**Assessment 1 – Individual Commodity Chain/Producer Narrative Essay**

**Due: 28 March 2018 at 11pm through Moodle TurnItIn portal**

**Worth: 30%**

**Word limit: 1500 words, plus references.**

This assignment is intended to make students think about the impacts of overconsumption in the advanced or developed economies of the world, by following the trail of a specific commodity to its original source(s). Students are expected to examine the social and environmental impacts of the production of a specific commodity or product that comes from a developing or least developed country (e.g. a cotton t-shirt, coffee, papaya, Niketm shoes, a type of timber, a rare mineral used in phones/IT equipment, a cosmetic cream made from Shea Butter etc).

Students may write this as a quantitative essay (lots of figures and statistics as is commonly used in ‘value chain’ analyses, have to explain those figures to make prof. understanding) or a more descriptive analysis (more ethnographic, using examples, references, images, about working conditions, rights and impacts). Students should explore the following key areas/headings:

* Colonial and/or recent history of the trade in the good/product
* Political economic aspects of the trade (trade rules or laws affecting it, volume of trade, countries involved etc)
* Local social conditions, labour rights and human rights in the producer country
* Local environmental impacts in the producer country
* Cultural impacts resulting from the trade (e.g. loss of tradition).

An excellent starting point is the website set up by Ian Cook (University of Exeter in the UK) and his students/peers: <http://www.followthethings.com/>. Ian also has several relevant articles, plus there are other authors who have done similar studies:

Cook, Ian. (2004) "Follow the thing: papaya." *Antipode* 36.4 : 642-664.

Cook, Ian, and Michelle Harrison. (2007) "Follow the Thing." West Indian Hot Pepper Sauce*. Space and Culture* 10.1 : 40-63.

Gereffi, G., & Memedovic, O. (2003). *The global apparel value chain: What prospects for upgrading by developing countries* Vienna: United Nations Industrial Development Organization. <http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/global/pdfs/AppareF1.pdf>

Marcus, G. E. (1995). Ethnography in/of the world system: The emergence of multi-sited ethnography. *Annual review of anthropology*, 95-117.

Mather, C. (2008). *Value Chains and Tropical Products in a Changing Global Trade Regime*. International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD). [www.ictsd.org/downloads/2008/07/mather\_issuepaperno13.pdf](http://www.ictsd.org/downloads/2008/07/mather_issuepaperno13.pdf)