

GEOGRAPHY AND PLANNING

GPHY884 – ECONOMIES, POLITICS, AND SPACE



Course Instructor	Dr. Dan Cohen	Email: dan.cohen@queensu.ca
Office	Mackintosh-Corry Hall, Room E302	
Contact Time	Weekly seminar (3 hours) Office hours (by appointment)	
Format	Seminar	
Class Assessment	Participation:	25%
	Finding political economy in the world:	15%
	Critical reflections/questions:	15%
	Term paper proposal:	5%
	Term paper:	40%

COURSE OVERVIEW

The past several decades have seen a series of economic crises from the Great Recession to today's struggle with inflation. With growing wealth inequality, the increased precariousness of work, and constant volatility in financial markets, understanding the functioning of the modern capitalist economy is fundamental to many of the questions facing geographers and planners today.

This discussion-based seminar introduces political economic thought and debates in economic geography for both those new to the subject and those centering it in their studies. Rather than viewing the economy as a distinct object, we will examine how economic activity is shaped by political and social struggles over the distribution of resources and is interwoven with (and contributes to) racialized and gendered inequality. The course begins by reviewing classic works of political economy and their methods of understanding economic structures, explores recent critiques of these works, and then proceeds to examine specific economic phenomena such as precarious labour markets, the increased power of finance, the 'green' economy, and economic recovery policies during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Students will participate in weekly discussions, lead a seminar by finding a news story that relates to the weekly readings, and produce a term paper (or an alternative they propose) on the subject of their choice. No prior knowledge of economic geography is required.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

To complete this course, students will demonstrate their ability to:

1. Critically review academic literature related to political economy and economic geography.
2. Discuss current debates in geography.
3. Present complex concepts in written formats.

COURSE TOPICS

Topics covered may include: political economic thought, racial capitalism, the financialization of economic activity, feminist economic geographies, the 'green' economy, labour geographies and precariousness, COVID-19 related economic policies, alternative economies, and methods in economic geography.

SELECTED COURSE READINGS AND TEXTS

There is no textbook for this course. We will read approximately four journal articles / book chapters per week.