

ANTH 3811: Anthropology of Altruism
T/TH 5:30-7 OA 2017

Instructor: Melinda Vandenberg Giles
Email: mvanden1@lakeheadu.ca

Expanded Course Description: The purpose of this course is to explore the concept of altruism. Altruism has been defined as a belief in or practice of selfless concern for the welfare of others. The particular ways in which altruism has been understood varies dependent upon the theoretical paradigm. The course is divided into 4 sections where we will consider altruism from a philosophical perspective, in terms of economic anthropology and bioethics, within spirituality, and from an evolutionary psychological paradigm.

Course Requirements:

Group Presentation: 30% Date to be determined

Term Paper: 35% Due: **Feb 13**

Final Exam: 35% Due: **March 27**

Evaluation:

All written assignments are to be double-spaced in 12 point Times New Roman font.

Term Paper: 3-4 page term paper based on topic of choice related to the concept of altruism. Minimum of 3 pages of content (excluding bibliography) required. Please use AAA (American Anthropological Association) Style. Grading will be based on content, writing style, organization, grammar and spelling. Please make sure you proofread since marks will be deducted for typos etc. Also ensure you reference properly. A minimum of 3 academic sources are required. **Term Paper will be due on D2L by 11:59pm Feb 13.** There will be a 5% deduction per day late until 7 days at which point the term paper will be worth 0%.

Final Exam: The Final Exam will be posted on D2L on March 13 (short answer questions). **The Final Exam will be due by 11:59pm March 27.** There will be a Final Exam Review Session on March 13

Group Presentation: Groups will present regarding a topic related to Altruism. Each group will select their presentation day and have the entire lecture time to present and have a discussion. All members of the group will receive the same grade.

Required Text:

All readings are under Content on D2L

Schedule of Topics and Readings:**PART I: PHILOSOPHY****WEEK 1: What Is Altruism?**

Jan 7 “Altruism”

Jan 9 **Who Is the “Other”?**
“Introducing Levinas to Undergraduate Philosophers”
“Spare Change”

PART II: ECONOMIC ANTHROPOLOGY AND BIO-ETHICS**WEEK 2: Economic Anthropology**

Jan 14 “Altruism and Self-Interest: Toward an Anthropological Theory of Decision-Making.”

Jan 16 **Bio-Ethics**
“Gifts Money Cannot Buy.”

PART III: SPIRITUALITY**WEEK 3: Buddhism**

Jan 21 “Altruism in Classical Buddhism.” Religion and Altruism.

Jan 23 **The Dalai Lama**
“Empathy, Compassion, and Finding Happiness in Our Troubled World.” The Art of Happiness in a Troubled World: His Holiness The Dalai Lama and Howard C. Cutler.

PART IV: EVOLUTIONARY PSYCHOLOGY

WEEK 4: Prosociality

Jan 28 “Altruism: Human, Cultural or What?”

Jan 30 **Happiness**

“A Life Worth Living: Evidence on the Relationship between Prosocial Values and Happiness.”

WEEK 5 Compassion

Feb 4 “Introduction” and “The Compassionate Instinct.” The Compassionate Instinct.

“Introduction” and “We Are All Bystanders.”

“Compassion Across Cubicles.” The Compassionate Instinct.

Feb 6 **Empathy**

“The Evolution of Empathy.” The Compassionate Instinct.

“Empathy and Altruism”

WEEK 6: Group Presentation/ Term Paper Work Time

Feb 11: **Workshop class**

Feb 13: **Workshop class TERM PAPER DUE on D2L 11:59pm**

WEEK 7: Reading Week

WEEK 8:

Feb 25

Feb 27

WEEK 9:

March 4

March 6

WEEK 10:

March 11

March 13 ZOOM Final Exam Review. Posting Final Exam on D2L after lecture.

WEEK 11:

March 18

March 20 Independent study time for Final Exam. ZOOM office hour.

WEEK 12:

March 25

March 27 FINAL EXAM DUE on D2L 11:59pm