Innovation and Knowledge Transfer in City-Regions
POL 454H1S/POL 2394S
Winter Term, 2021-22

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Time: Wednesday, 2:00-4:00 pm
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Course Description:

This course surveys two of the key themes related to the process of innovation in a knowledge-based economy: the process by which new knowledge is generated and effectively transferred to those organizations with the potential to commercialize it; and secondly, the paradoxical relationship between knowledge creation and proximity in a modern global economy. Increasingly the global economy is seen as a knowledge-based one, hence the critical importance of understanding how new knowledge is generated and deployed in the form of new products and processes. At the same time, the more global the economy becomes, the greater the value of proximity, hence the fascination with how to foster the growth of new regional concentrations of knowledge and innovation, such as Silicon Valley. This course surveys the current state of knowledge concerning these processes and explores the implications of this understanding for public policies designed to stimulate knowledge transfer and promote the growth of dynamic and innovative city-regions.

Required Reading: Course Readings are available online through the Library and the Portal.

Course Evaluation:

Evaluation will consist of a research paper of 20-25 pages (70%) for graduates; and an essay proposal (10%) and research paper of 15 to 20 pages (60%) for undergraduates. Seminar participation and presentations will be worth 30% of the grade for all students. Essay proposals are due in class on February 16 for undergraduates. Essays are due at the end of the term. A penalty of 1% per week day will be deducted for late essays and proposals.

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COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- The main objective of this course is to deepen our understanding of the way knowledge is generated and diffused in urban and regional contexts.
- We are also interested in the ways in which firms select from the infinite array of new knowledge to create new products and processes and introduce them to the market.
- Particular attention is focused on how the underlying institutional context for cities and regions shapes and constrains the way in which firms innovate.
- Of particular relevance are the broad processes of interest to evolutionary economists and economic geographers such as path dependency, regional resilience and experimentalist governance in contributing to these processes.
- The course is particularly concerned with questions of urban and regional governance and how these contribute to innovation.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

As we work through this academic content, the course seeks expand your academic skills by meeting several learning objectives:

- Enhancing your knowledge about important aspects of the nature of innovation processes in urban and regional settings.
- Building your comprehension skills (understanding) of key concepts used in the economic geography and governance literature to explain the nature of the innovation process.
- Develop your ability to apply knowledge that has been acquired in class to situations that involve urban and regional economic development.
- Helping foster critical evaluation skills by building a capacity for making judgments about the factors that shaped and constrained the innovation process and the implications for urban and regional development based on reasoned argument (an ability to derive conclusions, justify and verify decisions that are based on evidence and to think without prejudice or bias).
COURSE POLICIES

Office hours:
If you have questions about the readings, seminar discussions, or assignments, office hours are best. No appointment is needed. If you cannot make office hours but would like to meet, I can often chat for a few minutes after the class and can sometimes schedule another meeting time on the spot. Otherwise, contact me by emails to schedule a mutually agreeable alternative time.

Email:
Email is an effective way to communicate for short, quick questions, but extended conversations are best conducted face to face during office hours or in a special appointment.

Keep copies:
Students are advised to keep copies of all their draft work and hard copies of their assignments, including drafts of their assignments, until the marked assignments have been returned.

Plagiarism:
Make sure that the information in your essays and on your tests is presented in your own words. PLAGIARISM is a serious academic offence at the University of Toronto and will be treated according to the rules in the university’s Code of Behaviour.

For further clarification and information, please see the University of Toronto’s policy on Plagiarism at http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/plagsep.html.

Illness and Absences:
For 2021-22, the Verification of Illness (or “doctor’s note”) is not required. Students who are absent from academic participation for any reason (e.g., COVID, cold, flu and other illness or injury, family situation) and who require consideration for missed academic work have been asked to record their absence through the ACORN online absence declaration. Students should also advise their instructor of their absence.

Extensions:
Under extraordinary circumstances, consideration will be given to granting an extension based on an official medical note from a doctor or from the University specifying extreme family circumstances.

Accessibility Needs:
The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, please visit http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility.
TOPICS: First Term

1. Introduction to the course and discussion of outlines
2. Innovation and Local Economic Development
3. Innovation and the Firm
4. Tacit Knowledge, Related Variety and Path Dependence in Regional Development
5. Universities and Regional Economic Development
6. Regional Innovation Systems/Clusters/Learning Regions
7. Regional Resilience and Economic Development
8. Experimental Governance and Regional Economic Development
9. Cities and Innovation
10. Creativity and the Economic Geography of Talent
11. Urban Governance for the Knowledge Economy
12. Knowledge Cities and the Future of Economic Development in the Toronto Region
Topics:

1. Introduction to the course and discussion of outlines

2. Innovation and Local Economic Development


Philip Cooke et al. Eds. *Handbook of Regional Innovation and Growth*

3. Innovation and the Firm


4. Tacit Knowledge, Related Variety, and Innovation in Regional Development


Nonaka, Ikujiro and Hirotaka Takeuchi, The Knowledge-Creating Company: How Japanese Companies Create the Dynamics of Innovation

Nonaka, Ikujiro and David J. Teece, eds, 2000, Managing Industrial Knowledge: Creation, Transfer and Utilization


Jacqueline Senker and Wendy Faulkner, “Networks, Tacit Knowledge and Innovation,” in Rod Coombs et al., eds, Technological Collaboration: The Dynamics of Cooperation in Industrial Innovation

5. Universities and Regional Economic Development

*Shiri Breznitz, The Fountain of Knowledge: The Role of Universities in Economic Development, pp. 16-40


Martin Kenney and David C. Mowery, eds, Public Universities and Regional Growth


Geiger, Roger and Creso M. Sá, Tapping the Riches of Science: Universities and the Promise of Economic Growth


Helen Thorp and Buck Goldstein, Engines of Innovation: The Entrepreneurial University in the Twenty-first Century.


6. Regional Innovation Systems / Clusters/ Learning Regions


7. Path Dependence and Regional Resilience in Economic Development


Fuchs, Gerhard, and Philip Shapira, eds, 2005. *Rethinking Regional Innovation and Change: Path Dependency or Regional Breakthrough?*


**8. Experimental Governance and Regional Economic Development**


9. Cities and Innovation


Storper, Michael, 2013, Keys to the City, Part I


Enrico Moretti, The New Geography of Jobs


10. Creativity and the Economic Geography of Talent


11. Urban Governance for the Knowledge Economy

*Jen Nelles and David A. Wolfe, “Urban Governance and Civic Capital,” manuscript submitted to Territory, Politics, Governance


and


Pike, Andy, Andrés Rodríguez-Pose and John Tomaney, “Institutions: Government and Governance,” in Local and Regional Development, pp. 123-146.


Sellers, Jeffrey M. Governing from Below: Urban Regions and the Global Economy.


12. Knowledge Cities and the Future of Economic Development in the Toronto Region


*Toronto Region Board of Trade. 2020. *Shaping our Future: A Playbook for Rebooting and Reimaging the Regional Economy in Ontario’s Innovation Corridor.* Toronto. September


