

ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY (GEOG/ES 311)

Tentative Syllabus

Spring 2014: Wednesdays 5:00 pm – 8:20 pm, Sage 4212

Instructor: Dr. Elizabeth Barron; Sage 4451; 424-7115; barrone@uwosh.edu

Office Hours: 11:30 am – 1:00 pm Tuesdays and Thursdays or by appointment

Text and materials: (1) *REQ:* Gibson-Graham, J. Cameron, and S. Healy, 2013. *Take Back the Economy: An ethical guide for transforming our communities*. Minneapolis: University of MN Press. 222 pp. (2) Schumacher, E.F. 1973. *Small is Beautiful*. London: Blond and Briggs. 1989 edition. 324 pp. (3) All other readings will be posted on D2L. (4) Please also purchase a 1.5" 3-ring binder, to be filled with blank and lined paper.

Course Description: This class starts with the proposition that how we think about economy is a key to understanding social engagement across space and through time, with direct impacts on sustainable ways of living in the environment and with each other. Our goal is to explore how thinking differently about economies- how (and how much) we work, how we organize production, exchange goods and services, own and care for things, and finance the future-- might allow us to enact new ways of being together and relating to our surroundings.

The course is divided into three sections. In the first section, we review major economic systems (capitalism, Marxism etc.) and fundamentals of economic geography like production and exchange. In the second part of the course we will spend considerable time with *Take Back the Economy, Any Time, Any Place: An Ethical Guide for Transforming Communities*. Each chapter of this book looks at a different dimension of economic space: work, economic organization, exchange, tenure (ownership), and finance. We examine how these facets of the economic landscape are understood and then work through conceptual exercises that reframe this understanding in relation to ethical choices we might make as communities: choices to redefine our working lives or the way we exchanges things, for example, that might have implications for our own wellbeing and the wellbeing of ecologies at a variety of scales. At the course's conclusion we explore in more detail a few examples of communities attempting to reshape their economies (our own?) and environments with a mind towards sustainability and other ethical ends, and we will spend time on our collective semester long project: locating the diverse economy in Oshkosh, WI.

A special caveat from Stephen Healy: This class aims at demystifying beliefs about "the economy" in order enliven conversation about what it means to be in community and what it means for communities to be sustainable. Some people imagine that discussions of economy involve primarily technical and quantitative representation rather than ethical deliberation, mathematical formulas rather than self-reflection. Many of us hold deeply held beliefs about what an economy is, what counts as economics and even who is in a position to speak about the economy with authority. Some people are terrified of the economy; many economists like it that way. This obscurantism allows them to pretend that there is nothing ethical at stake in the realm of economy--that rather than choice there is only "preference" when there is not

necessity. As a society we have been complicit in installing some economists as technocrats. Some of them we have regarded as oracles and continue to do so--even after they've admitted they were wrong (Alan Greenspan comes to mind here). The ongoing global economic crisis seems like a portentous time to call all of that into question.

Course Goals: This course is designed to broaden your understanding of economic geography by:

1. *Providing* the tools for you to identify, understand, and apply multiple concepts of the economy and economic thought.
2. *Developing* your capacity to understand economic *processes* individually and how they relate to each other in space and time.
3. *Practicing* and *further refining* your oral communication skills through regular class discussions.
4. *Further developing* your critical thinking skills through regular course participation and assignments.
5. *Practicing* and *further refining* your written analytical skills through structured writing assignments.

Course Outcomes: By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. *Synthesize and apply principles from economic geography* to current events and research.
2. *Critically discuss a range of economic issues* in traditional and novel language, highlighting the political economic and ecological complexity of these issues and the ways these issues are problematized.
3. *Critically evaluate* normative explanations of economic systems, conflicts and problems, assessing who benefits and who does not from these forms of explanation.
4. *Generate clear and thoughtful analytical social science commentary* in the form of dialogue and writing of various lengths.

Course Requirements and Grades: Below is a general guideline for how I think about grades:

- A: Demonstrated excellence in comprehension and ability to articulate an informed perspective through the use of critical thinking and analysis. Includes reference to additional material, abstract concepts, or shows cumulative learning.
- B: Clear understanding of material and time spent engaging with subject matter and task. Or, some confusion, but demonstrated attempt at understanding, abstraction, and engaging with challenging topics.
- C: Sufficient completion of assigned work, but with little or no attention to detail, effort to excel, or investment in outcome.
- D: Insufficient completion of assigned work due to lack of attention to detail, lack of following instructions, lack of effort, lack of comprehension.
- F: Obvious lack of effort or ability to follow directions. Incomplete or absent assignment.

Your grade in this course will be calculated based on the following:

<u>Task</u>	<u>Points</u>
Attendance and Participation/pop quizzes	100
Quizzes (2 @ 50 points each)	100
Exam	100
Reflexive journals (inc. five essays, four activities)	400
<u>Diverse Economies of Oshkosh Collective Project</u>	<u>100</u>
TOTAL	800

Final Grade Ranges: A 800-750; A- 749-720; B+ 719-696; B 695-672; B- 671-640; C+ 639-616; C 615-590; C- 589-560; D 559-480; F 479-0

Attendance and Participation: In most cases I will provide some introductory material and a few questions for consideration, but you are expected to arrive to class prepared. **Being prepared means that you: 1) carefully read the assigned material, 2) come to class with a copy of the reading containing your notes, and 3) bring a set of questions for discussion. If I think that the majority of the class is not properly prepared, I reserve the right to give pop quizzes on the assigned readings.** Students will be evaluated in terms of how they engage with both material presented in class and with one another. Students will be expected to make arguments in relation to topics, expressing and defending their opinions in a courteous manner. Bottom line: I expect students to show up and participate in discussion. I will be looking for questions, comments, and attentive listening.

Quizzes and Exam: While the goals of this class are centered on intellectual engagement and development of new thoughts, there are just some things that you have to learn. So, there will be two quizzes and one exam during the course of the semester to “motivate” you to get these ideas down. These will be definitions, short answer and essay question based, and *cumulative in nature*.

Reflexive Journals: A major goal of this class is to destabilize your assumptions and expectations about what you know about the economy, and to give you a new language and an alternative framing that enables you to place yourself and your own experiences in a different economic context. The course provides the material and the tools, but you have to do the thinking and the work, and that is essentially the purpose of the reflexive journal. Over the course of the semester, you will write, draw, and diagram your way through your own thoughts about the economy, economic systems, and yourself as an economic subject. Some basic guidelines for your journal: (1) Once you have created something in your journal, you may not revise or amend it. You may do it again, and if you do multiple versions of something you are welcome to include them all in your journal (within reason). (2) The journal format is somewhat flexible, but everything needs to be legible, able to be handed in individually AND together, and fit within course guidelines. **(3) Your goal in creating your journal should be to meld careful and thoughtful engagement with the course material with personal reflection and thought. In other words, writing that contains no personal reflection or voice is not appropriate, and neither is writing that has no reference to the readings, concepts, and vocabulary of the**

course. We will review and discuss early on in the semester to enable everyone to become comfortable with this format.

Diverse Economies of Oshkosh project: Since this is the first semester that this course is being taught at UWO; we have the special, collective task of finding the diverse economy in Oshkosh. How we accomplish this is something we will collectively decide and engage with throughout the semester.

Course Expectations: This is a 300-level course and I expect that you will handle yourself accordingly (e.g., come to class on-time; make a serious effort to engage readings, discussions, and assignments; and treat your fellow students with respect and tolerance). This is a demanding class and I have high expectations for your participation. You should plan to spend a minimum of 2 – 3 hours outside of class for every hour in the classroom. If you are struggling with the material or the assignments, please come see me. Part of my job is to help you learn new material and new skills.

Academic Honesty – Plagiarism, cheating, stealing, or lying will not be tolerated in this class. Handing in someone else’s work is plagiarism. I take these subjects very seriously and will take all available measures to address suspected incidents of any of these. If you do not know what constitutes cheating, plagiarism, stealing, or lying, please see the college’s website (www.uwosh.edu/dean/conduct.htm) or ask me. Committing any of these acts in this class will result in you failing the class and referral to the Dean’s office for further disciplinary action, which is defined in UWS 14.03, Wisconsin Administrative Code. Students on the UW Oshkosh campus have been suspended from the University for academic misconduct.

Late Work – Assignments may be turned in late only if there is a legitimate reason. Should something happen to preclude you from turning in an assignment, you should contact me immediately (email). All late assignments will be penalized five percentage points off the total grade for every day it is late (i.e. a paper handed in two days late that would have earned a student an 80% will earn that student 70%).

Courtesy and Tolerance – This class is about ideas and their application to the broad topic of economy. As the course progresses, you are likely to discover that you disagree with the authors you are reading, me, and/or your fellow students. I strongly believe that disagreements are the potential sources of new insights and new knowledge, but only when the discussions about these disagreements focus on the ideas involved and the evidence that is presented to support them. I expect discussions in this class to speak to these ideas and the strength of evidence, not target specific people.

Special Circumstances – UWO is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. Students with disabilities should contact Disability Services (424-3100 (voice) or 424-1319 (TTY)) or visit their web site at <http://www.uwosh.edu/dean/disabilities.htm> for the University’s accommodation request form and documentation requirements as soon as possible to discuss academic accommodations and/or services. If you have any kind of special circumstances that I should know about, including any kind of diagnosed or undiagnosed disability or you are an athlete competing on a college team, please tell me right away. Sharing this information with me will allow me to create a suitable learning environment for you and further facilitate your academic success. All information will be kept strictly confidential.

Tentative Schedule

All course deadlines and test dates are listed here and on the course calendar on D2L. **You are responsible** for meeting deadlines and knowing dates for tests and quizzes, whether I remind you in class or not. If we experience changes to the schedule because of snow days or other circumstances, I will revise the calendar on D2L, and try to make announcements in class so that you can revise your own copy of the syllabus and your schedule accordingly. If you are not present in class when this happens, it is **your responsibility** to obtain the updated information. It is not excusable to say you missed it.

This course meets once a week for three hours and twenty minutes. This is a long time to think and talk intensively about economic geography, especially at the end of the day. To make the most of it, and in keeping with the ethos of this course, most weeks we will follow this general time structure:

5:00 pm – 6:00 pm: Lecture and discussion of week's readings

6:00 pm – 6:45 pm: Dinner and open discussion, guided by reflective journal materials. **Please bring your own dinner. As a form of practicing diverse economies and community, you are welcome to bring food to share with your classmates.**

6:45 pm – 7:45 pm: Early on may be additional lecturing. Generally, active work time: exercises, group work, in-class writing etc. and clarification and review as needed.

7:45 pm – 8:20 pm: Review and prep for next week

February 5: What is economic geography?

DUE: Bring a copy of the syllabus and required texts to class

Readings:

1. Sheppard, E., T.J. Barnes, J. Peck and A. Tickell. 2008. Introduction: Reading Economic Geography. *In: Reading Economic Geography*. Sheppard, E., T.J. Barnes, J. Peck and A. Tickell, (eds.) London: Wiley. 1-9.

Activities: Review of syllabus course goals and format. Discussion of “community” and “economy” topics; introductions and interests. Reading and discussion of above article, which we will read in-class. In class writing: What is economy? (learning and practicing reflexive journaling). Watch RSA Animate – “Crisis of Capitalism”; “Adam Smith: The Wealth of Nations”

February 12: Production, Exchange, and the ISMs of Theoretical Framing

DUE: First Journal Entry: *How are you an economic subject?* How do you fit into the economy? What parts of your life do you see as economic, and what parts do you see distinctly outside an economic frame? Are you satisfied with this arrangement? What might you like to see change? (500 words)

Readings:

1. Ch. 16: Lee, R. “Production” in *Introducing Human Geographies*, Cloke, P, P. Crang, and M. Goodwin (eds), London: Routledge, pp.223-243.
2. Schumacher: Preface, Introduction and chapters I.1-I.3 (ix-xxiii, 1-55)
3. TBTE Introduction and chapter 1 (xiii – xxiii, 1-17).

Activities: Lecture and discussion: (Post)positivism, (Post)modernism, (Post)structuralism; work through discussion questions in Lee, p. 241. Begin watching “Marx Reloaded”

February 19: Economy, Space, and the ISMs of Theoretical Framing (2)

DUE: Quiz (includes material from 2/5, 2/12, and 2/19)

Readings:

1. Schumacher: Chapters I.4-II.1 56-107.
2. Harvey, D. 2008. The Difference a Generation Makes. *in: Reading Economic Geography*. Sheppard, E., T.J. Barnes, J. Peck and A. Tickell, (eds.) London: Wiley. Pp. 19-28.

- Walker, R.A. 2008. Is There a Service Economy? The Changing Capitalist Division of Labor. *in: Reading Economic Geography*. Sheppard, E., T.J. Barnes, J. Peck and A. Tickell, (eds.) London: Wiley. Pp. 97-110.
- OPT (but highly recommended) Listen to: David Harvey – Reading Marx’s Capital (audio), Class 01 – Introduction (This is an overview of the course and introduction to Marx’s Capital). About 2 hours long.

Activities: Capitalism, Socialism, Marxism, Oh my! Lecture and Discussion; finish “Marx Reloaded.”

February 26: Taking Back Work: Surviving well

DUE: Second Journal Entry: Answer *at least* question 1 on p. 47 (500 words), read through and think about 2-4. You will be using the material you generate here to do exercises in class.

Readings:

- TBTE pp. 17-48
- Schumacher part III: The Third World, pp. 173-236
- Garson, Barbara. 2013. “How to Become a Part-Time Worker Without Really Trying.” <http://www.tomdispatch.com>

Activities: 24-hr clocks, well-being score card, well balance scales: actual and projected.

March 5: Exam 1

DUE: Exam 1

Readings: All lecture, activities, and readings are fair game for the exam.

Activities: Exam, dinner, movie: “The Gleaners and I”

March 12: Resources

DUE: Readings only.

Readings:

- Schumacher: II.2 – II.5 but NOT ii.4. (108-141 and 155-169)
- Cameron et al. 2014. Researching Diverse Food Initiatives: From Backyard and Community Gardens to International Markets. *Local Environment: The International Journal of Justice and Sustainability* 19:1, 1-9, DOI: 10.1080/13549839.2013.835096
- Jenny Cameron, Katherine Gibson & Ann Hill. 2014. Cultivating hybrid collectives: research methods for enacting community food economies in Australia and the Philippines. *Local Environment: The International Journal of Justice and Sustainability*, 19:1, 118-132, DOI: 10.1080/13549839.2013.855892

Activities: Discussion. Watch Good Food Better Quality (3:07) to prep for next week

March 19: Taking back business: New ways to think about surplus

DUE: Third Journal Entry: Start working on questions on pp 81-82

Readings:

- TBTE pp. 49-84
- Ch. 18: Goss, J. “Consumption Geographies” *in: Introducing Human Geographies*, Cloke, P, P. Crang, and M. Goodwin (eds), London: Routledge, pp.253-266.
- Poke around Woodman’s website, esp. history section: <http://www.woodmans-food.com/>
- Check out and read <http://oshkoshfoodcoop.com/>

Activities: Guest speakers from Woodman’s and Oshkosh food cooperative. Start a people’s account of Woodman’s and Oshkosh food co-op.

March 26: SPRING BREAK

April 2: Taking back business week 2

DUE: Fourth Journal Entry: Questions on pp. 81-82 of TBTE (750 words)

Readings:

1. Go to www.communityeconomies.org and review this website in detail. There is much to download and read. Find an article you are interested in there, read it, and come prepared to present it to your classmates.
2. Gibson-Graham, J.K. and Roelvink, G. 2010, The Nitty Gritty of Creating Alternative Economies, *Social Alternatives*, Volume 30, Number 1, 2011, pp. 29-33.
3. TBA.

Activities: Finish “A people’s account of Woodman’s and Oshkosh food co-op.” Start to strategize/create Diverse Economy of Oshkosh project

April 9: NO CLASS. AAG WEEK

Activities: Work on Diverse Economy of Oshkosh project

April 16: Take Back the Market: Encountering others

DUE: Do a “where from?” inventory of your kitchen or your closet.

Readings:

1. Readings: TBTE pp. 85-124;
2. Wright, M. W. 2008. The Politics of Relocation: Gender, Nationality, and Value in a Mexican Maquiladora, in: *Reading Economic Geography*. Sheppard, E., T.J. Barnes, J. Peck and A. Tickell, (eds.) London: Wiley. Pp 151 - 165.
3. Fried, G. and R.D. Wolff. 1994. Modern Ancients: Self-employed Truckers. *Rethinking Marxism*. 7(4):103-115.

Activities: Lecture on markets; we will continue the exercises in this chapter, share and discuss.

April 23: Take Back Property: Commoning

DUE: Create a Commons Yardstick for public space in or near your home town, for inclusion in your reflexive journal.

Readings:

1. TBTE pp. 125-158;
2. Barron, E. *forthcoming*, Situating Wild Product Gathering in a Diverse Economy: Negotiating Ethical Interactions with Natural Resources
3. Alper, J. 1993. Protecting the Environment with the Power of the Market. *Science*. 260: 1884-1885.

Activities: Lecture and discussion. Possible gleaning field trip.

April 30: Take Back Finance: Investing in Futures

DUE: QUIZ 2

Readings:

1. TBTE pp. 159-188 and conclusion 189-198.
2. Ch. 17: Tickell, A. “Money and Finance” in *Introducing Human Geographies*, Cloke, P, P. Crang, and M. Goodwin (eds), London: Routledge, pp.244-252.

Activities: Watch “The Mondragon Experiment”

May 7: Take Back Finance Week 2: focus on cooperatives

DUE: Fifth Journal Entry: Answer in some form, questions 1-5 on pp 187-188 (500 words)

Readings:

1. Luviene, N., A. Stitley and L. Hoyt. 2010. "Sustainable Economic Democracy: Worker Cooperatives for the 21st Century" *MIT COLAB* (available online at http://web.mit.edu/colab/pdf/papers/Sustainable_Economic_Democracy.pdf)
2. Read through the Evergreen website: www.evergreencooperatives.com. Pick one document from their documents section to read and share with the class. Check out especially: "The Financing of Evergreen." (available on line at <http://evergreencooperatives.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Evergreen-1.040-Financing.pdf>)

Activities: Working through questions on 187-188; Guest speakers from Oshkosh Cooperative and others; watch evergreen video.

May 14: Pulling Things Together**DUE: Reflective Journals. Diverse Economy in Oshkosh project**

Readings: None.

Activities: Final discussion of reflective journals; collective dinner; go through findings from DEO project