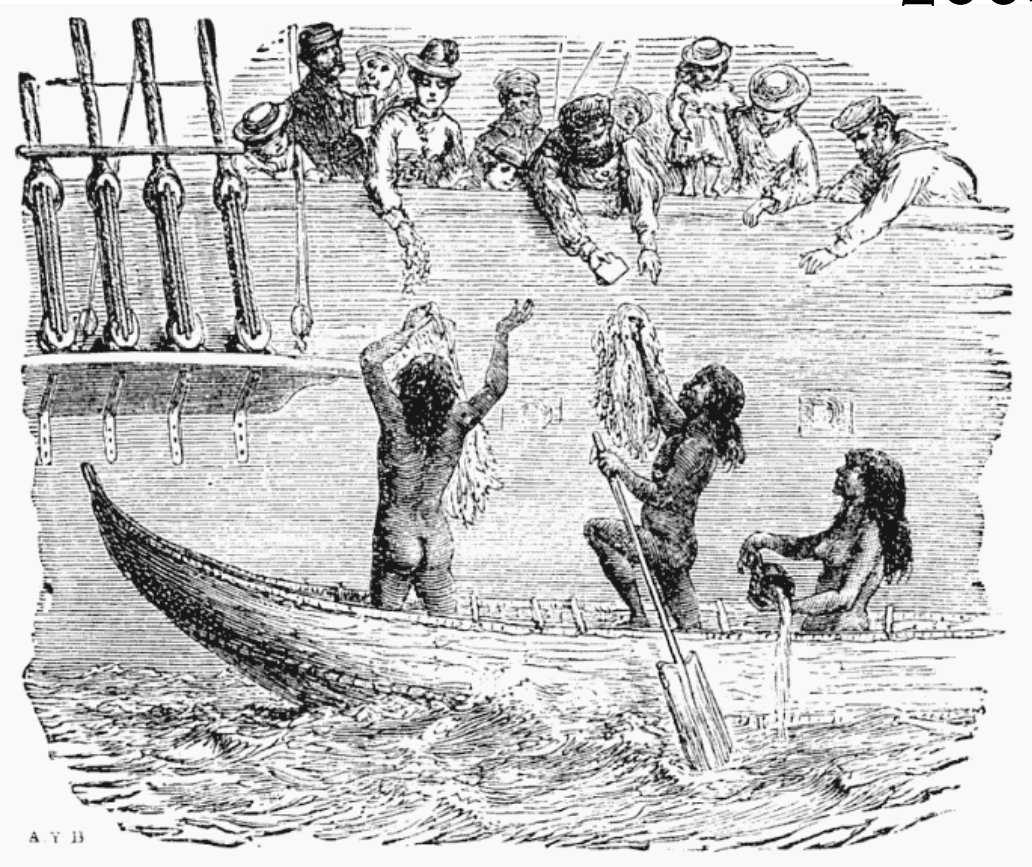
Macquarie University
Faculty of Arts
Department of Anthropology

2009



Anth 278

Commodities, Consumption & Culture

Unit Outline

Convenor: Dr. Greg Downey

www.anth.mq.edu.au/ ug/278

Cover illustration:
'Bartering with Fuegians'

A woodcut from the book, *A Voyage in the 'Sunbeam,' our Home on the Ocean for Eleven Months,* by Annie Allnut Brassey, published in 1878 (p. 135).

Married to Sir Thomas Brassey, English member of Parliament from Hastings (later, Earl Brassey), Annie Allnut Brassey's bestselling book, A Voyage in the 'Sunbeam,' describes traveling on the family yacht with her husband and five children. From 1876 to 1877, the family sailed around the world, and the subsequent book ran through many editions and was published in at least six languages. She started another voyage in 1886 to improve her health, but she died of malaria and was buried at sea.

The text with the woodcut reads:

> These skins proved to be the very finest quality ever plucked, and each separate skin was valued in England at from 4*l.* to 5*l.*
>
> The party consisted of a man, a woman, and a lad; and I think I never saw delight more strongly depicted than it was on the faces of the two latter, when they handled, for the first time in their lives probably, some strings of blue, red, and green glass beads. They had two rough pots, made of bark, in the boat, which they also sold, after which they reluctantly departed, quite naked but very happy, shouting and jabbering away in the most inarticulate language imaginable. It was with great difficulty we could make them let go the rope, when we went ahead, and I was quite afraid they would be upset. They were all fat and healthy-looking, and, though not handsome, their appearance was by no means repulsive; the countenance of the woman, especially, wore quite a pleasing expression, when lighted up with smiles at the sight of the beads and looking-glasses. The bottom of their canoe was covered with branches, amongst which the ashes of a recent fire were distinguishable. Their paddles were of the very roughest description, consisting simply of split branches of trees, with wider pieces tied on at one end with the sinews of birds or beasts.

The book was made available online through the Gutenber Project.
Release Date: January 31, 2005 [eBook #14836]
http://www.gutenberg.org/files/14836/14836-h/14836-h.htm

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF ARTS

COMMODITIES, CONSUMPTION & CULTURE
ANTH 278

Semester and Year:	**Second Semester, 2009**
Lecture meeting:	**Weds. 9-11:00 am, W5A 101**
Tutorials:	**Weds. 1 or 2 pm, W5A, 201**
Unit convenor:	**Dr. Greg Downey**
Office location:	**C3A, Room 623**
Email:	**greg.downey@mq.edu.au**
Consultation:	**Wed 5-6:00 PM, Thur 2-4:00 PM & by appt.**
Unit webpage:	**www.anth.mq.edu.au/ug/278**

Students in this unit should read this outline very carefully. The unit convenor reserves the right to make minor alterations during the semester, but most essential information for this unit is in the outline.

UNIT DESCRIPTION

Since the fall of the Soviet Bloc and the movement of China toward an open market, "capitalism" and "free markets" look to many people like the inevitable outcome of unbending laws of human nature. In fact, humans have found many ways to organize production, distribution, and consumption; even within free market economies, certain spheres of life and pockets of people follow very different logics of consumption. Capitalism and market-based economies have faced many alternative forms of organization, and they now make very specific, peculiar demands of participants, producing simultaneously both wealth and poverty.

This course examines the cultural dimensions of capitalism, exploring such foundational issues as forms of wealth and poverty, the value of money, customs of trade, the cultural implications of commoditization, the corporation as social organizataion, exchange and other forms of distribution, the creation of human 'needs,' globalization and its relation to everyday life, investment and anticipations of the future, advertising as a form of meaning-making, and the forms of irrationality that exist in markets.

This unit focuses especially on the relations among commodities, consumption, and culture because so much of Australia's economy, and that of the developed world, is oriented to consumption and 'services.' but also because contemporary social science research has concentrated on these issues. Some critics have argued that commoditization spells the end of authentic culture, that the human capacity for creativity is being replaced by the cultural industries' ability to mass produce images and objects 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 cultural products of capitalism.

UNIT RATIONALE

Much of the innovative theory in sociocultural anthropology over the most recent decades has arisen from the attempt to address cultural processes, not merely in isolated groups, off the main streams of global capitalism, but within the global economy itself. People engage in their own processes of meaning-making and social negotiation with the mass-produced products of the global economy.

In addition, as the rise of 'information industries' and the fields of marketing, branding, business consulting, and user research shows, understanding social and cultural processes within the economy is extremely important to contemporary firms. With over half of the doctoral recipients in anthropology working outside of academe, in such fields as consulting, marketing, economic development, and social services, understanding how anthropology might engage with the economy is vital for our students.

Students from other fields will come to better understand the variety of cultural and social processes going on 'inside' the economy (and the way that 'economic' activities are influenced by non-economic factors). So much of public debate in politics and policy is now shot through with references to economic terms—'efficiency', 'consumer demand', 'rational tradeoffs', 'cost-benefit analysis'—that a more critical, grounded understanding of economics and economic language is essential to participate fully in public life.

UNIT REQUIREMENTS

All students are required to attend a two-hour lecture or to listen to the lecture on iLecture. The weekly lecture may also include video segments and discussions, so **attending in person is the preferred option**; the unit is not currently being offered externally. All slides will be made available through Blackboard (http//learn.mq.edu.au), but video segments may not be available for those students who do not attend lectures.

The lecture meets from **9-11 am Wednesdays**, in room **W5A, 101**.

Students are also required to attend a weekly tutorial; attendance will be taken. Absence at more than two tutorials will result in an adverse impact on the student's final mark for the unit. Two tutorials are currently scheduled on **Wednesday at 1 and 2 pm (W5A 201). Tutorials do not meet until the second week of the semester.**

Please consult the timetable to confirm locations and times of all meetings as these are subject to change by the registrar, depending on unit enrollment.

All required readings and 'optional' readings are included in a course reader that is available for purchase at the University's bookstore. **Please purchase a copy of the reader.** Every effort has been made to acquire copies of material on the extended supplementary bibliography (at the end of this outline), but that has not always been possible due to the library's purchasing policy and holdings. If students are looking for additional readings and having any difficulties, please contact the convenor or tutor.

Online resources are available through the unit's Blackboard site and homepage: **www.anth.mq.edu.au/ug/278**. There, you will find further information on these topics and Internet links to relevant materials. All students registered in the class should have access to the WebCT for this unit.

TUTORIALS

Tutorials: **Weds. 1 or 2 pm, W5A, 201**
Tutor: **TBA**

All students are required to attend and participate in tutorials. In addition, students will be asked to present, alone or in pairs (depending both on their preference on the size of tutorial), one of the tutorial topics from weeks 4 through 12. See the Assessment criteria for a discussion of the requirements and evaluation criteria for these presentations.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit, students should be able to do the following:

1) Better understand basic economic terms and concepts from an anthropological perspective.
2) Use anthropological concepts to enrich their understand of the variability in human systems for production, consumption, and business.
3) Recognize the potential to use anthropological methods, concepts, and analytical frameworks in 'economic' settings.
4) Improve their presentation skills through practice in tutorials, in their structured presentations, and by studying and constructively commenting upon other participants' presentations.
5) Improve research and critical reasoning skills through presentations and an individual essay.
6) Have a greater respect for cultural variation and the diverse ways that humans organize themselves.
7) Be better prepared for their future in which they will be called upon to evaluate arguments made on the basis of 'economic' logic, in public as well as personal life.
8) Better appreciate how odd and intriguing very basic, everyday parts of our economic lives are.

ASSESSMENT

1. First portfolio submission **25%**
Due 16 September at ARTS Help Desk.

2. Final portfolio submission **30%**
Due 11 November at ARTS Help Desk.

Portfolios are collections of clippings, popular press articles, images, websites or other materials related to the topics discussed in this unit, the readings, lectures and tutorials. They involve a semester-long media watch for material related to the course. After collecting the materials, students should then write commentary or discussion of the items, although it will work best if the commentary is clustered and broken into a handful of topics. **The total amount of commentary should be around 1500 to 2000 words on the first portfolio, and about 2000 to 2500 on the second**, but this will likely be broken into short one or two page sections. Commentary should be typed to accompany clippings, either alone or, more commonly in groups, collected into a notebook or binder.

The objective of the portfolio assessment is to lead students to integrate what they are learning in the unit during the course of the semester with their everyday lives. Student marks will be assessed on the accuracy, sophistication, and rigorousness of the connections drawn between the readings from the unit and the texts found by the student. The assessment task rewards creativity, insight, thoughtfulness, and diligent work, rather than requiring a rush of activity around the due date. In addition, doing the media watch portfolio during the semester will assist in tutorial performance, providing the student with many examples to use in discussions.

Students should include a short bibliography at the end of the portfolio and use in-text citations, but the portfolio is NOT a research project, so most sources of theoretical work will be from the unit reader or supplementary readings. See the assessment rubric at the end of this outline for a clear sense of how the portfolios will be evaluated.

	Items	Commentary	Due date
First portfolio	15-20	1500-2000 words	16 September
Final portfolio	20-30	2000-2500 words	11 November

3. Independent essay **30%**
From 2000-3000 words.
Essay due Wednesday 21 October at ARTS Help Desk.

Essay are related to material from the unit and will require students to do independent research, both in the supplementary materials from this outline (see the supplementary material list in the unit reader) and outside these materials. Length is from 2000-3000 words (approximately 8-12 pages, depending on other formatting). Essay topics are

included, but new topics may be devised by students in consultation with the unit convenor and teaching assistant.

Format: Your assignments should follow the standard essay format and referencing system required in anthropology. Please look up the essay writing guidelines at the end of this outline and 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 work).

Your essays must be typed in 12-point font and double-spaced. Make sure all of the pages are numbered and that the essay is stapled. Correct grammar and spelling is required and part of the assessment for your written work will reflect this. Your essay should be submitted to the SCMP-Humanities Desk on the first floor of W6A. Make sure that you put an anthropology cover sheet on the front and sign it. The people at the desk will stamp it with the time and date received to confirm that you submitted the essay within the appropriate timeframe.

Evaluation criteria: See the end of this outline for a more complete discussion of each criteria as well as a copy of the assessment rubric used to assess this assignment.

Extensions: Any extensions must be requested in writing with valid documentation of their necessity (e.g., doctor's certificate). Any work that is submitted after the due date without an extension will be penalized: within one week of the date (20%); within two weeks of the due date 40%. Beyond two weeks, not accepted. Granting of an extension will be dependent upon a student's normal attendance of the tutorial. If you have not attended the tutorial sufficiently, you will not be granted an extension.

Important Note: It is a requirement that all students keep a copy of their written work. In the event of work being lost, or if you say it has been handed in but it is not in our records, you must be able to present a second copy. If you do not do so, no consideration can be given and all marks will be forfeited for that piece of work.

4. Tutorial presentation, attendance & participation. 15%

Tutorial presentations will be **no more than 25 minutes** and must include the following:

1) a clear description of the **two or three key points or ideas** from the tutorial readings (it may help to consult tutorial discussion questions;
2) a **concrete example of the concepts *not* found in the readings** but described by the student(s) and preferably brought in as a clipping or visual exhibit; and
3) a set of **three or four discussion questions or proposed exam questions** about the readings or concepts to help spark discussion and prepare people for the exams.

Evaluation criteria: Presentations will be evaluated on the following criteria:

1) Clarity: Does the presentation make a small number of specific points?
2) Accuracy: Does the presenter do a good job explaining (and understanding) the key points?
3) Effectiveness: Does the presentation style and manner communicate the material well (visual aids may or may not help)?

4) Organization: Does the presentation make sense, work within time limit, and effectively cover the readings?
5) Compelling: Is the presentation memorable, either due to good examples, effective organization, or other devices?

Please note: To do all that you are given to do, 25 minutes is not very long, so you need to (and can afford to be) pretty direct and to the point. You will not be penalized if you are short, unless you are much less than 15 minutes.

You should not be BORING. Bringing in an interesting example and highlighting the three or four key concepts will be a very engaging presentation.

Reading your underlined parts of your article will be awful and boring, and the convenor has instructed the teaching assistant to cut off students who choose to do this and give them a low mark on the assessment.

ASSESSMENT RATIONALE

This unit is built around a set of core concepts, analytical perspectives, and case studies of economic behaviour from an anthropological perspective. For this reason, students will be assessed primarily through two media watch portfolios and a research essay. Other evaluation structures have been used in the past, but this one seems to be the best for matching the unit objectives and encouraging students to use core concepts creatively. Changes is assessment structure also respond to student evaluations of the unit.

Portfolio assessments should decrease the pressure on students and make it possible for them to slowly accumulate material, writing passages or sections of their commentary during the weeks when they are thinking about the topics. In addition, with good examples from their media watch, students will be able to bring items into tutorials to discuss them, improving tutorial participation marks and providing an environment in which to test and improve ideas as well as get oral feedback.

The fragmented nature of the commentary allows students to explore a range of topics in succession, helping to cover the broad scope of the unit and to integrate concepts from readings and lectures into their awareness of everyday life. With so much of our news and media dedicated to economics, money, real estate, investing, employment, trade, and development, students will find no shortage of raw material for their portfolios. These assessment tasks simultaneously hold students accountable for the core concepts and give latitude to students to apply those concepts to novel material with creativity, in ways that reflect their interests and concerns.

Likewise, essay topics for the research essay will permit students to demonstrate a deeper grasp of core concepts while also improving writing and research skills. Research and communication in persuasive writing are essential general skills developed in the Faculty of Arts. Students should also choose topics that involve developing special types of knowledge that might be useful in an area that might be relevant to professional development in the long run.

In-class presentations, although a smaller fraction of the student's final mark, are an important part of the educational goals of improving skills. The convenor finds that the

task itself, even when given less weight in the final mark, encourages students to improve their presentation skills, especially if we discuss presentation skills in the unit and orientation, and reflect upon the strengths and areas for improvement in different presentations. Students frequently complain about the quality of other students' presentations – in this unit we intend to specifically polish presentation skills.

Essay Topics

You are welcome to contact the convenor if you have any questions. All essay topics should involve both creative work and use of material from lectures, readings and tutorials. Additional readings are suggested for each weekly topic in the unit reader; feel free to use any of these sources (or others that you find independently) in your essay.

Please note that suggested essay topics are intentionally broad. No student essay will likely answer every question in a topic; they appear to inspire the students to think and deepen their essays. Essays are evaluated in relation to the evaluation criteria, NOT to the specific wording of the topic (see the evaluation rubric at the end of this outline). Some of the best essays take topics in directions that the student perceives which may not have been apparent to the convenor or marker. Thoughtfulness, creativity, insight, and good analysis are the most important qualities of the best essays (in addition to being well written and organized).

Suggested essay topics

Objects: Commodified and uncommodified
In lecture and readings, we have discussed ways in which objects get commodified and what that entails. Are there any possessions that you have that have changed or are changing their status, that is, becoming non-commodities or commodities when they were once the opposite. In what ways might things become non-commodities? Relate your discussion to our readings (and concepts from them). You may want to consider possessions that seem especially important to the sense of self or ask yourself, 'Is there anything I have that would seem really weird to sell to another person?' Or you might consider a way in which people try to remake commodities into non-alienated objects, or transform relationships that might be seen as instrumental (profit-seeking or utility-maximizing) into other sorts of non-commodity relationships.

An ethnography of gift-giving
When are some of the times you give or receive gifts, and what are the rules of these gifts? Do different types of gifts have different rules or expectations? As best you can, in consultation with the readings, create a system of classification of the types of gift relations you have in your life. Imagine that you are writing an instruction manual for someone who were to be your 'substitute' for while; how would you help them to maintain your gift relations and avoid any social mishaps? Are you involved in any odd sorts of gift-giving relationships? How do these relationships compare to the ones you have read about? What makes them distinctive?

Poverty and affluence
Our readings on poverty and affluence suggest that neither of these categories is strictly a matter of wealth or income, but both involve a substantial degree of self- and social-

perception. How does our society, or some group in it, behave as if it were affluent? Do individuals consider themselves poor or affluent, and why? Does the perception of poverty or affluence influence other economic behaviour in ways not predicted by classical economic theory (such as in Antonioni and Flynn)?

Globalizing and localizing
Many observers are concerned about the effects of globalization, especially the possibility that globalization will eradicate cultural differences and local distinctiveness. In what ways do other places impinge upon or influence your life? Which objects remain identifiably 'foreign' and which foreign items become 'unmarked'? You may use a number of techniques to get a grasp of this, such as, 1) a census of origin for the products in your room (take a count of all the items that have 'made in…" information on them and what items they are); 2) take a census of public retail space to see what places these spaces 'refer to'; 3) pick a number of objects and research where they come from and how they have changed for inclusion in your everyday life. Or, alternatively, you might explore different types of globalization or different globalizing processes (such as the difference between 'internationalization' and 'globalization'). Describe different ways in which your life has become globalized, pointing out these different patterns.

The effects of trade
Classic economic theory holds that all parties should be better off through trade, but many critics find that perspective seems to miss a wide range of problems in our contemporary economy. How does trade actually work, in a specific case? You might look at a place where people sell used items (including online sites) or at one specific commodity. How have people tried to improve trade, either to make it more advantageous to themselves, or to make it more just? Are there any rules for trading which are not simply economic, like rituals or a sense of fair play or other guidelines?

The meanings of money
While most money flows through our hands to take care of everyday concerns, some money stays with us. We hold on to it, save it for special purposes, transform it into other things, or otherwise treat it as 'de-monitized.' Through introspection, discussion with friends, or other research, find examples of money that comes to rest, either to stop circulating entirely or to only circulate under certain circumstances. How is this money 'un-money'? Do there seem to be reasons why some money goes out of circulation in people's lives?

Consumption, shopping and morality
What areas of your own or someone else's shopping are affected by moral, ethical, political, or environmental considerations? In this essay, using observations, introspection, and (or) interviews with friends or family members, try to draw attention to which areas or types of shopping might be affected by other, non-relationship or non-object-related considerations (such as environmentalism, moral boycott, 'red' purchasing, nationalism). Alternatively, authors like Belk, Baudrillard, Galbraith and others have suggested that we often consume for reasons other than simply satisfying basic needs. Using examples drawn from your observations or media review, consider what different sorts of motivations might drive people to consume.

The social life of corporations
Marketing and branding are ways that we become convinced (or not) that companies have personalities; ironically, we then consume their products, in some cases, so that we

might partake in that personality or interact with it. Discuss two or three major marketing campaigns that have been either successful or unsuccessful (in your opinion, or according to some other evaluation) and how these campaigns make cultural sense to the consumers involved. You may want to consider a company's attempts to 're-brand' itself (such as BP) or a company's attempt to market itself as representative of a particular location (for example, Mexican restaurants or ready-made Indian food). You may want to contrast this particular company with very similar companies or products.

Social structures in economic life
Different sorts of social entities exist in economic life, not just corporations, and corporations themselves are often poorly understood by people, even when we have contact with them every day. What do people have to do, think, or believe for a corporation or similar entity to continue existing? How does that type of entity affect economic life or life in any other way? (One way to get yourself thinking about this is to see the movie, *The Corporation*.)

'Irrational' behaviour
One way to investigate the embeddedness of economic life is to find some area of behaviour where people behave 'irrationally.' Why do they engage in this behaviour? What seems to be the purpose, function, or meaning of irrational behaviour? Is there any non-official economic return or exchange happening? You might look especially at high-risk activities, hobbies, altruism, volunteering, social life, dating, romance, lotteries, 'prosperity' churches, or other behaviour where economic relevance is not so obvious.

Propose your own topic
Email the convenor with a possible topic, but do so before 2 October so that you have plenty of time to integrate any suggestions.

PLAGIARISM

Macquarie University has clear policies defining plagiarism, the presentation of someone else's work as your own, and the convenor of this unit strictly upholds these guidelines. Guidelines concerning plagiarism can be found in Macquarie's Handbook of Undergraduate Studies or online at: http://www.student.mq.edu.au/plagiarism/ .

Unfortunately, the use of word processors and on-line research practices can lead students into unethical behaviour without too much forethought or intention. To preserve the integrity of our educational programs, the University has adopted sophisticated technologies to deter plagiarism. Please note that the availability of online materials makes plagiarism easier, but it has made discovery of plagiarism even simpler. We now have specialized databases that quickly identify the source of particular phrases in a student's work, if not original, and evaluate how much is taken inappropriately.

My advice to you is to become familiar with the guidelines about plagiarism and then 'quarantine' the files that you are actually planning on turning into a tutor or convenor; that is, **do *not* cut and paste materials directly into any work file that you plan on turning in** as part of your exams. I have sat in ethics hearing with students who have done this who subsequently wind up humiliated and forced to repeat units, if not expelled.

I encourage you to discuss ideas with your classmates. I'm less concerned about you influencing each other and sharing thoughts than I am with copying electronic material. Discussing concepts with your peers is a natural, even desirable, part of your education, but your papers should ultimately be your own work. You are also certainly welcome to proofread each other's work prior to submission.

Grading Policy

Your final mark for this unit will include a range from 'fail' to 'high distinction', along with a standardised numerical grade (SNG). The Academic Senate of Macquarie University has set guidelines for the award and distribution of grades. For this reason, your raw mark for a unit, composed of the various components for each assessment item, may not be identical with your final SNG, although there should be very little difference.

Changes to this Unit

Our Faculty asks that I tell you how this unit has changed in order to reflect better student feedback. In some units, this may not be the case, but this unit has undergone a major overhaul in response to student feedback. Among other changes, these are the most major differences that you will find in this outline:

- The topic has shifted to include more discussion of economic justice, development, poverty, trade and corporations. This will be reflected in a new title for the unit beginning next year: 'Wealth, Poverty and Consumption.'
- The unit has been better integrated with the first semester unit on Development Studies and Culture Change in Anthropology, but it is still an independent unit.
- A number of changes have been made to the reading list to remove some of the more theoretically difficult texts; this material has been kept in the supplementary readings or will be covered in the lectures, but the reader should now be more engaging and accessible.
- Assessment tasks have been changed, with a midterm and final take-home exam replaced by media watch portfolios to make the assessments in greater harmony with unit objectives, as well as to decrease time pressure for students juggling work, family, and other commitments.
- Short video segments will be integrated into the unit for the first time.
- More material from the news will be brought into the lectures and included on the Blackboard website.
- Assessment rubrics have been created to provide clear standards for completing assessments and more rigorous, standardized assessment procedures.

In addition, many small changes came about because of student feedback. Specific topics and at least one reading were given to the convenor by students in previous years. Please pass on any constructive suggestions for improving this unit as the convenor will certainly consider ways to improve the offering. Student feedback is especially important in a unit like this, which strives to make anthropological concepts relevant to our contemporary milieu and everyday life.

Abbreviated Outline of Weekly Topics

Week	Date	Topic
1	5 Aug	What is 'Economic'?
2	12 Aug	Rationality
3	19 Aug	Affluence
4	26 Aug	Poverty
5	2 Sept	Commodities
6	9 Sept	Gifts
7	16 Sept	Consumption
		First portfolio assessment due
	Mid-semester Recess	
8	7 Oct	Money
9	14 Oct	Trade
10	21 Oct	Globalization
		Research essay assessment due
11	28 Oct	Corporations
12	4 Nov	Advertising
13	11 Nov	Irrationality
		Final portfolio assessment due

9-11 Dec 2009 The annual meeting of the Australian Anthropological Association will be hosted by the Department of Anthropology of Macquarie University.

OUTLINE OF LECTURES & READINGS

The unit outline includes a short description of each lecture and tutorial followed by a listing of the readings for each week; these readings are included in the reader or available online. The end of the unit outline contains a much longer bibliography of additional resources on the topic for the week. Please do not be confused by the doubling listing.

Week 1: What is 'Economic'?

5 August 2009

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 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 exploring.

Week 2: Rationality

12 August 2009

The dominant model in neo-classical economics makes certain assumptions about what motivates human beings and how they make decisions, especially that they use a form of means-ends calculation when making decisions that they call 'rationality'. Anthropologists have disagreed, both with economists and with each other, about whether or not these traits (such as, 'rationality', 'utility maximization', and others) exist among all people, or if the terms are just so general that they are circular. 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 most basic assumptions of economics, especially microeconomic models of rational activities and market interaction. We will ask if the economic model of 'markets' resembles actual markets or our daily economic activity; in particular, we will discuss the concept of 'embedding' and the various ways that societies have come to make decisions about research deployment and production allocation. In other words, we will ask if 'market' economics describes non-market economic behaviour.

Tutorial discussion

What do economists treat as universal human traits? What might be points of disagreement? How would taking cultural variation into consideration effect economics, if at all? Although Adam Smith is considered the origin of Classical economic theory, his writing has a very different tone and style than later economic work; what differences do you see between our two readings? Does the description of human behaviour offered by both readings square with your own experience? What sorts of factors might affect your decisions about how to spend money, what occupation to pursue, how to invest time and resources, and similar '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, Peter, and Sean Masaki Flynn. 2007. Getting to Know *Homo Economicus*, the Utility-Maximizing Consumer. In *Economics for Dummies*. Pp. 191-209. Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Week 3: Affluence

19 August 2009

We tend to think of 'the economy' as being driven by 'necessity': we feel like we have to work to survive. And, if we work harder, we'll be able to meet more of our needs and desires. But are needs natural? And is work really a necessary activity? This week we will discuss the feelings we have of need and how they motivate our behaviour in light of the incredible affluence of our age. In particular, we will look at the basic concept of 'demand' in economics to understand better how this economic variable actually might be created and experienced in reality.

Anthropologist Marshall Sahlins has pointed out that classical economic models of the state of humanity have certain underlying philosophical, even spiritual, assumptions that seem to arise very early in the history of Western philosophy. That is, economic models often assume things about our 'needs'—for instance, that they are inherently insatiable—that do not hold up to scrutiny or cross-cultural evidence.

Tutorial discussion

Both Sahlins and Illich, from radically different perspectives, offer critiques of the idea that Western technological economies merely produce products to meet humans' 'needs'. What conclusions do they draw about human needs and the condition of those who would be considered 'poor' or 'primitive' by Western standards? How might you relate this to Galbraith's discussion of the problems faced by an 'affluent' economy? How would Galbraith reply to someone who said that consumers' demands were natural?

Tutorial readings

Galbraith, John Kenneth. 1998 (1958). The Imperatives of Consumer Demand. In *The Affluent Society* (Fortieth Anniversary Edition). Pp. 114-123. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Marshall Sahlins. 1972. The Original Affluent Society. In *Stone Age Economics*. Pp. 1-39. Chicago: Aldine Atherton, Inc.

Illich, Ivan. 1969. Outwitting the 'Developed' Countries. Original printed in *New York Review of Books*, 6 November, pp. 20-24.

Week 4: Poverty

26 August 2009

At the same time that our age has produced unprecedented material wealth, it also has produced widespread and crushing poverty for many people. The gap between the rich and the poor is yawning, with it almost inconceivable to many in the developed world – or in the middle and upper classes in the developing world – how anyone can survive on less in daily income than we might spend on a cup of coffee.

During this lecture, we will consider both the objective measures of poverty in the world, and the social effects of extreme inequality. Although we tend to think of deprivation as the outcome of a simple lack (of money, of resources, of skills), we will look at the way that societies structure themselves to deny people certain sorts of opportunities, in part by comparing them to societies which are structured in very different ways. We will consider, for example, economist Amartya Sen's discussion of 'entitlement' problems and the possibility of famine.

Tutorial discussion

Green suggests that our understanding of poverty is wrapped up in why it continues to be such a pressing problem. How we think about and describe the poor, and how we think that they got poor in the first place, limits are ability to pragmatically address economic problems. How are the poor talked about? When are we aware of poverty? How do people in the public eye encourage us to see the poor, and how might this affect the poor? Are certain poor people more visible than others because they make more sense to us?

Tutorial readings

Isbister, John. 2003. A World of Poverty. In *Promises Not Kept: Poverty and the Betrayal of Third World Development*. Sixth edition. Bloomfield, Conn.: Kumarian and Palgrave.

Green, Maia. 2006. Representing Poverty and Attacking Representations: Perspectives on Poverty from Social Anthropology. *Journal of Development Studies* 42(7): 1108-1129.

Week 5: Commodities

2 September 2009

'Commodity fetishism', described by Marx and discussed by many theorists, has been one of the most important concepts for understanding 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 come to 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. We will consider what sorts of objects cannot be commoditized, and innovative efforts to turn new things into commodities in the 'Information Economy' and current intellectual property regimes.

Tutorial discussion

How does Koptyoff's discussion of the 'biographies of things' build upon the idea of the commodity as a fetish? From these two authors, how do we better understand commoditization? What does commoditization accomplish? Do you have 'non-commoditized' objects in your life? What are they and why aren't they 'commoditized'?

Tutorial readings

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

Koptyoff, Igor. 1986. The cultural biography of things: Commoditization as process. In *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Arjun Appadurai, ed. Pp. 64-91. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Week 6: Gifts

9 September 2009

French anthropologist and sociologist, Marcel Mauss, in his book, *The Gift*, famously contrasted gifts with commodities. He asked, what power is it in the gift that compels the recipient to eventually give a gift back 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 discussions, we will think more about the rules of gift-giving in our own cultures as well as others, and 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 considerations of one's own benefit, the relationships we actually can observe often involve many other social considerations. We will look at different forms of reciprocity across a variety of cultures.

Tutorial discussion

To whom do you give gifts and what sorts of gifts? What are the 'rules' of gifts? In informal arrangements (like selling things secondhand, working for a friend, borrowing something from a colleague, asking for help), when would you insist on paying or are

there ways of giving gifts? What sorts of gifts have no expectation of reciprocity? What other areas of your life, other than gifts, have similar dynamics?

Tutorial readings

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

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

Supplemental reading

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

Week 7: Consuming

16 September 2009

First portfolio assessment due at the Faculty of Arts Help Desk.

If the 'commodity fetish' helps us to understand the way that social relations of production are concealed in 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, shopping a form of recreation or production. 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 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, define the kind of people we are or are not through out 'taste.'

Tutorial discussion

Belk argues that there are some things—'objects of attachment'—that, unlike 'commodities', have intimate ties to individuals. (The term 'possession' has a wonderful ambiguity that captures this tie between people and things.) How does Belk describe these sorts of objects? What sorts of objects in your life have this power? How does Robbins describe a society built upon a new understanding of citizenship and the good life? What makes a consumer society distinct for Robbins from other types of social relations?

Tutorial readings

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

Belk, Russell W. 1988. Possessions and the Extended Self. *The Journal of Consumer Behavior* 15 (2): 139-168.

Supplemental reading

Baudrillard, Jean. 1988. Consumer Society. In *Selected Writings*. Mark Poster, ed. Pp. 29-56. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Midsemester Recess

Week 8: Money

7 October 2009

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

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 discussion

What are the functions of money? According to Paul Bohannan, what sort of economic systems existed among the Tiv, and what happened when 'general purpose money' was introduced into their economies? Are there any 'special purpose moneys' in your life? What are the two sides of the coin, according to Hart? What is the state's role in the creation and maintenance of money?

Tutorial readings

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

Hart, Keith. 1986. Heads or Tails? Two Sides of the Coin. *Man* (N.S.) 21(4): 637-656.

Week 9: Trade

14 October 2009

Trade has affected the rise and fall of empires, the wealth and poverty of nations, and the current international system of relationships. Although long-distance trade was once focused entirely on high status, high cost goods like silk, spices, porcelain, and precious metals, today, the most mundane objects are sent around the world, so that at our local grocery store, we can find the most basic foodstuffs brought from half a world away. Political leaders look to trade to bring prosperity, and the contemporary world order is built upon the assumption that more extensive trade will necessarily benefit all involved, rich and poor alike. But how is this possible? How can trade make everyone wealthier if it does not, itself, produce anything, but merely moves around things that are already produced? How did trade come to have the prestige that it now enjoys, and does current attitude toward trade make sense?

This week will also explore new movements in trade, including Fair Trade and Free Trade concepts, and ask what anthropologists can contribute to our understanding of global economic exchange. We will discuss protests against global trade and the key international agreements that shape the rules for trading, as well as historical trends in the flows of commodities. In summary, we will try to understand both how trade has shaped the modern world, and how our values and ideas influence what gets traded and how much people get for what they exchange.

Tutorial discussion

Can you clearly describe the differences between previous models of trade, Free Trade ideology, and Fair Trade concepts? Who makes certain kinds of arguments about trade that are discussed in these readings and why? Is Free Trade a coherent way of dealing with injustice and helping to combat poverty? How might individuals affect the way that the world trades goods?

Tutorial readings

Hahnel, Robin. 1999. Deconstructing the Neoliberal Myth: Analysis. In *Panic Rules! Everything You Need to Know about the Global Economy*. Pp. 13-26. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

Jaffee, David. 2007. A Movement or a Market? In *Brewing Justice: Fair Trade Coffee, Sustainability, and Survival*. Pp. 11-35. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Week 10: Globalization

21 October 2009

Individual research essay due at the Faculty of Arts Help Desk.

With the rise of global capitalism and the spread of Western-based multinational corporations, especially those marketing highly visible products, many critics have worried that the globe faces a kind of cultural 'graying out' in which vivid differences between groups will disappear. When we see a Kentucky Fried Chicken alongside a temple, or Fidel Castro wearing Nike shoes while giving a marathon speech, or an

African nomad in a Hulk Hogan t-shirt, we worry that capitalism will wipe out 'culture.' According to this reading, Coca-Cola, McDonald's, and pop music are among the cultural missionaries, far more merciless and effective than any that have come before, converting cultures everywhere into a single market.

But does the spread of commodities always bring culture along with it, or are commodities liable to being 'converted' themselves, given new meanings in the places they arrive? In today's lecture, we will reflect on the different types of change being wrought by the spread of Western material culture, and the changes in objects that also take place. In addition, we will reflect on the way that capitalism tends to generate subcultural splinters and forms of multiculturalism in our own lives.

Tutorial discussion

Theodore Levitt's piece is widely considered to be one of the foundational statements of the 'globalization' concept. What did Levitt anticipate would be the effects of 'globalization'? McDonald's restaurant is one of the hallmarks of 'globalization', such a symbol of the cultural effects of global capitalism that it has even become the target of attacks, both satirical and physical. Judging from the ethnographic observation of McDonald's in Beijing, however, what might you say are the complicating factors that Levitt may not take into account? Is McDonald's in Beijing an example of 'globalization' destroying local culture?

Tutorial readings

Levitt, Theodore. 1983. The Globalization of Markets. *Harvard Business Review* (May-June 1983): 92-102.

Yunxiang Yan. 1997. McDonald's in Beijing: The Localization of Americana. In *Golden Arches East: McDonald's in East Asia.* James L. Watson, ed. Pp. 39-76. Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press.

Week 11: Corporations

28 October 2009

Shadowing our discussions up until this week has been the mysterious entity that lives alongside us in the modern capitalists economy: the corporation. So pervasive in our lives that we usually fail to even think about them, in fact, corporations are odd, uncanny creatures. During this week we will discuss, in a non-technical way, the history of incorporation as a legal and economic form, and the implications of the existence of corporations for social and cultural life.

Although we have two critical readings for the tutorial this week, our goal is not to demonize a cultural fiction but to understand how it could arise and what influence it has on the way we understand ourselves. Alongside states and families, corporations are probably the most powerful institutions shaping our daily lives, and yet we often understand how they work, why they arose, and what they can do very poorly. Understanding them better allows us to see that they are cultural creations, subject to modification and change if we, as a society, choose to change the rules of their existence.

Tutorial discussion

What are the crucial attributes of corporations that affect the way that we live? How does the existence of corporations affect our society and our understanding of ourselves? Korten is definitely a critic of corporations, but his perspective helps us to 'de-naturalize' one of the most invisible institutions around us, one that is as fantastic as any imagined by a religion or spiritual system. What other sorts of economic entities exist in your experience? How might corporations be different, or how would their absence affect economic life? How are they changing?

Tutorial readings

Korten, David C. 1995. Rise of Corporate Power in America. In *When Corporations Rule the World.* Pp. 53-68. London: Earthscan.

Korten, David C. 1999. The Naked Emperor. In *The Post-Corporate World: Life After Capitalism.* Pp. 37-63. Pluto Press.

Week 12: Advertising

4 November 2009

In the United States, more is spent per capita on advertising each year than on education, and children will likely see more hours of television by the time they reach adulthood than spend hours in a classroom. Corporate logos are among the first symbols that children recognize. Other developed countries, including Australia, are not far behind, and advertising affects our lives, our emotions, our aspirations, and our imaginations. Some theorists argue that advertising profoundly affects consumer psychology, intentionally trying to create insecurities that can only be salved by consuming.

During this week, we will discuss the role of advertising in helping to create the material world around us, especially the phenomenon of 'branding'. Branding, the convenor will argue, can be better understood when compared to other forms of identity formation, such as totem use and religious conversion. We will focus on a specific brand (Nike), on the production of 'Generations' (X, Y) through branding, and the phenomenology, or experiential dynamics, of brand awareness.

Tutorial discussion

What about contemporary advertising and branding makes Naomi Klein anxious? How has the nature of advertising made resistance to its influence more difficult? Do we own brands, or do brands possess us? What 'brands' are most salient in your lives? Are you part of any 'brand communities'? Do brand relationships replace other forms of social relations?

Tutorial readings

Klein, Naomi. 2000. Alt.everything. In *No Logo: No Space, No Choice, No Jobs.* Pp. 63-85. Flamingo (Picador).

Muniz, Albert M., Jr., and Thomas C. O'Guinn. 2001. Brand Community. *The Journal of Consumer Research* 27(4): 412-432.

Week 13: Irrationality

11 November 2009

If we are all rational actors, as some economic theories seem to assume, what are we to make of extravagance, conspicuous consumption, wanton commodity destruction, or crazy, hare-brained get-rich-quick schemes? When explorers and missionaries arrived in the Pacific Northwest of North America (in areas in both the United States and Canada), some were shocked to find that the Native Americans engaged in a ritual giving of gifts, called 'potlatch' in which they distributed all that they had in a public display of wealth and generosity. As colonial economics brought more wealth into the community, the feasts grew ever more extravagant, leading to the destruction of valuable objects, the obliteration of mounds of blankets (a form of currency), and a kind of war of generosity.

Likewise, 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 great material wealth during the war. Called 'Cargo Cults' because they awaited the return of 'cargo' with the wealthy foreigners, these groups are an example of how people who have not fully understood the economic processes around them have tried to harness economic power.

This week will argue that both potlatch and cargo cults resemble some of the more irrational phenomena we see around us. We will examine areas of our own lives where extravagant consumption is not just condoned, but virtually demanded of participants, even if it leads to disaster. In addition, we will reflect on the ways that, as the means of wealth creation in our economy became more and more arcane—derivatives, futures, Internet start-ups, eBay businesses, lotteries—the opportunities for 'instant wealth' producing schemes seem everywhere, and people keep falling for the scams.

From *The Secret* to Bernie Madoff, from hosting the Olympics to the orgies of spending around weddings, we will discuss the ways that we try to conceptualize risk, to understand why people are susceptible to certain scams and not others, and to understand when we throw caution (and budgets) to the wind.

Tutorial discussion

How does Thorstein Veblen explain conspicuous consumption? What is the purpose of seemingly unreasonable expenditures, in Veblin's opinion? Why would the most marginal members of a class, those at the edge of a class rung, seem to be the most likely to risk ruin, according to Veblen's model? What other areas of life, like weddings, have dynamics that drive people to spend beyond their abilities?

How are 'get rich quick' schemes you might be familiar with similar to a cargo cult like John Frum? How do they propose to work? Are there other important choices about the financial future that we have to make in the absence of information or understanding? What part does trust or faith play in cargo cults, in pyramid schemes, or in our own economic confidence?

Tutorial readings

Raffaele, Paul. 2006. In John They Trust. *Smithsonian Magazine* 36 (11) (February 2006): 70-77. Accessed online at: http://www.smithsonianmagazine.com/issues/2006/february/john.php

Cole, Douglas. 1991. Underground Potlatch. *Natural History* 100 (10): 50-53.

Veblen, Thorstein. 1973. Conspicuous Consumption. In *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Otnes, Cele C., and Elizabeth H. Pleck. 2003. The Engagement Complex. In *Cinderella Dreams: The Allure of the Lavish Wedding*. Pp. 55-80. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Second portfolio assessment due at the Faculty of Arts Help Desk.
Unit evaluations will be conducted in this final session. Please attend.

ADDITIONAL READINGS ON LECTURES TOPICS

Week 1 What is 'Economic'?

Barry, Andrew, and Don Slater. 2002. Introduction: The Technological Economy. *Economy and Society* 31(2): 175-193.

Blim, Michael. 2000. Capitalisms in Late Modernity. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 29: 25-38.

Callon, Michel. 1998. *The Laws of Markets.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Carrier, James G., and Daniel Miller, eds. 1998. *Virtualism: A New Political Economy.* Oxford: Berg.

Dalton, George. 1961. Economic Theory and Primitive Society. *American Anthropologist* 63(1): 1-25.

Gudeman, Stephen. 2001. *The Anthropology of Economy: Community, Market, and Culture.* Malden, Ma.: Blackwell.

LeClair, Edward E., Jr. 1962. Economic Theory and Economic Anthropology. *American Anthropologist* 64(6): 1179-1203.

Robbins, Richard H. 2005. *Global Problems and the Culture of Capitalism.* Third edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Week 2 Rationality

Anderson, Elizabeth. 2000. Beyond Homo Economicus. *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 29(2):170-200.

Chibnik, Michael. 2005. Review Essay: Experimental Economics in Anthropology: A Critical Assessment. *American Ethnologist* 32(2):198-209.

Curry, George N. 2005. Doing "Business" in Papua New Guinea: The Social Embeddedness of Small Business Enterprises. *Journal of Small Business and Entrepreneurship* 18 (2):231-246.

Fehr, Ernst, and Urs Fischbacher. 2002. Why Social Preferences Matter – The Impact of Non-selfish Motives on Competition, Cooperation and Incentives. *Economic Journal* 112 (478):C1–33.

Ferguson, James. 2000. Economics and Barbarism: An Anthropological Comment on Pearson's "Homo Economicus". *History of Political Economy* 32(4):991-998.

Needleman, Joseph. 1991. *Money and the Meaning of Life.* New York: Doubleday.

Polanyi, Karl. 1944. *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of our Time.* Boston: Beacon Press (1971 reprint).

Sahlins, Marshall. 1976. *Culture and Practical Reason.* Chicago: University of Chicago.

Week 3 Affluence

Applbaum, Kalman. 1998. The Sweetness of Salvation: Consumer Marketing and the Liberal-Bourgeois Theory of Needs. (Including commentary) *Current Anthropology* 39(3):323-349.

Gagnier, Regenia. 2000. *The Insatiability of Human Wants: Economics and Aesthetics in Market Society.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kahn, Joel S., and Josep R. Lloberam eds. 1981. *The Anthropology of Pre-Capitalist Societies.* London: Macmillan Press.

Kaplan, David. 2000. The Darker Side of the Original Affluent Society. *Journal of Anthropological Research* 56(3):301-324.

Pearson, Heath. 2000. *Homo economicus* Goes Native, 1859-1945: The Rise and Fall of Primitive Economics. *History of Political Economy* 32(4):933-989.

Sahlins, Marshall. 1972. *Stone Age Economics*. Chicago: Aldine Atherton.

_____. 1996. The Sadness of Sweetness: The Native Anthropology of Western Cosmology. *Current Anthropology* 37(3):395-428.

Week 4 Poverty

Ackerman, Frank, Neva R. Goodwin, Laurie Dougherty, and Kevin Gallagher, eds. 2000. *The Political Economy of Inequality.* Washington, D.C.: Island.

Edelman, Marc, and Angelique Haugerud, eds. 2005. *The Anthropology of Development and Globalization: From Classical Political Economy to Contemporary Neoliberalism.* Malden, Mass.: Blackwell.

Goode, Judith, and Jeff Maskovsky, eds. 2002. *The New Poverty Studies: The Ethnography of Power, Politics, and Impoverished People in the United States.* New York:New York University.

Landes, David S. 1999. *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations: Why Some Are So Rich and Some So Poor.* New York: W. W. Norton.

Lutz, Mark A. 1999. *Economics for the Common Good: Two Centuries of Social Economic Thought in the Humanistic Tradition.* London: Routledge.

Maddison, Angus. 2001. *The World Economy: A Millennial Perspective.* Paris: Development Centre of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Nelson, Robert H. 2001. *Economics as Religion: From Samuelson to Chicago and Beyond.* University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Newman, Lucile F., ed. 1989. *Hunger in History: Food Shortage, Poverty, and Deprivation.* New York: Blackwell.

Ong, Aihwa. 1987. *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline: Factory Women in Malaysia.* SUNY Press.

Scarfe, Wendy, and Allan Scarfe. 1974. *Victims or Bludgers?: Case Studies of Poverty in Australia.* Malvern, Vic.: Sorrett.

Sen, Amartya. 1987. *On Ethics and Economics.* Oxford: B. Blackwell.

Serr, Klaus, ed. 2002. *Thinking about Poverty.* Federation Press.

Week 5 Commodities

Appadurai, Arjun, ed. 1986. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hansen, Karen Tranberg. 2000. *Salaula: The World of Secondhand Clothing and Zambia.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Haug, Wolfgang Fritz. 1986. *Critique of Commodity Aesthetics: Appearance, Sexuality and Advertising in Capitalist Society.* Robert Beck, trans. Cambridge: Polity.

Stratton, Jon. 1996. *The Desirable Body: Cultural Fetishism and the Erotics of Consumption.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Taussig, Michael. 1980. *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

van Binsbergen, Wim M.J. , and Peter L. Geschiere, eds. 2005. *Commodification: Things, Agency and Identities (The Social Life of Things Revisited).* Lit Verlag.

Week 6 Gifts

Carrier, James G. 1990. Gifts in a World of Commodities: The Ideology of the Perfect Gift in American Society. *Social Analysis* 29:19-37.

_____. 1992. The Gift in Theory and Practice in Melanesia: A Note on the Centrality of Gift Exchange. *Ethnology* 31(2):185-193.

Cheal, David J. 1988. *The Gift Economy.* London: Routledge.

Goddard, Michael. 2000. Of Cabbages and Kin: The Value of an Analytical Distinction between Gifts and Commodities. *Critique of Anthropology* 20(2):137-151.

Godelier, Maurice. 1999. *The Enigma of the Gift.* Cambridge: Polity.

Gregory, Christopher A. 1982. *Gifts and Commodities*. London: Academic Press.

_____. 1997. *Savage Money: The Anthropology and Politics of Commodity Exchange.* Amsterdam: Harwood Academic.

Laidlaw, James. 2000. A Free Gift Makes No Friends. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 6(4):617-634.

Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1920. Kula: the Circulating Exchange of Valuables in the Archipelagoes of Eastern New Guinea. *Man* 20:97-105

Mauss, Marcel. 1990. *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies.* London: Routledge.

Parry, Jonathan. 1986. The Gift, the Indian Gift and the 'Indian Gift'. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 21(3):453-473.

Weiner, Annette B. 1992. *Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping-While-Giving.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Week 7 Consumption

Belk, Russell W., Güliz Ger, Søren Askegaard. 2003. The Fire of Desire: A Multisited Inquiry into Consumer Passion. *Journal of Consumer Research* 30:326-351.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste.* Richard Nice, trans. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

De Certeau, Michel. 1988. *The Practice of Everyday Life.* Steven Rendall, trans. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Douglas, Mary, and Baron Isherwood. 1996. *The World of Goods: Towards an Anthropology of Consumption.* Revised edition. London: Routledge.

Geertz, Clifford. 1963. The Bazaar-Type Economy: The Traditional Pasar. In *Peddlers and Princes: Social Change and Economic Modernization in Two Indonesian Towns.* Pp. 30-47. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Heath, Joseph, and Andrew Potter. 2004. *Nation of Rebels: Why Counterculture Became Consumer Culture.* New York: HarperBusiness.

Humphery, Kim. 1998. *Shelf Life: Supermarkets and the Changing Culture of Consumption.* Cambridge and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.

Leach, William. 1993. *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture.* New York: Pantheon.

McCracken, Grant. 1991. *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Miller, Daniel. 1987. *Material Culture and Mass Consumption.* Blackwell.

_____. 1995. Consumption and Commodities. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24:141-161.

_____. 1998. *A Theory of Shopping.* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Miller, Daniel, Peter Jackson, Nigel Thrift, Beverley Holbrook, and Michael Rowlands. 1998. *Shopping, Place, and Identity.* New York: Routledge.

White, Katherine, and Darren W. Dahl. 2007. Are All Out-Groups Created Equal? Consumer Identity and Dissociative Influence. *Journal of Consumer Research* 34(4):525-536.

Zukin, Sharon. 2005. *Point of Purchase: How Shopping Changed American Culture.* New York and London: Routledge.

Week 8 Money

Binswanger, Hans. 1994. Money and Magic: A Critique of the Modern Economy in the Light of Goethe's Faust. Trans. By J. E. Harrison. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bloch, Maurice, and Jonathan Parry. 1989. Introduction: Money and the Morality of Exchange. In *Money and the Morality of Exchange.* Jonathan Parry and Maurice Bloch, eds. Pp. 1–32. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press.

Bryan, Dick, and Michael Rafferty. 2007. Financial Derivatives and the Theory of Money. *Economy and Society* 36(1):134-158.

Gilbert, Emily. Common Cents: Situating Money in Time and Place. *Economy and Society* 34(3):357-388.

Graeber, David. 1996. Beads and Money: Notes toward a Theory of Wealth and Power. *American Ethnologist* 23(1):4-24.

Guttman, Robert. 1994. *How Credit-Money Shapes the Economy: The United States in a Global Economy*. London: M. E. Sharpe.

Hermann, Gretchen M. 2006. Special Money: Ithaca Hours and Garage Sales. *Ethnology* 45(2):125-141.

Hutchinson, Sharon. 1992. The Cattle of Money and the Cattle of Girls among the Neur, 1930-83. *American Ethnologist* 19(2):294-316.

Maurer, Bill. 2006. The Anthropology of Money. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 35:15-36.

Orlove, Benjamin S. 1986. Barter and Cash Sale on Lake Titicaca: A Test of Competing Approaches. *Current Anthropology* 27(2):85-106.

Pryke, Michael, and John Allen. 2000. Monetized Time-Space: Derivatives – Money's 'New Imaginary'? *Economy and Society* 29(2):264-284.

Simmel, Georg. 1907 [1995]. Chapter 1: Value and Money, Part I. In *The Philosophy of Money*. Pp. 59-79. London: Routledge.

Toren, Christina. 1989. Drinking Cash: The Purification of Money through Ceremonial Exchange in Fiji. In *Money and the Morality of Exchange*. Maurice Bloch and Jonathan Parry, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University

Weatherford, Jack. 1997. *The History of Money: From Sandstone to Cyberspace*. New York: Crown.

Zelizer, Viviana A. 1997. *The Social Meaning of Money: Pin Money, Paychecks, Poor Relief, and Other Currencies*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Week 9 Trade

Bates, Robert H. 1997. *Open-Economy Politics: The Political Economy of the World Coffee Trade*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Fikentscher, Wolfgang. 2001. Market Anthropology and Global Trade. *The Gruter Institute Working Papers on Law, Economics, and Evolutionary Biology:* Vol. 1: Article 4. http://www.bepress.com/giwp/default/vol1/iss1/art4

Flynn, Donna K. 1997. 'We Are the Border': Identity, Exchange and the State along the Bénin-Nigeria Border. *American Ethnologist* 24(2): 311-330.

Littrell, Mary Ann, and Marsha Ann Dickson. 1999. *Social Responsibility in the Global Market: Fair Trade of Cultural Products*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lyon, Sarah. 2007. Maya Coffee Farmers and Fair Trade: Assessing the Benefits and Limitations of Alternative Markets. *Culture & Agriculture* 29(2): 100-112.

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WRITING ANTHROPOLOGICAL ESSAYS

Writing an anthropology essay can be a challenge, especially for those students who have little experience of the social sciences in their secondary education. Students are encouraged to think of their essay as an attempt to persuade a rational reader to agree with the essay's argument. The same things that would persuade you—evidence, clear logical statements, a reasonable tone (rather than an overly aggressive one)—will likely make your essay effective. Demonstrating a fuller knowledge of a topic, even if that means acknowledging facts that don't support your case, can better establish your credibility as an author than simply ignoring anything that doesn't support your position.

Your essay is an exercise in thinking, analysing, examining and criticising arguments, and, I hope, developing arguments of your own. You will read different perspectives, become more familiar with the relevant data, evaluate which arguments you find most compelling, and in turn try to convince a reader. Your essay should contain both specific facts (evidence) and over-arching arguments that both help you to decide which information is most crucial and depend upon your presentation of evidence.

Although there seems to be no web site as yet devoted to writing anthropology essays, the University of Toronto maintains an excellent site on writing skills, although it focuses on philosophy students in particular. Studying the material on these sites is probably the best way to initially approach writing anthropology:

University of Toronto Advice on Academic Writing, overview and links:
http://ut12.1ibrary.utoronto.ca/www/writing/advise.html

Uof T General Advice on Academic Essay-Writing:
http://ut12.1ibrary.utoronto.ca/www/writing/essay.html

Uof T, Understanding Essay Topics: A Checklist
http://utl2.library.utoronto.ca/www/writing/top ics.html

UofT, Critical Reading Towards Critical Writing:
http://ut12.1ibrary.utoronto.ca/www/writing/critrdg.html

UofT, Taking Notes from Research Reading:
http:/ / utl2.library.utoronto.ca/www/writing/not es.html

UofT, Using Thesis Statements:
http: //ut12.library.utoronto.ca/www/writing/thesis.html

UofT, Guide for Writing Critical Summaries:
http://www.chass.utoronto.ca:8080/philosophy/phlwrite/sousa.html

UofT, The Book Review or Article Critique: General Guidelines:
http://ut12.1ibrary.utoronto.ca/www/writing/bkrev.html

UofT, Writing a Philosophical Essay:
http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/philosophy/phlwrite/sousa.html

ANTHROPOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS

As in other social science fields, students in anthropology are expected to read critically and not simply accept as 'Truth' what you read. You will soon discover that much of anthropology, and some of the key debates in the field, are not disputes about facts; rather, the arguments are about how to interpret facts and which accounts of cause and effect are most plausible given the evidence at hand. Rather than detective work, anthropology can often resemble legal or political arguments, with the facts not in dispute, but the interpretation unclear and open to diverse readings.

Our understanding has often advanced through opposition of contrary viewpoints and shifting emphases. As in related disciplines, an internal tension generated by the opposition of arguments gives anthropology much of its vitality and interest. The arguments with those who deny cultural differences exist are much less interesting and important to the development of the field than the debates within it, among scientists who may agree about many things but disagree on key issues. Students may find it impossible to write, 'Anthropology says…' or 'Anthropology has shown…' Instead, recognition of other arguments, even when one disagrees with their perspective, is an essential ingredient in this type of collective endeavour.

Sometimes in anthropology, it appears that research generates as many questions as it does answers; few issues seem to be completely resolved, and new discoveries often make us uncertain about things that we hadn't even realized were open to debate. The point is that even the most important thinkers' ideas are not the 'final word'; for example, although no anthropologist would dispute the importance of a writer like Marcel Mauss, no reputable scientist would treat his writings as the definitive, final statements on gifts and exchange.

This openness to debate means that we expect your essays to demonstrate not just factual knowledge but also some ability to present and assess arguments and counter-arguments about particular problems. A good explanation of a disagreement is a better demonstration of a complete understanding of an issue than a one-sided, imbalanced account that ignores crucial reservations. Remember: debates haven't been settled for a reason in scientific fields—we don't expect you to be able to settle them definitively in 1500 words.

The criteria by which we assess research essays are:

1. Argument (20%): Make sure that your essay makes a clear argument—ask yourself, 'What do I want my reader to be persuaded to think?' And then, somewhere in your essay, make sure you state this clearly and build the case for this point. Essays are not unified by a topic or a subject; they are unified when you make a statement about the topic. You may find that you will need to write a bit before your argument becomes clear to you; once it is, make sure that you put it in your introduction and edit your essay to make it consistent with your argument.

A good creative argument can make use of other authors' work, but it applies it in a way, or expands it so that we can really see the insight of the paper's author. The point is not to always argue that everyone else is wrong about everything. Often a good argument says that an idea created in one area might be fruitfully applied to another area that the original author did not consider. This may lead us to say that the idea would need to be modified or expanded to take into account new details.

The bottom line is that having a good argument does not mean being argumentative. It means that, if someone asks you what your essay is about, you can say, 'My essay shows that …' If all you can say is 'My essay is about…' some topic, than you likely don't have a strong argument yet. Once you have an argument, you will be able to say that you have more than a topic; you have something you want to persuade the reader about that topic.

2. Use of evidence (20%): The content of your essay should be relevant to the question or problem you've selected. Don't include details or information not directly related to your argument. We will be looking at how you use evidence to advance your argument, for example, how well you integrate authoritative sources or passages from the resources that you reference. Make sure that your evidence actually supports your argument and that you explain how it fits into your overall essay.

Often, topical essays have a lot of extraneous information. Having a good, clear argument can help you to decide which information is really relevant and needs to be there for your argument to work. If information can be removed without undermining the argument, ask yourself if you really need it. Even if it's interesting, it can be tangential and unhelpful to your essay.

3. Research skills (30%): Your essay should be well-informed, reflecting your reading, research, and learning in the unit. Read as widely as possible and make use of what you read (but only if it is relevant—not everything you read this semester will be used in your essay). As a rule of thumb, a research essay should cite at least a dozen items, and they should *not*, under any circumstances, be unreviewed sources of unclear validity (for example, most webpages are not reviewed). Higher marks than 'Pass' will need to make greater use of appropriate resources.

4. Communication (10%): Your essay should be constructed in a way that shows the logical steps in your argument, with data from various sources being brought in as appropriate, and it should be easy to read. Being well written does not mean using a lot of big words, complicated grammatical structures, or purposefully opaque jargon. Good communication is clear.

Remember that paragraphs are the organisational 'building blocks' of an essay and that each paragraph should have a main idea or theme. Good organisation and effective writing can only be achieved by careful planning and frequent re-reading and revision of your writing as you proceed. Essays whose authors have not taken the trouble to review and edit them before submitting seldom succeed and will score low on Communication.

Begin with an introduction that foreshadows your argument. You may, if you wish, write a formal synopsis or use subheadings in the body of the essay, but this is not essential. It is more important to go back to the introduction after you have finished the body of the paper to see, for certain, that it actually represents what you have written. Too often, students write the introduction first and never bother to update it as their ideas change and develop. An overly vague introduction does not help you; if you find yourself padding the introduction with sentences that don't work toward your argument, or that talk in overly broad terms (e.g., 'Since time immemorial, people have traded…'), just delete them.

Develop your discussion progressively and coherently. This means ensuring that sentences and paragraphs follow logically from one another. A common fault is leaving out connecting thoughts that (in your mind) link the sentences you write. In addition, read what you write *out loud*; what may look fine on the screen may sound terrible to you if you read it out loud. An unfamiliar reader's experience is more like reading out loud than seeing the text on a computer screen.

Your conclusion should draw together the threads of your argument into a summary and present a final answer to or assessment of the problem.

If there seems to be disagreement in the literature about the meaning of certain terms, mention this and state how you intend to use the term(s). Choose an appropriate place to define terms—usually where the particular term is first mentioned. Dictionary definitions are often inadequate when it comes to specialist concepts, and including a dictionary definition in an essay is usually a sign things are not going well. Instead, use a definition from the literature by preference.

Take special care to express your ideas as clearly and concisely as possible. Do not use note or bullet point form. Write complete sentences and keep them as short and succinct as possible. Often students appear to think that ideas will sound more impressive if they are difficult to understand or make use of the largest possible words; this is never the case. Carelessly constructed sentences, poor choice of words and errors in punctuation and spelling obscure your meaning. We are interested in what you know and think, and will not penalise occasional errors in expression. But an essay is an attempt to communicate on paper in a formally structured way, and to succeed in this you must use writing skills. An essay with many faults in written expression rarely gains a good mark, not because we value grammar for grammar's sake, but because the cumulative effect of such errors obscures your meaning and argument. Some would even say that if you can't express your ideas clearly, then you can't think them clearly.

The best way to find out whether your essay is well-written is to have someone read it. This can be painful, since people are likely to have the effrontery to say that parts of it aren't clear! An alternative is to read it aloud to yourself. This can help you to recognise the syntactically awkward bits, but it may not help you to see the mis-spellings and other errors that only a fresh eye can notice. Nevertheless, a careful reading will pay dividends.

Failing that, run it through the spell-checker, but don't be surprised if the computer doesn't tell you not to use 'effected' instead of 'affected'.

N.B. The Vice-Chancellor has asked that writing skills be taken into account in the overall assessment of work, and particularly that "Markers should insist that ideas and facts should be expressed accurately and adequately, and should penalise the sort of writing which calls on them to provide a charitable interpretation of notions which have been vaguely or misleadingly expressed."

5. Integration of cited material (10%): Learn from how other veteran authors integrate text into their writing. Some students drop in quotes from what they have read, but they don't integrate the material well: either it doesn't really say what they want it to, they don't explain it or tie it into their own discussion, or they just put it in as chunks, never again discussing it or using a term from the passage or making reference to it.

Material from other people's writing is often essential to what we write. We get good ideas from other authors, want to disagree with them, think of a good example of a concept they discuss, or see a way that their ideas can be expanded. This is the heart and soul of learning, of building on each other's ideas rather than having to invent everything for ourselves.

In order to do so, though, we have to learn to stitch what they say into what we write, integrating it so that the ideas flow together. In general – and more practically – this means that a paragraph or section should seldom, if ever, end with someone else's words. A quote should never be stranded by itself without transitions into and out of it.

Your essay must be based on your own thinking. Only a small part of your essay should be direct quotations or material that is merely a modified or condensed version of another author's work. Extensive quotation or paraphrasing is not acceptable as it doesn't evidence your thinking about your reading (any more than 10% in long quotes is a really bad idea). Quotations and paraphrasing have value only in so far as you use them, sparingly, to strengthen your discussion.

We do not expect you to come up with original insights at this stage of your studies. But we do expect a serious effort to evaluate how the readings bear on the problem. One way to proceed is by comparing and contrasting the work of different writers. Consider the implications of the arguments and data used by one author for other works you are also referring to in your essay. One author may raise questions or make points that others do not consider. Indicate this in your discussion, and try to examine the other material in the light of these points. A statement by one writer may be in conflict with those of others. Which do you think is the most plausible? Is there enough data available to you from which you could decide between the different positions? If not, what sort of additional data is needed? Try also to anticipate possible objections to your arguments and say how you might deal with then.

Think for yourself and say what you think. By this we don't mean to encourage rash, unconsidered, one-sided statements. Rather, we hope you will be stimulated by your reading and that you will make the effort to think through the issues raised. Use your readings to substantiate your arguments, and to juxtapose (place side-by-side) different emphases, different points of view, and to highlight tensions you might find in the material. Essays that are simply a series of verbatim extracts or paraphrases from the

literature are not acceptable, even if their sources are properly acknowledged. A poorly expressed essay that nonetheless shows that the writer has made some attempt to think about her or his reading has some value. One that is mainly a cut-and-paste job of undigested quote has little value and may be plagiarism.

6. Referencing and ethics (10%): Never quote or use an author's work in any way without acknowledging it. You must always indicate where in the literature you obtained the facts, concepts and points of view which you discuss in your essay. When quoting an author verbatim, always show this with quotation marks and a citation. You must also indicate where a summary of someone else's work or ideas ends and your own discussion is resumed.

To quote or paraphrase another person's work without acknowledgement is plagiarism, that is, the presentation of the words and ideas of another writer as your own. Plagiarism demonstrates that the writer has failed to think independently, and it is unjust to writers who do honest work. To the extent that work is plagiarised it loses value, and depending on the amount plagiarised, may receive no marks at all.

Moreover, good authors use citation to reinforce their arguments, to suggest which lines of thinking influence the essay, and to share their awareness of the field of debate. In other words, good citation isn't just ethical, it makes an essay stronger and more persuasive. Good citation locates you, making your reader aware that you know more even than the essay itself includes.

There are many different ways of referencing essays, but most of them are variants of either the footnote/endnote system (sometimes called the 'Oxford system') or the author and date system of in-text citations (sometimes called the 'Harvard system'). In this and other anthropology units you are expected to use the Harvard system, since it is the system employed in almost all anthropology publications. Footnote/endnote citations will not be accepted. Remember that with the Harvard system you can still use notes (preferably endnotes) for additional comments, which may in turn include further Harvard-style citations within the note.

Harvard-style citations are placed in round brackets within the text of the essay. Three different variants can be used, depending on contexts. Thus:

- 'Fox (1967) made the point that …' or;
- 'Fox argues that incest is "not so much prevented as avoided" (1967: 72)' or;
- 'Several authors have studied somatic factors in social behaviour (e.g. Tiger 1975, Tiger & Fox 1986).'

Note that you must cite a page number whenever you quote directly. When you paraphrase or otherwise refer to or make use of a source without quoting it, the author's name and year of publication alone are sufficient.

Every citation in your essay should have a matching bibliographic entry in a 'References' list at the end. Every entry in your list should match a citation in the essay; don't include sources that you don't actually use. If you really want to include references that you have not cited, you should put them in a separate 'Additional References Consulted' list, but this is not necessary.

The References list should be alphabetised by surnames. Do not number the references (as is commonly done in Psychology, e.g.). Use italics or underline the titles of books

and serials. When quoting from a chapter in an edited collection, always cite the author of the chapter together with the year the collection was published, and include the editor(s) name(s) with the title of the collection in the bibliographic entry (see the Tiger reference in the following example):

References

Fox, R. 1967. *Kinship and Marriage*. Harmondsworth: Penguin

Peacock, J.L. 1969. Mystics and merchants in fourteenth century. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 8(1): 47-59.

Tiger, L. 1975. Somatic factors and social behaviour. In R. Fox (ed.), *Biosocial Anthropology*. London: Malaby.

Tiger, L. & Fox, R. 1986. The zoological perspective in social science. *Man* 1: 75-81.

Wolf, E. 1969. On peasant rebellions. *International Social Science Journal* 21: 286-294.

_____. 1982. *Europe and the People Without History*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

If you have read about someone's work in another publication, e.g. Fox (1967) mentions Leach (1961), but you haven't read the original Leach article, make this clear, e.g. 'Leach's 1961 paper (cited in Fox 1967)...' If you want to quote from a secondary source, you should indicate both the original author and the secondary source, e.g. 'Fox (1967: 32) quotes Leach's point that ". . ."'

When quoting from a particular book or article for a second or further time in your essay when in the meantime you have not cited any other item, simply reference by the abbreviation 'ibid.', which means 'in the same place'. If you are quoting from a different page in the same work, include the page number, e.g. '… blah, blah' (ibid.: 32).

When referring again to this author's work but where citations to other works have intervened since you last cited it, revert to the standard citation form, e.g. (Fox 1967) or 'Fox (1967: 118) argues that "…"'

When referring more than once to a work by several authors there is no need to repeat all their names every time. E.g., first reference: (Tiger, Fox & Pike 1975); subsequent references: (Tiger *et al.*). 'Et al.' means 'and others'.

If there are two authors of the same surname in your bibliography, distinguish them in references by initials. If there are two items by the same author and published in the same year, distinguish both citations and bibliographic entries as, e.g., (Lyons 1981a) and (Lyons 1981b).

More general information on setting out essays are provided on the SCMP website. Click onto 'Undergraduate' and then 'Essay Writing Guide.'