

**GGR 221 H1S**  
**New Economic Spaces**

Department of Geography and Planning

University of Toronto

Winter 2017

Wednesdays, 4-6 pm in SS 2102

**Course Instructor**

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**Teaching Assistants\***

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\*Please direct all administrative emails to the Course Instructor

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Throughout this course, we pursue an introduction to the essential geographical concepts central to current debates in economic geography. Once a subfield of human geography devoted to developing mathematical models predicting economic behaviour, since the 1970s 'new economic geography' has studied the dynamics of global economic change. To study this new economic geography, we focus throughout the course on the relationships among key economic actors and key economic processes. We examine global commodity flows to identify and trace the processes entailed in the geographical restructuring of production. Our timeline takes us from the historical origins of capitalism; to imperialism and industrialization; to mass production; to today's 'new economy'. We question what's new in this 'new economy' from the perspective of new economic geography. There is a central focus in all course activities on applying the unique insights of geographers to assess the ways people and places across the world are linked in the production of differential social relations and economic inequalities. By the end of the course, we will have at least a basic foundation for analyzing and interpreting the global economy as geographers.

**COURSE FORMAT & STUDENT CONTRIBUTIONS**

This is a lecture course with required tutorials. Student contributions are in speaking, writing, active listening, and participation in all the course activities. The course format and assignments are designed to enhance critical reading, analysis, writing, discussion, and research skills useful in future university studies and far beyond the classroom.

*There are no pre-requisites for this course;* a background in human geography or macroeconomics could be useful but is not required.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**The most important requirement** for this course, as with any course that grapples with difficult questions about economic inequality and socially constructed difference, is that we approach all readings, class meetings, and especially one another with patient and open minds; a willingness to see from new perspectives; and a commitment to honestly challenging our own assumptions.

**Specifically, some basic ground rules are:**

- Arrive to **every** class on time, prepared, and ready to engage. Be ready to pose questions, share your thoughts, and discuss the material as you are able and inclined to.
- Complete all readings and assignments **before** lecture.
- Bring the course materials with you to **every** class, preferably in hard copy.
- Review this course syllabus each week, and carefully re-read assignment guidelines while preparing and before submitting an assignment. All of the information you need to complete the course is provided in class and on Blackboard.
- Please be aware of the needs of others in the classroom – we are sharing this learning space and can show each other respect by being considerate.
- It is a university policy that **no** defamatory or discriminatory language is tolerated in the classroom. If you are unfamiliar with this, please review the Student Code of Conduct.
- **Think carefully about which uses of technology directly support your learning, and which isolate you or distract others in the classroom.** Electronic multi-tasking detracts from learning outcomes, both for the device users and for those sitting nearby. Laptops/tablets can be powerful tools for learning when used with purpose; cell phones are not necessary in the classroom. If you are managing an urgent personal or work matter, you are always welcome to quietly and momentarily leave the room to use your phone.
- **NO photographs or video recordings are permitted under any circumstances.** Personal audio recordings of lectures require the prior permission of the course instructor; see the course policies below.

## ASSIGNMENTS & EXAM

**ALL** assignments are due, hard copy, **at the start of lecture at 4.10 pm on the due date**. Any assignments submitted after the start of lecture on the due date will be assessed a late penalty (see the course policies below).

**Defining Economic Space (20%):** To practice applying geographers' insights into economic processes, you will write a critical reflection of your experience in a particular place where you performed a specific economic activity in the past week. To do this, you will consider course readings and lecture concepts to interpret and illustrate what you observed in this place. Assignment guidelines will be distributed in class and posted on Blackboard. The first tutorial is devoted to skills required for preparing this assignment. The paper will be no longer than 800 words and is due **8 February**.

**Global Commodity Chain Analysis (40%):** You will choose a **manufactured** consumer product in your household and write a global commodity chain analysis of it. The paper will examine key sites along this commodity's chain, integrating course readings and your own research to support an argument about what the 'life' of this item illustrates about the geography of the global economy. Assignment guidelines will be distributed in class and posted on Blackboard. Two tutorial sessions are devoted to global commodity chain research and analysis skills. The paper will be no more than 2500 words and is due **22 March**.

**Preparation, Participation, and Engagement (10%):** Throughout the term, you will complete a variety of in-class activities in lectures and tutorials. Because engagement can take a variety of forms, you will be offered multiple modes of participation (discussion, writing, small group work, etc.). This component of the course grade is evaluated based on a **combination of the quality and quantity** of your contributions throughout the term.

**Final Exam (30%):** Covers **all** readings and lectures. A review guide including question formats and content to review will be posted to Blackboard before the last lecture. The last tutorial is devoted to exam review. The final exam date, time, and location will be announced by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences later in the term.

## TUTORIALS

There are 4 tutorials for this course. Tutorials are devoted primarily to introducing assignments and practicing skills required to complete assignments, as well as review of course concepts. During tutorials, you will complete in-class activities that form part of the participation component of the final grade. Any preparation for tutorials, if assigned, will be announced in advance on the course Blackboard site.

You **must** register for one of the following tutorial sections. You may **only attend the tutorial you are registered for**. Any exceptions to this require the prior approval of the course instructor.

Tutorial Code	Day/Time	Room	TA
TUT0101	Wednesdays, 3-4 pm	SS 2108	Matt
TUT5101	Wednesdays, 6-7 pm	SS 2108	Adam

## Tutorial Dates & Topics

25 January	Defining Economic Space Assignment
15 February	Introduction to Global Commodity Chain Research
15 March	Global Commodity Chain Analysis Workshop
5 April	Final exam review

## TEACHING ASSISTANTS

In this course, we are lucky to work with a team of teaching assistants whose expertise in economic geography supports your learning.

Matt and Adam are available to you throughout the term to consult on assignments, answer questions, and discuss your interests.

You are warmly welcome – and strongly encouraged – to visit your TA’s office hours regularly, which will be announced in advance on Blackboard.

## COURSE POLICIES

**Accessibility:** The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations, or have any accessibility concerns about the course requirements, the classroom, or the course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: <https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>

**Audio Recording: Only with the prior permission of the course instructor** may you make personal audio recordings of lectures for your own individual use only. Audio recordings permit lecture content review and are not a substitute for attending class. If you are granted permission by the course instructor to make personal audio recordings of lectures, you may **not**, under any circumstances, share or distribute the files in any format through any means. No photographs or video recordings are permitted under any circumstances. **Non-compliance with any of the above policies will be subject to disciplinary action under the Student Code of Conduct.** In accordance with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, students with accessibility needs will be permitted to make audio recordings of lectures.

**Academic Integrity:** You must comply with the university's policies on academic integrity. Please don't plagiarize. As a student at U of T, you are expected to understand and follow these policies: <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/students/students>

**Email Policy:** Please conduct as much course business as possible in person, before and after class and during office hours. Direct all administrative emails to the course instructor. You are encouraged to be in contact with each other and to carefully consult the resources provided to you. **We therefore ask that you limit emails to very short questions for which you cannot otherwise find an answer.**

It is a university policy that **only emails from official UofT email accounts** will be returned; to ensure a response, include the course code (GGR 221) in all subject lines. Usually you can expect an email reply within 2-3 days. Exceptions to this are: weekends and holidays; the day before a deadline; and no questions about assignment marks will be addressed until it has been 24 hours since the marked work was returned in class.

**Absence from class:** This course is designed assuming that all students attend all lectures and tutorials, but attendance 'points' are not recorded. It is your responsibility to obtain and retain all of the course material, including lectures and in-class exercises. It is not possible to participate if you are absent. It is ultimately up to you to determine how to best manage your time. If you encounter any difficulties during the term that will prevent you from regularly attending class, please contact your College Registrar asap.

**Absence from the final exam:** You must file a formal petition with the Faculty of Arts and Science if you miss the final exam for any reason:  
<http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/petitions/common#deferred>

**Submitting Assignments:** ALL assignments must be submitted, hard copy, **at the start of lecture** at 4.10 pm on the due date. Any assignments brought to class after the lecture begins will be considered 1 day late and a penalty of 5% will be applied. Please plan your day to arrive to the classroom well in advance with your completed assignment in hand to avoid any issues. **NO** assignments are accepted via email, under office doors, in tutorials, or during office hours.

**Late Assignments:** can be submitted to the department's dropbox in the main office of the Department of Geography and Planning on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of Sid Smith, Room 5047. Note that assignments are date stamped only at the end of the day on days the main office is open. Assignments submitted to the 'after hours' dropbox outside the main office doors will be date stamped the next day the office is open. This means that any assignments submitted to the dropbox **on or after** the due date will be marked late. Take this into account to avoid further late penalties.

**Penalty for late assignments:** is **5% per day with no work accepted 5 days after a deadline**. Weekends (Saturday and Sunday) count as 1 day for this purpose. Note that the 5% penalty applies after lecture begins on the due date, and additional penalty is applied for each day late thereafter.

**Missed assignment deadlines:** Extensions will be granted sparingly, and only in the case of **documented** illness or personal emergency. For medical reasons, you need an official medical note that clearly excuses you from work or school on the due date: <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca/> In the case of personal emergency, please contact your College Registrar as soon as possible.

**Reviewing assignment marks:** No questions about assignments marks or requests to review marks will be addressed until it has been 24 hours since the marked work was returned in class.

It is a university policy that you have 2 weeks from the day a marked assignment is returned in class to ask questions or to request a review of the assignment. If you wish to have an assignment reviewed, you **must** do the following: carefully re-read the comments and assignment guidelines; send the course instructor a brief (1-2 paragraph) motivation that identifies the substantive assignment requirements that you believe could be re-evaluated; and attach a scanned copy of the marked assignment including all comments to the email. If the request is accepted, there are three possibilities: the mark can stay the same, it can go up, or it can go down.

**Copies of assignments:** It is your responsibility to pick up marked assignments, to maintain digital copies of written assignments, and to retain hard copies of all marked assignments until the final grades are recorded.

## REQUIRED READINGS & LECTURE SCHEDULE

All assigned readings are available as .pdfs on the course Blackboard site.

### **11 January            “All Economics is Geographical”**

Coe, Kelly, & Yeung “Thinking Geographically About the economy”  
Read this course syllabus in full.

### **18 January            Commodities**

Michael Watts “Commodities”  
Kate Evans, *Red Rosa* [Excerpt]

### **25 January            Production**

Richard Walker, “The Geography of Production”  
Alana Semuels, “Upheaval in the Factories of Juarez”

### **1 February            Consumption & Social Reproduction**

Juliana Mansvelt, “Consumption-Reproduction”  
Lourdes Benería, “The Enduring Debate Over Unpaid Labour”

### **8 February            Divisions of Labour & Uneven Development**

David Harvey, “Division of Labour” and “Uneven Geographical Developments and the Production of Space”

### **15 February            Global Commodity Chains**

Prithi Ramamurthy, “Why is Buying a ‘Madras’ Cotton Shirt a Political Act?”  
Carole Cadwalladr, “My week as an Amazon insider”

**\*\* 21-24 February: READING WEEK – NO CLASS**

**1 March                      Waste**

Vinay Gidwani, "Waste/Value"  
Susan Strasser, "A Brief History of Trash"

**8 March                      The 'New' Economy**

Linda McDowell, "Service Employment and the Commoditization of the Body"  
Ian Greer et al "Work Not Play"

**15 March                    States, Governance, and Regulation**

Danny Mackinnon, "Neoliberalism, State Transformation, and Economic Governance"  
Mark Blyth, "The Austerity Delusion"

**22 March                    Financialization**

Susanne Soederberg, "Subprime Housing Goes South"  
David McNally, "The Great Panic of 2008"

**29 March                    Alternative Economies**

Jenny Cameron, "Taking Back Work: Surviving Well"  
Ajowa Nzinga Ifateyo, "A Co-op State of Mind"

**5 April                      Review & Reassessment**

Read the final exam review guide to prepare for tutorial & lecture.

**\*\* Final Exam TBA: 10-28 April \*\***