Economic Development: Firms, Industries, and Regions

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed for students interested in the theories and realities of urban and regional economic development. The course incorporates lectures on key concepts in economic geography (including agglomeration economies; location theory, and models of urban development) that are critical to understanding city-regions as sources of economic development.

The course will operate as a cross between a lecture course and seminar and incorporate some field experience and guest speakers.

The course focuses on the United States, recognizing that economic development practice is embedded in national political economic institutions. However, while US focused, the course materials have implications for sub-national regions in other nations. We will examine the rationale for undertaking economic development programs, commonly used tools in such efforts, including finance, and some of the major strategic issues confronting ED policy-makers.

Learning Objectives:

Critical thinking – through assignments that encourage comparison
Writing/ Oral Communication – ability to write a memo; ability to write a policy brief
Quantitative Methods to analyze regional industrial strengths (LQs and shift share) and investment impact (input/output analysis)
How to do a regional strategic economic development plan
Strategies for financing economic development projects Learning Objectives
Decision making methods
Concepts underlying social justice, governance and participation
COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

This course will consist of a series of lecture/discussions, field visits and guest speakers. The course grade will be determined on the following basis: 1) performance on and quality of discussion questions for the readings each week; 2) a 2-3 page policy brief on an economic development issue, due Friday May 13; 3) class participation.

There will be no incompletes in this course. Final grades will be posted based on work turned in. Obviously, missing work will affect your grade.

PLEASE DO NOT SUBMIT DISCUSSION QUESTIONS OR PAPERS BY EMAIL. Papers and exams should be posted on the BB site. Further instructions will be provided.

Special Dates

Special lectures: TBA

Honor Code and Citations

In this course, students are expected to turn in original work. As such, all assignments should properly cite the work of others (this includes work gleaned from electronic sources as well as books and articles). Please refer to a style guide for details on citations. Please review the university’s honor code: http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html.

Course Reading:

Reading for each topic is available on Blackboard. Please make sure you have a Blackboard account.

The core reading for the course will come from a classic text: *Global Shift, Mapping the Contours of the World Economy* by Peter Dicken. We will use the seventh edition of the book (2015). Global Shift is available from Buffalo Street Books in downtown Ithaca. It will also be on reserve in The Fine Arts library.

An additional text used throughout the course is also on library reserve

Also Recommended:


COURSE SCHEDULE

Part I: Introduction: A Framework for Thinking about Economic Development and Basic Concepts

**Introduction to the course**

**February 1: What is economic development?**
*Christopherson and Wissoker*

Introduction to the course -- course resources, blackboard sign-up, survey; policy memo assignment. No posts on reading will be required for this week. You can weigh in on first week's readings in the second week, if you wish.

How is ED defined: By economists? By practitioners? By planners? By regionalists? What are the different ways it is measured? A basic definition: economic development is defined as the process that influences the growth and restructuring of an economy to enhance the well-being of a community.

Reading:


Dicken: pp 1-6 “What in the World is Going On”

Recommended:

**Part 1: How Do Global Changes Create the Context for Economic Development Options?**

**February 8: Processes of Global Shift: Unraveling Complexity; Technological Change**
*Christopherson*

How should we understand technological change? How do technological changes affect innovation?

Reading: Dicken: pp 48-106.
Discussion of technology and intellectual property-based strategies for economic development as preparation for visit to Cornell Innovation Center in Ithaca later in semester.

Recommended readings on technological innovation and job creation

February 15: February break holiday

February 22: Transnational Corporations and the State
Christopherson

Why does economic development policy differ among countries? What are the key trends affecting the location of production and research and development location? Is ED policy converging around a U.S. model? Why is economic development different in the US and Canada? What are the limits to a “flat world”?

Reading:
Dicken: pp 114-207

Recommended:


February 29: Winning and Losing in the Global Economy: Processes of Uneven Development
Christopherson

Reading:

Dicken, pp 227-258. TNCs and Global Production Networks

Recommended:


Part 2: Key Theories at the Regional Scale

March 7: Regional Theories-1--Clusters and Agglomeration
Wisssoker

Reading:


Blair and Carroll, Chapter 4, “Economic Interdependence and Local Structure,” pp 71-87.

Perry, Chapter 4, “Learning Regions,” pp. 79-107

Perry, Chapter 5, “Enterprise Clusters and Regional Specialization,” pp. 108-133

March 14: Regional Theories-2--Models of Growth (and the lack of it)
Wisssoker
Reading:

Blair and Carroll, Chapter 5, “Regional Growth and Development,” pp 89 -112.

Perry, Chapter 2, “Regional Competitiveness and Local Economic Development,” pp. 18-50


Giloth, “The Opportunity Challenge: Jobs and Economic Growth”—manuscript

March 21: Public Data Workshop Mann library
Tom Ottaviano

March 28: Spring Break

Part 3: Practitioner Policy tools

April 4: Tourism as an Economic Development Strategy: How Do you Make it Work?
Guest Speaker Tom Knipe

April 11:
Universities and Economic Development
Tom Schryver

Field trip to downtown Ithaca incubator

April 18: What Role Do Government Subsidies Play in Economic Development Practice?
Case: The Trebloc Site in Downtown Ithaca

Reading:


How Brazil's Olympic Dreams Turned into a Nightmare. Available at: http://thinkprogress.org/sports/2013/07/02/2236331/brazil-world-cup-olympics-economic-nightmare/

Recommended:


Resources: www.goodjobsfirst.org/

April 25: What Do Economic Development Planners Do and What Can They Do? Wissoker

Leigh and Blakely, Chapter 4, “The Local Economic Development Profession and Professionals,” pp. 99-112


Chapple, Karen, Chapter 4, “Planning for Jobs--and life,” pp. 94-112


May 2: New Developments in Company Strategies
Changing location calculations: Why are manufacturing firms reassessing their global location strategies? Are there new prospects for old industrial cities?

Christopherson

Reading:


May 9: How can citizens influence economic development policy? What did you learn from research on your policy brief?

Christopherson and Wisokker

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Appendix 1: Preparing Discussion Questions

Preparing Discussion Questions

Purpose
The “Weekly Discussion Questions” assignment is designed to:
encourage you to synthesize ideas from the readings,
help you keep the material is fresh for class discussion, and
stimulate discussion so we can learn more from our interaction with one another than an individual would learn from reading the article alone. (Its also more fun.)

Questions should be thought provoking, intended to get people interested in talking. Look for potential controversies or assumptions in the article, chapter or lecture that may be contentious or unexpected. Even articles that simply present data can be the subject of discussion if the data contravenes the conventional wisdom.

General advice for posing discussion questions
Start with something in the reading that interests/intrigues you, confuses you, or that you find controversial. Try and draw connections between readings and/or class discussions to bring out larger themes. Once you decide what to ask, contextualize it within a few sentences that explain the part of the article or lecture that you are referring to. This will serve as a lead-in, and help the reader understand why you are asking the question.

**Ideas about types of questions to ask**

1. **Analysis** – Asking “why,” “what is the meaning of...,” “Does this author’s argument adequately address...”

2. **Compare and contrast** – “What is the difference between...,” “How does this author’s view on ___ compare with this author’s writing on ___, and whose view is more compelling?”

3. **Cause and effect** – “What connection is there between...,” “What factors might lead to...” “Has ___ influenced ___?”

4. **Applicability** – “How might this theory/concept be applied?” “What evidence do we see of this theory in the daily practice of ___?”

5. **Clarification** – “What is meant by...,” “Explain how...” (This is a good technique for exploring how different terms or concepts are interpreted by different writers and practitioners.)

6. **Context** – “How does ___ relate to broader questions about ____?”

**Questions of purpose encourage us to examine the author’s goals.**

**Questions of information encourage us to look at sources of information as well as at the quality of information.**

**Questions of interpretation encourage us to examine how information is organized and given meaning.**

**Questions of assumption encourage us to examine what the author is taking for granted.**

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Questions of implication encourage us to follow out where the author’s thinking is leading.

Questions of point of view encourage examination of the author or lecturer’s point of view and consideration of other relevant points of view.

Questions of relevance encourage us to discriminate what does and what does not bear on a question.

Questions of accuracy encourage us to evaluate and test for truth and correctness.

Questions of precision encourage us to look for critical details and specificity.

Questions of consistency encourage us to examine the author or lecturer’s thinking for contradictions.

Questions of logic encourage us to consider how the author or lecturer’s argument or analysis holds together, how it adds up and makes sense within a reasonable system.

Appendix 2

ADDITIONAL READING AND RESOURCES

This reading list is intended primarily for those who want to deepen their knowledge of the subject.

Books on Reserve in the Fine Arts Library, which you may want to consult:


