

Department: Geography

Course No: 200

Credits: 3

Title: Economic Geography

Contact: Alexander Vias

Content Area: CA2-Social Sciences

Catalog Copy: GEOG 200. Economic Geography Either semester. Three credits. Open to sophomores or higher.

Examination of the relationship among economic, cultural, and geographic processes which affect the patterns, structure, and growth or decline of economic activities. The global extent of the agricultural, manufacturing, and service sectors is presented with particular emphasis on the interdependency of non-western and western economies.

Course Information: 1. Course goals, objectives, requirements, themes, issues etc.

a. The goal of GEOG 200 is to develop geographically informed students who know and understand the patterns and networks of economic interdependence on the earth's surface. By the end of this course, students will: have a good knowledge of the perspectives, analytical tools, subject matter, and major concepts of economic geography; and be able to better understand the world by examining selected current issues at the local, national, and international levels.

b. Students are required to complete 3 lengthy take-home exercises that reinforce important analytical skills and concepts in economic geography. All require extensive writing to answer questions about each analysis. Additionally, students are required to regularly hand in 1-2 page write-up on assigned articles from journals. Students also must participate in class discussions of articles pulled from newspapers and magazines on issues relevant to course content. Finally, 2 midterms and 1 final exam feature both multiple choice questions and several essay questions. Readings are from a text, journal articles on Electronic Course Reserve, and newspaper articles posted to the GEOG 200 WebCT site.

Take Home Exercise Topics:

Exercise 1 - "Population Geography for Business"

Exercise 2 - "Agricultural Location Theory"

Exercise 3 - "Regional Specialization and Economic Growth"

c. Important topics include population and natural resource interactions, regional growth and change, the location of industries, and economic development both in the Developed and Developing World. Throughout the course, the significant role of spatial interaction and globalization processes will be emphasized through discussions of contemporary problems like resource destruction, famine, underdevelopment, economic restructuring and unemployment, and regional decline.

General Topics as listed in Syllabus:

Introduction & History of Economic Geography

Population

Natural Resources

Agriculture and Food Resources

Location Principles and Agricultural Land Use

Location of Manufacturing I

Location of Manufacturing II

Location of Services

Urban and Regional Growth

International Trade and Globalization

Meets Goals of Gen Ed: 1. Students develop a good understanding of the basic vocabulary and concepts central to economic geography through a broad introduction to the sub-discipline. The exposure is not only in terms of contemporary views and ideas, but also the development of intellectual thinking in economic geography.

2. GEOG 200 helps students acquire intellectual breadth and versatility by emphasizing the broad overlap in topics between geography, economics and sociology. In all parts of the course, the links between these disciplines are reiterated, along with discussion on the spatial focus that distinguishes geography from these other social sciences.

3. An important component of the course is the evolution of thought in economic geography, and how ideas are constantly re-evaluated and adjusted through the critical analysis of scholarly material. Throughout the presentation of material in class, students are urged to critically evaluate the material presented (through short write-ups on articles and in-class discussion), and to question what is ordinarily given as fact both in class, and in the general media.

4. An important topic touched on, especially as it relates to scholarly inquiry, is the need for ethical behavior by researchers, not only in how they conduct their research, but in how they depict the different peoples and societies who are often the focus of research.

5. Although the course touches on a number of distinct topics in economic geography (regional growth, pollution, location theory), an over-arching theme is how increasing interaction and trade--all part of globalization--are changing economic activity at multiple geographic scales.

6. A natural topic of concern in geography are vast economic differences that exist between the developed and developing world. Besides focusing on the economic and historical reasons for these differences, in this class we explore also more contemporary thinking on the role of cultural differences in the development of such significant gaps in economic development between these groups of countries.

7. Students develop analytical tools through the several exercises that are at the heart of this class. In the first exercise, students are introduced to on-line data and analysis tools that are part of the Census Bureau's American Factfinder. Of special relevance is the exposure to online databases and mapping tools that will be of use for research in other social science classes.

CA2 Criteria: 1. GEOG 200 introduces students to important ideas in contemporary economic geography, including aspects of location theory, globalization, and theories on regional growth and change.

2. GEOG 200 introduces students to methods used in the social sciences. Throughout the course, students learn to: collect economic and demographic data, analyze the data with web-mapping programs, or by using computer spreadsheets. Students also learn to link these analyses with important concepts introduced in lecture. Finally, the integrity of the research process, especially the need for honesty in data gathering and analysis, will be explored.

3. Geography is a natural subject for introducing the interaction of people's around the globe, and the interaction of people with their environment. An important component of the class examines global resources and the role they play in economic growth and development.

4. Central to GEOG 200 is the notion of economic change and globalization, and how these processes produce very uneven effects across space. The creation of differences in terms of economic prosperity between developed and developing nations, and between groups within nations, is examined in several portions of the course.

Role of Grad Students: Graduate assistants attend class, assist in writing and administering tests, photocopy materials for class, and assist with grading. They schedule office hours to provide extra help to students who need it. Graduate students are also introduced to the process of constructing and teaching a college-level course. By the end of the semester, the graduate student will have developed and presented at least one full class lecture in the presence of the primary instructor.