. See iLearn for more details and list of films. To be submitted via turnitin (link on Unit iLearn page) by 23:59 on the due date.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Develop the ability to assess received understandings of economic discourses and practices using anthropologically informed holistic and relativistic descriptions of cultural practices.
- Apply a critical, anthropologically informed understanding of economic transactions and institutions to real world situations and phenomena.
- Improve writing skills, especially structuring of argument, organization, and use of supporting evidence and data.

Research Essay

Due: **3 Nov**

Weighting: **25%**

Details: Essay of 1850-2150 words in length based on independent research on the topic of "Following the Thing." See iLearn for further information. To be submitted via turnitin (link on Unit iLearn page) by 23:59 on the due date.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Apply a critical, anthropologically informed understanding of economic transactions and institutions to real world situations and phenomena.
- Describe how global interconnectedness shapes contemporary practices of consumption and structures of inequality.

Delivery and Resources

Lectures - Wednesdays 1-3 pm, 25aWW, Room 114

Lectures will use videos and other material not available elsewhere. Students must either attend lecture or email one page summary of lecture points to convenor within 72 hours of lecture delivery.

Tutorials meet on Wednesdays--check timetables for the location of your particular tutorial as this may be subject to change.

Check iLearn page for weekly readings, background readings and other resources.

Required readings will be made available on Leganto (electronic reserve) and/or will be accessible through OneSearch on the MQ Uni Library Website.

Unit Schedule

Week	Date	Lecture (Thu)	Date	Tutes (Thu)
1	31 July	The Travels of a Fleece	31 July	None—Tutorials begin Wednesday, 7 August
2	7 Aug	Global Connections and Frameworks/ False Universals	7 Aug	<i>Introductions; How to do well in the unit.</i>
3	14 Aug	Cultural Economies/ Wealth and Poverty Beyond the Bottom Line	14 Aug	<i>Some things money can't buy</i>
	18 Aug	SHORT ESSAY #1 DUE 23:59 via Turnitin		

4	21 Aug	Markets and Other Forms of Exchange	21 Aug	Debate: Altruistic Donation
5	28 Aug	Money, Money, Money	28 Aug	Debate: Cashless Society
6	4 Sep	Stuff: Consumption in Critical Perspective	4 Sep	Debate: Welfare Quarantining
7	11 Sep	Following the Thing/Friction in the Commodity Chain	11 Sep	<i>Typically Australian?</i>
Mid-semester Recess				
8	2 Oct	Following the Mobile I—Extraction	2 Oct	<i>Our phones, our selves</i>
	6 Oct	SHORT ESSAY #2 DUE 23:59 via Turnitin		
9	9 Oct	Follow the Mobile II—Production	9 Oct	Debate: Global Labor Standards
10	16 Oct	Follow the Mobile III—Consumption	16 Oct	Debate: Fair Trade
11	23 Oct	Follow the Mobile IV—The Cloud	23 Oct	<i>Privacy and Surveillance</i>
12	30 Oct	Research Essay Consultations	30 Oct	Research Essay Consultations
13	6 Nov	Follow the Mobile V—Destruction and Recycling	6 Nov	<i>Show and Tell: Obsolete Objects</i>
	Nov 8	RESEARCH ESSAY DUE 23:59 via Turnitin		

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central\)](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)

- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#) (**Note:** *The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.*)

Undergraduate students seeking more policy resources can visit the [Student Policy Gateway](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway) (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit [Policy Central](http://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<http://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/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/study/getting-started/student-conduct>

Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

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) 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

If you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

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

Graduate Capabilities

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Apply a critical, anthropologically informed understanding of economic transactions and institutions to real world situations and phenomena.
- Improve writing skills, especially structuring of argument, organization, and use of supporting evidence and data.
- Produce in cooperation with other students an effective presentation about a conflict in economic anthropology-related materials, improving presentation skills and teamwork.

Assessment tasks

- Group Tutorial Presentation
- Short Creative Essay
- Short Scholarly Essay
- Research Essay

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Produce in cooperation with other students an effective presentation about a conflict in

economic anthropology-related materials, improving presentation skills and teamwork.

Assessment task

- Group Tutorial Presentation

Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Apply a critical, anthropologically informed understanding of economic transactions and institutions to real world situations and phenomena.

Assessment tasks

- Group Tutorial Presentation
- Short Scholarly Essay
- Research Essay

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Develop familiarity with anthropological approaches to economic institutions and transactions.
- Develop the ability to assess received understandings of economic discourses and practices using anthropologically informed holistic and relativistic descriptions of cultural practices.
- Question commonly held and taken for granted assumptions about what is 'natural' or 'normal' human economic experience.

- Apply a critical, anthropologically informed understanding of economic transactions and institutions to real world situations and phenomena.
- Describe how global interconnectedness shapes contemporary practices of consumption and structures of inequality.

Assessment tasks

- Lecture Engagement
- Tutorial Participation
- Group Tutorial Presentation
- Short Creative Essay
- Short Scholarly Essay
- Research Essay

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Develop the ability to assess received understandings of economic discourses and practices using anthropologically informed holistic and relativistic descriptions of cultural practices.
- Describe how global interconnectedness shapes contemporary practices of consumption and structures of inequality.
- Improve writing skills, especially structuring of argument, organization, and use of supporting evidence and data.

Assessment tasks

- Lecture Engagement
- Tutorial Participation
- Group Tutorial Presentation
- Short Creative Essay
- Short Scholarly Essay
- Research Essay

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Improve writing skills, especially structuring of argument, organization, and use of supporting evidence and data.

Assessment tasks

- Short Creative Essay
- Short Scholarly Essay

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Improve writing skills, especially structuring of argument, organization, and use of supporting evidence and data.
- Produce in cooperation with other students an effective presentation about a conflict in economic anthropology-related materials, improving presentation skills and teamwork.

Assessment tasks

- Group Tutorial Presentation
- Short Creative Essay
- Short Scholarly Essay

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should

have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Develop familiarity with anthropological approaches to economic institutions and transactions.
- Develop the ability to assess received understandings of economic discourses and practices using anthropologically informed holistic and relativistic descriptions of cultural practices.
- Question commonly held and taken for granted assumptions about what is 'natural' or 'normal' human economic experience.
- Produce in cooperation with other students an effective presentation about a conflict in economic anthropology-related materials, improving presentation skills and teamwork.

Assessment tasks

- Lecture Engagement
- Tutorial Participation
- Group Tutorial Presentation
- Short Creative Essay
- Short Scholarly Essay
- Research Essay

Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Describe how global interconnectedness shapes contemporary practices of consumption and structures of inequality.
- Produce in cooperation with other students an effective presentation about a conflict in economic anthropology-related materials, improving presentation skills and teamwork.

Assessment tasks

- Lecture Engagement
- Tutorial Participation

- Group Tutorial Presentation
- Short Creative Essay
- Research Essay