GEOG 221
ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY
Monday/Wednesday 5:35 – 6:50
Hunter North, Room 1028 & Online
Spring 2013

Instructor: Annie Spencer
Office location: Hunter North, Room 1032
Email: aspencer@gc.cuny.edu (Include “GEOG221” in the subject line)
Office hours: By appointment

Brief description/purpose of course: This course serves as an introduction to the study of economic geography. Economic geography, as a subfield of human geography, emphasizes the spatial, social and environmental aspects of economic livelihoods, production, and social reproduction on scales ranging from the household to the nation-state and beyond. The course will examine social and economic processes in an international context and will explore questions of food production, the global supply chain in manufacturing, labor, migration, urbanization, deindustrialization, uneven development, debt and inequality. Geography 101 is a prerequisite for the course, which is a 3-credit course and satisfies GER 3/B.

The course will be taught as an online/in-person hybrid course. The first two sessions of the course will meet in-person in room 1028 of Hunter North. Attendance is mandatory for the eight (8) in-person sessions. The rest of the course will take place in an asynchronous, online format with weekly assignments.

The class will meet at Hunter (North Building, room 1028) on the following dates:

Monday, January 28
Wednesday, January 30
Monday, March 4
Wednesday, March 6
Monday, April 15
Wednesday, April 17
Monday, May 13
Wednesday, May 15

Required textbook: The one required text for the course is:


The text has been ordered through Shakespeare & Co. and can be found online in new and used editions. If you buy online, be sure to buy the (much less expensive) paperback edition.
Supplementary readings will be found on Blackboard unless otherwise specified.

**Course 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.

**Course evaluation:** Students will be evaluated on the following criteria.

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<th>Component</th>
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<td>Class participation</td>
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<td>Midterm exam</td>
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<td>Response papers</td>
<td>30 (3 @ 10 each)</td>
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**Class Preparation and Participation:** Students are required to attend in-person class sessions and be prepared to discuss the readings and any discussion assignments given in the previous class. Readings should be completed before the class period in which they will be discussed. Online class sessions will also include mandatory participation components. Students’ written (online) and spoken (in-person) comments should regularly demonstrate effective class preparation and substantive, thoughtful engagement with the course materials and topics. Students are expected to keep up with online course assignments and to be active participants in online group activities. Attendance and class participation in these activities— in-person and online—will comprise the class participation portion of a student’s grade.

**Midterm Exam:** A timed, 2-hour test on Blackboard. Topics covered will be addressed before the exam.

**Response Papers:** Students will be responsible for three brief (3 - 4 typed page) response papers throughout the course of the semester. These assignments are given in the body of the syllabus in the date on which they are due (September 21, November 9, December 7). If students are unfamiliar with the Opinion Editorial format, examples are available in the New York Times and other major newspapers.

**Final Exam:** Take-home, essay exam; the exam will be handed out during the last class period on May 14. The exam must be turned in in-person during the class’s scheduled exam period as determined by the Hunter College Registrar’s Office, Wednesday, May 22, from 5:20 to 7:20 PM.
Standards for written work: Your written work (the final exam) should conform to the following standards:

- Papers should be typed, double spaced with one-inch margins, using a Times Roman or other similar serifed font. (Courier style fonts are not to be used.) Papers should be stapled in the upper left hand corner. Plastic report covers should not be used.

- Papers should cite sources and use the author-date style of referencing commonly used in the discipline of geography. See a copy of the Annals of the Association of American Geographers for examples.

- Papers should make use of sources from the World Wide Web only when the source is a government agency or other reliable institution, and online version of a print resource (i.e. article databases), or when it is the online source itself that is the subject of the research. See me concerning the appropriateness of using sources from the Web. You should not use Wikipedia or other online encyclopedic references in a college level paper.

Writing help

Students who need help with writing are encouraged to take advantage of the Hunter College Writing center. The Reading/Writing Center is located in Room 416, Thomas Hunter Building.

Drop-in hours and more information can be found here: [http://rwc.hunter.cuny.edu/index.html](http://rwc.hunter.cuny.edu/index.html)

Classroom policies: Participation is 15 percent of the class grade. For in-class sessions, students should not expect to receive full credit for participation if they are habitually absent, late, sleeping, using electronic devices or are otherwise visibly not engaged in or disruptive of the class discussion. For online sessions, students should complete all required assignments in the week that they are assigned. Whether online or in-person, students will be expected to demonstrate that they have read and engaged critically with the week’s readings.

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.

Hunter College Policy on Academic Integrity: 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 assignments/missed exams: If you will not be able to complete an assignment on time, please inform me of this at least one day prior to the due date. Late assignments will ONLY be accepted if a prior arrangement has been made with me and appropriate circumstances warrant
additional time. Late assignments without appropriate circumstance/documentation will be penalized (5 points off per day late).

Students should make every effort not to miss the midterm exam window. If you miss the exam, you must (1) contact me within 48 hours of the missed exam, (2) present acceptable documentation for your absence, and (3) be available for the make-up exam (there will be one make-up exam day held outside of class for those eligible). A make-up exam will cover the same material as the regular exam but will not be the same exam.

**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.

**Disclaimer:** Assignment due dates and readings 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 for staying abreast of any such revisions.

**SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS**

**Monday, January 28:** IN-PERSON CLASS: Introduction and course overview

[no assigned reading]

**Wednesday, January 30:** IN-PERSON CLASS: Conceptual Foundations & Setting the Stage


**Week of February 4:** An Economic Geography Approach to the World Economy

**Readings:**
- Coe, Chapters 1 & 2

**WEEK 2 BLACKBOARD TASKS (to be completed by week’s end):**
1. Watch Narrated PowerPoint Lecture
2. Watch Week 2 Videos
3. Post in Week 2 Discussion Board
Week of February 11: Changing Thought and Practice in Economic Geography

Readings:

WEEK 3 BLACKBOARD TASKS (to be completed by week’s end):
1. Watch Narrated PowerPoint Lecture
2. Post in Week 3 Discussion Board
3. Assignment: Paradigm Shifts in Economic Geography

Week of February 18th+: Uneven Development

Readings:
- Coe, Chapter 3

WEEK 4 BLACKBOARD TASKS (to be completed by week’s end):
1. Watch Narrated PowerPoint Lecture
2. Watch Video Selections in Week 4 BB folder: “Land of Destiny,” others TBD.
3. Post in Week 4 Discussion Board (Assignment: Uneven Development in the News)
4. Fill out confidential feedback form/progress report

*No Classes Monday, February 18.

Week of February 25: Commodity Chains

Readings:
- Coe, Chapter 4
- TBD, on November 2012 Tazreen Factory Fire in Dhaka, Bangladesh
WEEK 5 BLACKBOARD TASKS (to be completed by week’s end):
1. Watch Narrated PowerPoint Lecture
2. Watch Video Selections in Week 5 BB folder: U.S. Saipan, Tazreen Factory Fire, Kenya’s Cut Flower Industry
3. Post in Week 5 Discussion Board
4. Submit Response Paper 1

Response Paper 1: Write about some aspect of uneven development in New York City or elsewhere that has been in the public eye in recent months and explore the nature of the unevenness. What scale(s) does it exist at? What groups of people are involved, and what does the unevenness look like (how is it lived)? What institutions are involved in producing/maintaining the unevenness?

Monday, March 4: IN-PERSON CLASS: Technology and Agglomeration: A “Flat” World?

Readings:
- Coe, Chapter 5

Wednesday, March 6: IN-PERSON CLASS: The Role of the State

- Coe, Chapter 7
- Additional, TBD.

Week of March 11: The Environment & The Transnational Corporation

Readings:
- Coe, Chapters 6 & 8

WEEK 7 BLACKBOARD TASKS (to be completed by week’s end):
1. Watch Narrated PowerPoint Lecture
2. Watch Video Selections in Week 7 BB folder
3. Post in Week 7 Discussion Board
4. Midterm Review Discussion Board—post your clarifying questions for our midterm review.

Week of March 18: MIDTERM REVIEW & MIDTERM EXAM

No Assigned Readings. Beginning the week of March 11, students will have access to a discussion forum on Blackboard that is dedicated to midterm review questions. Students can post their own questions and help fellow students by responding to others, as well as read my responses. In addition,
I will hold SYNCRONOUS, online “office hours” in Blackboard Chat, during our regular class period (5:35 – 6:50 pm) for three sessions:

- Monday, March 11
- Wednesday, March 13
- Monday, March 18

Students are encouraged to log-on during these sessions to ask any clarifying questions about the material covered in our exam. The transcripts from these chat sessions will be posted on the midterm review discussion board.

*The midterm exam will be published on Blackboard on Tuesday, March 19 at 8 am. Once opened, you will have two hours to complete the exam, save it, and submit it. You cannot pause your testing session. The completed test must be submitted (on Blackboard) by Friday, March 22 by 5 pm.*

**WEEK 8 BLACKBOARD TASKS**
1. Post to Review discussion thread and participate in midterm review chat sessions if possible
2. Fill out confidential midterm feedback form/progress report
3. **TAKE THE MIDTERM!** Deadline: Friday, March 22 at 5 pm.

**Week of March 25:** SPRING BREAK

**Week of April 1*: Geographies of Development**

*Readings:*
- Additional, TBD.

**WEEK 9 BLACKBOARD TASKS (to be completed by week’s end):**
1. Watch Narrated PowerPoint Lecture
2. Watch Video Selections in Week 9 BB folder: *The Commanding Heights, Life and Debt*
3. Post in Week 9 Discussion Board

*No Classes Monday, April 1.

**Week of April 8: Economic Geography of the Global Food System**

*Readings:*
• Coalition of Immokolee Workers, “About” page: [http://ciw-online.org/about.html](http://ciw-online.org/about.html)

**WEEK 10 BLACKBOARD TASKS (to be completed by week’s end):**
1. Watch Narrated PowerPoint Lecture
2. Watch Video Selections in Week 10 BB folder: *Food, Inc.*, La Via Campesina
3. Post in Week 10 Discussion Board
4. **Submit Response Paper 2.**

**Response Paper 2:** Choose one issue that interests you with regard to global food and agriculture issues and explore the various factors— institutions, actors, historical events, decisions, motives, logics, and geographic scales—that must be included in any attempt to understand the nature of the issue.

**Monday, April 15:** **IN-PERSON CLASS:** Group Discussion

No new readings. Group discussion will focus on topics covered in the previous weeks’ readings.

**Wednesday, April 17:** **IN-PERSON CLASS:** Financialization & Financial Crises

• “The Giant Pool of Money,” Radio Program. This American Life. 2010. (listen or read transcript)
• Additional, TBD.

**Week of April 22:** Financialization & Financial Crises II

**Readings:**
• TBD

**WEEK 12 BLACKBOARD TASKS (to be completed by week’s end):**
1. Watch Narrated PowerPoint Lecture
2. Watch Video Selections in Week 12 BB folder: *Inside Job*, others TBD
3. Post in Week 12 Discussion Board
Week of April 29: Labor, Laborers, and Laboring in the Global Economy

Readings:
- Coe, Chapter 9

WEEK 13 BLACKBOARD TASKS (to be completed by week’s end):
1. Watch Narrated PowerPoint Lecture
2. Watch Video Selections in Week 13 BB folder: Land of Destiny; Harlin County, USA.
3. Post in Week 13 Discussion Board

Week of May 6: Topographies & Counter-Topographies in Economic Geography

- Coe Chapter 12

WEEK 14 BLACKBOARD TASKS (to be completed by week’s end):
1. Watch Narrated PowerPoint Lecture
2. Watch Video Selections in Week 14 BB folder: TBD.
3. Post in Week 14 Discussion Board
4. Submit Confidential Check-In Report
5. Submit Response Paper 3

Response Paper 3: Pick an economic problem in the news today—at any scale covered in the New York Times—and write a paper discussing how you would go about understanding the nature of the problem better. This is different than being asked to explain the problem. You’re instead thinking about what one would need to consider in order to know how to approach the problem. Write about the various agencies, institutions, actors, motivations, ideologies, and borders involved that make the problem what it is.
**Monday, May 13: IN-PERSON CLASS:** In-Class Discussion: The Economic Geography of Debt

- Additional, TBD.

**Wednesday, May 15: IN-PERSON CLASS:**

No Required Readings. Final exam review & Closing remarks.

**Wednesday, May 22: FINAL EXAM DUE 5:20 to 7:20 PM**