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Introduction
Instructor: Ekaterina Bezborodko
E-mail: eb926@hunter.cuny.edu
Office: Blackboard Collaborate portal
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2:30-3:30 limited alternative hours might be available by appointment in person or online via zoom

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. After introducing capitalism as a system, we will examine topics such as labor, natural environment, the financial system, and geopolitics, among others. We will conclude by considering what alternatives to the dominant economic system might exist today.

Objectives
Upon completion of this course students will:
- have an understanding of the goals, subjects, 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
- be able to make better sense of academic, government and journalistic accounts of the global economy in relation to their own lives.

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 required readings will be posted on Blackboard, unless other online access is specified
# Mini-Schedule of Topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 28</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
<td>Feb 4</td>
<td>What is economic geography? (Lecture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 1</td>
<td>What is “the economy?” (Lecture) (Happy Year of the Tiger!)</td>
<td>Feb 4</td>
<td>What is economic geography? (Lecture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 8</td>
<td>What is capitalism? (Lecture)</td>
<td>Feb 11</td>
<td>NO CLASS – COLLEGE CLOSED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 15</td>
<td>What is capitalism? (Discussion)</td>
<td>Feb 18</td>
<td>What do we mean by “spatial process” when talking about capitalism? (Discussion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 22</td>
<td>Historical foundations of capitalism: Nature into Property, People, Profit (Lecture)</td>
<td>Feb 25</td>
<td>Nature/Property (Discussion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 1</td>
<td>The State (Lecture)</td>
<td>Mar 4</td>
<td>The State (Discussion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 8</td>
<td>Labor (Lecture)</td>
<td>Mar 11</td>
<td>Labor (Discussion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 15</td>
<td>Labor (Discussion)</td>
<td>Mar 18</td>
<td>Infrastructure or Technology (Short Lecture &amp; Discussion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 22</td>
<td>Finance (Lecture)</td>
<td>Mar 25</td>
<td>Finance (Discussion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 29</td>
<td>Permanent War Economy – Economic Warfare (Mini Lecture &amp; Discussion)</td>
<td>Apr 1</td>
<td>Permanent War Economy – the Military Industrial Complex around the world (Mini Lecture &amp; Discussion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 5</td>
<td>Introduction to Communism as Economic Thought and Theory (Lecture, with extensive discussion)</td>
<td>Apr 8</td>
<td>Communist Legacies: USSR and China (Discussion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 12</td>
<td>Communist Legacies:3rd World/Non-Aligned Communism; 20th-Century USA (Discussion)</td>
<td>Apr 15</td>
<td>NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 19</td>
<td>NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK</td>
<td>Apr 22</td>
<td>NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 26</td>
<td>Alternative Economies (beyond communism): Introduction (Lecture)</td>
<td>Apr 29</td>
<td>Alternative Economies: Alternative property/profit/labor. (Discussion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 3</td>
<td>Alternative Economies: Solidarity economies and other systemic practices</td>
<td>May 6</td>
<td>Climate Change: Does it change everything?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday (11 pm)</td>
<td>Subject/Assignment</td>
<td>Thursday (11 pm)</td>
<td>Subject/Assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 31</td>
<td>Nothing – get ahead on readings</td>
<td>Feb 3</td>
<td>Nothing – get ahead on readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 7</td>
<td><strong>REQ</strong> Journal Entry #1: Capitalism &amp; You</td>
<td>Feb 10</td>
<td>HW #1 Economy/Geography Ch 1 &amp; 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 14</td>
<td><strong>REQ HW</strong> #2: What is capitalism</td>
<td>Feb 17</td>
<td><strong>REQ HW</strong> #3 Spatial process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 21</td>
<td>Nothing Due – get ahead on reading</td>
<td>Feb 24</td>
<td>HW #4: Nature/Property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 28</td>
<td><strong>REQ</strong> Journal Entry #2: The State &amp; You</td>
<td>Mar 3</td>
<td><strong>REQ HW</strong> #5 The State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 7</td>
<td><strong>REQ</strong> Journal Entry #3: Work</td>
<td>Mar 10</td>
<td>HW #6 Labor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Mid-Term Essay Prompt is Posted</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 14</td>
<td>HW #7: Labor</td>
<td>Mar 17</td>
<td>HW #8: Infrastructure or Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 21</td>
<td><strong>REQ</strong>: Journal Entry #4 – Debt Last day to send suggestions for student choice topics!</td>
<td>Mar 24</td>
<td><strong>REQ HW</strong> #9: Finance Mid-Term Essay Due! In-class poll on student choice topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 28</td>
<td><strong>REQ</strong>: Journal Entry #5: War HW # 10 Economic Warfare</td>
<td>Mar 31</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 4</td>
<td><strong>REQ</strong> Journal Entry #6: Communism &amp; You</td>
<td>Apr 7</td>
<td>HW #13: USSR and China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>REQ HW</strong> #12: Intro to Communism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 11</td>
<td>HW #14: 3rd World &amp; Non-Aligned</td>
<td>Apr 14</td>
<td>HW #15: Communism in USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 18</td>
<td>NONE – SPRING BREAK</td>
<td>Apr 21</td>
<td>NONE – SPRING BREAK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 25</td>
<td><strong>REQ</strong> Journal Entry #7: Alternatives</td>
<td>Apr 28</td>
<td>HW 16: Alternative Economies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2</td>
<td>HW 17: Alternatives</td>
<td>May 5</td>
<td><strong>REQ HW</strong> #18: Climate Change Final Essay Prompt Available Today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 9</td>
<td>Student topic 1, reading questions <strong>REQ HW</strong> #19 Special Topic #2</td>
<td>May 12</td>
<td>Student topic 2, reading questions HW #20: Special topic 2</td>
</tr>
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**Final Exam (Presentations): TBD between 5/18 and 5/24, as per registrar’s schedule)**

- **Final Essay Due: Friday, 5/20, 11pm**
Final Exam Attendance is REQUIRED Present your reflections on this semester, based on your reflection journal and reflection paper

Topic Descriptions with Condensed Reading List
(These are a few sample readings from 2021; textbook will stay the same, but different or additional supplemental texts may be chosen for 2022 to reflect current events and new publications in our field.)

All readings apart from the textbook are posted on Blackboard unless otherwise noted.

Jan 28 – First class: introductions
We get to know each other and the syllabus. What brings you to economic geography, and what do you hope to learn this semester?

Week 1 – February 1 and February 4
Introduction: The Economy, economics and economic geography
We meet spatial concepts like “scale” and expand our idea of what is included in “the economy.” What can the field of economic geography bring to the study of economy that the field of economics does not?

Week 2 – February 8 (NO CLASS FEBRUARY 11!)
What is capitalism?
We learn what makes capitalism a “system” rather than a random bunch of activities. Its arrangement makes it a very powerful source of technological and social change, but it also experiences regular crises. If it is such a durable system, how come it routinely breaks down?

Week 3 – February 15 and February 18
What is “spatial” about capitalism?
We continue exploring capitalism as a system and learn how it is spatially dynamic: it tends to continually expand its global reach. We journey to Sudan for an eye-witness account of how a place becomes globalized and capitalist. What happens to places left behind in this process?

Discussion on Tuesday:

Discussion on Friday:

Week 4 – February 22 and February 25
Historical Foundations of Capitalism: Nature into property, people, profit
We go back 500 years to learn how capitalism started. It fundamentally changed European society – including the role of women – and influenced the violent way Europeans treated people they encountered in the Americas. Does this history help us understand the role of racism and sexism today?


**Week 5 – March 1 and March 4**

**Who runs the economy? The State: A look at state functions**

You might be surprised by this, but capitalism is highly dependent on a strong, well-functioning government. It keeps the system going when it experiences a crisis, but it also provides a multitude of every-day services that keep the economy running. Can the state really keep up with global capital?


**Week 6 – March 8 and March 11**

**Labor: What power does labor hold?**

In theory workers hold all the power in this world – if they walk off the job, “the economy” would grind to a halt. How does the spatial division of workers pair with racial, gender, and national divisions to limit this power in practice? And how have workers across vast spaces overcome these obstacles recently?


**Week 7 – March 15 and March 18**

**Labor (cont.) and Infrastructure**

We focus on the overlooked and sometimes unpaid labor of “social reproduction,” often done by women. The pandemic has put the spaces in which we provide childcare, eldercare, and education into question. Who works in these spaces, and how have they fought for visibility and labor rights?


*This year we need to decide whether to focus more on (information) technology specifically or infrastructure in general. This is a key moment for US infrastructure decisions. Is infrastructure more than bridges and roads? If we choose to focus on technology, we’ll consider the material structures and actual (non-virtual!) places underpinning the internet and related economic activities.*


Please watch **episodes 2, 3, &4.**
**Week 8 – March 22 and March 25**  
**Finance: Does Wall Street run everything?**  
We consider the functions of finance in organizing the global economy. We explore by way of an exciting (and weirdly humorous) look at the way the financial system melted down in 2008. And what did the COVID pandemic teach this generation about the role of Wall Street?


**Week 9 – March 29 and April 1**  
**Permanent War Economy**  
Though war is sadly far older than capitalism, we’ll learn about the way today’s “military industrial complex” overlaps with our economic system. We’ll also consider whether economic sanctions are an alternative to warfare or not. Where can we find traces of the war economy in our landscape?


**Week 10 – April 5 and April 8**  
**Communism in Theory and Practice**  
Yes, we’ll read parts of the Communist Manifesto. Then we will see how the “big two” – the Soviet Union (USSR) and China – applied some of these principles, for better and for worse. How did they change the geographies of their societies in the process?


**Week 11 – April 12 (SPRING BREAK STARTS ON APRIL 15)**
Communism in Theory and Practice

We journey to places as diverse as Chile, Burkina Faso, the former Yugoslavia, and yes, even the USA (!) to experience very different flavors of communism in action. Did these societies replicate some of the successes while avoiding the mistakes of the “big two,” and why don’t we hear more about them?


Week 12 – April 19 and April 22 SPRING BREAK!

Week 13 – April 26 and April 29

Economic Alternatives

We learn to identify the thousands of activities, institutions, and social movements all around us that challenge elements of the capitalist system, even here in NYC! Are you part of this without realizing it?


Week 14 – May 3 and May 6

Economic Alternatives (cont) and Climate Change – Does it change everything?

Can economic alternatives and solidarity economies operate at a global scale, and do they really need to scale up to make a difference?


Climate change is an existential thread, and “the economy” as we know it must change its focus to avert total disaster. What can we do? What should we do?


Week 15 – May 10 and May 13

Student Choice Topics

Last year’s (2021) class wanted to learn about China’s role in the global economy, plus what happened with Game Stop, which turned the stock market upside down earlier that fall. I did not know much about Game Stop, but I prepared ahead, and we had a lot of fun learning about it together. Sky’s the limit!
Final Exam Date – TBD as per registrar

Learning Activities
Evaluation Activities - Summary

- Class Participation: 35%
- Written Homework: 35%
- Mid-Term Essay: 10%
- Final Essay: 10%
- Reflection journal and presentation: 10%

Learning Activities - Details
Class Participation

Purpose

- Make sure you are following along and understanding the lecture.
- Discuss key texts in depth and apply course concepts to new examples.
- Learn from your classmates’ perspectives.

Description

- During lectures, the instructor will ask questions and so can you.
- During text discussion days, we will work in break-out groups and with the whole class to analyze the assigned text and apply its insights to your own experience or other examples.
  - Some questions will be provided ahead of time.
  - You can suggest discussion questions that interest you or ask for clarifications.

How to do it

- Make all efforts to attend each class.
- Read the assigned discussion texts before the class we’re discussing it in.
- Speak up.
- Listen carefully to your classmates.
- No one will be punished or embarrassed if they do not understand something— we’re here to help each other learn. Let’s always keep that in mind during discussions.

Evaluation

- This component is pass/fail (100 or 0).
  - Everyone who attends and contributes to discussions regularly will receive full credit.
  - Anyone who feels they’re struggling can reach out for help. You will be notified if you’re not on track to get full credit. We can address anything that makes participation difficult.
  - If an emergency, unavoidable change in schedule, or other serious problem makes class participation difficult, reach out as soon as possible.
- The only way to fail (receive zero) is to hardly ever show up and/or hardly ever say anything and/or not respond to attempts to reach/help you.
Written Homework

Purpose
- Consolidate and check for understanding of what you’ve read and heard about in lectures.
- Allow the instructor to see what areas need clarification.
- Let students suggest discussion questions that are interesting to them.

Description & How to do it
- Questions will be located in an assignment portal in each week’s topic folder.
  - Please upload Word or PDF. Not Pages or other formats. I can’t download them.
- Due at 11 pm on the day before class for which text is assigned.
- Expect 4-5 questions.
- Good answers are a few sentences long but not more than a mid-sized paragraph. They show that you have read and tried to understand the text.
- Read the texts to answer – a term that you might hear in daily life could mean something different within the economic geography context.

Evaluation
- This is graded on a 2/1/0 point scale.
  - 2 – you answered all the questions and demonstrated that you’ve read the text; it’s OK if you get some answers wrong as long as there is evidence you have tried reading everything, and as long as you try to implement suggestions for how to improve.
  - 1 – you tried to do the above but you left out a question and/or it is not clear if you’ve read the text(s) completely.
  - 0 – you do not submit anything (remember, you only need to submit 10!), or you show evidence of not reading the text at all, or you get most questions wrong on multiple assignments and do not work with the instructor to fix that.
- You will get feedback on the assignment so that you know how to meet the standard for a 2.
- Only the top eight scores will be used for the final grade.

Mid-Term and Final Essay

Purpose
- Show that you can apply the concept of space/place/spatial process to understand economic systems and activities (midterm essay).
- Show that you can analyze current or historical problems with our economic system and use historical and theoretical knowledge to suggest an improvement or alternative (final essay).
- Take time to think through and demonstrate your own original ideas and positions relative to the concepts, theories, and texts from our class.

Description
- 3-5 page essays
- Must refer to class texts, use citations, and include works cited list.
- You do not have to use sources from outside the class (talk to the instructor if you prefer to).

How to do it
- A prompt and rubric will be available at least two weeks before each essay is due.
- All prompts and portals for submitting work are located in a separate section of our course site (see Blackboard orientation for clarification).
- For your midterm essay, you will have a chance to revise based on feedback from the instructor on your first attempt.
• For your final essay, you can get feedback on drafts or outlines if you get in touch three or more days ahead of the due date, but you cannot revise after submitting final essay.

Evaluation
• A rubric will be given to you ahead of time along with the prompt.
• Standard 100-point grading structure (translatable to A/B/C etc.)
• In case of emergencies, we’ll do our best to work out a schedule. I will not accept essays more than a week after the due date at all unless it’s a documented emergency.

Reflection journal & presentation
Purpose
• Connect class topics to what is going on around you and to your own life.
• Apply economic geography concepts to analyze your own situation.
• Document and discuss how your thinking about economic issues evolves over the semester.

Description
• There are seven short prompts for your reflection journal. They will ask you to reflect on the way you have experienced certain economic concepts or events.
• Write as much or as little as you want – one paragraph/one idea is fine as a minimum.
• At the end of the semester, you will re-read your journal entries and identify the ways that your thinking has remained the same or changed, preparing a short document and presenting your thoughts to the class during the final exam period.
• It is up to you to make this as personal or impersonal as you wish. You are never required to share personal information! You can present your opinion or a discussion of something in general if you do not want to discuss your own direct experience!

How to do it
• This is meant to be a thought exercise, not an exam-style experience. Make it as meaningful and enjoyable as you can, and do not worry about right/wrong answers – there aren’t any.
• The journal entry portals will be located in the same place as the homework assignment portals.
• Upload your work in Word or PDF.
• The final presentation/summary paper materials will be posted at the same time as the final essay prompt.
• Remember – you never have to share personal details that you do not feel comfortable sharing!
  o Example – you can answer any prompt with the level of personal detail comfortable for you. A) write about your own direct experience B) write about what you’ve heard about in your community/school/friends/city/in general C) write about your opinions (link them to something you know/observe, but choose how personal you want to make that).
  o If you feel that you cannot answer a prompt without discussing something you really don’t want to share with the instructor, get in touch – we can reframe that question in a way that works for you.
  o Only the instructor will read your journal entries and final reflection paper; the final presentation of reflections is for the whole class.

Evaluation
• 50% is completion of the seven journal entries and 50% is the reflection paper and presentation at the end of the semester. Grading is based on completeness.
Communication, Etiquette, and “Netiquette”

Communications

I love to hear from you! Ask for help, share ideas and resources, chat about geography and graduate school. Please get in touch!

- Please use your Hunter email address, if you have one, to communicate with me.
- Include “Economic Geography” in your subject line. & Sign with your first and last name.
  - Instructors often receive suspicious phishing, malware, and other harmful emails. We must be careful about the emails we open, so please follow these guidelines.
- I will make all efforts to answer emails within two business days. If you do not hear from me after three business days, please write again.

Netiquette (in case of switch back to online mode)

This applies only if we have to go back to online instruction! During live recorded lectures, small-group discussions, and while posting in discussion boards, let us observe good netiquette to create a smooth, welcoming and above all, a respectful experience.

During class time:

- Whole-class lectures are recorded and posted for people in the class to listen.
- Any break-out discussion groups are not recorded.
- Keep your microphone on mute when not speaking.
- Raise your hand virtually before speaking – click on the “raised hand” button at the bottom of your screen.
  - Don’t forget to lower your hand after being called on.
- If your microphone doesn’t work well, you can use the chat function in place of raising your hand.
  - The chat is not for long side conversations or sharing extraneous information. With twenty students, a stream of chat messages can become distracting. We can pause the class discussion and address questions etc. together instead.
- You are encouraged to turn your camera on when speaking; however, this is never required.

The “course room” is always open on Blackboard Collaborate (except during the final exam slot).

  - It works just like the class time portal, or just like Zoom. A space set aside just for this class to gather, day or night. The instructor doesn’t have to be there to “unlock” it.
  - You can log in together and talk to each other in real time using chat, microphones, and/or video.
  - Use it for group study sessions or other online activities with your classmates.
  - The course room is a whole-class resource; please do not set up meetings from which you exclude any members of the class.
  - If you need total privacy for a conversation with your classmates, please exchange personal contact information, because the “course room” is a space that anyone can enter at any time, like a room with an open door.
• Treat it like an actual classroom – if you wouldn’t want to do something in an empty classroom at Hunter, don’t do it in the virtual course room.

**Policies on grades, academic integrity, harassment**

**Policy on late work, Incomplete (IN), Unofficial Withdrawal (WU) and Credit/No Credit (CR/NC) grades:**

- Extensions to due dates can be given, but I will not accept essays one week after the due date or accept multiple late homework assignments unless you have serious emergencies. It is your responsibility to get in touch as soon as you can or to respond to my emails. If I don’t hear from you, I can’t help you!

- Changes to due dates because of foreseeable events (something that is already scheduled ahead of time, such as a religious holiday) should be discussed ahead of time.

- A final grade of IN (incomplete) will only be given under extraordinary and/or documented circumstances.

- Only students who have regular attendance and have completed ALL course work (including the final essays) will be eligible for a final grade of CR/NC. It is not a substitute for a “zero.”

- Hunter’s/CUNY’s policy on CR/NCR is subject to change semester-to-semester, as you saw in Fall 2020. Pay attention to CUNY and instructor announcements.

- A WU will be given to students who unofficially drop the class – that is, students who simply “disappear” from class, stop completing assignments, and do not get in touch with me before the end of the course. This can have serious consequences for financial aid. Please get in touch if you run into difficulties rather than abandon the course.

**Hunter College Statement 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.

***Please note, copying even a single sentence or phrase directly from another text without providing citations is considered a form of plagiarism. Ask citation questions/ask for help to avoid unintentional plagiarism.***

**ADA Policy (from Office of AccessABILITY)**

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 E 1214B, to secure necessary academic accommodations. For further information and assistance, please call: (212) 772-4857 or (212) 650-3230.

**Hunter College Policy on Sexual Misconduct**

In compliance with the CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Hunter College reaffirms the prohibition of any sexual misconduct, which includes sexual violence, sexual harassment, and gender-based harassment retaliation against students, employees, or visitors, as well as certain intimate relationships. Students who have experienced any form of sexual violence on or off campus (including
CUNY-sponsored trips and events) are entitled to the rights outlined in the Bill of Rights for Hunter College.

a. Sexual Violence: Students are strongly encouraged to immediately report the incident by calling 911, contacting NYPD Special Victims Division Hotline (646-610-7272) or their local police precinct, or contacting the College's Public Safety Office (212-772-4444).

b. All Other Forms of Sexual Misconduct: Students are also encouraged to contact the College’s Title IX Campus Coordinator, Dean John Rose (jtrose@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-650-3262) or Colleen Barry (colleen.barry@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-772-4534) and seek complimentary services through the Counseling and Wellness Services Office, Hunter East 1123. CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct Link: http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/la/Policy-on-Sexual-Misconduct-12-1-14-with-links.pdf