Economic Anthropology: Consumption, market and culture

Instructor: Unnur Dís Skaptadóttir

Description of the course

In the course the economic aspects of society and culture are examined. Globalization has created new field of research for economic anthropologists in their analysis of the relationship between the economic issues, society and meanings given to products in everyday life. The course will examine earlier field of research in economic anthropology about gift exchange, trade and production among peasants and new research on consumption patterns and trade in present times, on fair trade and global mass production of goods. Concepts such as work, leisure time ad markets are examined from anthropological perspectives. The economic crisis of communities, especially in Iceland, will further more be examined.

Course evaluation:

Participation in class 30%

a) General participation in class
b) Students will raise discussions and questions based on the readings. They will summarize the articles and then draw out two questions for discussion. Students will sign up for this in the first day of class which articles they want to be responsible for.

Group assignment 20%

Students, two or three together, will work on assignment in which they use the obtained knowledge to analyse some economic aspect of their daily lives. Students will present the assignment to their fellow students in class with power point presentation. They must bring something to show to the class, an object, a picture etc. In the presentation they have to refer to some of the course reading.

Examination 50%

Examination in the last class based on all the readings in the course
**Reading Material**


*Other readings will be provided as pdf documents.*

**Schedule**

25. April - Introduction, general discussion about the course and evaluations

Students sign up for groups and on a list for discussion leaders

*What is Economic Anthropology?*

27. April - Theories and historical overview

Wilk and Cliggett, chapter 1, 2 and 3


28. April - Society, power, politics and the economic. Influence of Durkheim and Marx

Wilk and Cliggett, Chapter 4


5. April - Economic Globalization - consumption and production


9. April - Migration and migrant workers / work, division of labor and identities


11. April Ethical consumption


12. April
Presentation of group work

16. April
Gifts and debt
Wilk and Cliggett chapter 5 and 6


18.05 Final examination