

GEOGRAPHY AND PLANNING

GPY 228 – Geographies of the Global Political Economy



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Contact Time	1.5 hrs tutorial per week; 1.5 hrs weekly in-class lecture; weekly office hours	
Format	Lectures, discussions, and debates based on key texts, case studies and videos	
Class Assessment	Infographic Assignment	20%
	2 Tutorial Assignments	30%
	1 page Research proposal	15%
	8 page Op Ed	30%
	Participation and Attendance	5%

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course examines the geographies of the contemporary global economy from a broadly political economy perspective. It introduces a series of theories, debates and case studies designed to help you better understand the global political economic system in which we live, and imagine the world that we can aspire towards. The course is divided into four sections. The course begins with an overview of common concerns of economic and social inequality, uneven patterns of geographical development and the search for equity that faces all regions and peoples of the world. We discuss competing approaches to theorizing how the market (capitalist) economy works and introduce you to political economy; the perspective that informs much of the lecture and reading material discussed in the course. The opening section concludes with a brief historical overview of the gradual evolution of the world economy over a period of nearly five hundred years and the relationship between capitalist expansion and its expression in class, racial, gender and spatial inequalities. In Section Two, we focus on the events in the period since the end of the Second World War (1945); in this, we are interested in issues such as the uneven spatial and temporal (booms and recessions) nature of global capitalism, new technologies and management methods, the global racial, gender and class division of labour and the social and environmental implications of neo-liberal globalization. In Section Three, we discuss selected aspects of the present-day global economy including the development of global production systems, changes in the composition of the workforce and the organization of work, the growing importance of financialization and the re-scaling of the economy and political institutions. Finally, we examine how people in their search for greater equity and security in their daily lives have mobilized against racial capitalism and speculate on the possible impacts on the global economy of spatial shifts in economic power as well as the impacts of movements for worlds beyond capitalism.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this course students will be able to:

1. Critically assess competing theories of globalization to determine the relationship between capitalist systems and patterns of uneven geographical development.
2. Make connections between periods, locations, national traditions to delineate intellectual trends in our understanding of capitalism across spans of time and space.
3. Recognize economic and political relationships and policies that reproduce or support oppressive and unequal spatial relationships.
4. Communicate complex ideas surrounding the workings of capitalist systems and the spatial flows they generate to a lay audience.
5. Consolidate their knowledge about space, place, scale and power as abstract concepts and apply them to an analysis of concrete instances of racial, gender and sexual inequality in the global economy.

SELECTED COURSE TOPICS

Globalization, anti-Colonialism; Racial Capitalism; anti-Black and anti-Indigenous Racism, Global Production Networks; Racial and Gendered Divisions of Labour; Financialization; Precarity and Work; Social Reproduction, Debt Economies, Austerity; Outsourcing; Free Trade; the Alt right, Climate Change

SAMPLE OF TYPICAL COURSE READINGS (May change from Year to Year)

Mackinnon D. and A. Cumbers (2019). An Introduction to Economic Geography: Globalization, Uneven Development and Place. Toronto: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Sheppard, E. (2016). Limits to Globalization: The Disruptive Geographies of Capitalist Development. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Aoyama, Y., J.T. Murphy and S. Hanson (2010). Key Concepts in Economic Geography. Sage Publications.