Course Overview

Geographic relations of production, exchange and consumption; trade and economic development; location of economic activities; globalization and economic transformations at the national, regional, and local scales; institutional, social, political, environmental, and cultural aspects of economic activities in various places.
Organization

The course is organized in five parts. We begin with an introduction to the main themes of economic geography and its different theoretical approaches. In part two, we turn our attention to the multi-faceted process of globalization and examine the historical transformation of global capitalism and its most recent configurations. In part three, we investigate key actors in the global economy, including the state, corporations, and labor. In the fourth part of the course, we explore the spatial organization of the world economy and its unevenness by focusing on place and identifying various ways in which globalization shapes local economies. We build upon concepts learned in the previous sections and highlight the role of key actors, institutions, and historical forces in shaping development trajectories and producing unique economic places. We rely on examples from around the world to illustrate spatial differences in the organization of contemporary economies. In the fifth part, we study recent work in economic geography on flows and networks connecting places around the globe, including trade, finance, immigration and knowledge.

Goals

The goals of the course are to engage students in the contemporary issues of economic life, expose them to current research questions in economic geography, and provide tools to interpret complex economic problems from a geographic perspective.

The central question that has traditionally been asked by economic geographers relates to the causes of uneven economic development at various scales: Why are some parts of the world more economically developed than others? Why do some regions grow faster than others? Why do some industries succeed in specific places and fail elsewhere?

While these questions remain important today, primarily because of the rapid globalization of economic activities and the associated transformation of production and consumption, economic geographers have increasingly turned their attention to the institutional, social, political, and cultural arrangements that shape and differentiate economic activities in various places. Thus new questions are being raised regarding everyday economic practices and the spatial processes that constitute them, including issues of livelihood, work, consumption and lifestyle, gender, ethnic networks, corporate culture, money and finance, etc. These themes will be discussed throughout the course.

Materials

The readings for the course have been assembled from academic journals and books to cover a wide range of topics in economic geography. There is no required textbook and all the readings are available on Blackboard in folders that corresponds to the dates and topics described in the schedule section below.

Assignments, tests, and other course materials are also available on Blackboard.

Milestones

Various Dates
Reading responses
(marked by ✓ on schedule)
March 26
Midterm examination
Online (11am to 12:15pm)
May 5
Economic Landscape Project due
(optional: draft due on April 23)
May 12
Final examination
Online (10:30am to 12:30pm)
Student Learning Outcomes

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

- Recognize spatial patterns of economic inequality and identify the processes that underlie them
- Contextualize the contemporary spatial organization of production and consumption within the historical development of the capitalist economy
- Analyze the processes of globalization and identify its costs, benefits and contradictions
- Draw connections between global economic restructuring and the functioning of local economies in different places across the world
- Untangle the links between the economic, political, social and cultural forces shaping economies.

Assessments

Your grade for the course will be based on the following requirements:

1. **Reading Reflections**

   In order to ensure that you are engaging with the reading material and that you are participating in the course, there are 15 reading responses due throughout the semester on dates indicated in the syllabus. Readings for which responses are requested are indicated on the schedule below by a check mark (✓). You are allowed to miss 5 without it negatively affecting your grade. Reading responses should be submitted on Blackboard no later than 10:30 AM on the due date. This will give me a little bit of time to look at them before class and incorporate any relevant questions into lecture. *Late submissions will not be accepted.* Reading responses should consist of a short paragraph (about 250 words) that directly addresses the specific question or prompt posted on Blackboard in the “Assignments” section. These should **not be reading summaries.** You could earn 20 points for a thoughtful and well-articulated response, 15 points for a mediocre response, and only 5 point for submitting a response that fails to meet the expectations (e.g., too short, poorly written, unfocused).

2. **Examinations**

   There will be one midterm (3/19) and one final examination for the class (5/12). Examinations will consist of definitions (25%) as well as multiple-choice (35%) and essay questions (40%). You are responsible for all information covered in class, including lectures, guest lectures, films and shorter videos, podcasts, and other types of presentations, as well as reading assignments. The final exam will not be cumulative. *No make-up exams will be given.* All exams will be given via Blackboard, so **do not come to class on the day of the exam.** During the time shown on the syllabus, you will be able to log into Blackboard and take the exam at the location of your choice. Be sure that you have a good connection; use one of the student computer labs on campus if necessary. Blackboard will automatically save your work at the end of the test period and will stop the test. The exam will no longer be available after this period.

3. **Project: Economic Landscape**

   For this project, you will pick a place (e.g., a city, a country, a neighborhood, an industrial district, a region) and focus on its primary industry (e.g., high-tech, tourism, agriculture, oil, banking, manufacturing) to describe its economy from a geographic perspective. Massey (1994)’s conceptualization of “place” should help you identify how this economy has
been constructed over time and shaped by a variety of actors and networks that blend together to create layers that make up a unique economic site. Similarly, the idea of “evolutionary economic landscape” (Martin and Sunley 2007) should guide your approach by drawing attention to the fact that economies take on unique forms and structures that evolve over time and can be “read” in the landscape.

The paper will include a theoretical component in which you identify a framework that explains the shape of the economic landscape you have chosen, using concepts studied in class and making references to the readings. It will also include an empirical part where you will provide data that describe the characteristics of the local economy you selected and the main factors that underlie its development. In both parts, you will need to cite all your sources.

This project should be approximately 1500 words (6 pages, 12 font size, double-spaced), not including tables, figures, notes and references. It is due online on May 5th, but I encourage you to submit a draft before April 23rd if you’d like to receive comments and suggestion. Details about this project and a grading rubric will be provided on Blackboard.

4. Extra-credits

There are no scheduled extra-credit assignments. However, if you learn about an event on campus that relates to the course material (e.g., film, conference, presentation, special event), you may be able to turn it into an opportunity for extra credit. You will need to let me know ahead of time, so that I can announce the event to the whole class via Blackboard. In other words, it is your responsibility to find extra-credit options! You will then need to attend the event, show proof of attendance (via a picture of yourself at the event) and submit a 250-word reflection essay on Blackboard. Each extra credit assignment will be worth 20 points, and you are only allowed to submit three (up to 60 points).

Grading

The final grade will be computed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm and final examinations</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Responses</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Landscape Project</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1000</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[+ Extra credits</td>
<td>up to 60</td>
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Class Schedule

Part I: Introduction

- **January 22:** Introduction to the course
  Read Course Syllabus on Blackboard

- **January 27:** Key Themes in Economic Geography

- **January 29:** Approaches in Economic Geography

Part II: Globalization, Capitalism, and Uneven Economic Development

- **February 3:** Globalization

- **February 5:** The Historical Development of Capitalism

- **February 10:** The Global Expansion of Capitalism in the Periphery: Colonialism

- **February 12:** Spatial Divisions of Labor: Contemporary Reorganization of Global Capitalism

Part III: Key Actors in the Global Economy

- **February 17:** The State under Neoliberalism

**February 19: Corporations**


**February 24: Labor**


**Part IV: A World of Differences: Globalization and the Production of Economic Places**

**February 26: Deindustrializing Places**


**March 3: Clusters, Innovation and Flexible Manufacturing: Fashion in New York**


**March 5: Centers of Innovation: Information Technology in India**


**March 10: New Manufacturing Regions: Southeast Asia**


**March 17: Extraction Economies: Oil in Nigeria**


**March 19: Agricultural Economies: Ranching in the Amazon**
March 24: Export Processing Zones: Environmental Issues along the Mexico-US border


March 26: MIDTERM EXAMINATION – ONLINE – DO NOT COME TO CLASS!

March 31 & April 2: NO CLASS - Spring Break

April 7: Global Tourist Destinations: Mega Events, Infrastructure and Development


April 9: Home: The Economic Geography of Social Reproduction


April 14: Women Entrepreneurs Reshaping Places


April 16: Child Labor


April 21 & 23: AAG Meetings – NO CLASS: Work on Your Projects!

NOTE: OPTIONAL EARLY DRAFT OF ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE PROJECT DUE ONLINE ON 4/23 (before midnight).

Part V: Mobilities and Flows: Spatial Networks in the Global Economy

April 28: Trade and Global Commodity Chains


April 30: Labor Migration: Transnational Networks

May 5: Capital Flows: Circuits of Money and Finance


ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE PROJECT DUE ONLINE (before midnight)

May 7: Consumption, Culture and Taste


May 12: FINAL EXAMINATION - ONLINE (10:30am to 12:30pm)

Course Policies

Attendance

As noted above, attendance is critical to the success of the course and a positive learning experience. I expect you to come to class prepared and on time. In addition, the tests will cover material from lectures that is not in the readings. Be sure to turn cell-phones and other electronic devices on silent mode during class to minimize disruptions. Do not come to class if you plan to engage in unrelated activities such as texting, chatting with other students, surfing the net or sleeping. If you need to miss class, please notify me by email.

Readings

Lectures and discussions will be based on the assigned readings. I expect you to come to class prepared and ready to participate actively in discussions by asking questions, providing examples, and sharing your thoughts. The online reading responses are set up to encourage you and help you prepare for class. Some of the readings will be more challenging than others; I do not expect you to understand everything the first time. However, I hope that you will come to class with questions and informed criticism.

Due dates

All assignments and exams are due by the dates and times indicated in the schedule via Blackboard. I do not accept any late assignments. Please, be sure to submit your assignment online in time to avoid grade penalties. Similarly, be ready to take the online exam at the time and date specified above. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have a good internet connection.

Help

I want you to succeed in this class! Take advantage of my office hours if you need help (or make an appointment). You should also feel free to email me with any questions. But, please, do not wait until after the test to communicate with me. At that point, it is usually too late for me to help you.

You may also ask for help at the SDSU Writing Center (http://writingcenter.sdsu.edu) and, in some cases, from Student Disability Services (http://go.sdsu.edu/student_affairs/sds/).
Special Accommodation

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that I cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until I have received an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

When you were admitted to SDSU, you signed a statement of academic honesty committing to be honest in all academic work and understanding that failure to comply with this commitment will result in disciplinary action. This is a reminder to uphold your obligation as a student at SDSU and to be honest in all work submitted and exams taken in this class.

Any form of cheating will result in an "F" and a referral to the Dean for further action (see http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/srr/academics1.html). Plagiarism is considered cheating and is a serious form of academic dishonesty. According to the SDSU library, plagiarism is defined as "the act of using someone else's words, sentences, or ideas and passing them off as your own without giving credit by citing the original source" (see http://infotutor.sdsu.edu/plagiarism/index.cfm).

You might be plagiarizing if you:

- Submit someone else's work as your own.
- Buy a paper written by someone else.
- Copy sentences, phrases, paragraphs, or ideas from someone else's work, published or unpublished, without giving the original author credit.
- Replace select words from a passage without giving the original author credit.
- Copy any type of multimedia (graphics, audio, video, internet streams), computer programs, music compositions, graphs, or charts from someone else's work without giving the original author credit.
- Piece together phrases, ideas, and sentences from a variety of sources to write an essay.
- Build on someone else's idea or phrase to write your paper without giving the original author credit.
- Submit your own paper in more than one course.