

**SYLLABUS: Economic Anthropology, ANTH 4143, Spring 2006**

Instructor: Karl F. Rambo, 520 Dale Hall Tower, 325-1999, krambo@ou.edu

Office hours: MWF, 9-10:30am; TTh 1:30- 2:30pm or by appointment. I am often available other hours throughout the week.

Course Description: This course introduces students to the issues, methods, and concepts of economic anthropology. The material for the course will consider issues of production, distribution, and consumption in non-Western societies as well as Western societies. As Richard Wilk, the author of one of our texts writes, "This is not watered-down economics for the mathematically disabled." We will be thinking about the purpose of work and material goods, the comparison of gifts and commodities, why poverty exists, the evolution of regional and global economies, and the way contemporary capitalist economies shape other aspects of society and culture. In order to think about the role of production, exchange and consumption in many cultures (including our own), we will be learning a bit about how economists handle their analyses of market economies. As Wilk writes in the syllabus for his class, "Economic anthropology takes highly abstract, mathematical, and dry economics and turns it into something more interesting, theoretical, controversial and complicated. We ask all the tough questions about human nature, power and social life that economics stopped wondering about over 100 years ago. It has direct topical focus on peasants, markets, gifts and commodities, consumption, and systems of production. It is readily applied to archaeology, international business, and any other social science." A bit harsh towards economics, perhaps, but it provides a good objective for our course.

Texts: 1. *Economies and Culture*, Richard R. Wilk, ISBN: 0813320585, paperback, Westview Press.

2. *The Gift*, Marcel Mauss, ISBN: 039332043X, paperback, WW Norton. (n.b.: this edition is translated by W.D. Halls and has an introduction by Mary Douglas). It is important to get this edition of this book.

3. There will be additional readings made available on the class Desire 2 Learn web page and/or on file at the Student Union copy shop.

Grades: Grades will be determined by student's performance on two in-class exams (30 points each); class participation in discussion of the reading assignments (10 points); an analysis of individual economic behavior (10 points); the creation of a simulation game (5 points); and a term paper/project (15 points). There are a total of 100 points in the semester. The second exam will be held during the assigned final exam period. An attendance record will be kept. Beyond two absences, each absence will result in the loss of an earned class participation point.

Etc.:

Cheating on exams or plagiarizing on the papers will lead to disciplinary action (as per the Student Code of Conduct) and a failing grade in the course. Those who may need special accommodation due to a disability are advised to contact the Office of Disability Services (325-3852). Students who use a non-OU e-mail account are responsible for making sure mail sent to their OU addresses is forwarded appropriately.

Schedule: "Economy and Culture" (Economic Anthropology), ANTH 4143, Spring 2006  
 (HEA)= reading from Carrier, The Handbook of Economic Anthropology

<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>
January 17 – First day	19 – <u>The Gift</u> , Forward and introduction
24 - Marcel Mauss, <u>The Gift</u> , chapter 1	26 - Sahlins, "Subsistence Affluence" article
31 Mauss, Chapt 2	February 2 - Mauss, Chapt 2 (continued)
7 - Bohanon article on Tiv spheres of exchange	9 - Rambo, "From Shells to Money"; Strathern and Stewart, "Ceremonial Exchange"
14 - Gift, Conclusion; Yan ( <u>HEA</u> ), "The Gift and Gift Economy"	16 - Game simulation
21 - Game simulation discussion	23 Wilk, <u>Economics and Culture</u> , Preface and chapter 1
28 - Wilk, Ch. 2, Human Nature	March 2 - Wilk, Ch. 3, Neoclassical Microecon.
7 - Wilks, ch. 4, Social and Political Economy	9 – Mid-term exam
14 – Spring Break	16 – Spring Break
21-	23 - Wilk Chapter 5
28- Wilk Chapter 6, Conclusion	30 – Hunt ( <u>HEA</u> ), One Way Econ. Transfers
April 4- Blim ( <u>HEA</u> ), Culture and Economy	6 – Schor, <u>Overspent American</u> , Visible Lifestyles
11- Schor, Hermes bag	13 – Hamilton, <u>Growth Fetish</u> , Ch. 3
18- Twitchell – A (mild) defense of luxury; PacoUnderhill on foreign malls	20 – Schwartz, <u>Paradox of Choice</u> , Choice and Happiness
25- Project presentations	27 - Project presentations
2- Project presentations	4 - Project presentations

Final Exam: **Friday, May 12th, 8am**