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Office Hours: By appointment

Description: This course introduces economic geography, a way to examine economic processes as they occur at a variety of scales, from global, to national, to household. The unique contribution of economic geography is to consider economic, historical, cultural, and political developments occurring in distinct but connected places as they contribute to the formation of economic systems spanning the globe. The main topic of the course will be the development and current trends in global capitalism, with case studies from around the world.

Objectives
Upon completion of this course students will:
- have an understanding of the goals, methods, subject, principles and theories of economic geography and be better informed about the spatial characteristics of economic processes;
- have an understanding of the close links between local events and global phenomena;
- have an understanding of contemporary trends in the global economy and their impacts on individual livelihoods in diverse places; and
- be able to apply newly-acquired knowledge to think sensibly and critically about important real-world problems and be able to make better sense of academic, government and journalistic accounts of the global economy.

Learning Outcomes
- describe the main characteristics and geographic patterns of global capitalism
- recognize the role of space and place in the workings of economic systems
- use scalar reasoning to discuss economic activities
- consider the interdependence of political and social power, environment, and history in economic development
- write clearly and succinctly about economic geography concepts, using relevant examples, well-developed arguments, and correct citations

Textbook

Other readings will be posted on Blackboard, unless other online access is specified.
Evaluation

Class Participation: 10%
Presentations: 10%
Written Exercises: 20%
Mid-Term Exam: 25%
Final Exam: 35%

Class Participation
Everyone will be expected to have read the textbook prior to the first class of the week and the case study readings by the second class. This will allow everyone, not only class presenters, to contribute to class discussions. Students who are often absent, late, or distracted, or whose comments consistently stray far from the broad topics under discussion, will not receive full credit. On the other hand, everyone can feel free to ask clarifying questions and to suggest discussion topics and connections to other materials or subjects. No one will be penalized for lacking prior knowledge of these topics during discussions, as long as it is clear that students have taken the time to read and investigate the week’s materials to the best of their ability.

**Please note – being late to class impacts on participation; for every three late arrivals, a point is taken off your final grade.**

Presentations and Types of Class Discussions
You will be required to present twice on the supplementary/case study readings. The presentation will be no longer than 10 minutes and will conclude with thought-provoking discussion questions.

Written Exercises
You will answer several questions related to the week’s reading and/or complete a map or other exercise relevant to the week’s discussion. The four weeks when you are required to do this are marked with an ** on the syllabus. Questions/instructions will be provided a week ahead of time and will be due through Blackboard by 10 pm the day before class.

Mid-Term Exam
The exam will consist of an in-class component of short answer and extended response, plus an out-of-class component of one or two essay questions assigned at least a week before the exam. Answers to essay questions will be handed in on the day of the mid-term. A guide to expected essay structure will be provided, and students are expected to refer to the reading and provide citations.

Final Exam
The final exam will be a set of take-home essay questions assigned by the final class at the latest. Students will need to hand in the essays in person on the day of the final exam (Friday, May 27, between 11:30 AM and 1:30 PM), when we will have a brief wrap-up discussion. Essays must include citations.

For students with a strong interest in a particular topic or who would like to read an additional academic book relevant to their interests, it may be possible to reduce the number of essays on the final exam (from 3-4 to 1-2) in exchange for a short research paper or book review. You need to talk to me about
this option no later than Week 6. I will approve this option only if it is a topic I am able to offer competent advice on. I’ll be glad to make recommendations for interesting and manageable books.

**Hunter College Policy on Academic Integrity:** Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures.

***Please note, copying even a single sentence or phrase directly from another text without providing citations is considered a form of plagiarism. Don’t hesitate to ask citation questions to avoid unintentional plagiarism.***

**Hunter College ADA Compliance:** In compliance with the American Disability Act of 1990 (ADA) and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Hunter College is committed to ensuring educational parity and accommodations for all students with documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. It is recommended that all students with documented disabilities (emotional, medical, physical, and/or learning) consult the Office of AccessABILITY, located in Room E1214B, to secure necessary academic accommodations. For further information and assistance, please call: (212) 772-4857 or (212) 650-3230.

**Note on late exams:** You will only be able to make up the mid-term exam if you have a documented reason. If you have an emergency, try to contact me within 48 hours of the exam. However, if your reason involves religious holidays or other events known to you in advance, I will not accept any make-up exams unless you have gotten in touch with me at the start of the semester.

**Policy on Incomplete (IN) and Credit/No Credit (CR/NC) grades:** A final grade of IN (incomplete) will not be given except under the most extraordinary, and documented, circumstances. Only students who have completed ALL course requirements including all writing assignments, midterm and final exams will be eligible for a final grade of CR/NC.

**Note:** Readings and class schedule may change from what is listed in this syllabus depending on the needs of the class and in unforeseen events such as school closures. I will give ample warning of any changes. Students will be responsible keeping up with announcements.

**Course Schedule**

*Most weeks will contain one or two case study readings in addition to the textbook chapters, TBD.*

**Week 1 - January 29**

**Introduction**

Please carefully read the entire syllabus no later than before the next class.

**Week 2 - February 2 and February 5**

**Introducing The Economy, economics and economic geography**

Coe, Kelly, Yeung (2013) Chapters 1, 2, and 16 (only through p. 512)
Week 3 – February 9 (Friday schedule; NO CLASS Friday, Feb. 12)
Capitalism, uneven development, and geography’s role in the economy
    Coe, Kelly, Yeung (2013) Chapter 3

Week 4 – February 16 and February 19
**Capitalism, uneven development, and geography’s role in the economy (continued)
    Coe, Kelly, Yeung (2013) Chapter 3

Week 5 – February 23 and 26
**Environment and Economy: Nature as stage, input, commodity and place
    Coe, Kelly, Yeung (2013) Chapter 5

Week 6 – March 1 and March 4.
**Who runs the economy? State power in a globalizing world
    Coe, Kelly, Yeung (2013) Chapter 4

Week 7 – March 8 and March 11
Who runs the economy? Corporations
    Coe, Kelly, Yeung (2013) Chapters 10

Week 8 – March 15 and March 18
Who runs the economy? Labor power: global and local divisions of labor
    Coe, Kelly, Yeung (2013) Chapters 6 and 13 (especially 13.1, 13.2, 13.4 – all other sections optional)

Week 9 – March 22 and March 23 (Wednesday is following a Friday schedule)
**Who runs the economy? Financialization - the rise of finance?
    Coe, Kelly, Yeung (2013) Chapter 7

MID-TERM ESSAY QUESTIONS DISTRIBUTED BY MARCH 23
Special Topics student suggestions due MARCH 23 (see below for explanation)

Week 10 – March 29 and April 1
March 29 – Review Discussion
In-Class Midterm April 1
Mid-Term Essay Questions Due April 1

Week 11 April 5 and April 8
Technological change and clusters: Why hasn’t the internet made Wall Street obsolete?
    Coe, Kelly, Yeung (2013) Chapter 9

Week 12 – April 12 and April 15
Economic Alterity: What else is going on besides capitalism? What else is possible? What else has been tried?
Week 13 – April 19 (NO CLASS Friday, April 22 – spring break begins)
Commodity Chains – a brief and fun introduction

Week 14 – May 3 and May 6
Special Topics

Week 15 - May 10 and May 13
Special Topics

Special Topics weeks are an opportunity to look at recent case studies of the topics addressed so far, to cover a certain process or geographic area in more depth, or to address a topic of student interest. We will select them by a Blackboard poll. Students can also submit their own idea for a Special Topics theme no later than March 23, and we can add it to the ballot.

Environment and Economy II: Green Capitalism and New Frontiers of Resource Extraction
Interested in the rising importance of biotechnology, wondering about market-oriented solutions to climate change (carbon markets, REDD+), or want to learn more about the most recent expansion of industrial agriculture?

Financialization II: Frontiers of Finance and Development
Want to understand the history, spread, and current impacts of microfinance lending to poor people in developing countries? Micro-lending or microfinance is being described as a solution to global poverty and an innovative form of development. How does it work, and what are its successes and drawbacks?

The BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa): The rise of the developing world?
Depending on student interest, we can address the BRICS as a general force in the world economy, or look at post-socialist, post-apartheid, and neo-socialist transitions in one or two of these countries.

Commodity Chains I: The spatial chain of production of everyday objects
Commodity Chains II: Wastes, Drugs, and Other Under-Studied Commodities
After a brief explanation of the commodity chain idea, we will consider an every-day example such as coffee or blue jeans. Or, if you already got what you wanted from the “brief introduction” we could instead consider the commodity chains for illicit substances. How can the drug economy be quantified and studied, and is it a major force in the world economy? How does the money generated by the illicit economy enter mainstream capital? What is it like at the end of the commodity chain, where waste is turned into new commodities in surprising places?

Urban Economics: Informal economies, land markets, and the global urban future
Are there similar economic processes going on in cities around the world? How is global urbanization connected to economic globalization? How and why is “gentrification” a global phenomenon? And what’s going on right now, right here in NYC?

**Racial and Gendered Capitalism**
What is the relationship between racism and capitalism? Are racism and sexism unconnected leftovers from prior economic formations, just a cultural phenomenon unrelated to economy, or absolutely central to capitalist economies? One of the greatest debates in economic geography, with special relevance to us in the U.S. How are gender divisions of labor connected to this question?

**Inside the World Bank, WTO, and IMF**
Continuation of discussion of state power, with specific case studies of these global institutions and their impact on local economic and social landscapes. What do these powerful institutions actually do, can they actually force countries to change their economic policies, and what kinds of results are typical of IMF/WB interventions?

**Week 16 – May 17 (last class)**
Review/final discussion
Final Exam Essays assigned by May 17 at the latest.

Final Exam Date - May 27. You will need to be present to submit your final essays in print, unless you have made arrangements to give me a hard copy before.