Course Overview & Objectives

This seminar is a stand-alone graduate course that serves as Part I of a two-part examination of economic geography’s foundations and contemporary theoretical contributions/developments. During this semester, we will read and analyze classic texts in economics, political economy, economic sociology, philosophy, and economic geography/regional science with the goal of establishing an in-depth understanding of the intellectual history of these fields and their relationships to past and contemporary trends in geography scholarship and economic policy making. There is a lot of material to be covered and the reading load – understandably – is heavy, but the importance of engaging with the approaches, styles, biases, perspectives, and contextual circumstances of these seminal works requires that we read them earnestly and in their original form as much as possible. In doing so, a key objective is to help you strengthen your understandings of contemporary theories in economics, economic sociology, and human geography and to, more broadly, help you contextualize your research interests in relation to seminal texts and thinkers in the social sciences.

The seminar is organized into three parts or themes. In the first part, meetings 2-6, we will trace the development, meanings, and critiques of classical and neo-classical theory in political economy and economics – including Smith and Ricardo’s political economy, the Marginal Revolution, Schumpeter’s views on business cycles and innovation, Keynesian growth theory, and Marxist and Feminist critiques of economic theory. The second part of the course – meetings 7-8 – we will focus exclusively on economic geography and regional science proper as we read, discuss, and analyze theories of industrial location and the rise (and fall) of the quantitative revolutionaries in the 1960s and 1970s. In the final section of the course, weeks 9-13, we will explore the philosophical and theoretical bases for “newer” directions in economic geographical thinking: institutional approaches, perspectives on embeddedness, networks, practice theory, and moral or social economies.

Approach

The course will demand a significant amount of reading and pre-class preparation and class meetings will focus on in-depth and open discussions of the reading materials. I view my primary role as a facilitator and instigator of in-class analysis and discussion of the materials and case studies we will explore. You will be expected to complete the assigned readings prior to class and you should be prepared to discuss the materials in detail. I will post reading materials and discussion questions on our Cicada web page (https://cicada.clarku.edu). Suffice to say, you need to be ready, willing, and able to take an active role in class if you are to perform well.

Assignments

Reaction or response papers (5 required, 10% each, 50% of final grade) - You will write reaction or response papers for any five of the class meetings and readings during the semester. In doing so, you will react to or critique some of the key issues, approaches, or topics as they are framed by the authors in a manner of your choosing. There are no formal guidelines regarding the approach you take only that you have a clear

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1 As a stand-alone course there is no requirement nor expectation that students will take both semesters of the seminar and it is not a pre-requisite for Part II.
introduction to the paper, a brief summary (i.e., your evidence) of the content, topic, approach, or author your comments are addressing/critiquing, and that there is a conclusion (of sorts) that ties the key points of your discussion together in a coherent and concise manner. Also, you must have at least one response paper from each of the three themes of the course (i.e., economics, economic geography, social, cultural, and political issues). (4-5 pages each, double-spaced, 12 point font).

If you prefer, you may write a longer research paper (20-25 pages and worth 30% of your final grade) – due at the end of term (12/10/10) – as a substitute for three of the five reaction of response papers. You will need to consult with me to discuss your proposed topic and the objectives of your paper and you will still need to submit two response papers.

Brief presentation on reading materials (2 required, 20% of final grade) – You will lead a discussion (no more than 10 minutes) during two of our seminar meetings in any manner you see fit. Your goal as discussant is to lay the foundation for an in-depth and stimulating discussion on the reading materials at hand, not to provide a detailed summary (i.e., regurgitation) of what the readings were about (although some introductory remarks will be necessary). More details on my expectations will be provided in class.

Participation Grade (30% of final grade) – Participation is a key component of this course that will be assessed in relation to your contributions to classroom discussions and to your ability to respond to questions and comments. The criteria for evaluation on participation are pretty straightforward – namely the relevance of comments/questions to the reading materials or discussion thread and the quality of question, comment, or contribution. My sense is that you all know what kinds of contributions make for an interesting discussion but I can provide you with further clarification if needed.

Evaluation & Grading
Response and research papers will be evaluated based on the following three criteria:

1. Content – accuracy, sourcing, rigor 40%
2. Clarity of argument – organization, writing or presentation quality 30%
3. Creativity – sophistication of argument, writing or presentation style 30%

Summary of the grading breakdown for the semester:
Response/reaction papers (5 @ 10% each) 50%
(30% for a longer, in-depth, research paper + 2 response papers)
Reading materials discussant 20%
Participation grade 30%

Course schedule and assigned readings
Meeting #1 (8/31/10) – Course introduction and overview – 103 years in 130 pages or so...

Meeting #2 (9/7/10) – Classical views of economies and economic processes


Meeting #3 (9/14/10) - The marginalists and neo-classical microeconomics – Bentham to Jevons to Marshall

Meeting #4 (9/21/10) – Marxist and Feminist reactions to classical and neo-classical economics

- Marx, K. (1863) Capital: Vol. IV: Theories of Surplus-Value, Progress Publishers; General observation; Chapter 3 (sections 1-8); Chapter 4 (sections 1-5).
- Geoff Schneider and Jean Shackelford, Bucknell University Department of Economics, “Ten Principles of Feminist Economics” (http://www.facstaff.bucknell.edu/gschnedr/FemPrclps.htm#_ftn1)
- David Harvey reads/interprets/performs…Capital – see www.davidharvey.org. (Optional)

Meeting #5 (9/28/10) –Keynsianism and the rise of growth theory


Meeting #6 (10/5/10) – Schumpeter on business cycles, innovation, and the state

Process: Volume I, New York: McGraw-Hill, Chapters 3 (pp. 72-109 – not the entire chapter). (Chapter 2, remainder of chapter 3, and chapter 4 are optional)


**NO CLASS 10/12/10 – FALL BREAK**

**Meeting #7 (10/19/10) – Industrial location classics – Von Thunen, Weber, and Christaller**

- Lösch, A. (1954 [1940]) *The Economics of Location*, New Haven: Yale University Press, Introductions and preface, Intro. to Part II and Chapters 9-12 (pp. 101-137); Chapter 13 (section 2 – pp. 168-220); For (optional) examples of applications of Losch’s work see pp. 395-507. (all optional)

**Meeting #8 (10/26/10) - The rise (and fall) of the behavioral-quantitative revolution in economic geography**


**Meeting #9 (11/2/10) – Institutions and economic development - Weber, Durkheim, and Veblen**


**Meeting #10 (11/9/10) – States, embeddedness, and market interventions**


**Meeting #11 (11/16/10) – Foundations of network studies**


**NO CLASS 11/23/10 – THANKSGIVING BREAK**
Meeting #12 (11/30/10) – Bourdieu, phenomenology and practice

- Bourdieu, P. (1977) *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Chapter 1 (pp. 1-30); Chapter 2 (pp. 72-114); Chapter 4 (pp. 159-197).

Meeting #13 (12/7/10) – Morality and values in the space economy

- Smith, A. (1790) *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 6th edition, London: A Miller, Part I (Section 1); Part II (Sections 1 and 2); Part III (Chapter 1); and Part IV.