

GEOG 582
Economic Geography
Fall 2006

MWF 11:10 a.m.-12 noon, 104 James Hall
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Office hours: MW 2:15-3:15 p.m.; R 1-2 p.m.

Purpose of the course

This course is intended as an introduction to the geography of economic activity. At a most basic level, economic geography is concerned with understanding where goods and services are produced and consumed, why those patterns develop and change over time, and how those processes shape the character of places and landscapes.

In considering these general questions, we will contemplate why unevenness of development is a fundamental characteristic of the world today. We will examine the factors that are leading to increasing integration of the global economy. We will assess the importance of the local in an age of globalization. We will look at how people produce the food they need to survive, how they turn raw materials into finished products, and how goods and services move from place to place. We will investigate the relationships between economics and the environment, technological innovation and economic dominance, labor costs and industrial location. We will examine the ability of governments to reinforce and reshape geographic patterns. In short, we will try to understand a few of the many ways economics shape geography and geography shapes economics.

The course will be organized into nine sections. After an introductory section that will provide students with an overview of basic patterns, concepts and issues, the remainder of the course will be organized around eight subjects that represent core concerns of economic geography — population dynamics, resources and the environment, agriculture and food production, transportation and communications, cities as economic nodes, manufacturing, services and retail, and international trade.

Current awareness

There is no textbook for this course, but you are required to read daily a major international newspaper, such as the *New York Times* or the *Times* of London (but not *USA Today*), paying particular attention to articles that show the relationship between geography and economics. The UNH Library subscribes to several such newspapers, including several foreign language titles such as *Le Monde*. You can also read a newspaper on the web; a gateway to newspaper web sites is available at <http://newslink.org/>. If you have a reading knowledge of a language other than English or a strong interest in another country, you are encouraged to read a newspaper published in that language or place. You must choose a single paper to monitor throughout the semester and the instructor must approve your choice no later than Wednesday, September 6.

If you read a newspaper online, please make sure you can access most of the paper for free (a few newspapers charge for full access). Some newspapers, such as the *New York Times*, require you to register to access articles on their web sites, but do not require you to pay to view most articles. If you read the newspaper on the web, view the print version of the paper if possible, since newspaper web sites are often filled with breaking wire service stories that are more ephemeral in nature. You are expected to come to class with an awareness of current economic issues of potential geographic significance. You should also

copy or print articles that seem especially germane to the concepts and themes explored in class, or that cover topics that have the potential to impact the world's geographies at a global, regional, or local scale.

Five times during the semester, you will be required to write a short essay about an article or subject of your choice that you encountered in your reading. In that essay, you should briefly summarize the topic, assess its potential economic and geographic significance, and reflect personally on its implications and meaning. Your reflections should not be knee-jerk reactions, but should be reasoned, intelligent and show that you have thought carefully about the subject. Essays must be 300 words or less, word-processed or typed on one side of a single sheet of paper (please no cover sheets, presentation binders, etc.), and double-spaced. Electronic submissions will not be accepted. You will be graded on the appropriateness of your article selection, the insightfulness of your analysis, and the quality of your writing.

Examinations and grading

There will be three exams, each covering one-third of the course. The last exam will be given during the final exam period, but will not be comprehensive and will have the same format and length as the other exams. Exams will include a mixture of identification, short answer, and essay questions. They are intended to measure your general understanding of key course themes, concepts, and issues. Please bring an unmarked blue book to class on the day of exams.

Each of the exams will be worth 25 percent of your semester grade, 75 percent total. The current awareness essays together will be worth 25 percent. Final grades will be assigned based on the traditional scale in which an A represents work of exceptional quality (90 percent or better), a B is considered good (80-89 percent), a C is satisfactory (70-79 percent), a D is poor (60-69 percent), and anything below 60 percent is failing. The instructor may modify that scale downward if the class as a whole performs below expectations. Plus grades will be awarded to any student in the B, C, or D ranges whose semester average is within two percentage points of the minimum score for the next highest letter grade. Minus grades will be awarded to any student in the A, B, C, or D ranges whose semester average is within two percentage points of the next lowest letter grade.

You are also required to complete a personal information card and turn it in no later than September 6. Students who fail to turn in personal information cards on time will have one percentage point deducted from their final grade. Extra credit is not available.

Attendance, missed exams, lateness

Attendance will not be taken, but students are responsible for obtaining notes from classmates for any classes missed. The instructor will not re-teach material or provide notes to individual students. Students are responsible for obtaining information about any announcements made during class periods they miss.

Makeup exams will rarely be permitted and will only be considered when circumstances beyond a student's control prevent them from taking the exam during the scheduled class period. If you think you have a legitimate excuse, you must notify me by e-mail or telephone *before the exam begins*, or, when that is logistically impossible, very soon afterwards on the same day. You must also be able to prove your excuse in writing (doctor's note, towing receipt with time listed, etc.). Conflicts with jobs, other classes, and your personal life are not satisfactory excuses. Exams cannot be taken early for any reason.

Essays turned in after they are due will be docked one letter grade for each school day they are late. Lateness will be excused only when unusual circumstances prevent you from submitting an essay on time. You must notify me *before the assignment is due* and be able to prove your excuse.

Academic honesty

Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated in this course and will be severely punished when discovered. The instructor will review the university's academic honesty policy in class and will provide examples of behavior that would be considered violations of that policy. If you have questions about what constitutes academic misconduct, ask the instructor or see the university's *Students Rights, Rules and Responsibilities* handbook, available at <http://www.unh.edu/student/rights/>

Blackboard

The university's Blackboard computer system (<http://blackboard.unh.edu/>) will serve as the archive for course materials, will provide students access to their grades, and may be used as a method for distributing information between class meetings. I will assume that the e-mail address linked to your Blackboard account is your primary e-mail address and that you check it regularly.

Tentative Schedule

August 28: Introduction to the course

August 30-September 11: Patterns, concepts, issues

September 4: Labor Day; no classes

September 6: Personal information card due

September 13-20: Population dynamics

September 18: Current awareness essay 1 due

September 22-September 29: Resources and the environment

October 2: Exam 1

October 4-13: Agriculture and food production

October 6: Current awareness essay 2 due

October 9: Columbus Day/Fall break; no classes

October 16-23: Transportation and communications

October 25-November 1: Cities as economic nodes

October 25: Current awareness essay 3 due

November 3: Exam 2

November 6-17: Manufacturing

November 10: Veterans Day; no classes

November 15: Current awareness essay 4 due

November 20-29: Services and retail

November 23-24: Thanksgiving break; no classes

December 1-8: International trade

December 6: Current awareness essay 5 due

December 13, 10:30-12:30: Exam 3