WEALTH AND CULTURE

His best companions, innocence and health;
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.

--Oliver Goldsmith, 1770

Surplus wealth is a sacred trust which its possessor is bound to administer in his lifetime for the good of the community.

--Andrew Carnegie, 1889

A great fortune is a great slavery.

--Lucius Annaeus Seneca

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Riches and poverty evoke powerful emotions. People may attribute wealth to luck, hard work, immorality, occult forces (sorcery, devil pacts), public policies, or various combinations of these. Some consider extremes of wealth and poverty to be natural or inevitable. Others vehemently dispute this notion. We shall examine such themes through ethnographic and popular accounts drawn from Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe, and the United States. Unifying themes center on what constitutes wealth, how competition for it is institutionalized, how it is won or lost, and what moral and social obligations its possession entails.

Requirements include regular attendance, active participation in class discussions (which requires completing assigned readings on time), an in-class examination (week 6), and a final paper (about 8 pages/2,000 words) on assigned readings (due Friday, May 4). For the final paper, a list of topics from which to choose will be distributed in class in week 13. Make-up exams will not be allowed except under extreme emergencies, which must be documented by your Dean. If you miss an exam, you must notify the instructor of the reason no more than 24 hours later. (Such notification should be by both phone/voice mail and email.)

**Travel plans are not an acceptable reason for missing an exam.**

During many class meetings short quizzes will be given during the first 10 minutes of class. (These quizzes cannot be made up and cannot be taken by those who arrive late to class. The lowest quiz grade during the semester will be dropped.)

Grades will be determined as follows:

Quizzes = 25%
Attendance & participation = 10%
In-class examination = 35%
Final essay = 30%
Any late work will be penalized except under extraordinary circumstances, which must be documented by your Dean. Late papers will be marked down ½ grade per day of delay (for example, a B+ paper that is two days late will be a C+; a B+ paper that is one day late will be a B).

Be careful to avoid plagiarism. You are responsible for knowing what plagiarism is. A clear explanation, with examples of different types of plagiarism, is available on the website of Georgetown University's Honor Council:
http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/hc/plagiarism.html

Attendance: Since the class meets just once each week, absences are costly (in terms of grade points and quantity of required course material missed).

Classroom atmosphere: We are all responsible for creating a friendly, relaxed, and productive classroom atmosphere. That requires listening respectfully to everyone, phrasing comments constructively and politely, turning off cell phones and other electronic devices, coming to class on time, and refraining from reading the newspaper or working on other assignments during class. *How well you practice these common courtesies will be reflected in the class attendance and participation portion of your grade.*

Communication: Any changes in exam date, reading or paper assignments, and other information listed below will be communicated to students via the class listserv and/or WebCT. All students are responsible for timely attention to email and WebCT postings for this course and therefore should check WebCT and their Rutgers "eden" email accounts regularly. To access WebCT, go to <https://webct.rutgers.edu> and follow log-in instructions. For technical problems with WebCT, contact 732-445-HELP (-4357) or webcthd@rci.rutgers.edu.

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Required textbook (available for purchase at Douglass Co-op Bookstore):


Other required readings are on electronic reserve in the Rutgers library.

How to access e-reserve readings: Go to Rutgers home page and click on LIBRARIES; click on FIND RESERVES; click on RESERVES; enter either instructor's name or course number or course title and click on appropriate box. You will find a list of articles assigned for this course. Click on DETAILS and then click on ELECTRONIC ACCESS for a copy of the assigned article, which you can either read online or download.

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SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

Week 1/Jan. 22  INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

Week 2/Jan. 29  CULTURE


Week 3/Feb. 5  BITTER MONEY, FORBIDDEN COMMODITIES


Film: "Maragoli"

Week 4/Feb. 12  WEALTH AND DEVIL PACTS


Week 5/Feb. 19  MARKET MENTALITIES


Film: "A Way to Move On"

Week 6/ Feb. 26  **EXAM #1**

Week 7/March 5  **CORPORATE DISCIPLINE AND WORKPLACE CULTURE:**

*Precariousness, Mobbing, Gender*

[Guest lecturer: Noelle Mole]


**SPRING BREAK** (March 10-18)

Week 8/ March 19  **SECRETS OF SUCCESS IN AMERICA**


Week 9/ March 26  **THE AMERICAN DREAM IN PERIL?**


Week 10/ April 2  **THE WAL-MART DEBATE**


Film (excerpt): *Wal*Mart: The High Cost of Low Price

Week 11/April 9  **THE INVISIBLE POOR?**


Week 12/April 16  **CULTURALIZING POVERTY**


Week 13/ April 23  WALL STREET AND THE ECONOMY OF APPEARANCES


Week 14/ April 30  MORAL ECONOMY?


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**FINAL ESSAYS** due on Friday, May 4 by 2:00 p.m. (no exceptions) in instructor's Anthropology Department mailbox (room 305, Ruth Adams Building, Douglass Campus). No electronic submissions.