



## **GEO 3502: Economic Geography**

University of Florida - Department of Geography

Fall 2023

Credits: 3; Prereq: none

Class Number: 13114

This course is offered in person on Tuesday from 9:35-10:25 AM (Little Hall 201)  
and on Thursday from 9:35-11:30 AM (MAEB 211)

Updated: 8/18/2023

### **Instructor**

Dr. Olivier J. Walther, Department of Geography, 3131 Turlington Hall, [owalther@ufl.edu](mailto:owalther@ufl.edu).  
Office hours: Tuesday 10:40 AM – 2:00 PM or by appointment.

### **Overview**

The world is becoming increasingly connected. Yet, the benefits of globalization have not been shared equally across the regions. What makes regions competitive? Why are some cities more innovative than others? How do borders affect human flows and ideas?

The aim of this course is to study the spatial causes and consequences of uneven development. The course provides a general introduction to economic geography, a science that examines how societies, firms and states make use of space through their economic activities.

The course first discusses the concepts developed in economic geography to understand uneven economic development across the world. It then examines how money, states, firms and workers reshape the global economic landscape. Finally, the course considers the territorial consequences of uneven development for local societies, firms and regions and discusses possible policies that can contribute to reduce territorial disparities.

At the end of the course, you will be able to reflect on the major drivers of territorial change observed across the world using a variety of concepts developed in economic geography. You will also be able to find relevant data pertaining to the evolution of cities, regions and countries, organize the data into tables, maps, or graphs, and apply your knowledge of the spatial economy to compare major trends across regions.

## Schedule

24 Aug	Course introduction (McK&C 2019, chap 1, pp. 3-13) Exercise 1
29 Aug	Key concepts in economic geography (McK&C 2019, chap 2: 26-34)
31 Aug	Regions and regional geography (World Bank 2009: xix-xxiii)
5 Sep	Population (Rosling 2014, 00:00-11:30, 19:15-26:20)
7 Sep	Exercise 2. Working with spatial data (Yau 2013, chapter 4, pp. 146-161)
12 Sep	Guest lecture: Dr. Yujie Wu, University of Florida (transportation)
14 Sep	Guest lecture: Ms. Lacey Harris-Coble, University of Florida (agriculture)
19 Sep	Production, industrial districts and clusters (McK&C 2019, chap 3, pp. 58-85)
21 Sep	Exercise 3. Introduction to ArcGIS/Pro. <b>RQ + case study due (mid-term)</b>
26 Sep	Labor and knowledge-intensive activities (McK&C 2019, chap 6, pp. 174-178).
28 Sep	Exercise 4. Spatial inequalities (Glaeser 2011: 69-91) <b>First assignment due October 1 at 11:59PM</b>
3 Oct	Development (McK&C 2019, chap 7, pp. 197-203)
5 Oct	Exercise 5. Mapping development
10 Oct	Finance (McK&C 2019, chap 4, pp. 102-113)
12 Oct	Q&A on mid-term paper. <b>Mid-term due October 15 at 11:59PM</b>
17 Oct	Transport, communication, the digital economy (McK&C 2019, chap 8, 227-234)
19 Oct	Transport policies (Walther et al. 2019a)
24 Oct	Networks, value chains and space (Walther et al. 2019b)
26 Oct	Exercise 6. Economic networks (McK&C 2019, chap 9, pp. 254-265). <b>Second assignment due October 29 at 11:59PM</b>
31 Oct	Feedback on mid-term paper (attendance is mandatory)
2 Nov	Individual work on final paper (in class or at home)
7 Nov	Cities, urban agglomeration, innovation (McK&C 2019, chap 10, pp. 295-303)
9 Nov	Exercise 7. Cities (Shane 2019)
14 Nov	Regional integration and borders (World Bank 2009: 96-102)
16 Nov	Exercise 8. Borders (OECD 2019) <b>Research question + concept due (final)</b>
21 Nov	State and governance (McK&C 2019, chap 5, pp. 130-142)
28 Nov	Tourism (Hall and Page 2014: 1-11)
30 Nov	Exercise 9. Tourism (Davis 2017, chap 9, pp. 253-260)
5 Dec	Course overview. <b>Final paper and optional assignment due Dec 6 at 11:59PM</b>

## Final grade

Attendance and participation	10 points
First assignment	10 points
Mid-term paper	30 points
Second assignment	10 points
Final paper	40 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 points</b>

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The major assessment components of this course include:

- Regular attendance and participation: students are expected to be at every class meeting throughout the entire class session and must not be reading other materials or use their cell phones. Participation entails responding to questions directed by the instructor and participating in peer-initiated discussions as well.
- First assignment: 500-word description of the data and methodology used to describe the changing geography of a subnational region. This assignment is due **October 1 at 11:59PM** on Canvas.
- Mid-term paper (1500 words). This descriptive paper uses statistical data from various sources to study the recent economic evolution of a region of your choice. For more information, see “How to write your mid-term paper” on [Canvas](#). The mid-term paper is due **October 15 at 11:59PM** on Canvas.
- Second assignment: 1000-word literature review of a geographical concept used to explain the changing geography of your region. This assignment is due **October 29 at 11:59PM** on Canvas.
- Final paper (3000 words). This analytical paper applies some of the key concepts developed in economic geography to study the evolution of a region. For more information, see “How to write your final paper” on [Canvas](#). The final paper is due **December 6 at 11:59PM** on Canvas.
- Students who wish to improve their grades can complete an optional assignment worth 10 additional points and due **December 6 at 11:59 PM**. Not completing this assignment will not hurt your grade.

Letter grades will be assigned according to the following numerical scale:

A: 93-100+, A-: 90-92, B+: 87-89, B: 83-86, B-: 80-82, C+: 77-79, C: 73-76, C-: 70-72, D+: 67-69, D: 63-66, D-: 60-62, E: <60, E1: stopped attending, I: incomplete. For more information, visit UF’s [Grading Policies](#).

This course fulfills the University of Florida’s Writing and Math Requirement (formerly Gordon Rule). This means that students in this course are required to write at least 6,000 words in assignments throughout the semester. For more information on the Writing and Math Requirement, please examine this [link](#) at the Office of the Registrar.

## Literature

### Textbook

The textbook for the course is *Introduction to Economic Geography. Globalization, Uneven Development and Place* by Danny MacKinnon & Andrew Cumbers (third edition, 2019). Two hard copies are reserved for this class at the library.

### Supplemental readings

- Badger E et al. 2023. Coastal Cities Priced Out Low-Wage Workers. Now College Graduates Are Leaving, Too. *The New York Times*, [May 13](#).
- Davis JE. 2017. *The Gulf: The Making of an American Sea*. New York, W.W. Norton.
- Glaeser E. 2011. *Triumph of the City. How our Greatest Invention Makes us Richer, Smarter, Greener, Healthier, and Happier*. New York, Penguin.
- Hall MC, Page SJ. 2014. *The Geography of Tourism and Recreation*. London, Routledge.
- OECD 2019. Regional integration in border cities. Paris, OECD *West African Papers* 20.
- Rosling H. 2014. [Don't Panic](#), 00:00-11:30 Fertility, 19:15-26:20 Mortality
- Shane S. 2019. Prime Mover: How Amazon Wove Itself Into the Life of an American City. *The New York Times*, Nov. 30.
- Walther O, Dambo L, Koné M, van Eupen M. 2019a. Mapping travel time to assess accessibility in West Africa: The role of borders, checkpoints and road conditions. *Journal of Transport Geography* 82.
- Walther O, Tenikue M, Trémolières M. 2019b. Economic performance, gender and social networks in West African food systems. *World Development* 124: 1-14.
- World Bank. 2009. *World Development Report. Reshaping Economic Geography*. Washington, DC, The World Bank.
- Yau N. 2013. *Data Points. Visualization That Means Something*. New York, Wiley, chapter 4.

### Citation style and plagiarism

When quoting a book or an article, make sure that the source is cited properly and that your paper is not plagiarized, wholly or in part. Use Google Scholar or the UF Library website to export your references in MLA, APS, Chicago or any referencing style you want.

General statements must be presented as follows: Cities tend to attract creative workers (Scott 2002). Excerpts must be presented in quotation marks to show that a particular portion of your paper is from a different source. Include the author's name, the date, and page numbers, as follows: According to Glaeser (2011: 65), "national policy should strive to enrich and empower everybody".

References must be placed at the end of the paper, not in footnotes, and sorted alphabetically

Artificial Intelligence (AI) programs such as ChatGPT must not be used in this class.

## Software

Students must have their own laptop or desktop computer. We will work with three programs (Excel, ArcMap/ArcGIS Pro, and ORA) available on [UF Apps](#). The students are responsible for installing the software on their own computer or accessing UF Apps. The instructor cannot be held responsible for any damage or malfunction resulting from the installation or use of the programs.

## Other information

Please review the University's policies regarding [student conduct and conflict resolution](#), available through the Dean of Students Office [website](#). Any violations of the Student Honor Code will result in a failing grade for the course and referral to Student Judicial Affairs.

A course description is available here: <https://one.ufl.edu/soc/>

Books and articles can be accessed using [UF's Libraries](#). To find a scientific journal, please go to [Journals](#) of use [Google Scholar](#).

The course is delivered in person. It includes lectures, discussions, tutorial exercises, and case studies. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with [university policies](#).

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the [Disability Resource Center](#) (352-392-8565) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter, which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/>

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. For additional information, please visit the [University website](#).

This syllabus represents current plans and objectives. As the semester proceeds, those plans may need to change to enhance the class and student learning opportunity. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.