

ECONOMY, CULTURE, AND ANXIETY

Description

This course will examine how people experience psychological and cultural stress and anxiety when faced with economic upheaval. It will explore preconceptions of the economy and how these preconceptions are challenged by 1) the introduction of capitalism to pre-capitalist economies, 2) the collapse of the economy due to economic hardship, and 3) the collapse of state socialist economies. The course will provide examples from a cross-cultural perspective considering examples as diverse as eighteenth century Western Europe, cargo cults in Melanesia, peasant agriculture in South America, Perestroika-era Soviet Union, and contemporary America. The goal of this course is to bring an understanding of psychological processes of anxiety, drawn from both cognitive and psychoanalytic work, to bear on an understanding of the duress felt by people when the everyday-ness of the economy is violently challenged. Throughout, emphasis will be placed on the influence of psycho-cultural models in the mediation of perceptions and experiences of economic upheaval.

Textbooks

- Joseph Stiglitz Globalization and its Discontents. New York: W.W. Norton (2002)
- Michael Taussig The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press (1980)
- Franz Fanon Black Skin, White Masks. New York: Grove Press (1967)
- Nancy Reis Russian Talk: Culture and Conversation During Perestroika Ithaca: Cornell University Press (1997)
- Katherine Newman Falling From Grace: Downward Mobility in the Age of Affluence (1999) Berkeley: University of California Press
- Richard Wilk Economies and Cultures (1996) Boulder: Westview Press. ISBN: 0-8133-2058-5 (for the paperback)

Course Design and Requirements

The course will be organized as a seminar. I will lecture during the first 10-15 minutes of most classes in order to contextualize the assigned material, leading the participants in discussion during the remainder of each class period. Student evaluations will be based on

1) Take-home mid-term essay exam (25%): This exam will cover the background literature on the economic and psychological foundations of this course. This is one of the “writing components” of this course and, as such, you will have the opportunity to revise the essays and resubmit them after you receive the graded exams back.

2) Three short theme papers (8% each, 24% total): Each of these theme papers will explore a topical question drawn from each of the remaining themes in the course. Each will be 5-7 pages long. These theme papers, too, can be revised and resubmitted.

3) Take-home final essay exam (25%): This exam will test your knowledge and your ability to synthesize the material from the entire course in a well-written fashion. No revision will be possible after this exam is turned in.

4) Class Participation (20%): There are many courses in your career at university that will have a “participation” component that will not really count for much. This is NOT one of those classes. It is essential that you be an active participant in the class discussions. This course will be run as a seminar, meaning that there will be a great deal of discussion and very little (if any) time where I will be lecturing. By participating, you will be able to show me that you have read the material, that you have thought about the material, and that you can engage both the material and your fellow students in a thoughtful analysis of the material. I will include periodic updates of your participation when I return your “theme papers” so you will be able to monitor your progress.

5) Intangibles (5%): There is a side to every class that is difficult to quantify but is connected to how much the student is engaged in critiquing the material in the course and how much effort the student is putting into the course. Basically, the way to think about this is that EVERY instructor has wiggle room to account for students who do 1) the bare minimum or 2) go above-and-beyond the expectations of the class. Most instructors, however, don’t feel the need to be honest and up-front about these intangibles. I do. These points are yours to lose. Unlike the other three components in the evaluation process, everyone starts with all 5%. Just be respectful and work hard and you’ll have nothing to worry about!!! One note: If it is obvious to me that people are not participating in class discussions, I will begin to give pop “reading quizzes” as part of these “intangibles.”

6) Syllabus Exam (1%): After Drop/Add I will give you a short exam to see if you have read the syllabus. Instructors get a bit sick of repeating things to students that are clearly indicated on the syllabus. I hope that this will address this recurring problem (and give you a quick and easy 1%!).

Course Outline

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Section I Psychological and Economic Foundations

The course will begin by examining some of the models used in psychological anthropology and economic anthropology. The goal of this course will be to bring these two sub-disciplines together by focusing on the experience of anxiety felt in moments of economic stress. To this end, The first part of this section will consider some of the ways in which social and cultural anthropologists have tried to make sense of economic differences. Of particular importance in this section is to re-examine the “given-ness” of economic experiences through the lens of cross-cultural examples. The second part of this section will examine the ways in which stress, cognitive dissonance, and anomie intersect with an understanding of class and socio-economic marginalization.

Week 1

1/9 Introductory comments

Week 2

- 1/14 *Allen Johnson "In Search of the Affluent Society" *Human Nature* 1978.
*Richard Lee "Eating Christmas in the Kalahari" *Human Nature* 1969 (10).
* Kahneman, Daniel and Amos Tversky "The Framing of Decisions and the Psychology of Choice." *Science*. Pp. 453-458. 211(4481): Jan. 30, 1981. (not on reserve, full text article can be accessed through www.lib.duke.edu)
- 1/16 *Karl Polanyi "The Economy as Instituted Process" *In Trade and Market in the Early Empires* (1957). Karl Polanyi, Conrad Arensberg, and Harry Pearson, eds. Pp. 243-270. Chicago: Henry Regenry Company.
*Harold Wolozin "Lying and Economic Dogma" *Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry* 1974 (13(2):196-203).

Week 3

- 1/21 *Richard Wilk *Economies and Cultures* (1996) Boulder: Westview Press. (Pp. ix-101)
1/23 *Richard Wilk *Economies and Cultures* (Pp. 103-155)

Week 4

- 1/28 *E. P. Thompson "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century" *In Customs in Common* (1991). E. P. Thompson. Pp. 185-258. London: Merlin Press.
1/30 *Maurice Bloch and Jonathan Parry "Introduction: Money and the Morality of Exchange" *In Money and the Morality of Exchange* (1989). Maurice Bloch and Jonathan Parry, eds. Pp. 1-32. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Week 5

- 2/4 *Leon Festinger *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (1957) Evanston: Row, Peterson, and Company. (On Reserve: Pp. 1-31)
*Anthony Wallace "Mazeway Resynthesis: A Bio-Cultural Theory of Religious Inspiration" *Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences*. 18:626-638 (1956)
*Anthony Wallace "Revitalization Movements" *American Anthropologist*. 58:264-281 (1956)
2/6 *Leon Festinger *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (On Reserve Pp. 233-279)

Week 6

- 2/11 *Joel Cooper and Russell Fazio "A New Look at Dissonance Theory" *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*. 17:229-266 (1984).
2/13 *Eddie Harmon-Jones and Judson Mills "An Introduction to Cognitive Dissonance Theory and an Overview of Current Perspectives on the Theory" *In Cognitive Dissonance: Progress on a Pivotal Theory in Social Psychology* (1999). Eddie Harmon-Jones and Judson Mills, eds. Pp. 3-21. Washington: American Psychological Association.

*Judson Mills “Improving the 1957 Version of Dissonance Theory” *In Cognitive Dissonance: Progress on a Pivotal Theory in Social Psychology* (1999). Eddie Harmon-Jones and Judson Mills, eds. Pp. 25-42. Washington: American Psychological Association.

Section II Making Sense of Capitalism: The Third World

In this section we will closely examine the ways in which non-Western indigenous cultures have attempted to make sense of the intrusion of new economic systems – especially capitalism – within pre-existing and syncretic worldviews. These ethnographic examples will provide the key to understanding the experience of the economy – rather than the economy as an abstract system – because they allow for a challenging of the “givenness” of Western economic norms. The goal in this section will be to disrupt the assumptions of students in order give them a toolbox for re-examining the Western experience of the economy in later parts of the course.

Making Sense of Money

Week 7

2/18 *Michael Taussig The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America (1980) Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. (Pp. xi-139)

2/20 *Michael Taussig The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South American (Pp. 143-233)

Pathology in the Experience of Colonialism and Capitalism

Week 8

2/25 *Peter Worsley The Trumpet Shall Sound (1968) New York: Schocken Books. (On Reserve Pp. 11-48, 75-92, 195-219)

2/27 *Andrew Lattas “Introduction: Hysteria, Anthropological Discourse, and the Concept of the Unconscious: Cargo Cults and the Scientisation of Race and Colonial Power” *Oceania* 63: 1-14 (1992)

*Jeffrey Clark “Madness and Colonisation: The Embodiment of Power” *Oceania* 63: 15-26 (1992)

*Doug Dalton “Cargo Cults and Discursive Madness” *Oceania* 70: 345-361 (2000)

Week 9

3/4 *Franz Fanon Black Skin, White Masks (1967) New York: Grove Press. (Pp. 7-140)

3/6 *Franz Fanon Black Skin, White Masks (Pp. 141-232)

Spring Break 3/7-3/17

Section III From Command to Market Economies: The Second World

In this section we will consider the experiences of the industrialized – and, now, vanishing – “second world” in order to see how post-socialist east Europeans have tried to understand the “new” tenuousness of the experience of economic change in the shift from state socialist economies to market(izing) economies. This section is important as a bridge between

the “distant” experiences described in Section II and those of the “first world” which will bring an understanding of the connection between anxiety and the economy “back home” for students.

Week 10

3/18 *Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff “Occult Economies and the Violence of Abstraction: Notes from the South African Postcolony” *American Ethnologist* 26(2):279-303 (1999).

*Katherine Verdery “What Was Socialism, and Why Did It Fall?” *In* *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* Katherine Verdery. Pp. 19-38. Princeton: Princeton University Press (1996)

3/20 *Katherine Verdery “Faith, Hope, and Caritas in the Land of the Pyramids, Romania, 1990-1994” *In* *What Was State Socialism and What Comes Next?* Katherine Verdery. Pp. 168-203. Princeton: Princeton University Press (1996)

*Bruce Grant “The Return of the Repressed: Conversations With Three Russian Entrepreneurs” *In* *Paranoia Within Reason: A Casebook on Conspiracy as Explanation*. George Marcus, ed. Pp. 241-268. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (1999)

Week 11

3/25 *Nancy Reis Russian Talk (1997) Cornell: Cornell University Press. (Pp. 1-125)

3/27 *Nancy Reis Russian Talk (Pp. 126-201)

Section IV Economic Anxiety in the “Land of Plenty”: The First World

In this section we will bring the examination of the intersection of culture and anxiety to bear on the economy of the “first world.” While attention will be paid to the stress of unemployment and economic marginalization in the West, particular attention will also be focused on experiences and perceptions of downward mobility.

Week 12

4/1 *Katherine Newman Falling From Grace: Downward Mobility in the Age of Affluence (1999) Berkeley: University of California Press (Pp. ix-173)

4/3 *Katherine Newman Falling From Grace: Downward Mobility in the Age of Affluence (Pp. 174-248)

Week 13

4/8 *Claudia Strauss “Who Gets Ahead? Cognitive Responses to Heteroglossia in American Political Culture” *American Ethnologist* 17: 312-328 (1990)

*Claudia Strauss “What Makes Tony Run? Schemas as Motives Reconsidered” *In* *Human Motives and Cultural Models*. Roy D’Andrade and Claudia Strauss, eds. Pp. 197-224. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1992)

4/10 *Michael Blakey “Psychophysiological Stress and Disorders of Industrial Society: A Critical Theoretical Formulation for Biocultural Research” *In* *Diagnosing America* (1995). Shepard Forman, ed. Pp. 149-192. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Week 14

4/15 *Watch "Roger and Me"

4/17 *To Be Announced

Week 15

4/22 *To Be Announced