

Geography 5401: Economy, Space and Society

Instructor: Darla Munroe

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Office hours: W, F 1:00 – 3:00 pm

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Introduction to the course

How we think about the economy shapes our social engagement through space and time, and influences how we live in our communities and with each other. We will critically examine multiple ways of thinking about economies: what the economy is, how and why it is changing, and how through it we become economic actors - workers and consumers. We will explore these concepts further by examining the governance of a 'global economy,' how economic processes are structured through social systems like race and gender, and by scrutinizing varied forms of capitalism we see internationally.

Class goals: To provide human geographic tools and concepts for understanding the economy, to develop greater insight into ongoing processes of global economic change, practicing and enhancing written and oral communication about geographic scholarship, and further developing critical thinking skills.



Course evaluation

Midterm exam		20%
Commodity chain analysis		20% total
Commodity proposal	5%	
In-class presentation	15%	
Final paper		30% total
Actor proposal	10%	
Paper	20%	
Leading class discussion	15% each	30% total
		100%

Readings

Textbook: Economic Geography: A Contemporary Introduction, 2nd Edition. Coe et al, Wiley

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. You are also welcome to register with Student Life Disability Services to establish reasonable accommodations. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. **SLDS contact information:** slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

Course outcomes: By the end of this course you should be able to:

- Synthesize and apply principles from economic geography to current events and research
- Critically discuss a range of contemporary economic issues, highlighting political and social complexity of these issues and the way they are discussed in the general public
- Critically evaluate economic outcomes, conflicts and problems, with attention to winners and losers; and
- Generate clear and thoughtful social science commentary

Format: This course will be a combination of lecture and discussion. Learning over the course of the semester will cumulate in a final report and presentation. Students will be required to lead discussion on the readings at least twice during the semester.

Class policies

Our primary joint responsibility in this class is to create a productive learning community. Good humor and support of one another are welcomed and encouraged. You should respect my right to teach and the right of your fellow students to learn. You are expected to conduct yourself with courtesy at all times and to treat everyone with respect.

Threatening or intimidating speech in any form will not be tolerated. Other disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to, holding conversations with classmates, passing notes, making unnecessary comments, leaving and coming back into the classroom (except in emergencies), coming in late or leaving early on frequent occasions, and failing to turn off cell phones. If you violate these standards of courtesy and respect, you may be dismissed from class.

Course material: Students are responsible for all material presented in class and all assigned readings. It is assumed that students have completed the readings before class. **Integration of course themes will be assessed in the final paper, and many of these themes will be discussed only in class.** Students are expected to attend all classes, complete the required reading, participate in class discussion and activities, and take exams and **turn in all assignments on the scheduled dates.** Students are also expected to take a proactive role by seeking assistance from the instructor when problems arise. Lecture outlines will be posted on Carmen. In the event that you miss class, seek detailed notes from a classmate.

Attendance: Because this is an active classroom where discussion and in-class activities are emphasized, attendance is required. Missing more than **three classes** without a documented excuse will result in a lowered grade (one full letter grade for 4 missed classes, two full letter grades for 6 missed classes, and so on). Students with particular constraints, e.g., family obligations, should see me to work out a plan that will work for all concerned.

Missing work due to illness or other circumstances: Students who miss class due to serious illness or other extreme circumstances must submit documentation to me within one week of the absence in order to turn in any work missed. If documentation is not received within this period excusing the absence, the student will receive a 0 (zero) grade for any work missed.

Use of classroom technology: It is the student's responsibility to ensure access to our learning technology website, Carmen, and all of its tools. This includes seeking technical support from OSU staff (ocio.osu.edu) when encountering any problems. Students must themselves confirm that discussion postings are successfully posted or files are uploaded correctly in order to receive credit. Students **MUST** read Carmen email regularly.

Gradebook: It is also the student's responsibility to look at the **Carmen gradebook** regularly. I make every effort to keep your grade up to date and students should be well aware of their class standing at all times throughout the semester.

In-class discussion and midterm: There are no make-ups for missing assigned days to lead discussion or taking the midterm without a documented excuse.

Leading discussion: Students will be assigned into groups, and each group will lead class discussion at least twice, beginning in Week 2. Part of leading discussion is to generate exam questions.

Exam: There is an in-class, midterm exam on Tuesday, October 24th.

Commodity chain assignment: Each student will pick one commodity to analyze. They must describe the geography of the commodity chain, how value is added along the chain, assess relevant social and environmental impacts (winners and losers) at multiple stages of production, and major issues of governance. Details are to be found on Carmen.

Final paper: Each student will pick a particular class of economic actor to analyze in the context of class readings. How important is this actor type in shaping the global economy? How is this actor type situated in various networks, in relation to other places and other people?

Academic Misconduct: It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct at <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>.

Schedule (subject to change)

Week	Date	Day	Topic	Reading	Due
1	22-Aug 24-Aug	Tue Thur	Welcome to class!		
2	29-Aug 31-Aug	Tue Thur	What is the economy?	Ch 2	Group 1
3	5-Sep 7-Sep	Tue Thur	Commodity chains	Ch 8	Commodity proposal; Group 2
4	12-Sep 14-Sep	Tue Thur	Transnational corporations	Ch 10	Group 3
5	19-Sep 21-Sep	Tue Thur	Commodity chain presentations		Commodity chain writeup
6	26-Sep 28-Sep	Tue Thur	<i>Enron: Smartest guys in the room</i> Finance	Ch 7	Group 4, Enron writeup
7	3-Oct 5-Oct	Tue Thur	Capitalism	Ch 3	Group 5
8	10-Oct 12-Oct	Tue Thur	Labor Autumn break	Ch 6	Group 1
9	17-Oct 19-Oct	Tue Thur	Guest speaker		
10	24-Oct 26-Oct	Tue Thur	Midterm No class		
11	31-Oct 2-Nov	Tue Thur	State	Ch 4	Group 2, Final paper proposal
12	7-Nov 9-Nov	Tue Thur	Retail	Ch 11	Group 3
13	14-Nov 16-Nov	Tue Thur	Gender	Ch 13	Group 4
14	21-Nov 23-Nov	Tue Thur	Ethnicity Thanksgiving	Ch 14	Group 5
15	28-Nov 30-Nov	Tue Thur	Consumption	Ch 15	
16	5-Dec 7-Dec	Tue Thur	Wrap-up		
FINAL	8-Dec	Fri	Final paper due 5 pm		Final paper