

**The Seminar in Economic Anthropology
ANG 6930
Fall 2007**

**THE TRANSITION TO CAPITALISM:
From the People without History to the People in the Way
(M-8-10: Turlington 2318)**

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Office Hours: MWF 10:30-11:30AM and
T/Th by appointment in the PM**

“The spread of capitalist relations within the economy and their eventual domination, their further penetration outside the economy and the alignment or replacement of existing institutions in accordance, is, then, always a far more protracted and uneven process than schematic models of the bourgeois state and bourgeois society allow for. It is a transition which often takes centuries.” (Worsley, The Three Worlds, 1984: 33)

It is arguable that the most fundamental issue of the modern era has been the expansion of capitalism and the impact on and efforts of the people of the world to take advantage of, adjust to, accommodate, or resist this process over roughly the last five centuries. The extraordinary expansion of capitalism, culminating in the precipitous decline of socialist economies and the rise of hegemonic forms of capitalism has led some commentators to suggest the capitalism is in some fundamental way consistent with the basic principles of human behavior. As anthropologists, we have an obligation to examine this position as completely as possible in its theoretical, historical and ethnographic contexts.

This seminar has been designed to enable the participants to explore the transition to capitalism in as much detail and complexity as possible. From a general perspective, the theoretical assumption of the seminar is that the best socio-cultural anthropology is always informed by solid historical understanding of both problem and context. For that reason, the focus of the seminar and the directed readings will be on theories of the evolution of capitalism as an economic, social and cultural system, first at a conceptual level, and then in specific contexts in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Once the theoretical and historical exploration of capitalism is completed, the remaining weeks of the seminar will be devoted to research problems undertaken in specific contexts by each participant to be presented for discussion. Format guidelines for both seminar presentations and final seminar papers are attached on a separate page.

The seminar has been organized around readings from specific required texts. The texts will be available at Goering's Bookstore. (1717 NW 1st Ave)

The texts are as follows. Comaroff, Jean and John L. Comaroff- Millennial Capitalism
And the Culture of Neo-Liberalism (C&C)
 Cooper et al-Confronting Historical Paradigms
 Edelman and Haugerud-The Anthropology of Development and
Globalization (E&H)
 Heilbroner, Robert-The Nature and Logic of Capitalism
 Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt-Friction: An Ethnography of Global
Connection
 Wolf- Europe and the People without History
 Wood-- The Origin of Capitalism

Seminar organization and readings

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| Aug. 27 | Introduction: Concepts and Goals: Theory and History in the Analysis of
The Transition to Capitalism |
| Sept 3 | Labor day (No class) |
| Sept. 10 | Capitalism and Accumulation
Heilbroner (entire)
E&H Intro |
| Sept. 17 | Capitalism as a Social and Ideological System
Wood (entire)
E&H Part 1 |
| Sept. 24 | The Pre-Capitalist Context and the Expansion of Capitalism
Wolf chps 1-4
Cooper et al chps 1-2 |
| Oct 1 | Colonialism, Imperialism and the Emergence of the World System
Wolf chps 5-8
Cooper et al chps 3-4 |
| Oct. 8 | Capitalist Relations in the Core and the Periphery
Wolf chps 9-12
Cooper et al chps 5-6 |
| Oct. 15 | Global Capitalism and Development Theory
Tsing, Preface and pages 1-50
C&C, Comaroff&Comaroff
E&H parts II, III |

- Oct. 22 From Local to Global: Millennial Transitions and Tensions
 Tsing pages 51-88
 C&C-Stengs et al; Coronil
 E&H part IV
- Oct. 29 Market Society and Gender
 Tsing, pages 88-121
 C&C, Wright; Sekula
 E&H-part V
- Nov 5 Society, Space and Environment in Global Capitalism
 Tsing, pages 122-154
 C&C-Harvey
 E&H part VI
- Nov12-Veterans' Day-(No Class)
- Nov 19 State, Market and Culture in Millennial Capitalism
 Tsing, pages 155-204
 C&C Morris; Weller
 E&H part VII
- Nov. 26 Millennial Capitalism and Individual and Cultural Identity
 Tsing, pages 205-273
 C&C-Geschiere&Nyamnjuh; Povinelli
 Edelman/Haugerud part VIII
- Dec 3 Participant Presentations
- Dec ? and ? Participant Presentations