Instructor: Harald Bathelt  
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Office Hours: Tuesday, 2:30-4:30 PM  
(or by appointment)  
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Lecture Hours: Tuesday, 12:00-2:00 PM  
Lecture Room: UC 179 (University College)  

Course Description:  
This course engages with topics that are closely linked to the study of comparative industrial politics and comparative political economy. It investigates the role and functioning of institutions in the political economy, using a firm-centred perspective that addresses questions of industrial location and organisation, and the formation of industry networks at different spatial levels. Employing an interdisciplinary approach, the course explores how institutions are established in an economic context, how they change, how they impact economic action, and how they are influenced by political action at different scales. This is largely done in a conceptual way by focusing on different theoretical bodies of work that help to explain economic action and interaction. The course provides a framework for economic policy-making by exploring regularities in the behaviour of firms and other organizations. It serves as an excellent preparation for 4th-year undergraduate and graduate courses related to innovation studies, political economy and comparative industrial politics seminars.  

The course applies a relational and spatial perspective of economic action, which emphasises the role of context, path-dependence and contingency. It explores the intentions, opportunities and constraints of economic agency by analysing the interdependencies between institutions and industrial organisation, interaction, innovation, and evolution at different levels, thus exploring the spatial construction of the political economy. Topics discussed in class include: (i) a relational perspective of economic interaction in space, (ii) organisational options of production in the political economy, (iii) innovation, technological, and societal change at different spatial levels, (iv) evolutionary perspectives on economic interaction in space, and (v) issues of economic globalisation and regionalisation.
Course Structure:

Although the course is based on a lecture format, it will provide plenty of opportunities for active student participation in class discussions. Course evaluation will be based on a final exam and a research component, consisting of an annotated research proposal (2 pages plus annotated bibliography) and a research paper (10-15 pages double-spaced).

For the research assignment, students are expected to choose a topic from the context of the course, and apply it to the Canadian and/or US political economy. This should be done from a comparative perspective – e.g. comparing two industries in the Canadian or US economy, or comparing the organisation/evolution of one industry across two or three North American regions or cities. The paper proposal should provide an introduction to the topic, put forward the main question or problem to be addressed, and provide a first structure of the argument advanced. An annotated bibliography should also be attached that gives an overview of the sources to be used. It is expected that the research paper will later be developed from this proposal and the comments received on it. To conserve paper, please print all assignments double-sided.

Assignments are expected to be handed in on the due date in class. The due dates for the assignments are noted below. For lateness, a penalty of 3% per day will be deducted from the mark for the first 7 days. After this 7-day period, papers will no longer be accepted. Students are strongly advised to keep rough and draft work and hard copies of their research papers and assignments before submitting them to the Department. These should be kept until the marked assignments have been returned.

Blackboard:

The course uses the management system Blackboard which helps to establish efficient communication between instructor, teaching assistant, and student. One of its advantages is that students can access their marks at any time on an individual basis. Questions should be directed to the teaching assistants first. An answer will normally be provided within 2-3 days, except for the weekend. In urgent cases, students should discuss issues with the teaching assistant or instructor in person or by telephone.

To access the Blackboard-based course website, go to the UofT portal login page at http://portal.utoronto.ca and log in using your UTORid and password. If you need information on how to activate your UTORid and set your password for the first time, please go to http://www.utorid.utoronto.ca. The Help Desk at the Information Commons and telephone assistance under 416-978-HELP can also answer other related questions.

Once you have logged in to the portal using your UTORid and password, look for the “My Courses” module, where you will find a link to this course website along with links to all your other Blackboard-based courses. At times, the instructor or teaching assistant may decide to send out important course information by e-mail. To this end, all UofT students are required
to have a valid UofT e-mail address. You are responsible for ensuring that your UofT e-mail address is set up AND properly entered in the ROSI system.

**Turnitin.com:**

The course also uses Turnitin.com, a web-based program to deter plagiarism. Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site. If, as a student, you object to using Turnitin.com, please see the course instructor to establish appropriate alternative arrangements for submission of your written assignments. This must be done well in advance of the submission deadline.

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and will be dealt with accordingly. For further clarification and information, please see the Blackboard-based course website and the University of Toronto’s policy on Plagiarism at: [http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources](http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources).

Students should register with the course on the Turnitin.com website in the first week of classes. The information required for registration includes Class Section ID: 4263615 and Section Enrollment Password: pol371. The Class Name is “institutions & spatial political economy 2012”.

**Accessibility Needs:**

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: [accessibility.services@utoronto.ca](mailto:accessibility.services@utoronto.ca) or [http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/](http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/).

**Required Readings:**

The readings for this course consist of two components:


(b) POL 371H Course Kit (information to be provided by the instructor in the first week of classes; see also the information provided on the Blackboard-based course website)
Further details about the course and suggestions from students will be discussed in class.

**Course Evaluation:**

The course evaluation will be based on the following aspects:

- **20%** paper proposal (2 pages plus annotated bibliography) (due class 6: February 14)
- **40%** research paper (10-15 pages) (due class 11: March 27)
- **40%** final exam

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TOPICS: Spring Term 2012

A. Relational perspective of economic interaction in space

1. Introduction: Political-economic geography in relational perspective
2. Institutions in the spatial political economy

B. Organisational options of production in the political economy

3. Classical view of industrial location and policy
4. Transaction cost theory, embeddedness, and networks
5. Firms and states
6. Industrial districts and creative milieus

C. Innovation, technological, and societal change at different spatial levels

7. Learning, knowledge creation, and lock-in
8. Innovation, product-cycles, and long waves
9. Innovation systems

D. Evolutionary perspective on economic interaction in space

10. Organisational ecology and start-up processes
11. Social construction of economic spaces

E. Economic globalisation and regionalisation

12. Temporary and transient spaces in the global political economy
Readings by Topic: Spring Term 2012

Readings marked by an asterix (*) are core readings on each topic which all students are required to read.

1. Introduction: Political-economic geography in relational perspective


2. Institutions in the spatial political economy


3. Classical view of industrial location and policy


4. Transaction cost theory, embeddedness, and networks

*Granovetter, M. (1985): Economic action and economic structure: the problem of
embeddedness. *American Journal of Sociology* 91: 481-510 (ISSN 0002-9602).


5. Firms and states


6. Industrial districts and creative milieus


7. Learning, knowledge creation, and lock-in

8. Innovation, product-cycles and long waves


9. Innovation systems


10. Organisational ecology and start-up processes


11. Social construction of economic spaces


12. Temporary and transient spaces in the global political economy


