

ANTHROPOLOGY 2262B-001

Global Commodities

Department of Anthropology

BRIEF COURSE OUTLINE

Winter 2027

Version date: June 26, 2026

Instructor: Dr. Andrew Walsh (he/him)

Email: awalsh33@uwo.ca

In person.

Credit value: 0.5

Prerequisite(s): None.

Antirequisite(s): The former Anthropology 2262F/G.

Office and hours: SSC-3402, meetings by appointment on Zoom or in person.

Course Description

What do bananas, sugar, gold, sapphires, coffee, oil, rare earth minerals, and tourist crafts have in common? They are all 'global commodities' that connect producers and consumers from different parts of the world in ways we rarely think about. In this course, we will approach global commodities from an anthropological perspective to shed light on important, often overlooked, aspects of globalization and the global economy. Beginning with coffee, we will consider how the global circulation of commodities reflects certain key global historical trends and processes. The course is designed to encourage students to think differently about the global economy, and, more particularly, about how the producers and consumers of global commodities live interconnected lives. You do *not* need a background in anthropology to succeed in this course.

Technology permitting, in-person lectures will be recorded and posted so that students can catch up on missed classes or review ahead of the midterm and final.

All quizzes and reflections will be completed on-line before class. Lectures, midterm and final exam are in person.

Learning Outcomes

In successfully completing this course, students will:

- Learn key theoretical approaches and research methods used by anthropologists and other social scientists to study the workings of the global economy.
- Develop an awareness of how certain global commodities move around the world, and of how their own consumption choices connect them to others.
- Improve critical thinking skills necessary for understanding how the global flow of commodities affects people at multiple points along global commodity chains.

Course Materials

The main source for this course is the book *Coffee Culture* by Tucker. You will be able to access this and other required readings free of charge on the course Brightspace site.

Barring technical difficulties, weekly lectures will be recorded and posted on the course OWL site for students who want to review them.

Evaluation Breakdown

20% -- Weekly online quizzes/reflections. Over the course of the term, students will complete short weekly quizzes or reflections related to assigned readings. These quizzes and reflections will be completed online *before* the start of weekly lectures.

35% -- Midterm – In-class, to be held during our usual class time on. The midterm will consist of Multiple Choice and True/False questions.

45% -- Final Exam – During the final exam period on a date to be determined by the registrar. The final exam will consist of Multiple Choice and True/False questions.

PLEASE NOTE: *The evaluation methods described in this course outline are essential requirements for the course. The midterm and final exam make use of multiple-choice questions to evaluate student learning. The multiple-choice format allows for assessment of students' detailed knowledge of a broad range of concepts, theories, principles, and research that other formats do not permit.*