

GEOG 115: INTRODUCTORY ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY

Fall 2011

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Class Meetings:	Tuesday and Thursday 9:30AM - 10:45AM BOL B40
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Office Hours:	Tuesday & Thursday 2:00 – 3:00 and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In a world where retail districts in Chicago, London, Singapore, and Dubai look increasingly similar, and the same Starbucks drink is offered in cafes in Seattle, Tokyo, and Moscow, the global economy seems to be dramatically diminishing the differences between places. Yet, increasing disparities between the wealthy and poor in the United States or between indigenous peoples and new migrants within China, for example, may suggest otherwise. Is inequality on the rise—and for whom? What processes are driving this trend? The contradictions of globalization will be confronted in this class, as we examine record corporate executive earnings but falling real wages for the average worker, new technologies that improve production but perpetuate inefficient and uneven distribution of resources, and U.S. economic dominance defined by a shortage of secure well-paid jobs in the United States. What are the historical factors that shape the global economy and current spatial economic order? What are the contemporary factors involved? And, what do all of these factors tell us about the economic landscape in Milwaukee?

In this course, we focus on the historical and contemporary factors that shape the global economy and current spatial economic order. This entails studying *processes*—such as economic restructuring, changing production systems, and the internationalization of trade and industry. We will also study the role of various *actors* in the economy—including states, producers, labor, and consumers. Through this focus, we will unpack the term ‘globalization,’ which is so widely used to explain contemporary economic relations and explore the causes, effects, representations, contradictions, costs and benefits of globalization.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Recognize the causes and patterns of spatial inequality
- Compare the historical development of the capitalist economy to the contemporary geography and spatial organization of production and consumption
- Analyze the processes that constitute globalization and the connections between economic, political, and social processes shaping our globe
- Evaluate global economic restructuring by analyzing local and regional economic policies

REQUIRED READINGS*

Coe, Neil, M., Phillip F. Kelly, and Henry W.C. Yeung. 2007. *Economic Geography: A Contemporary Introduction*. London: Blackwell.

- Available at UWM Bookstore or on-line. If you choose to order your text, do so promptly because required readings will start immediately after class commences.

ON-LINE COURSE READINGS will be available on D2L

- NOTE: These on-line readings are essential. Expect to see questions relating to these readings on quizzes and exams, just as you would textbook readings.
- It is your responsibility to regularly check your course syllabus for supplementary reading requirements.

** I reserve the right to add or remove readings as the semester progresses.*

GRADING & REQUIREMENTS

Out of a total of 400 points, your grade will be determined by the following breakdown:

Participation & Attendance	5 %	20 points
In-class Assignments & Activities	10%	40 points
Reading Quizzes	10 %	40 points
5 at 10 points, drop the lowest score		
Assignments	15 %	60 points
3 at 20 points		
Final Project	15 %	60 points
Midterm	20 %	80 points
Final	20%	80 points

DESCRIPTION OF REQUIREMENTS

Participation & Attendance (5%)

This course will be conducted in a seminar-like format, with brief lectures on the theme of the day followed by a classroom discussion. Students are expected to complete the readings before class and participate in classroom discussions because discussion is the primary avenue of instruction. Readings, assignments and class meetings are designed to inspire students to grapple with new ideas and engage in critical thinking, discussion, and writing. I will regularly take attendance. Repeated absences will have negative impact on your grade. Sleeping, texting, and disruptive behavior will result in you being counted absent for the day.

In-class Assignments & Activities (20%)

We will frequently undertake class activities designed to facilitate active engagement with course themes. These activities may include class debates, responses to a film clip, or group reflections to a topic. These activities presume a familiarity with the readings and you are expected to come to class prepared and able to participate.

Reading Quizzes (20%)

To assess reading comprehension and to make ensure that you are reading closely and critically, I will give five reading quizzes throughout the semester. You will have 5 quizzes

and I will drop the lowest of your quiz grades at the end of the semester. The week that these quizzes will take place is indicated in the course schedule.

Assignments (15%)

You will be responsible for three assignments, each worth 20 points. The purpose of these assignments is a) to encourage engagement with major themes and topics from the course, b) to facilitate a deeper understanding of class material as it applies to “real world” situations, c) and to further develop your critical thinking skills. Assignments will be distributed and due in class according to the course schedule below.

Final Project (15%) “Cities, countries, commodities, and corporations”

Your final project will require you to explore the various dimensions of economic geography through a focus on a single commodity, a country, a corporation, or a city that interests you. For countries (i.e. Mexico) or cities (i.e. Green Bay) you may want to explore the evolving economic landscape or and expansion of a particular economic sector in that particular place. You might also wish to write a “development report” that analyses the economic and social status of the area. You may wish, instead, to focus on a particular commodity (apples) or a corporation (Apple or GE), examining geographic and historical shifts in production. You will share a 3-minute “snapshot” of your research with the class. You will need to approve your topic with me. Please see me to discuss concerns or questions about your project.

Exams (Midterm 20% ; Final Exam 20%)

The midterm will take place after we have established a foundation for the course. The purpose is to test your understanding of key concepts that will be essential to your participation in the remainder of the course.

The following scale will be used to determine your grades:

A = 95-100%	A- = 90 - 94%	
B+ = 85 - 89%	B = 80 - 84%	B- = 77 – 79 %
C+ = 74 – 76 %	C = 70 – 73 %	C- = 67 – 69 %
D = 64 - 66%	D- = 60 - 63%	
F = < 60%		

IMPORTANT DATES:

- 9/27: Assignment #1 due in class
- 10/18: Midterm Exam
- 11/8: Assignment #2 due in class
- 11/10: Topic for final project due in class
- 12/1: Assignment #3 due in class
- 10/13: Final Project due in class
- 12/19: Final Exam, 10am – noon

COURSE POLICIES

- **Attend and participate in lectures.** Lectures are a key part of this class!! Tests will cover material from lectures that is not in your readings. Be active in your own learning and participate in lectures and discussions. **DO NOT COME TO CLASS IF YOU PLAN TO SLEEP, TEXT, OR SURF THE INTERNET.** It's distracting to me as a lecturer and to your fellow classmates.
- **Complete all assigned readings BEFORE class.** All lectures and discussion will presume a familiarity of the readings. You are expected to come to class prepared and able to participate in the lecture activities and discussion by sharing your thoughts, views, questions etc. **READ CRITICALLY.** Make sure that you not only understand the content of the assigned readings, but also consider the significance and validity of the argument and analysis presented.
- **Complete work thoughtfully and on time.** Except in the case of a verifiable medical or family emergency precluding timely submission, **there will be no make-up exams, and no make-up quizzes in this class. Late written assignments are penalized 1 letter grade per day including weekends.** There will be no extra credit in this class. Please come and talk to me in the event of a life or health emergency. I will not be able to help you with your course requirements unless you inform me of your circumstances.
- **Actively and Respectfully Contribute.** We all have a responsibility to ensure that an open and welcoming atmosphere is maintained. If we all agreed on everything, our university classes would be rather boring. Instead, a multiplicity of opinions means that we can share and learn from each other. However, you must make informed arguments and respectfully engage with one another.
- **Support: Get some!** Take advantage of office hours! And do so BEFORE the quiz or exam. I am here to help succeed in this class. If my office hours conflict with your schedule, then email to set up an appointment for an alternative point. Also, take advantage of the "free" (ie. you already paid for them) services on campus, such as The Writing Center and the assistance of librarians.
- **Special Accommodations:** To request academic accommodations due to a disability or special need, please contact the UWM Student Accessibility Center and inform me as soon as possible about special accommodations so that I can best meet your needs. Student Accessibility Center, Mitchell Hall Room 112, (414) 229-6287, <http://www4.uwm.edu/sac/>
- **Academic Integrity:** Plagiarism, cheating, and other misconduct are serious violations of your contract as a student and I will consider them as such. You are expected to know and follow the University's guidelines: <http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/OSL/DOS/conduct.html>. You are guilty of cheating whenever you present as your own work something that you did not do. You are also guilty of cheating if you help someone else to cheat. Buying, copying, or quoting work

without proper citation will result in serious consequences. If you have questions about citations, please check with me.

COURSE SCHEDULE

INTRODUCTION

WEEK ONE

Sept 6:

Overview of the course

- No new readings; Visit D2L site

Sept 8:

What is Economic Geography?

- (Coe et al. 2007) Chapter 1: A Geographical Approach to the Economy, 3-30.
 - **Total: 27 pages**

WEEK TWO

Sept 13:

Representing the Economy

- (Coe et al. 2007) Chapter 2: Economic Discourse: Does 'the Economy' Really Exist? 31-56.
 - **Total: 25 pages**

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CAPITALIST ECONOMY

Sept 15:

Historical Development of Capitalism

- Stutz, F. and Warf, B. 2007. "The Historical Development of Capitalism" in *The World Economy: Resources, Location, Trade and Development*, 5th Edition. Prentice Hall. 25-45. **(D2L)**
 - **Total: 20 pages**
 - *Handout and discuss Assignment #1*

WEEK THREE

* Quiz #1 this week *

Sept 20:

Imperialism and Industrialization

- Stutz, F. and Warf, B. 2007. "The Historical Development of Capitalism" in *The World Economy: Resources, Location, Trade and Development*, 5th Edition. Prentice Hall. 45-57. **(D2L)**
- Knox, P., Agnew, J., and McCarthy, L. 2003. "The Dynamics of Interdependence: Transformation of the Periphery" in *The Geography of the World Economy*, 4th Edition. 249-262. **(D2L)**
 - **Total: 26 pages**

Sept 22:

Fordist Accumulation and the Industrial Core

- Knox, P., J. Agnew, L. McCarthy. 2003. The Geography of the World Economy. **Fordism and North American Industrialization.** pp 153-158 **(D2L)**
 - **Total: 5 pages**
 - *Modern Times* film clip

WEEK FOUR

Sept 27:

Keynesian and The New Deal

- MacKinnon, D. and A. Cumbers. 2007. "The State and the Economy: The Keynesian Welfare States" in An Introduction to Economic Geography: Globalization, Uneven Development, and Place," pp 118 - 120. **(D2L)**
- Brinkley, A. 1996. "The New Deal: An Overview," *Social Education*, 60(5): 255-258. **(D2L)**
- Peet, R. 2007. The discourse of Keynesian Economics. *Geography of Power*, 65-72. **(D2L)**
 - **Total: 12 pages**
 - *Assignment #1 Due in class*

Sept 29:

Deindustrialization of the Core

- (Coe et al. 2007) Chapter 5: Technology and Agglomeration: Does Technology Eradicate Distance? 119-152.
 - **Total: 33 pages**
 - *Roger and Me* film clip

WEEK FIVE

* Quiz #2 this week *

Oct 4:

Post-Fordism and Flexible Accumulation

- No new reading

Oct. 6:

The Global Service Economy

- Boo, Katherine. 2004, July 5. "Letter from India: The Best Job in Town," *New Yorker*. 55-69.
 - **Total: 14 pages**
 - *Outsourcing Debate*

THE GEOGRAPHY OF DEVELOPMENT

WEEK SIX

Oct 11:

Uneven Development

- (Coe et al. 2007) Chapter 3: Uneven Development: Why is Economic Growth and Development So Uneven? 59-86.
 - **Total: 28 pages**
 - *Handout midterm review sheet*

- Oct 13: **Neoliberalism as a global strategy**
- (Coe et al. 2007) READ ONLY BOX 7.1 on page 204
 - **Total: 1 page (!)**

WEEK SEVEN

Oct 18: **MIDTERM EXAM - Good Luck!**

- Oct 20: **Geographies of Development**
- MacKinnon, D. and Cumbers, A. 2007. "Chapter 11: Geographies of Development" in *An Introduction to Economic Geography: Globalization, Uneven Development, and Place*. Prentice Hall. 252-278. **(D2L)**
 - **Total: 26 pages**

WEEK EIGHT

- Oct 25: **Debt Crisis and Structural Adjustment**
- No new reading – review box on Structural Adjustment in 10/20 assigned reading
 - *Life and Debt* film clip

- Oct 27: **Commodity Chains**
- (Coe et al. 2007) Chapter 4: Commodity Chains: Where Does Your Breakfast Come From? 87-118.
 - **Total: 33 pages**
 - *Handout and discuss Assignment #2*

ACTORS IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

WEEK NINE

* Quiz #3 this week *

- Nov 1: **The State**
- (Coe et al. 2007) Chapter 7: The State: Who Controls the Economy: Firms or Governments? 187-210.
 - **Total: 23 pages**
 - *Handout and discuss final project description*
- Nov 3: **The Corporation**
- (Coe et al. 2007) Chapter 8: The Transnational Corporation: How Does the Global Firm Keep it All Together? 223-253.
 - Bakan, J. 2004. "Are you working for a Psycho? The corporation: The pathological pursuit of Profit and Power," *The Ecologist*, 21-23.
 - **Total: 33 pages**
 - *The Corporation In-class activity*

WEEK TEN

Nov 8:

Labor: Workers and Livelihoods

- (Coe et al. 2007) Chapter 9: Labour Power: Can Workers Shape Economic Geographies? 254-283.
 - **Total: 29 pages**
 - *Assignment #2 Due in class*
 - *Wisconsin Labor Debate*

Nov 10:

Consumers

- (Coe et al. 2007) Chapter 10: Consumption: Is the consumer always right? pp 284 -316.
 - **Total: 32 pages**
 - *The Story of Stuff*
 - *Final Project Step One – turn in project topic*

ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHIES AND SOCIAL DIFFERENCE

WEEK ELEVEN

* Quiz #4 this week *

Nov 15:

Socializing Economic Life

- (Coe et al. 2007). Chapter 11: Culture and the Firm: Do Countries and Companies have Economic Cultures? pp 321 – 345
 - **Total: 24 pages**
 - *Library Research Tutorial TBA*

Nov 17:

Gendered Economic Geographies

- Chapter 12: Gendered Economic Geographies: Does Gender Shape Economic Lives? pp 348 -373
 - **Total: 25 pages**
 - *Handout and discuss Assignment #3*

WEEK TWELVE

Nov 22:

Race/ethnicity and Economic Geography

- (Coe et al. 2007). Chapter 13: Ethnic economies: Do Cultures have Economies? pp 377 -402
 - **Total: 25 pages**

Nov 24:

NO CLASS: HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

ECONOMIC CHALLENGES, GLOBAL CRISIS

WEEK THIRTEEN

Nov 29:

Poverty, Inequality, and the Working Poor in the U.S.

- Erhenrich, B. 1999. “Nickel-and-Dimed: On (not) Getting by in America.” *Harpers’ Magazine*, January 1999, 37 -52. **(D2L)**
 - **Total: 15 pages**
 - Final project check-in – work-shopping “zero draft”

Dec 1:

Debt: savings and loans crisis

- Williams, B. 2004. “Chapter 5: Pummeling the Poor,” in *Debt For Sale*. 92-124. **(D2L)**
 - **Total: 32 pages**
 - *In Debt We Trust* film clip
 - *Assignment #3 Due in Class*

WEEK FOURTEEN

* Quiz #5 this week *

Dec 6:

Subprime and Predatory Lending

- Fishbein, A. and Bunce, H. 2001. “Subprime market growth and predatory lending,” HUD Publications. 273-288. **(D2L)**
 - **Total: 15 pages**

Dec 8:

Global Financial Crisis: Bailing out Wall Street, but what about Main Street?

- Cassidy, J. 2010, November 29. “What Good is Wall Street?” *The New Yorker*. 1-17. **(D2L)**
 - **Total: 17 pages**

WEEK FIFTEEN

Dec 13:

Final Project “Snapshots”

- Final Project papers due in class

FINAL EXAM:

MONDAY, DEC 19th, 10-12