

GEOGRAPHY AND PLANNING

GPY 370 – Special Topics in Human Geography: Markets, Environments, and Societies



Course Instructor	Dr. Dan Cohen	Email: dan.cohen@queensu.ca
Office	Mackintosh-Corry Hall, Room E302	
Contact Time	3-hour lecture twice a week	
Format	Lectures and in-class activities / assignments	
Class Assessment	Reading response papers: 30% In-class worksheets: 10% Project proposal: 5% Final project: 25% Final exam : 30%	

COURSE OVERVIEW

Markets are everywhere. From buying groceries at the supermarket to the complex financial instruments that led to the Great Recession, markets are fundamental to the organization of everyday life. This is truer now than ever, with the expansion of market logics into new areas of life from systems of care (social programs, longterm care facilities, etc.) to the pricing of environmental processes (carbon markets, green bonds for land conservation etc.).

In this course we will examine how political decisions, social structures, and environmental systems shape market exchange as well as the functioning of economies more broadly. We will pay particular attention to attempts to create markets out of social and environmental 'things' from carbon and wildlife to learning and care. In doing so we will investigate connections between economic activities within markets and the production of environmental, social, and political spaces and how these connections impact communities and ecological systems. This interdisciplinary approach is appropriate for students from a variety of backgrounds beyond economic geography.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course students will:

- Identify relationships between economic, social, and environmental systems.
- Apply interdisciplinary insights to the study of economic activity and market exchange.
- Analyze the connections between market exchange and broader sociopolitical structures.
- Evaluate and critique the relevance of market-based solutions to social and environmental problems.
- Present complex ideas in written form.

COURSE TOPICS

Economic, social, and environmental crises; Theories of market activity; Impact investing; Markets for exotic wildlife; Debt relations and microfinance; Carbon markets; Alternative economies; Racialized and gendered inequality; Impacts of marketization of systems of education and care; Philanthrocapitalism; Financialization

COURSE READINGS

Course readings will consist of academic journal articles and chapters, podcasts, films/documentaries, and long-form journalism. All readings will be available via the courses' e-reserve.