**Innovation and Knowledge Transfer in City-Regions**  
**POL 454H1S/POL 2394S**  
**Winter Term, 2023-24**

**Instructor:** David A. Wolfe, Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy  
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**Time:** Wednesday, 1:00-3:00 pm  
**Room:** Room A101, University College

**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 weekday 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: Winter Term

Jan. 17: Introduction to the course / Technological Innovation and Local Economic Development

Jan. 24: Technology, Institutions and Socio-Political Change

Jan. 31: Regional Innovation Systems/Clusters/Learning Regions

Feb. 7: Global Production Networks, Global Innovation Networks and Regional Economic Development

Feb. 14: Tacit Knowledge, Path Dependence and New Path Creation in Regional Development

Feb. 21: Reading Week

Feb. 28: The IT Revolution and Implications for Local and Regional Development

March 6: Universities and Regional Economic Development

March 13: Experimental Governance and Regional Economic Development

March 20: Cities, Innovation, and the Economic Geography of Talent

March 27: Urban Governance for the Knowledge Economy

April 3: Knowledge Cities and the Future of Economic Development
Topics:

Jan. 17: Introduction / Technological Innovation and Local Economic Development


Pike, Andy, Andrés Rodríguez-Pose and John Tomaney, 2006, *Local and Regional Development*, pp. 96-113.


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

Jan. 24: Technology, Institutions and Socio-Political Change


K. Neilson and B. Johnson, Institutions and Economic Change: New Perspectives on Markets, Firms and Technology


J. Rogers Hollingsworth and Robert Boyer, eds, Contemporary Capitalism: The Embeddedness of Institutions

Jan. 31: Regional Innovation Systems / Clusters/ Learning Regions


Feb. 7: GPNs, GINs and Regional Economic Development


**Feb. 14: Tacit Knowledge, Path Dependence, and New Path Creation**


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


Martin, Ron. and Peter Sunley, 2006. “Path dependence and regional economic evolution,” 

Martin, Ron, 2011. “Regional Economies as Path Dependent Systems: some issues and 
implications,” in *Handbook of Regional Innovation and Growth*, ed P. Cooke at al., pp.

Implications of Path Dependence for Cluster Formation,” in P. Braunderhjelm and M. 

Simmie, James, et al. 2008. *History Matters: Path dependence and innovation in British city-


**Feb. 21: Reading Week**

**Feb. 28: The IT Revolution – Implications for Regional Economic Development**

*Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Economy*, ch. 1

*C. Freeman and F. Louca, *As Time Goes By*, pp. 301-335

*Juan Alcácer, John Cantwell and Lucia Piscitello, “Internationalization in the information age: A 
new era for places, firms and international business networks,” *Journal of International 

*Sturgeon, Timothy J. 2003. “What really goes on in Silicon Valley? Spatial clustering and 

Capitalist Accumulation.” *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society* 13(1, 
March): 55–76.

Carlota Perez, *Technological Revolutions and Financial Capital*, pp. 36-59.

Chris Miller, *Chip War*

Margaret O’Mara, *The Code*

Manuel Castells, *The Internet Galaxy*, ch. 3

Industrial Revolution in Global Business*, pp. 119-167.

David Mowery and Timothy Simcoe, “The Internet,” in Benn Steil, et al., *Technological 
Innovation and Economic Performance*

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, *Continuing Innovation in 
Information Technology*, 2016.
March 6: 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.*


**March 13: Experimental Governance and Regional Economic Development**


March 20: Cities, Innovation, and the Economic Geography of Talent


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


Enrico Moretti, The New Geography of Jobs


March 27: Urban Governance for the Knowledge Economy


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.*


**April 3: 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 Reimagining the Regional Economy in Ontario’s Innovation Corridor.* Toronto. September


