

## Week 1: Economic Landscape Analysis StoryMap Assignment

GEOG 30763: Economic Geography | Summer 2025

### Assignment Overview

**Points:** 100 points

**Due Date:** Sunday, July 13, 2025, 11:59 PM

**Format:** ArcGIS StoryMap with integrated spatial analysis and narrative

**Length:** 1,500-2,000 words + maps, photos, and spatial analysis

### Learning Objectives

By completing this assignment, you will:

- Apply fundamental economic geography concepts to analyze real places
- Develop skills in spatial observation and documentation
- Practice integrating fieldwork with theoretical frameworks
- Create compelling narratives that combine data, images, and analysis
- Build proficiency with ArcGIS StoryMap platform

### Assignment Description

You will conduct a systematic analysis of the economic landscape in your local area, documenting spatial patterns of economic activity and connecting your observations to course concepts from Weeks 1-2. This assignment requires both fieldwork (observation and photography) and desk research (data analysis and mapping).

### Core Requirements

#### I. Study Area Selection (15 points)

Choose one of these spatial scales for analysis:

##### Option A: Neighborhood Commercial District

- Select a 0.5-1 mile radius around a commercial center

- Must include at least 15-20 different businesses
- Should show variety in business types and building ages

#### Option B: Highway/Transportation Corridor

- Choose a 2-3 mile stretch of major road/highway
- Focus on economic activities that cluster near transportation
- Include both commercial and industrial land uses

#### Option C: Downtown/Central Business District

- Analyze the core commercial area of your city/town
- Must include at least one city block of detailed analysis
- Focus on spatial organization of different economic functions

**Justification Required:** Explain why you chose this area and how it represents interesting economic geography concepts.

## 2. Fieldwork Component (25 points)

### Physical Survey Requirements:

- Spend minimum 3 hours conducting systematic observation
- Visit your study area at least twice (different times of day/week)
- Take 20-30 high-quality photographs documenting:
  - Different types of economic activities
  - Building types and architectural styles
  - Transportation infrastructure
  - Signs of economic change (new construction, vacant buildings, etc.)
  - Consumer behavior and pedestrian/vehicle patterns

### Observation Log:

- Record GPS coordinates for key locations
- Note business names, types, and apparent customer demographics
- Document infrastructure (parking, transit, utilities)
- Observe temporal patterns (busy vs. quiet times)
- Note evidence of recent changes or development

### GPS Recording Options:

**Easiest Method:** Enable location services on your smartphone camera. Your photos will automatically include GPS coordinates that you can extract later.

### Free Apps for Field Recording:

- **Avenza Maps** (iOS/Android): Free version allows GPS location recording and photo geotagging - perfect for this assignment
- **GPS Essentials** (Android): Completely free with waypoint recording and coordinate display
- **What3Words** (iOS/Android): Free app that gives unique 3-word addresses for any location
- **Google Maps:** Drop pins at locations and copy coordinates directly from the web interface

**For Viewing Photo Coordinates:** If your photos have embedded GPS data, you can view coordinates by checking photo properties on your computer or using the free GPS apps listed above.

## 3. Spatial Analysis Component (25 points)

### Required Maps (create in ArcGIS Online):

#### Map I: Economic Activity Overview (*Primary requirement*)

- Interactive web map showing your study area with clearly marked boundaries
- Point markers for all observed businesses/economic activities (minimum 15-20 points)

- Use ArcGIS Online's built-in symbols to categorize by business type
- Include pop-ups with business names, types, and brief observations
- Add your observation route and key photos

#### Map 2: Spatial Pattern Analysis (*Secondary requirement*)

- Same base map with businesses grouped by economic function
- Use color-coding or symbol variation to show clustering patterns
- Include simple demographic data layer (population or income) for context
- Brief analysis of why businesses cluster where they do

#### Technical Support Available:

- ArcGIS Online access and tutorial video available on course website
- AI assistance permitted for technical questions about mapping tools
- Template maps available to help with basic setup
- Virtual office hours for troubleshooting technical issues

### 4. Theoretical Analysis (35 points)

#### Connect your observations to course concepts:

##### Section A: Location Theory (Week 1 Concepts)

- Analyze why different businesses locate where they do
- Apply concepts of agglomeration and clustering
- Discuss role of transportation and accessibility
- Consider rent gradients and land use competition

##### Section B: Spatial Processes (Week 1-2 Concepts)

- Identify examples of uneven development in your study area
- Analyze how spatial factors shape economic opportunities

- Discuss connection between local and global economic processes
- Consider how place identity affects economic activity

### Section C: Scale Analysis

- Connect local patterns to regional/national/global processes
- Identify how your local area fits into broader supply chains
- Analyze local impacts of larger economic trends
- Discuss how global processes manifest locally

### StoryMap Structure and Organization

#### Required StoryMap Sections:

#### 1. Introduction & Study Area (200-300 words)

- Compelling opening that draws readers in
- Clear thesis statement about your main findings
- Overview of study area with introductory map
- Brief methodology explanation

#### 2. Physical Landscape Analysis (400-500 words)

- Systematic description of observed economic activities
- Integration of photographs with analytical text
- Discussion of spatial patterns and relationships
- Evidence-based observations about economic organization

#### 3. Theoretical Connections (500-600 words)

- Explicit connections to course readings and concepts
- Analysis using economic geography frameworks
- Discussion of spatial processes at work

- Integration of quantitative data where relevant

#### 4. Multi-Scale Analysis (300-400 words)

- Connection of local patterns to broader geographic scales
- Discussion of global-local linkages
- Analysis of how external forces shape local economic landscape
- Consideration of regional economic context

#### 5. Conclusions & Implications (200-300 words)

- Summary of key findings
- Reflection on what your analysis reveals about economic geography
- Discussion of limitations and questions for future research
- Personal reflection on learning process

#### Technical Requirements

##### StoryMap Design:

- Professional appearance with consistent formatting
- Effective use of multimedia (maps, photos, text integration)
- Clear navigation and logical organization
- Appropriate use of StoryMap features (sidecar, map tours, etc.)

##### Writing Quality:

- Clear, engaging prose appropriate for educated general audience
- Proper grammar, spelling, and sentence structure
- Strong analytical voice with evidence-based arguments
- Smooth transitions between sections and ideas

##### Academic Standards:

- Integration of relevant course concepts throughout
- Evidence of critical thinking and original analysis
- Professional-level presentation and design

## Evaluation Criteria

### Excellent (90-100 points):

- Sophisticated spatial analysis with clear theoretical connections
- High-quality fieldwork with systematic documentation
- Professional StoryMap design with effective multimedia integration
- Original insights about local economic geography
- Strong writing with clear analytical voice

### Good (80-89 points):

- Solid spatial analysis with appropriate use of course concepts
- Adequate fieldwork with good documentation
- Well-designed StoryMap with appropriate multimedia use
- Clear understanding of economic geography principles
- Good writing with minor issues

### Satisfactory (70-79 points):

- Basic spatial analysis meeting minimum requirements
- Adequate fieldwork but limited depth of observation
- StoryMap meets technical requirements but lacks polish
- Shows understanding of basic concepts but limited synthesis
- Acceptable writing with some organizational issues

### Needs Improvement (Below 70 points):

- Insufficient spatial analysis or weak theoretical connections
- Inadequate fieldwork or poor documentation
- Technical problems with StoryMap or poor design choices
- Limited understanding of course concepts
- Writing issues that interfere with communication

### **AI Policy for Technical Support**

#### **Newly Permitted AI Use for Technical Tasks:**

- "How do I add points to a map in ArcGIS Online?"
- "What's the best symbol style for showing different business types?"
- "How do I create pop-ups with business information?"
- "How do I change the basemap in ArcGIS Online?"
- "What's the process for sharing my map in a StoryMap?"
- "How do I find GPS coordinates on my phone?"
- General troubleshooting for ArcGIS Online interface and tools

#### **Still Prohibited AI Use:**

- Writing any portion of your analysis or narrative
- Generating observation logs or fieldwork documentation
- Creating analysis or theoretical connections
- Completing spatial analysis or map interpretation

#### **Technical Support Resources:**

- ArcGIS Online tutorial video available on course website
- Virtual office hours for hands-on technical assistance
- Peer discussion forum for technical questions

- Template maps and sample projects for reference

### Submission Requirements

1. **StoryMap URL:** Submit working link to published StoryMap. (Make sure your privacy settings are set to “public” when you publish the storymap, or no one will be able to view it besides you – including your professor who needs to view it to grade it!)
2. **Reflection Document:** 1-page reflection on research process and key learning outcomes

### Getting Started Checklist

- Review course readings on spatial analysis and location theory
- Select and visit study area for initial reconnaissance
- Watch ArcGIS Online tutorial video on course website
- Download one of the recommended GPS recording apps
- Plan systematic fieldwork schedule (multiple visits)
- Identify relevant data sources for spatial context
- Begin fieldwork documentation and photography
- Draft StoryMap outline with section planning

### Questions?

Contact Dr. Crotty during virtual office hours (Tuesdays 12:30-1:30 PM) or via email. Don't wait until the last minute if you encounter technical difficulties or need clarification on concepts.

**Success Tip:** Start early! The best StoryMaps come from multiple field visits and thoughtful revision. Give yourself time to observe, analyze, and create a polished final product.