

ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY

Course Syllabus — Spring 2020

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Office hours: Saturdays, 13:40–15:00

§ Course Description

Pre-requisites

There are no pre-requisites for this course.

Abstract

Economic geography is a one-module mandatory course offered to the first-year students of the program. The course purports to introduce the students to the geographical mode of thinking in application to various economic phenomena. Thus, we will consider pressing global questions such as how economic change, past and recent, has been shaped by geography and how historical processes affect the economic and social geography of modern societies.

After discussing the scope, method, and key theoretical approaches in the subject, the course reviews comparative economic systems and the history of their evolution. Using geographical dimensions of space, place, location, and scale, we then explore different mechanisms of capitalist economy: agricultural, manufacturing, and services production, labor and capital markets, spatial patterns of consumption and trade. Matters of economic development, growth, and integration are also addressed, inasmuch as these are related to geographical conditions of the countries.

§ Learning Objectives

The course purports to:

- introduce the students to the geographical mode of thinking in application to various economic phenomena;
- acquaint the students with the logic of capitalist economic development and its spatial and historical drivers, as well as conventional measures thereof;
- survey alternative (heterodox) theories of economic development;
- familiarize the students with the principal concepts of economic policymaking and provide a basic conceptual toolkit for their future studies and research in the broader economic domain.

§ Learning Outcomes

Upon successfully completing the course, students should be able to:

- evaluate the applicability and importance of economic geography in analyzing the modes of societies' and economies' operation;
- explain, synthesize, and apply key concepts, techniques, and theoretical approaches in economic geography;
- establish and analyze spatial patterns of economic development;
- explain the role of historical, environmental, cultural, and other factors in determining economic activities.

§ Course Plan

Week 1. Introduction. The subject and key concepts of economic geography

Week 2. Historical development of economic systems. The genesis of modern capitalism

Week 3. Mechanics of the capitalist economy. Economic development: definitions, metrics, and theories

Week 4. Primary sector activities. Resources and the resource curse.

First Grand Test

Week 5. Geographies of labor and migration. Social structure

- Week 6. Geographies of capital. Financialization and global banking
- Week 7. Geographies of production. TNCs, MNCs, global value chains
- Week 8. Geographies of consumption
- Week 9. Economic openness, trade, and geography. Economic integration.

Second Grand Test

Final exam — group project presentations

§ Reading List

The materials used for instruction include academic articles, books, and case studies. Further (optional) readings are marked with an asterisk*:

Barnes, T. J., Peck, J., & Sheppard, E. (Eds.). (2012). *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Economic Geography*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

Bhagat, R. S., McDevitt, A. S., & Baliga, B. R. (2017). *Global Organizations: Challenges, Opportunities, and the Future*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

*Cheshire, P. C., Nathan, M., & Overman, H. G. (2014). *Urban Economics and Urban Policy: Challenging Conventional Policy Wisdom*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Clark, G. L., Feldman, M. P., Gertler, M. S., & Wójcik, D. (Eds.). (2018). *The New Oxford Handbook of Economic Geography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

*Crescenzi, R., & Percoco, M. (2013). *Geography, Institutions, and Regional Economic Performance*. Berlin: Springer.

*Dinc, M. (2015). *Introduction to Regional Economic Development*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Dixon, A. D. (2014). *The New Geography of Capitalism: Firms, Finance, and Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

*Karlsson, C., Andersson, M., & Bjerke, L. (Eds.). (2017). *Geographies of Growth: Innovations, Networks and Collaborations*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

*Khawar, M. (2017). *The Geography of Underdevelopment: Institutions and the Impact of Culture*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Sheppard, E. (2016). *Limits to Globalization: The Disruptive Geographies of Capitalist Development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

§ Grading System

The final grade shall be determined as per the following weights:

- In-class participation — 30%
- Quizzes — 20%
- First Grand Test — 15%
- Second Grand Test — 15%
- Final exam (group project) — 20%

In-class participation accounts for a substantial share of the final grade, as it is crucial for learning experience. The students are thus expected to engage with the core ideas of the course as discussed in lectures and readings and to arrive to class well prepared. Participation shall be evaluated in concordance with the HSE-UoL program evaluation rubrics, the *Code of Conduct* and *Expectations* (available on the [official website](#)) and shall be based on:

1. Student's contribution to the discussion of a given problem or business case based on the concepts we learn. The quality of student's comments — critical thinking, relevance to the topic, conceptual links to the previous topics, and rhetorical aptitude — is more important than the quantity of the same.
2. Student's in-class behavior, including punctuality, non-distraction, constructive and respectful attitude towards her peers and the comments they make.

Should a student be absent from more than four classes for reasons of sickness or with other valid excuses, he or she is allowed to make up for that in the form of an additional Grand Test in the format specified below. In

that case, the Grand Test is offered at the end of the course and covers all the topics of the course.

Quizzes are offered at the beginning of each seminar and are based on the contents of the preceding lecture. A quiz consists of ten questions and lasts for no more than seven minutes. Questions may be of either multiple-choice, true/false, or short-answer format.

Sample questions:

1. A population pyramid of this shape  describes a:
 - A. Rapidly expanding population
 - B. Stationary population (*correct*)
 - C. Contracting population
 - D. Expanding population
2. Which of the following is NOT a major reason for economic integration?
 - A. Access to new markets
 - B. Greater regional security due to increased economic interdependence
 - C. Attracting foreign direct investment
 - D. Increased factor mobility
 - E. Increased protection of domestic industries (*correct*)
3. Transfer of a portion of migrant workers' wages back to their families is called ... (one word)

Correct answer: remittance

First and *second Grand Tests* are offered after fourth and ninth weeks, respectively. Each test is based on both the lectures and readings covered thitherto and consists of 40 questions with 30 minutes time allowed. Questions may be of either multiple-choice, true/false, or short-answer format.

Sample questions:

1. According to the neoclassical economic theory, factor prices (= rewards = costs) across countries converge; this is what has happened over the course of the 20th century.
 - A. True

- B. False (*correct*)
2. “the knowledge, skills, competencies, and other attributes embodied in individuals or groups of individuals acquired during their life and used to produce goods, services, or ideas in market circumstances” is a definition of:
Correct answer: human capital
3. Which of the following countries does NOT have a trade surplus?
- China
 - Germany
 - Switzerland
 - U.S.A. (*correct*)
 - Japan

§ Examination Type

Final exam will take the form of *group project* and will require the student to produce a presentation in collaboration with an assigned team of four colleagues. Such teams' composition shall be announced by the time of the third session.

The presentation should survey the economic geography of a given country (assigned by the professor), and should cover the following aspects:

- Economic history
 - Historical crafts and industries
 - Did the country pass through *all* modes of production? Did it ever experiment with socialism? Did its colonial heritage (if any) have any impact on economic development?
 - When (if at all) did the country industrialize? Which strategies and policies were used? How did its geography and history affect industrialization?
- Resources. Economic and social structure
 - Natural resources; their historical and modern use
 - Economic structure: sectors of economy, their shares in GDP and employment. Major industries and their geographical concentration

- c. Labor force: flexibility of labor markets (government regulation, unionization rate), levels of education
 - d. Social structure: population growth rates and their relative components, pyramid. Density, urbanization, geographical concentration
3. Economic position and development
- a. Indicators of development (GDP, GDP per capita, HDI, inequality, productivity, unemployment, *etc.*) with regional comparisons, links to the parts above, and explanations
 - b. Trade: openness, structure of exports and imports, principal trading partners
 - c. Economic integration projects
 - d. Main economic and social challenges

Rather than simply listing the items above, the project should explain the links between them, with reference to, and explicit use of, the theories and concepts studied in class.

The presentation is to last for no longer than 12 minutes, followed by a Q&A session. The presentation should be legible (avoid questionable color pairings and any text smaller than 18 pt), concise (present but the essence of your findings), and, ideally, interesting for the entire class. You are free to select whichever member of the team is to present a particular part, although I reserve the right to address subsequent questions to any member of the team.

Each team is required to email a digital copy of the presentation to altukhov@live.com no later than 24 hours before the scheduled presentation. Each team shall be evaluated in concordance with the following rubric:

		<i>1 point</i>	<i>2 points</i>	<i>3 points</i>
Content (group)	<i>Material</i>	Clear structure; basic facts listed	Facts interpreted with reference to lectures and seminars	Argumentation from further sources

	<i>Visuals</i>	Clear concise text; imported visuals	Self-produced visuals	
	<i>Sources</i>	Relevant sources; APA formatted		
Delivery (individual)		Effortless speech, occasional peeking	Persuasive speech, occasional peeking	
Feedback (group)		Grade equals the jury's grade ± 1 ; substantiation provided	Strengths and weaknesses of the presentation analyzed	

Each group's presentation is also evaluated by all other groups according to the rubric above. One evaluation per each presentation is then randomly selected and compared against the jury's evaluation; this translates into the evaluating group's *feedback* mark.

§ Methods of Instruction

Methods of instruction include weekly lectures and seminars, a team project, and self-study.

§ Special Equipment and Software Support

No special equipment nor software is required for the course.