

GEG 5129

Economic Geographies

Module Handbook 2023/24



Semester B

Module Conveners:
Dr Carlo Inverardi-Ferri
Dr Konstantinos Melachroinos

Lectures: Tuesday 1-3pm – Fogg Lecture Theatre



Updated 09/01/24

Module Introduction

Over the course of more than a century, the concept of ‘the economy’ has shifted considerably from a simple focus on the household as *the* primary economic sphere to the notion that the economy is so all encompassing it can be understood as ‘a thing’ that somehow exists ‘*out there*’ – external to society and culture. Many economic geographers contend that both understandings are erroneous. A primary aim of this 15-credit module, therefore, is to examine how ‘the economy’ is grounded in spatial and social relations. Similarly, the nature of Economic Geography as a discipline has also shifted. For instance, traditionally, Economic Geography tended to be separated from its disciplinary ‘others’ – most specifically, Development Geography – by a sharp intra-disciplinary division of labour, with Economic Geographers largely confining their attention to geographies of ‘the economy’ in the Global North, while Development Geographers sought to understand geographies of ‘development’ in the Global South. While this separation still exists to some extent, it has come under much criticism both from within the field of Economic Geography and beyond, with many pointing toward the notion that *uneven development* is at once a global and local phenomenon. As such, we are seeing divides bridged in ‘newer’ sub-disciplines such as research on global production networks, the new international divisions of labour, evolutionary economic geography, and labour geographies.

The overarching aim of this module, therefore, is to explore the diversity and inequalities of economic development experiences globally, as well as within and between countries. It does so by examining how core economic issues of capital accumulation, valuation, production, exchange, and labour play out in practice with reference to a range of case studies including: labour and work; money and finance; cities and regions; everyday ‘informal’ and ‘hustle’ economies; nature and the environment. In so doing, the module seeks to encourage students to consider:

- **The changing nature of economic geographies over time;**
- **How and why issues of scale, space, place, and nature affect economic geographies across the world; and**
- **How uneven geographies of power shape different parts of the world;**

Importantly, by the end of the module, students will: have developed a critical perspective on theory, practice and policy development; understand the role of scale, space and place in the emergence of economic geographies; have developed a global perspective on issues of uneven development, global production networks, labour, and nature; and have addressed on-going debates around economic crises, clusters and regional systems of innovation, climate change and the geographies of post-recessionary growth.

Key Debates

GEG 5129 offers a broad introduction to some key debates within economic geography. In summary, the module explores:

- What we mean by ‘the economy’ and by economic geography
- The intellectual history of economic geography
- Theories, concepts, and debates in the discipline and beyond
- The geographies of globalisation through global production networks, national systems of innovation and the geographies of work
- The economic geographies of cities and regions
- The role of nature and the environment in economic geographies
- The geographies of economic crisis and financialisation

Module Aims

The overarching aim of GEG5129 is to explore the diversity and inequalities of economic development experiences globally, as well as within countries and among nations. Within this frame, the module has six further aims:

- To critically examine how the ‘economic’ in economic geographies is theorised and why it matters;
- To develop a critically informed understanding of how space, place, scale, and the environment are substantively implicated in ‘economic’ processes;
- To explore how different theoretical and methodological approaches can be used to examine the ‘economic’ and economic geographies in different parts of the world;
- To question how the economy works (and does not work) for different people and places at different scales – asking especially who neoliberal capitalism works for/ privileges and who it marginalises and oppresses;
- To better understand actually existing alternative economic geographies that point beyond capitalist social relations as well as their contradictions and limitations;
- To outline and illustrate some exciting new research streams within Economic Geography that encourage students to engage with research agendas in their own independent geographical investigations, if not beyond into postgraduate research.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of GEG5129 and the relevant reading, students will be able to:

- Provide critical and diverse perspectives on the origins, forms, and effects of various economic geographies in both their material and discursive forms;
- Analyse different economic geographies through a range of theoretical approaches, including Marxist, poststructuralist, feminist and postcolonial;
- Show how different methodological and epistemological approaches have been used to examine economic geographical issues;
- Illustrate how economic theories feed through to policies at global and local scales;
- Develop and defend their own views on the multiple ways in which economic concerns of capital, production, exchange, valuation and consumption, operate within, and impact on, the spatially variable and diverse sets of socio-cultural conventions, norms, attitudes, values and beliefs of societies within which economic decisions and practices take place.

In terms of disciplinary skills, students should be able to demonstrate:

- Critical reading skills
- Critical writing skills
- Critical discussion skills

Finally, on completion of the module and the relevant reading, students should have developed the following attributes:

- A critical perspective on the theory and practice of economic geographies
- An understanding of the role of space, place, scale, nature and the environment in the emergence and reproduction of economic geographies
- A global perspective on issues of uneven development

Lecture Outline

Who: Dr Carlo Inverardi-Ferri and Dr Konstantinos Melachroinos will taught on this module

Where: Lectures will take place in the Fogg Lecture Theatre. Please refer to your timetable.

When: In Semester B, lectures will be on Tuesday, 1-3 pm. Lectures will start promptly, so please ensure that you arrive on time.

Advice and Feedback Hours: Dr Carlo Inverardi Ferri: Tuesdays 3pm-4pm and Wednesdays 11.30am-12.30pm – online and in person. Dr Konstantinos Melachroinos: Mondays: 2pm - 3pm and Wednesdays: 10am – 11am – online and in person. Please email before attending to confirm which format.

WEEK: DATE	LECTURE CONTENT
Week 1: 23/01/24	Introduction: Placing the 'economy'
THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS	
Week 2: 30/01/24	Theories and concepts I: From political economy to economic geographies
Week 3: 06/02/24	Theories and concepts II: Capitalism and the construction of 'difference'
QUANTITATIVE ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY	
Week 4: 13/02/24	Clusters and regional economic development
Week 5: 20/02/24	Regional systems of innovation
Week 6: 27/02/24	Evolutionary economic geography
READING WEEK	
Week 8: 12/03/24	Mock exam
QUALITATIVE ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY	
Week 9: 19/03/24	Global production networks
Week 10: 26/03/24	Labour in the world market
Week 11: 02/04/24	Nature and the environment
Week 12: 09/04/24	Money, finance, and financialisation

Module Assessment and Feedback

This module will be assessed through a **written exam** (100% of overall module mark). This would be a 2-hour and 30-minute exam in which students must answer two questions from a list of seven total questions. The questions will focus on the module's content. In your answers you are expected to engage with the core theories, concepts and debates introduced in class and connect these to case studies of your own choice.

Feedback will focus on the knowledge acquired and the capacity to link different theoretical and empirical elements into coherent and concise answers. Regarding the marks, we will follow the School's marking scheme (for level 4, 5, and 6). However, some criteria might not (or only relatively) apply, for instance, the use of images and visual material.

Marks will remain provisional until confirmed by the **School Examination Board (SEB)** at the end of each academic year. The marking criteria are included in the Undergraduate Guide.

Additional Guidance

QMPLUS

GEG5129 has its own QMPlus site from where you can download lecture hand-outs. As is the School of Geography policy (Teaching and Learning Committee), these will not be distributed in hard copy. Power-point slides for each lecture will be made available for you to download and/or print in advance of each week's lecture. The QMPlus site also provides a 'one-stop-shop' access to important readings to reduce the time you will need to spend searching for material in libraries. Go to <http://qmplus.qmul.ac.uk>

ATTENDANCE

In line with School policy, attendance at lectures will be monitored. If for some exceptional reason you are unable to attend, please let Dr Carlo Inverardi-Ferri (c.inverardi-ferri@qmul.ac.uk) know (preferably in advance). If you do miss a session, please check the module QMPlus site for hand-outs and other module related materials. Genuine reasons for non-attendance will be treated sympathetically.

LECTURE/SEMINAR PREPARATION

For any sessions that require preparation (reading, note taking) please ensure that you have undertaken all work required and that you contribute fully to discussions and other learning activities in class. The weekly Lectures are your opportunity to engage with in-depth learning and knowledge exchange. Please take advantage of this opportunity and add to a vibrant peer-learning environment.

MODULE RELATED MESSAGES AND NOTICES

Important messages will be circulated via QMPlus and to your college email account, so please check these regularly.

CONTACTING THE MODULE CONVENOR

If you require further help and advice, please feel free to contact: Dr Carlo Inverardi-Ferri, Room 109 (in the geography building), c.inverardi-ferri@qmul.ac.uk. If there are substantive elements of the module that you do not fully understand, please come to Advice and Feedback Hours.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

Please let us know if you have any specific learning needs and we will be happy to try to accommodate them. Disability and Dyslexia Service loans digital recorders to students who need this aid. Provided that our permission is sought we will allow students with specific learning difficulties to record the lectures. Please do not make personal recordings of the lectures without our explicit consent.

Reading/Podcast/Video List for Lectures

Reading, listening and watching lists for each lecture are provided in QMPlus. While it is important to take good notes during lectures, it is essential that you read independently rather than simply rely on lecture-notes for your exam. There are a vast number of potential references for the topics covered. Indeed, the amount of literature included here may seem intimidating, **but you are not expected to read it all!** Because of pressure on materials, we have included a list of references, which will often cover similar ground. So if your first-choice reading is not available, you should still be able to find materials from other sources that are relevant to any particular lecture.

At the beginning of each lecture's list, we have assigned one **Essential Reading**. Essential readings are **compulsory** and are the 'backbone' of your exam preparation. Read them carefully and take notes. To prepare for your weekly lectures, it is strongly encouraged that you read a mix of textbook chapters and journal articles. While textbook chapters provide a general overview of concepts and illustrative examples in a more instructive manner, journal articles provide discussions that push research areas forward and introduce or contribute to debates. The readings will be integral to class discussions, which are designed to provide you with a much deeper, more rounded learning experience. Please remember that the quality of your peer-learning environment is something that each and every one of you can affect. Further, *The Dictionary of Human Geography* (5th edition) (Johnston *et al.* (eds.), 2009) is a useful starting point for any reading you do on this course. The book provides details on many of the theoretical concepts that underpin human geography. It also provides invaluable references to works that will both broaden and deepen your understanding of those concepts.

You are also encouraged to draw on relevant material from good quality media sources such as newspapers (on-line or print), news media outlets such as radio and on television, and news magazines. In all cases, try to **think relationally** between current socio-economic issues and their geographies and what you are learning through your readings and weekly lectures (for example, the on-going effects of economic crises – where they are happening; why; the social, political, and economic relations involved; their uneven geographies, etc.).

In reading around the material covered in lectures, you should be *selective* and *critical*: **selective**, because you simply do not have the time to read everything on the reading list; and **critical**, because you may find that there are differences of opinion between the lecturer and the writer of an article, or that you yourself disagree with either the lecturer or an author. Try to keep in your mind as much as possible the relationship of what you are reading to the content of the lectures and the aims of the course. This will help you select and focus on the parts of a book or article that are most relevant to you, as you do not always need to read a whole book to gain some useful understanding from it. Credit will be given for evidence of such independent reading in your exam.

Textbooks

Each week we will select the **Essential Reading** from one of the following textbooks. Most themes are treated in more than one textbook, and we encourage you to explore how different textbooks treat the same topics.

1. Barnes, T. J and Christophers, B. (2018) *Economic Geography: A Critical Introduction*. Wiley Blackwell.
2. Barnes, T.J., Peck, J., and Sheppard, E. (eds.) (2012) *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Economic Geography*. Wiley-Blackwell.
3. Capello, R. (2016) *Regional Economics* (2nd Edition), Routledge, Abingdon Oxon, ISBN: 9781138855885
4. Coe, N.M., Kelly, P.F. and Yeung, H.W.C. (2020) *Economic Geography: A Contemporary Introduction*, 3rd edition. Blackwell.
5. Coe, N.M., Kelly, P.F. and Yeung, H.W.C. (2013) *Economic Geography: A Contemporary Introduction*, 2nd edition. Blackwell.
6. Dicken, P. (2015) *Global Shift: Mapping the Changing Contours of the World Economy*. The Guildford Press.
7. Hudson, R. (2005) *Economic Geographies: circuits, flows and spaces*. Sage Publications.
8. Lee, R., J. Wills (eds.) (1997) *Geographies of Economies*. Wiley.
9. Mackinnon, D., and Cumbers, A. (eds.) (2015) *Introduction to Economic Geography: Globalisation, Uneven Development and Place*. Routledge.

Helpful Supporting Text:

10. Gregory, D., Johnston, R., Pratt, G., Watts, M. and Whatmore, S. (eds) (2009). *The Dictionary of Human Geography* (5th edition). Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Additional Texts:

1. Castree, N., Coe, N., Ward, K., and Samers, M. (eds.) (2003) *Spaces of Work: Global Capitalism and the Geographies of Labour*. Sage.
2. Clark, G.L., Feldman, M.P. and Gertler, M.S. (eds.) (2003) *The Oxford Handbook of Economic Geography*. Oxford University Press.
3. Clark, G.L., Feldman, M.P., Gertler, M.S., & Wójcik, D. (eds.) (2018) *The new Oxford handbook of economic geography* Oxford University Press.
4. Leyshon, A., Lee, R. and Williams, C.C. (2003) *Alternative Economic Spaces*. Sage.
5. Sokol, M. (2011) *Economic Geographies of Globalisation: A Short Introduction*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Key Academic Journals

- Economic Geography
- Journal of Economic Geography
- Progress in Human Geography
- Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie
- Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers
- European Planning Studies
- Regional Studies
- Environment & Planning A
- Urban Studies
- Territory, Politics, Governance