Economic Geography: Capitalism and Its Others

Economic Geography 16:450:513

Formerly titled: Rethinking Economy

Meeting Time: TBD
Room: TBD
Instructor: Kevin St. Martin, kevin.st.martin@rutgers.edu

Course Introduction

This course will begin from the proposition that how we think about the economy matters. Economic theory does more than describe the economy, it constitutes and actively shapes it. Dominant economic theories represent the economy as homogenous and singularly capitalist thus precluding imagining and enacting economic difference and experimentation. The course will engage with a variety of research currents across several disciplines that are rethinking economy as a diverse and decentered field rather than a single entity or dominant force. For example, economic geographers and other scholars have recently turned their attention toward “alternative economic spaces” and practices, and have done so by drawing on feminist understandings of the economy, anthropological investigations into non-capitalist economies, sociological re-workings of “the market” as a site of contingency rather than law, and post-structural critiques of “development” which posit that “another production is possible.” These are all endeavors that are working to decenter the economy as a single form or identity, and thereby reveal economic spaces and landscapes as decidedly more diverse, differentiated, and open to intervention.

In addition to new representations of economy, the course will explore the variety of experiments and alternative economic practices in motion today. It will integrate examples from the solidarity economy, fair trade, alternative food networks, cooperative production, cooperative and co-housing, reclaiming commons, and bartering and informal markets as cases of organizations, institutions, or movements that are enacting alternatives to the current economic “system.” It will read these cases for their economic difference, relationship to place, implications for community and environmental wellbeing, and transformative potential across spatial scales.

Course Themes

- Representing and Performing Economy
- Alternative and Diverse Economies
- Poststructural Marxian and Feminist Approaches to Economy
- Subjectivity, Space, and Economy
- Economic Diversity and Intersections with Race, Ethnicity, and Indigeneity
- Economies of Community and Environmental Wellbeing
- Commons and Commoning
Learning Goals

- Explore the implications of various social theory perspectives (e.g. poststructuralism, feminism, intersectional theory, performativity, new materialisms) relative to representations and understandings of economy.
- Develop an understanding of economy that foregrounds the diversity of economic practices (past and present) that constitute livelihoods, households, and communities.
- Critically explore a range of case studies that detail instances of economic difference aligned with social and environmental justice.
- Rethink economy as site of ethical decision making, post-capitalist politics, and diverse possibility.

Course Format and Requirements

The format for the course is a seminar that meets once per week to discuss readings, make presentations, and generally learn from each other. The importance of participation cannot be stressed enough. Regular attendance is essential given the nature of the topics and the importance of discussion and the sharing of insights, opinions, references, etc.

Common Readings
There will be weekly readings that will be common to all students. These are designed to anchor classroom discussions but they will not limit possible discussion topics.

Presentation Teams
Each week two students will present their reactions to the readings and will offer points for discussion. Students are expected to produce short presentations based on the week's readings. Presentations may incorporate a variety of media and students are encouraged to experiment (e.g. try MS Powerpoint or Prezi, use maps and graphics, practice oral presentation).

Reaction/reflection papers
1-2 page reaction papers (300-450 words only) will be required each week by those students who are not presenting. They must be type written, double spaced, and 12pt font. They should also include a bibliography and use a standard academic citation method.

Class Discussion
Each week students will be required to come to class with questions from the readings. These questions will be further developed collectively and listed on the board. Questions will form the basis for class discussion. Questions and discussion should touch upon and summarize the major themes from the readings.

Midterm assignment and Final assignment
There will be written (take-home) mid-term and final exams. Exams will be an essay format and will be based on the discussion questions developed in class.

Students will be assessed according to the following scheme:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reaction papers and presentations</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Classroom participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</tbody>
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Readings

Key texts for the course will include the following manuscripts:


Other reading will include articles as well as selections from the following edited volumes:

- De Sousa Santos, B. Ed. 2006. *Another Production is Possible: Beyond the Capitalist Canon*. Verso.
Students will be given the opportunity to choose course readings of interest that fit into course themes throughout the course.

Course Readings by Week (selections from the following, subject to change)

**Week 1: Reframing Economy**


**Week 2: Alternative Economies and Spaces**


**Week 3: Marxist and Polanyian Approaches**


**Week 4: Postdevelopment in Practice**


**Week 5: (Post) Socialism as Praxis**


**Week 6: Feminist Readings, Feminist Interventions**


**Week 7: Performing Markets, Performing Economy**


**Week 8: Race, Economy, and Spaces of Economic Difference**


Hawthorne, Camilla. “Black Matters Are Spatial Matters: Black Geographies for the Twenty-
first Century.” *Geography compass* 13, no. 11 (2019).


**Week 9: A Postcapitalist Politics**


**Week 10: African American Cooperative Histories**


**Week 11: Community Economies in Majority/Minority World Contexts**


**Week 12: Community and Commons Futures**


**Week 13: Case: Fair Trade Rebels**


**Week 14: Case: Reimagining Livelihoods**

Policies and Support

Attendance:
Students are expected to attend all classes; if you expect to miss one or two classes, please let me know as soon as possible.

Academic Honesty: Students are expected to understand and act in accordance with the Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers/. Violations include: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, denying others access to information or material, having someone else complete your course work, and facilitating violations of academic integrity by others. Below are some resources to explore about academic integrity, but please also ask me if you have any doubts.

- Resources for Students: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/resources-for-students/
- General Academic Integrity Link: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/
- The Camden Plagiarism Tutorial (Interactive): http://library.camden.rutgers.edu/EducationalModules/Plagiarism/
- Consult Don't Plagiarize: Document Your Research! For tips about how to take notes so that you don't plagiarize by accident. http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/avoid_plagiarism

Library/Learning Support: Online Learning Tools from Rutgers University Libraries include Rutgers RIOT, Searchpath and RefWorks – you can find them at http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/tutorials. You may also consider visiting the Learning Centers (https://rlc.rutgers.edu/) or Academic Advising for SAS students: https://sasundergrad.rutgers.edu/advising/advising

Student Wellness Services:

- Bias Incident Reporting and Support (DICE): https://diversity.rutgers.edu
  The Division of Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement works to advance, promote and advocate for inclusiveness, diversity, and equity at Rutgers University. If you believe you are the victim of or a witness to an alleged bias incident, you may report the incident, in person or by phone, to the Dean of Students Office, Residence Life staff, or another member of the Student Affairs staff https://diversity.rutgers.edu/resources/bias-and-crisis-support. Individuals may also report an alleged bias incident online at: http://studentaffairs.rutgers.edu/for-students/bias/bias-incident-reporting/

- Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS): (848) 932-7884 / 17 Senior Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 / http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/. University is stressful, particularly when you are juggling many courses, jobs, and family responsibilities – and everything has been dramatically compounded by COVID-19. CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professional within Rutgers Health services to support students’ efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include: individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community and consultation and collaboration with campus partners.

- Crisis Intervention: http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/crisis-intervention/

- Report a Concern: http://health.rutgers.edu/do-something-to-help/
• **Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA):** (848) 932-1181 / 3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 / www.vpva.rutgers.edu/. The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848-932-1181.

• **Disability Services:** (848) 445-6800 / Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Piscataway, NJ 08854 / https://ods.rutgers.edu/. Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation. The documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus’s disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form.

• **Sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, and/or stalking** may be reported using any of the following options:
  o Report to a Title IX Coordinator directly (a list of each campus’s Title IX Coordinator is provided below). Such a report may be made at any time (including during non-business hours) via telephone or email, or by mail to the address listed for the Title IX Coordinator.
  o Report online, using the reporting form at http://endsexualviolence.rutgers.edu/report-an-incident/
  o Individuals may also report crimes of sexual violence to the Rutgers University Police Department.