

Economic Ethnography
Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays 11:30 – 12:50¹

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Office hours: Tuesdays and Fridays 9:00 to 10:00.

COURSE OVERVIEW

Conceptually, economic ethnography (EE) is a combination of concepts of economics and anthropology to understand social interactions. EE includes economic tools (e. g. microeconomic analysis), anthropological tools (e. g. the analysis of cultures and community), and institutional analysis. In this class our goal is to comprehend in specific settings how culture affects economic outcomes and also how economics affect cultural outcomes. For example we will focus on cultural factors that affect economic development; or economic factors that change cultural practices and expressions.

Pragmatically, this class will provide the tools for the study of economic environments in the interior of the country, in rural and semi-rural areas; small and micro-enterprises usually operate in these environments; frequently, indigenous peoples manage such enterprises. We will study certain issues that prevail in these contexts, such as trust, reciprocity, social networks, production clusters, perceptions of development, and others. Another purpose of this class is to create a link between the students and other social and economic contexts outside Guatemala City; this requires field work and visits to the interior. We will visit San Lucas Toliman, where UFM and Grameen Bank are working together on a micro-lending program, and the small town on Chajul in Quiché. This course assumes that the interaction with people (artisans, farmers, small business owners, etc.) to get to know their way of life is fundamental to understand their economic, social, and cultural problems and opportunities. This class is designed for students with some sense of adventure, who enjoy traveling and discovery, who want to learn in the classroom and beyond.

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Participation in class and field-trips	40%
Short essays (12 essays, three pages each)	20%
Final paper	38%
Attendance to office hours	2%

Participation in class and field-trips

¹ We will not have classes on Mondays and Fridays due to the way the class is organized.

Since this class is designed as a **seminar**, we will use the Socratic Method. This means that I will not teach in the traditional way, students will read in advance and will bring comments, questions to the class. Our purpose is to explore ideas by discussing intensely the content of the readings and the experiences in field trips. We will pay special attention in relating concepts in the articles with our field trips. I will ask questions in class to motivate discussions. Students can have a clear perspective of our class dynamic by reading this article about the Socratic method at the University of Chicago: [http://www.law.uchicago.edu/socrates/soc_article.html].

We will make three field trips on the weekends, three to Chajul, Quiche; and one to San Lucas Toliman. The field trips are the core of our class; we will discuss the details and logistics the first day of classes, Monday, May 28.

Short essays

Students will write 10 short three-page essays (double spaced), and submit them on Tuesdays and Thursdays (see below for specific dates). I will indicate the topic of each essay in advance; the topics will be related with education, health, housing, access to clean water, infrastructure, cultural practices and migration, among others. Students will write their papers on these issues discussing (1) a particular environment they know, (2) news in daily papers, or (3) experiences, events, or circumstances identified in the field-trips. Students can write their papers in English if they feel comfortable doing so.

Each class

To each class students will bring **one page**, double spaced, summary of the paper that is scheduled for that day, and will include at least three questions about the article; this will give students the necessary preparation for the discussion in class.

Final paper

Students, organized in groups of two, will write a final paper based on the field trip. It must be 9 page-long, double spaced. Students are expected to supplement sources with at least 5 academic sources (journal articles or books), at least 2 from the reading list, and at least 2 books from the Ludwig Von Mises library. We will grade this paper based on the identification of an interesting situation on the field, the rigor in the application of a theory (discussed in class or developed by the student), and the robustness of the evidence provided to substantiate the main claims of the paper. Students can write this paper in English if they feel comfortable doing so.

Attendance to office hours

At least two visits to office hours are required, so that students have the chance to ask or discuss general issues of the class or specific questions about their papers.

Late work will not be accepted

Late work will not be accepted, however, to take into consideration sickness or appropriate reasons for lack of submissions of the short papers the grades of one short paper will be dropped before the computation of the final grade.

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, falsifying identity or academic records, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. Ignorance about what counts as plagiarism is not an acceptable excuse. Each student is required to maintain the standards of integrity set forth in the Francisco Marroquín handbook for academic excellence.

IMPORTANT DATES

May 28	First day of classes, discussion of field trips
May 31	1 st short paper due, in this paper students will define some issues they will focus on during the first field-trip
June 5	2 nd short paper is due
June 7	3 rd short paper
June 8-10	Field Trip to Chajul, Quiche
June 12	4 th short paper
June 14	5 th short paper
June 15-17	Field Trip San Lucas Toliman
June 19	6 th short paper
June 21	7 th short paper
June 26	8 th short paper
June 28	9 th short paper
June 1- July 1	2th Field trip to Chajul, Quiche
July 3	10 th short paper
July 10	Final paper is due.

READING LIST. Each day we will discuss a paper or a chapter of a book. Therefore, we will discuss three readings every week. Readings with asterisk [*] will be available in Grafipronto; the others are available through **JSTOR**.

Monday May 28:

Discussion of field-trip logistics

Concepts of Economic Anthropology

Tuesday May 29:

[*] Gudeman, S. (2001). "Community, markets, and culture" [Chapter 1]. In: Gudeman, S., *The Anthropology of economy*, pp. 1-24. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Wednesday May 30:

[*] Gudeman, S. (2001). "Economy at the base" [Chapter 2]. In: Gudeman, S., *The Anthropology of economy*, pp. 25-51. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Thursday May 31. :

[*] Ensminger, J. (1996). "A proper marriage: New institutional economic anthropology" [Chapter 1]. In: Ensminger, J., *Making a market: The institutional transformation of an African society*, pp. 1-32. New York: NY: Cambridge University Press.

Case studies

Tuesday June 5:

[*] Rees, M. (2007). "Migration in times of globalization: The central valleys of Oaxaca, Mexico." In. D. Wood (Ed.), *Research in Economic Anthropology*, 25. pp. 27-50. Oxford, UK: JAI, Elsevier.

Wednesday June 6:

[*] Marroquin Gramajo, A. (2007). "Wayuu crafts: A dilemma of culture and development." In. D. Wood (Ed.), *Research in Economic Anthropology*, 25. pp. 217-240. Oxford, UK: JAI, Elsevier.

Thursday June 7:

Alexander, J. & Alexander P. (1991). What's a fair price? Price-setting and trading partnerships in Javanese markets, *Man*, 26(3), pp. 493-509. Available at JSTOR

Recommended readings:

The Bazaar Economy or How Bizarre is the Bazaar Really?
Frank S. Fanselow. *Man*, New Series, Vol. 25, No. 2. (Jun., 1990), pp. 250-265.
Available at JSTOR

The Bazaar Economy: Information and Search in Peasant Marketing (in
Economics and Anthropology: Developing and Primitive Economies)
Clifford Geertz. *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 68, No. 2, Papers and
Proceedings of the Ninetieth Annual Meeting of the American Economic
Association. (May, 1978), pp. 28-32.
Available at JSTOR

Culture [during this sessions students should find connections of the readings with economic theory]

Tuesday June 12:

[*] Levi-Strauss, C. (1995). *Myth and meaning*. New York, NY: Schocken Books.

Wednesday June 13:

[*] Geertz, C. (1973). “Thick description: Towards an interpretive theory of culture.” In: Geertz, C., *The interpretation of cultures*, pp. v-32. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Thursday June 14:

[*] Geertz, C. (1973). “The impact of the concept of culture on the concept of man.” In: Geertz, C., *The interpretation of cultures*, pp. 31-51. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Ethnography and economic development issues

Tuesday June 19:

Hashemi, S. & Riley A. (1996). Rural Credit Programs and Women's Empowerment in Bangladesh, *World Development*, 24(4), pp. 635 – 53. Digital file.

Wednesday June 20:

Behrman, Jere. (1996). The impact of health and nutrition on education, *World Bank Research Observer*, 11(1), pp. 23-37. Digital file.

Tuesday June 26:

Recommended readings:

[*] Yunus M. *Grameen Bank at a glance*. Bangladesh: Grameen Bank.

After this point we will discuss articles related with topics identify in our field-trips.