

# Geography 2410: Economic Geography

Spring 2009 Olin Hall #142  
Mon & Wed 10:00a – 11:50a

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**Instructor:** Dr. Eric Boschmann

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**Office hours:** I'm always around, but let me know if you are coming

**Course Description:** From the catalog, this course is described as, “economic elements as spatially arranged, distribution of economic activities on the earth's surface; market, resource and transportation factors in location theory.”

We build upon this description by recognizing the centrality of economic activity in everyday social, political, (and environmental) life – be it global interactions, national economies, regional growth, neighborhood vibrancy, or personal everyday lives. Major topics include: uneven development/ spatial inequalities; global supply chaining; technology, agglomeration and distance; the environment; the role of the state, the firm, and the individual; consumption; and cultural dimensions of economic life. Economic geography tries to make sense of this activity through the lenses of key geographic principles: space, place, and scale. Finally, given the very current discourse regarding ‘sustainability’, this course will attempt to make some sense as to where economic geography might fit into this agenda.

**Course goals:** In this course you will:

1. become knowledgeable of both contemporary and traditional concepts of economic geography, and relate them to real-world observations and/or experiences
2. develop your critical thinking – through class discussion, engagement with reading assignments, and expression through writing assignments
3. develop presentation skills

**General Education at the University of Denver:** This course fulfills the general education requirements of “Ways of Knowing: Scientific Inquiry, Society and Culture”, by meeting these basic objectives:

- Describe the basic principles of human functioning and conduct in social and cultural contexts
- Describe and explain how social science methods are used to understand these underlying principles.

**Textbook:** N. Coe, P. Kelly, and H. Yeung. (2007) *Economic geography: A contemporary introduction*. Blackwell Publishing. ISBN 978-14051-3219-0 (REQUIRED)

(Peter Dicken. *Global Shift* is another useful text, but is not required. The 2003 4<sup>th</sup> edition is on reserve at the library)

**Grades:**

- 33.3% Reading and participation
- 33.3% Short assignments
- 33.3% Project and presentation

**Reading and Participation:**

Participation is expected from everyone. This class will run like a seminar, with mostly discussion and some mini-lectures. Class time is dependant upon everyone having read the assigned material. The reading load is not overwhelming, nor is it dense. Since there are no exams, your mastery of the material will be evidential during our discussion periods.

→ \*For the days when a reading assignment is due, you are expected to send me (via e-mail) your reading reflections and discussion questions.\* *If you are absent*, you are required to submit in writing a more extensive discussion and reflection on the reading assignment (minimum 250 words). ←

### *Short Assignments*

1. **Roger & Me writing response.** Due: Friday, April 3, 4pm.
2. **Reflections on a debate.** Due: Friday, April 17, 4pm.  
Choose: Globalization or international development. Readings will be provided.
3. **Run the numbers.** Due: Friday, May 1, 4pm.
4. **Economic geography and your everyday life.** Due: Friday, May 15, 4pm.

### *Project and presentation: “Commodities, countries, corporations, and cities”*

In this project you will explore the various dimensions of economic geography by researching a single commodity, country, corporation, or city that interests you. For countries (e.g. Paraguay) and cities (e.g. Shanghai), you might explore the changing/evolving economic nature of a particular place. Or, you might trace the geographic expression of some commodity (e.g. bananas, or mail-order DVDs; the Internet; major sports) through history, or a major corporation (e.g. GM or Samsung). Please see me individually to help shape your idea into a project.

- Select a topic you are interested in, and that has sufficient resources.
- Collect numerous resources, and at least two academic journal articles.
- You must relate your topic to key themes / ideas discussed in this class or textbook.
- Dicken (2003) has some examples (auto industry, etc), but yours does not need to be this thorough and all-encompassing... but it gives you some ideas.
- Use visuals. Tables, maps, and images are great communicators; but make sure each visual is highly relevant to your presentation.
- Project updates: (1) Very briefly share your initial idea, verbally in class on **April 1**. (2) Provide a lengthier verbal update – including the problems you are facing, on **April 22**. (3) If you are absent on these dates, you must submit your updates to me in writing.
- Final presentations (~15 minutes) will be made during the last 3 class periods.
- You must also turn in a concise and well-written paper version of the topic you are presenting. This should be 6 – 8 pages long (double spaced; 1 in margins; 12 point font).
- Grading will be based upon the project update, your presentation (including peer evaluation), and the written document.
- The presentation file and paper are due by **Noon on Monday, June 1**. You can hand them in earlier if you like.

The purpose is: a] for you to explore something of particular interest; b] to associate course concepts to the real world; c] for all of us to learn a little bit about many different topics of our everyday economic life. A very good project could evolve into a senior research topic.

## Economic Geography Schedule

Spring 2009

(subject to minor changes)

	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Week 1	3/23 Course introduction	3/25 Film: <i>Roger &amp; Me</i>	
Week 2	3/30 Ch. 1 and 2* (~54 pp.) Navigating geography and the economy	4/1 Discuss: 1. economic sustainability 2. making presentations <i>[initial project ideas are verbally due]</i>	
Week 3	4/6 Ch. 3* (~17 pp.) Uneven Development	4/8 Geographies of inequality READ: Beaverstock et al. 2004	
Week 4	4/13 Ch. 4 & 5* (~63 pp.) Commodity chains, technology, agglomeration, distance	4/15 Ch. 6* (~20 pp.) Economy and environment Case study: Colorado tourism and climate change / pine beetles	
Week 5	4/20 Ch. 7* (~33 pp.) The role of the state and regulating bodies (IMF, World Bank, WTO)	4/22 Project update & TBA	
Week 6	4/27 Ch. 8 and 11* (~51pp.) Global firms / corporations	4/29 Film: <i>The Corporation</i>	
Week 7	5/4 Ch. 9 and 10* (~65 pp.) Labor and Consumption Short film: <i>The story of stuff</i>	5/6 Field trip: <i>The magic of the mall</i>	
Week 8	5/11 Ch. 12 and 13* (~56 pp.) Cultural dimensions of economic geography	TBA	5/13
Week 9	Presentations	Presentations	5/20
Week 10	Memorial Day	Presentations	5/27
Turn in your completed projects no later than: <b>Monday, June 1, by <u>noon</u></b>			

\*on these days, submit your reading comments and discussion points by 9am\*