



SYLLABUS: ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY, GEOG 30763-045

COURSE & INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Course

Economic Geography, GEOG 30763-045

Semester and Year: Spring 2026

Number of Credits: 3

Course Component Type: WE (Writing Emphasis)

Course Format: In-Person

Class Location: Palko 227

Class Meeting Day(s) & Time(s): Tuesday/Thursday 12:30 – 1:50 pm

Instructor

Instructor Name: Dr. Sean M. Crotty

Office Location: SCHAR 2004C

Virtual Office Hours: Wednesdays 12:30 PM – 1:30 PM

Preferred Method of Contact: Email

Email: sean.crotty@tcu.edu

Response Time: Email is the best way to reach me. If you have a question or concern, please don't hesitate to contact me. I am invested in your success in this class and beyond, so communication is important to ensuring that success. With that said, emails should be formatted with the following guidelines to ensure effective communication.

- **Be clear:** Emails should have a clear, specific, subject line related to the topic of that particular email and should contain your name and the course title.
- **Be professional:** Emails should begin with a normal and appropriate salutation. Avoid slang, profanity, etc in your communications with professors.

Be reasonable: I check email every weekday and am very responsive to students. I also have a family, including young children, so when I leave the office for the day/weekend I don't check email. I endeavor to respond to emails during the week within 24 hours and emails sent over the weekend will be returned the first day of the following business week (Monday unless there's a holiday).

Final Evaluative Exercise & Important Dates

Final research project is due by the start of our assigned final exam time, 11:00AM, Thursday, May 7th, 2026, unless other arrangements are made in advance.

Rescheduling of Finals Policy: According to the [Faculty/Staff Handbook “Rescheduling of Finals”](#), Rescheduling a final arrangement must be made one week prior to the last day of classes. Rescheduling of final examinations is permitted 1) for meeting the 3-exams in 24-hour rule or 2) for graduating seniors whose faculty members must submit final grades by Wednesday 5pm of finals week. Unless the student is graduating, the exam must be taken during final examination week.

Note for students: The syllabus is your first course reading. It provides an orientation to, overview of the flow, and expectations of the course. You should turn to the syllabus for details on assignments and course policies.

Student Resources & Policy Information

Click or scan QR code for resources to support you as a TCU student. Please note section on [Student Access and Accommodation](#) and [Academic Conduct & Course Materials Policies](#).



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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Economic Geography is the study of how elements within the economy are spatially arranged, as well as the ways that space, place and spatial scales shape economic activities in different parts of the world. Through a series of readings, discussions, and research assignments, this course examines the distribution of economic activities on the earth's surface; market resource and transportation factors in location theory, and the role of state, market and civil society's agents in management of the economy. Students are further introduced to Geographic Information Systems (GIS) through content-focused lab assignments, though no previous experience with GIS is required for this course.

Program & Major Connections

This course currently meets all or part of the following requirements for a degree:

- GEOG 30763: Economic Geography is also an upper-division course that counts toward the Geography BA Major, Geography BS Major, and the Geography Minor.
- GEOG 30763 also counts toward several degree plans in the Economics Department and Interdisciplinary Studies. Contact your academic advisor to make sure the class counts for your specific degree plan if it is not listed above.
- Dr Crotty is one of the advisors for the Geography Department and is happy to discuss the requirements for the Geography BA, BS, and minor. Our graduates have among the highest employment rates at graduation of any major!

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Materials

Coe, Kelly and Yeung, 2019. *Economic Geography: A Contemporary Introduction, 3rd edition* SBN-13: 978-1119389552 ISBN-10: 1119389550.

- Access to a computer with Microsoft Office. Students will be provided with a trial copy of ArcGIS to use on their personal computers. Remote access to on-campus lab computers with ArcGIS Pro and other required software programs is facilitated through the TCU IT department.
- Additional readings will be provided through TCU Online
- Webcam or smartphone camera for video reflections
- Reliable internet connection for accessing course materials and submitting assignments

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY & METHODOLOGY

I view my role as a facilitator and guide for your independent exploration of economic geography. You'll engage deeply with course materials through multiple modalities: video lectures, interactive content, peer discussions, and hands-on analysis projects.

The mission statement of TCU is "To educate individuals to think and act as ethical leaders and responsible citizens in the global community." This course will challenge you to critically examine important global issues like uneven economic development, environmental degradation, the role of corporations and states in the economy, and how social identities affect economic opportunities. Most importantly, you must demonstrate understanding of how these issues are inherently geographic.

Success in this asynchronous course requires self-discipline, time management, and active engagement with your peers and instructor through online platforms. You are responsible for creating your own educational experience and staying on schedule with course materials and assignments. I believe that students should be committed to creating their own educational experience, and take ownership of their education. I am here to help you learn and think about things geographically, but I cannot do it for you

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 1) **Knowledge and Understanding:** On completion of the semester, students will be able to demonstrate that they.
 - a) Understand the main characteristics of the capitalist economy and its relations to unevenness through a geographic lens.
 - b) Understand how economic processes must be analyzed within the context of global and local environmental, socio-cultural, and political processes
 - c) understand the main factors which influence the way in which local economies function and develop and how local conditions interact with regional, national and global influences
 - d) are able to apply the factors to understanding the local impact of changes in particular industries and the development of particular local economies

- e) Are familiar with the particular policies employed by various economic actors (e.g. government, corporations, labor) to influence economic activity and outcomes at multiple scales (e.g. global, national, metropolitan, neighborhood).
- 2) **Skills:** On completion of the semester, students will be able to demonstrate that they.
- a) are capable of thinking and writing critically about economic processes.
 - b) are able to analyze economic activity from a geographic perspective.
 - c) are able to discuss the nature and causes of uneven economic development at multiple scales.
 - d) have basic understanding of, and experience using, particular research methods used in geography
 - e) have developed a very basic familiarity with the ArcGIS software platform and how to use those programs analyze the spatial dimensions of economic activity.
 - f) have a basic understanding of qualitative research methods used in geography, and will have experience conducting participant observation.
 - g) can design and complete an independent research project.

Course Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to help students develop several skills critical for life-long learning, and for professional success after graduation. First, the discussion-focused classroom activities requires students to discuss and consider each dimension of the economy from multiple perspectives and hold each perspective as true/valid in different ways. Second, the writing assignments require students to engage with the complexity and sometimes contradictions inherent to the contemporary global economy, and discuss those dimensions in a wide range of applied contexts globally. Third, the final project requires students to think independently, to be self-starting, to collaborate with others to maximize their collective abilities, and to see a project to its completion with a deliverable of publication-level quality.

TCU Outcomes: Core Curriculum & Finding Ourselves in Community

- **TCU Core Curriculum Requirement(s):**
 - Writing Emphasis (WE):
 - “Write for a specific discipline, profession, or field using a writing process that emphasizes revision”

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assignments

Weekly Engagement Activities (150 pts)

Format: Each week includes multiple engagement activities:

- **Video Reflection Posts** (personal video responses to prompts)
- **In-class Discussion Participation** (small-group discussions during class meetings)
- **Concept Application Exercises** (short written analyses)

AI-Resistant Design: These activities require personal reflection, local observation, and connection to your own experiences and geographic location. Video reflections are particularly difficult for AI to complete authentically.

Place-Based Analysis Storymaps (300 pts)

Three papers, 100 points each

Rather than generic response papers, you'll create **ArcGIS StoryMaps** based on **place-based analyses** that combine spatial analysis with narrative storytelling:

1. **Module 1: Economic Landscape Analysis** - Conduct a walking/driving survey of your local area, document economic activity with photos, and analyze spatial patterns using course concepts
2. **Module 2: Supply Chain Investigation** - Trace the supply chain of a product you use regularly, investigating its geographic journey and analyzing uneven development patterns
3. **Module 3: Consumer Geography Project** - Document and analyze your own consumption patterns over one week, connecting to broader geographic theories about retail and consumer behavior

AI-Resistant Features: These papers require local fieldwork, personal interviews, original photography, and connection to your specific geographic location. They build on each other sequentially and require reflection on personal experiences.

GIS lab Assignments (200 pts)

Four lab assignments, 50 points each

These lab assignments provide an opportunity to examine quantitative measures of the spatial economy, as well as build a familiarity with spatial data, GIS software, and the ESRI Business Analyst tool:

1. **Geographic labor-market patterns** – you will use data and maps from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) to understand spatial patterns in several different occupations.

2. **Industrial specialization at the metropolitan scale** – examine the concentration of particular kinds of industries in the city of Chicago, IL. You will work with ArcGIS Pro to complete this assignment.
3. **Locational analysis of DFW breweries, wineries, and chain restaurants** – You will use ArcGIS Pro to map a variety of businesses in the DFW region and explore the differences in their locational strategies.
4. **ESRI Business Analyst Pro Basics Module** – You will complete the ESRI online training module for their Business Analyst tool. It will provide a foundation for locational analysis and data collection needed for your final projects.

AI-Resistant Features: These require hands-on use of GIS software, original spatial analysis, and creative storytelling that combines technical skills with personal interpretation.

Collaborative Research Project (350 pts)

Multi-stage, peer-reviewed project

Working in groups of 2-3, you'll conduct an original research project on an economic geography topic, selected from a set of options provided by the professor:

- **Stage 1: Proposal with Peer Review** (50 pts) - Groups propose research questions and methods, then peer-review other groups' proposals
- **Stage 2: Data Collection & Analysis** (100 pts) - Groups collect data and conduct spatial analysis
- **Stage 3: Final Presentation & Paper** (200 pts) - Groups create an ESRI Storymap presenting their research and findings, a video presentation of their storymap, and an academic research paper (target length 2000 – 3000 words).

AI-Resistant Features: Collaborative work, peer review process, original data collection, and video presentations make AI completion nearly impossible while building professional skills.

Grading Philosophy & Policy

Assignments are graded using the following criteria, with emphasis on original thinking and application of geographic concepts:

Excellent (A): Demonstrates sophisticated understanding of geographic concepts, provides original analysis, incorporates multiple perspectives, shows evidence of genuine engagement with local places and communities.

Good (B): Shows solid understanding of course concepts, applies theories appropriately, demonstrates engagement with assigned materials and local context.

Satisfactory (C): Meets basic requirements, shows understanding of fundamental concepts, completes required activities with minimal depth.

Needs Improvement (D-F): Fails to demonstrate understanding of course concepts, lacks evidence of genuine engagement, shows possible academic dishonesty.

Late Work Policy

Deadlines are firm for this course, as other students depend on your contributions for discussions and peer reviews. However, I understand that life happens:

- **Planned absences:** Contact me at least one week in advance to arrange alternative deadlines
- **Emergencies:** Contact me and/or the dean of students immediately to discuss accommodations
- **Technical issues:** Document the problem and contact me within 24 hours

Examples of non-excusable delays:

- Poor time management
- Procrastination
- Non-emergency travel during course deadlines

Technology problems that could have been avoided with proper planning

Course Assignments & Final Grade

Final Grade Elements / Grade Breakdown:

Module	Assignment	Outcome(s)	Percentage	Points
Weekly	Reflections & Discussions	1a-1e, 2a-2c	15%	150
Module 1	GIS StoryMap 1	1a, 1c, 1d, 1e; 2a-2e	10%	100
Module 2	GIS StoryMap 2	1a, 1c, 1d, 1e; 2a-2e	10%	100
Module 3	GIS StoryMap 3	1a, 1c, 1d, 1e; 2a-2e	10%	100
Module 1	GIS Lab 1	1a, 1c, 1d, 1e; 2a-2e	5%	50
Module 2	GIS Lab 2	1a, 1c, 1d, 1e; 2a-2e	5%	50
Module 3	GIS Lab 3	1a, 1c, 1d, 1e; 2a-2e	5%	50
Module 4	GIS Lab 4	2d-2e	5%	50

Module	Assignment	Outcome(s)	Percentage	Points
Module 2	Collaborative Project	1a-1e; 2a-2g	5%	50
Module 3	Collaborative Project	1a-1e; 2a-2g	10%	100
Module 4	Collaborative Project	1a-1e; 2a-2g	20%	200
		Total	100%	1000

Grading Scale(s)

Option 1: Final +/- Grade Scale:

Grade	Score	Grade	Score
A	940–1000	C	740–769.99
A-	900–939.99	C-	700–739.99
B+	870–899.99	D+	670–699.99
B	840–869.99	D	640–669.99
B-	800–839.99	D-	600–639.99
C+	770–799.99	F	0–599.99

Course Policies

Participation, Engagement & Attendance

Attendance

The attendance policy for this course corresponds to the official TCU attendance policy. Students who miss class and/or any graded material for any reason defined as an “excused absence” by the university, which include Title IX-related issues, military leave, holy days, and university-related absences, will be allowed to makeup that material without penalty. Students who miss class and/or any graded material for a reason defined as a “verified absence”, which is any absence not covered by the excused absence definition, but for which the student completes the absence documentation form, may be allowed to makeup that material without penalty as well. See additional details below.

Make-up exams will only be permitted in the instance of a documented illness or emergency or a documented TCU-sanctioned activity, provided that you notify me of your absence before the examination.

Because it is considered an infringement on student privacy for me to have access to student medical records, I cannot accept medical documentation to justify absences. If you have a legitimate reason for your absence and want to provide verification, please access the Absence Documentation Form [HERE](#).

Students are responsible for arranging a make-up examination with me. In the event that you miss an exam and do not meet these conditions, you will receive a score of zero for the exam. I will not assume that continued absence from class indicates an official withdrawal until notified by the Registrar.

Participation

Someone once said, “90 percent of success in life is just showing up, the other 10% is knowing why you’re showing up.” Attendance and participation are crucial for success in this course and life. I don’t assign grade points directly to attendance or the degree to which you participate during in-class discussions, but after more than a decade teaching this course, I can say with real certainty, the students that show up and participate are the ones that consistently earn the highest marks in the course.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Ethical Considerations and Consequences for Misuse

Permitted AI Use:

- Technical troubleshooting for GIS software (with proper citation)
- Formatting assistance for citations and references
- Grammar checking and proofreading (but not content generation)

Prohibited AI Use:

- Writing any portion of analysis papers or project reports
- Generating discussion forum posts or video reflection content
- Creating interview questions or survey instruments
- Analyzing data or drawing conclusions for assignments

Why This Policy Matters: This course meets Writing Emphasis requirements, which means you must develop your own analytical voice and writing skills. The assignments are specifically designed to require personal experience, local knowledge, and original thinking that AI cannot provide. Using AI for prohibited purposes undermines your learning and violates academic integrity.

Detection and Consequences: Assignments are designed to be difficult or impossible for AI to complete authentically. *Misuse of AI or other assignment-help tools will be handled according to TCU’s Academic Conduct Policy or other relevant policies and may result in sanctions, including failing the course, program dismissal, suspension, or expulsion.*

When in Doubt: If you're unsure whether a particular AI use is appropriate, ask me before using it. I'm happy to clarify boundaries and help you use technology appropriately.

COURSE SCHEDULE

This course is organized into five multi-week modules. Each module opens on Monday at 12:01 AM and closes on Sunday at 11:59 PM. Within each module, you must complete activities by their respective deadlines, all of which are available on our course D2L webpage. Please pay particular attention to peer discussions and collaborative work which require timely participation for your classmate's success as well.

Module 1: (Weeks 1 – 3) Introduction & Economic Landscapes

Learning Materials:

- Welcome video lecture series (4 videos, ~60 minutes total)
- Chapters 1-3: Geographic Approaches, Economic Discourse, Uneven Development
- Interactive mapping exercise: "Where am I in the global economy?"

Activities:

- **Major Assignment: Economic Landscape Analysis Paper**
- **GIS StoryMap 1: Economic Patterns**
- Video reflection: Introduce yourself and describe the economic geography of your hometown (5 minutes)
- Discussion forum: Share and discuss economic landscape photos from your local area
- Concept application: Define economic geography and uneven development using local examples

Module 2 (Weeks 4-6): Networks, Corporations & Global Connections

Learning Materials:

- Lecture videos on global networks, corporate power, and labor (6 videos, ~90 minutes)
- Chapters 4-6: Networks, Transnational Corporations, Labour
- Documentary excerpts on global supply chains and labor migration

Activities:

- **Major Assignment: Supply Chain Investigation Paper**
- **GIS StoryMap 2: Migration & Labor**
- **Collaborative Project: Proposal & Peer Review**
- Video reflection: Interview someone about their work and migration history
- Discussion forum: Share supply chain findings and discuss global connections

Module 3 (Weeks 7-9): Consumers, Finance & Governance

Learning Materials:

- Lecture videos on consumer geography, financial systems, and state power (7 videos, ~105 minutes)
- Chapters 7-10: Consumers, Finance, States, International Institutions
- Case studies of retail geography and financial crises

Activities:

- **Major Assignment: Labor Market Analysis Paper**
- **GIS StoryMap 3: Environmental Justice**
- **Collaborative Project: Data Collection Phase**
- Video reflection: Analyze your own consumption patterns and retail choices
- Discussion forum: Compare financial landscapes and governance across different regions

Module 4 (Weeks 10 - 12): Environment, Identity & Economic Futures

Learning Materials:

- Lecture videos on environmental issues, social identities, and alternatives (7 videos, ~105 minutes)
- Chapters 11-15: Environment, Clusters, Identities, Alternatives, Applications
- Case studies of environmental justice and alternative economies

Activities:

- **Major Assignment: Consumer Geography Project**
- **GIS StoryMap 4: Alternative Economies**
- Video reflection: Envision the future of economic geography in your career

Module 5 (Weeks 13-15): Professional Experience/Final project work

Learning Materials:

- Material depends on each group's project specific needs.

Activities:

- **Collaborative Project: Final Presentation & Paper**
- Discussion forum: Share collaborative research findings and course reflections

Course Calendar

This calendar represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunities. Such changes will be clearly communicated.

Date	Topic	Preparation / Homework	Class Activity/ Assignment(s) Due
Jan 13 Tues.	Course Introduction	NA	Lecture/Introductions
Jan 15 Thurs	A Geographical Approach to the Economy	Ch 1 “Economic Geography” – Dictionary of Human Geography	Group Discussion
Jan 20: Tues.	Economic Discourse: Does “the Economy” really exist?	Ch 2	Group Discussion
Jan 22: Thurs	Considering social-economic alternatives	Harvey: Spaces of Hope – Edalia	Group Discussion GIS Lab 1 Due: 1/25/25
Jan 27 Tues	Uneven Development	Ch 3	Group Discussion
Jan 29: Thurs	The State: Who controls the economy: Firms or Governments?	Ch 4	Group Discussion Storymap 1 Due: 2/1/25
Feb 3: Tues	Environment/Economy: Can Nature be a Commodity?	Ch 5	Group Discussion
Feb 5: Thurs	Labor Power: Can Workers Shape Economic Geographies?	Ch 6	Group Discussion
Feb 10: Tues	Making Money: Why has finance become so powerful?	Ch 7	Group Discussion
Feb 12: Thurs	Commodity Chains: Where does your breakfast come from?	Ch. 8	Group Discussion GIS Lab 2 Due: 2/15/25
Feb 17: Tues	Commodity Chains	NA	Group Discussion
Feb 19: Thurs	Technological Change: Is the world getting smaller?	Ch 9	Group Discussion Storymap 2 Due: 2/22/25

Date	Topic	Preparation / Homework	Class Activity/ Assignment(s) Due
Feb 24: Tues	The Transnational Corporation: How does the Global Firm keep it all together?	Ch 10	Group Discussion
Feb 26: Thurs	Spaces of sale: How and where do we shop?	Ch. 11 <i>Underhill: Why we buy</i>	Group Discussion GIS Lab 3 Due: 3/1/25
Mar 3: Tues	Retail Geography Field Trip	NA	Group Discussion
Mar 5: Thurs	FINAL PROJECT PROPOSALS	FINAL PROJECT PROPOSALS	Group Work on Project Proposals Final Project Proposals Due: 3/8/25
Mar 10: Tues	Clusters: Why do Proximity and Place matter?	Ch. 12 Reading to be added	Group Discussion
Mar 12: Thurs	Gendered Economic Geographies: Does Gender Shape Economic Lives?	Ch 13 <i>Gilbert: Race, Space, and Power: Survival Strategies of Working Poor Women</i>	Group Discussion Storymap 3 Due: 3/15/25
Mar 17: Tues	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK
Mar 19: Thurs	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK
Mar 24: Tues	Ethnic Economies: Do Cultures have Economies?	Ch. 14 <i>Crotty and Bosco: Racial Geographies and Day-Labor Formalization</i>	Group Discussion
Mar 26: Thurs	Consumption: You are what you buy.	Ch 15	Group Discussion GIS Lab 4 Due: 3/29/25

Date	Topic	Preparation / Homework	Class Activity/ Assignment(s) Due
Mar 31: Tues	Economic Geography: Intellectual Journeys and Future Horizons	Ch. 16	Group Discussion
Apr 2: Thurs	Final Project Work	Final Project Work	Final Project Work Storymap 4 Due: 4/5/25
Apr 7: Tues	Final Project Work	Final Project Work	Final Project Work
Apr 9: Thurs	Final Project Work	Final Project Work	Final Project Work
Apr 14: Tues	Final Project Work	Final Project Work	Final Project Work
Apr 16: Thurs	Final Project Work	Final Project Work	Final Project Work
Apr 21: Tues	Final Project Work	Final Project Work	Final Project Work
Apr 23: Thurs	Final Project Work	Final Project Work	Final Project Work
Apr 28: Tues	Final Project Presentations	Final Project Presentations	Final Project Presentations
May 7: Thurs	FINAL PAPERS DUE at 11:00AM	FINAL PAPERS DUE at 11:00AM	FINAL PAPERS DUE at 11:00AM