Department of Political Science  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  

The Spatial Construction of the Political Economy  
POL 371H 1 S  
Spring 2020

Instructor: Harald Bathelt  
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Office Hours: Monday, 2:30-4:00 PM  
(or by appointment)  
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Lecture Hours: Monday, 12:00-2:00 PM  
Lecture Room: SS 2127 (Sidney Smith Hall)

Course Description:

This course engages with topics that are closely linked to the study of comparative industrial politics, comparative political economy and economic geography. It investigates the spatial construction of the political economy, using a firm-centred perspective that addresses questions of industrial location, organization, innovation and the formation of networks at different spatial levels. Employing an interdisciplinary approach, the course explores how economic interaction differs across space, how it is shaped by institutions in different contexts, how it changes over time, and how it is influenced by political action at different scales. This is done in a largely conceptual way. The course provides a framework for economic policy-making by exploring regularities in the behaviour of firms and organizations. It serves as an excellent preparation for 4th-year undergraduate seminars related to innovation studies, political economy and comparative industrial politics.

The course applies a relational and spatial perspective of economic action that emphasizes the role of context, path dependence and contingency. It addresses the intentions, opportunities and constraints of economic agency by analysing the interdependencies between institutions and industrial organization, interaction, innovation, and evolution at different spatial levels, thus exploring the spatial construction of the political economy. Topics discussed in class include: (i) a relational perspective of economic action/interaction in space, (ii) organizational 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 globalization and regionalization.
Course Structure:

Although the course has a lecture format, it will provide plenty of opportunities for active student participation in class discussions. Course evaluations will be based on a final exam and two research components: a research proposal (2 pages double-spaced plus annotated bibliography) and a research paper (10-12 pages double-spaced). In addition, a 2% attendance bonus will be granted to those students attending at least 10 classes.

For the research assignments, 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. Specifically, students should choose (a) one manufacturing or service industry and compare (b) two cities, regions or states/provinces in Canada and/or the US. With these choices, the research should focus on one of the following topics:

- Comparison of economic start-up dynamics and institutional support
- Comparison of cluster development and policy
- Comparison of innovation systems and policy
- Comparison of growth dynamics and local-global networks

The 2-page paper proposal should provide an introduction to the topic, put forward the main question or problem to be addressed, provide a preliminary structure of the argument advanced, and indicate the conceptual basis used to structure the research. An annotated bibliography should be attached to the proposal 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 should be handed in as a hardcopy on the due date in class (or, if not possible, in the Political Science Main Office, SS Room 3018). 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 receive a grade of 0%. (Special arrangements can only be made based on proper documentation, such as a doctor’s note, and must be arranged with the instructor or teaching assistant in a timely fashion.) Students are strongly advised to keep rough and draft work and hard copies of their research papers and assignments after submitting them to the Department. These should be kept until the marked assignments have been returned and the grades posted on ACORN. The research paper (NOT the proposal) also needs to be submitted online through the Quercus-based course website.

Quercus:

The course uses the management system Quercus which helps to establish efficient communication between instructor, teaching assistant, and students. One of its advantages is that students can access their marks at any time on an individual basis. Questions related to the course should normally be directed to the teaching assistant first. An answer will usually 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 Quercus-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 into the portal using your UTORid and password, you will find a link on the Quercus “Dashboard” to this course website, along with links to all your other Quercus-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 ACORN system.

**Academic integrity:**

Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the UofT degree that you earn will be valued as a true indication of your individual academic achievement, and will continue to receive the respect and recognition it deserves. For further details and information on academic integrity, see https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity.

**Turnitin.com:**

The course also uses Turnitin.com, a web-based program to deter plagiarism and ensure academic integrity. Normally, students will be required to submit their research papers (NOT the proposals) 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 website. The submitted electronic version of the research paper and the handed-in hardcopy must be identical.

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 at least 4 weeks before the submission deadline.

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and will be dealt with accordingly. For further clarification and information on plagiarism, see the University of Toronto’s policy on Plagiarism at http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/using-sources/.
The submission of the final research paper to Turnitin.com is done through the Quercus-based website, without the need to register separately with Turnitin.com. Students have to select “Assignments” from the Quercus course menu and click the “Research Paper” link to upload and submit their research papers (“Submit Assignment”). Help regarding this process is available through portal.help@utoronto.ca (see also the information in the Quercus “Help” menu).

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 at accessibility.services@utoronto.ca or http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/.

Required Readings:

The readings for this course consist of two components:


(b) All required readings are accessible online by clicking the link “Library Course Reserves” on the Quercus-based course website.

Course Evaluation:

The course evaluation will be based on the following aspects:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper Proposal</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bonus</td>
<td>2%</td>
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Further details about the course and suggestions from students will be discussed in class.

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TOPICS: Spring Term 2020

A. Spatial political economy: Relational perspective of economic interaction in space
1. Introduction: Spatial political economy in relational perspective
2. Institutions in the spatial political economy

B. Organizational options of production in the spatial 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. Organizational ecology and start-up processes
11. Social construction of economic spaces

E. Economic globalization and regionalization
12. Temporary and transient spaces in the global political economy
Readings by Topic: Spring Term 2020

Readings marked by an asterisk (*) are core readings which all students are required to read.

1. Introduction: Spatial political economy 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


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. Organizational ecology and start-up processes


11. Social construction of economic spaces


12. Temporary and transient spaces in the global political economy


