Fall 2017 - GEOG 4LE3
Geography of the North American Political Economy

Instructor: Dr. S. Mills
Office: KTH 701 B (mailbox KTH 717)
E-mail: smills@mcmaster.ca
Please indicate 4LE3 in Subject Heading

Class meeting time:
Mondays: 11:30-2:20
Location: ABB 166

Office hours:
Mondays: 2:30-3:30 or by appointment

SGES: http://www.science.mcmaster.ca/geo/
Labour Studies: http://www.labourstudies.mcmaster.ca/

Course description
This course critically engages with geographical questions of development and inequality in cities and regions. We will examine why development is uneven, how global changes are connected to local events and the roles of key economic actors in economic activity. The course adopts a political economy approach that sees economic activities as connected to politics, the environment and social relations. In this way, the course will connect economic processes which are often presented as scientific laws that are unchangeable, to the activities and livelihoods of individuals, communities and regions. The course will both familiarize students with key concepts in political economy and examine how they apply to changes in different sectors of the North American economy over the past half century.

Learning outcomes
Students will demonstrate an understanding and critical awareness of key concepts and debates in economic geography and will also learn to: critically evaluate academic literature; apply theoretical knowledge to real world examples; work effectively independently and in groups; develop clear and well-supported oral and written arguments.

Formal evaluation  % of final grade  Due date
Participation  25  Ongoing
Seminar facilitation*  25  In class (sign up sheet)
Article critique*  15  In class (sign up sheet)
Research paper  30  4pm, Nov 22nd or in class Dec 4
Paper presentation  5  In class Dec 4th- Week 12

*Students should schedule either seminar facilitation or article critique on or before October 30th.

Course approach
My approach to teaching is influenced by research on teaching and learning that shows that the ability of learners to recal, apply and evaluate concepts is greatest when they are actively engaged in the learning process. Student participation, both oral and written, is therefore required as the course will be delivered seminar style

Course materials
All course materials are available either through the library or on Avenue to learn as a pdf or hyperlink.
*Note – Students are responsible for downloading the readings well in advance of the class date. Internet failure is not a legitimate excuse for not having completed the readings
Participation

Preparation
In a seminar course, the readings are the course. As such, students must come to each class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. Being prepared includes: reading the assigned readings at least once and coming to class with physical notes (printed out or hand written) that outline points one and two as well as as many of the other points as you are able.

1. A list of concepts that you found new or challenging for clarification and/or discussion
2. Your attempt to identify the main point/argument of the reading
3. A description of the supporting evidence or methods used by the author
4. A comparison of the reading with other readings in the same or preceding weeks
5. An application of some of the ideas from the reading to current events
6. An Informed critique of the author’s analysis
7. Additional questions to pose to the class

Grading
Students will be assessed based on attendance as well as contribution to group discussions and activities. Students participation grades will be based on their ability to both demonstrate a knowledge of the content of the readings (1 through 3) as well as on their demonstration of the higher order activities (4 through 7 above). Note that quantity does not trump quality. A student can earn an A grade by making two or three thoughtful comments that demonstrate a critical engagement with the ideas from the readings each seminar. Alternatively, a student who comments frequently but does not demonstrate any of the learning outcomes above will fair poorly.

*Notes will be collected at the end of class by the instructor to assist with evaluation.

Some activities will have a negative affect on a student’s participation grade. These include: disruptive behavior or speech (see below), missing classes, talking to classmates about things that are not a contribution to the class discussion, general nonparticipation, sleeping during class, coming to class late or leaving early, and/or the use of cell phones, iPads, iPods, mp3 players, or any electronic devices. Note electronic devices (including computers are only allowed for note taking at the beginning of each class when the instructor is providing a summary of the previous week’s concepts).

Format
It is our collective responsibility to foster an open, welcoming, and inclusive learning environment and discussion space. As such, we must commit to honest and critical engagement with the course materials and competing theoretical perspectives, while remaining respectful to each other and our space. Towards this end, this seminar has a zero-tolerance policy on rude, disrespectful, intolerant, and/or offensive behaviour and/or speech. This behaviour will have a significant negative impact on your participation grade. Students who prove disruptive or disrespectful through their actions and/or speech towards the instructor or peers will be asked to leave.

You are not expected to understand 100% of the readings prior to coming to class, but rather to have tried your best to engage with the materials, identify what you do not understand and absorb what you do understand. To this aim we will spend the first hour of each seminar clarifying new concepts and terms that were used in the readings. The second hour of the course will consist of a student-led active learning activity designed to increase comprehension of the readings and link them to real world examples. The last hour of the course will be an open seminar discussion.
Seminar facilitation (25%):  
In groups of two, you will be charged with facilitating part of the seminar and providing a presentation/learning activity. On the Wednesday immediately prior to the scheduled seminar, you and your partner need to provide a ‘long reading summary’ related to the week’s topic and readings. This piece is an extended version of your weekly reading summary submission and aims to prepare you to facilitate the seminar. It should include expanded notes on each article and a larger number of discussion questions for the seminar discussion section. The long reading summary should also explain the week’s presentation or learning activity, how it relates to the week’s topic and readings, and the learning objective/outcome it seeks to achieve.

Your responsibilities for the seminar are as follows:
  a) Co-facilitating the discussion of keyterms/concepts prior to your presentation/activity with the instructor.
  b) Presenting a group learning activity and/or presentation of a real life example to help students understand the concepts presented in the readings.
  c) Co-facilitating a discussion about the readings based on the questions that you have developed as well as those of your peers.

Instructor responsibilities to co-facilitate the seminar:
The instructor will intervene over the course of the seminar to: help the flow of discussion, ensure equitable participation by students (if conversation is being dominated by one or two students) and to provide clarification of terms and concepts.) The instructor will also provide a review of the main concepts from the previous seminar on an as needed basis.

Article critique (15%)
Students will submit an article critique on a week that they are not facilitating the seminar. The article critique is due at the beginning of class on the day where the class is discussing the readings that you have chosen to write about.

Research Paper (30%)
Students will write a research paper of no more than 2500 words (10 pages max). The paper will present a theoretical and empirical analysis of a contemporary problem/case study within the subject area of the course.

There are two different due dates for the research paper: Week 11 and Week 12. Students who submit on or before the first deadline (November 27th in class) will receive substantial feedback on their paper. Students who submit on the second deadline (December 4th in class) will receive minimal feedback.

Submission Requirements:

Formatting
Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are due in-class in hardcopy. All assignments must be submitted using Times New Roman, 12pt font, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins and page numbers. Do not submit a title page. Instead, at the top of the first page include the following heading:

Course code – Name – Student Number – Date Title – Word count
GEOG 4UL3– Clark Kent – 012345678 – Nov 7, 2017 Superheroes and Uneven Development – 733
Assignments that are over the word count limit or that fail to follow the formatting guidelines will be penalized by 5%.

Citation Style
All assignments must use Chicago Manual of Style, 16th edition (Author-Date). Most journals require this citation style, so it is good to get practice with it. No exceptions are permitted.

Failure to do so will result in a penalty of 5%.

Late Submission Policy
Assignments will not be accepted late. Failure to submit will result in a mark of zero. A Note on Reading:
Students are expected and encouraged to ‘back-read’ in this course. That is to say, students should seek to make connections across weeks as well as the themes and topics covered. This is especially important with regard to political economy theory, since students are expected to use these theoretical and analytical tools in their final paper.

Email
Please ask detailed questions about course material and assignments in person. I only use e-mail to answer administrative/organizational questions that can be answered in one sentence. Please include a proper salutation ie. “Hi Proff Mills, Hi Dr. Mills or simply Dr. Mills” and include your name /signature in all e-mails.

All e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Laptop Policy
Seminar: During the seminar portion of the course there is no reason to use a laptop or any electronic device since discussion is the primary form of instruction. Exceptions will be made in unique circumstances - please come and see me if this is an issue for you.

Lecture: In cases where the instructor is providing a summary of concepts or a lecture laptops may be used for taking notes and referring to concepts. Students using laptops for other purposes will be asked to turn their laptops off for the remainder of the course.

1. Academic Ethics
http://www.mcmaster.ca/univsec/policy/AcademicIntegrity.pdf Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, specifically Appendix 3, located on the website above.
The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- Improper collaboration in group work.
- Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

2. **Course Modifications**
   The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

3. **Returning work and mark appeals**
   Work will be returned at scheduled times. Work that is not picked up at the scheduled time will not be eligible for re-marking, and will be disposed of after 14 days. While we make every effort to provide you with a grade that best reflects the quality of your work, re-marking will be conducted at discretion. If you wish to have your work (assignments, examinations, etc.) re-marked, you will be asked to explain in writing, within 14 days after the work is initially returned. The first person to contact for clarification is the person who marked the work.

**Course grading**
A – 80-100% - Student work is excellent in most respects: evidence of extensive knowledge and understanding; substantial reading and study beyond the course content; well organized, shapely focused; contains originality; strong ability to analyse, synthesize and evaluate material.
B – 64-79% - Student work is good: well argued; evidence of reading beyond assigned class material, solid knowledge and understanding of course material; covers most points at a satisfactory depth; well organised yet lacks originality and insight of an A assignment.
C – 55-64% - Student work is adequate: shows some knowledge and understanding of course content; little or no evidence of outside reading; contains errors or omissions; focus wanders from questions at hand; weak use of examples and organisation.
D – 50-54% - Student work is very poor: inadequate, possibly a very short assignment with little material of relevance to the topics covered and possibly serious errors and omissions.

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**Student Accessibility Services:** http://sas.mcmaster.ca MUSC-B107

*NOTE: Disclosure of disability-related information is personal and confidential.*
Student Accessibility Services offers various supports for students with disabilities. We work with full time and part time students. SAS provides or assists students with their academic and disability-related needs, including: Learning Strategies, Assistive Technologies, Test & Exam Administration, Note-Taking Programs, Classroom Accommodations. Please inform the instructor if there are disability needs that are not being met.
McMaster University Policy on Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities & McMaster University Anti-Discrimination Policy

Student Success Centre: http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/ GH-110 905-525-9140 x24254
Provides the following services: student orientation, academic skills, leadership, service-learning, volunteerism, educational planning, employment and career transition.

Student Wellness Centre http://wellness.mcmaster.ca/ MUSC-B101 905-525-9140 x27700 Provides services in: Personal and Psychological Counselling, Mental Health Support, Medical and Health Services

Additional resources:

Globe and Mail, business section, Saturday paper.

### PROVISIONARY CLASS SCHEDULE

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME 1: INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL ECONOMY</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sept. 11th</strong></td>
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<td>- Chapter 2: Capitalism.</td>
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<td><strong>Sept. 18th</strong></td>
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<td>Oct. 9th</td>
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- Chapter 1. Analyzing globalization, 1-28  
**Are global production networks the best lens to understand the contemporary geopolitical economy?** |
| Oct. 23th  | Week 6: Manufacturing: capitalist crisis and creative destruction |
**How has capitalist crisis altered the spatial organization of auto-manufacturing in Canada?** |
| Oct. 30th  | Week 7: Resource industries and uneven development |
**What are the effects of uneven development for resource regions?** |
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<th>Nov. 6th</th>
<th>Week 8: Restructuring and mobility in extractive industries</th>
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<td><strong>What is the relationship between labour mobility and restructuring?</strong></td>
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<th>Nov. 13th</th>
<th>Week 9: Worker control and agency in agriculture</th>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Do workers have agency?</strong></td>
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<th>Nov. 20th</th>
<th>Week 10: Urban development, the creative class and post-industrial spaces</th>
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<td><strong>Do development models that promote creative cities improve well-being?</strong></td>
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<th>Nov. 27th</th>
<th>Week 11: Tourism, neoliberalism and path dependency</th>
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<td>Eaton, E. 2008. From feeding the locals to selling the locale: Adapting local sustainable food projects in Niagara to neocommunitarianism and neoliberalism. Geoforum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 4th</td>
<td>Week 12: Paper presentations</td>
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Note: publications in italics can not be used for article critiques since they are not academic articles.