

# EAS 396

## Research Methods in Human Geography



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**Instructor:** Dr. Robert J. Summers Fall 2008  
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### **CLASSES**

Time: Tues and Thursday 12:30- 13:50pm.

Location: BUS 2-5

### **CALENDAR DESCRIPTION**

Introduction to the study of the location, distribution and spatial organization of economic activities on both the local and the international scale. Prerequisite: any EAS 192 and any EAS 29X course

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of EAS 396 is to introduce students to institutional economic geography:

By the end of the course students should:

- Be able to discuss the economy in terms of an institutional economics approach (institutional political economy)
- Be familiar with the general factors that encourage or discourage economic growth in different regions and locations.
- Be able to critically review general articles on economic geography
- Be familiar with impacts of economic change that are not directly related with growth, such as equity, culture change, environmental impact, and others.
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### **LECTURE STRUCTURE**

This is a small class which deals with complex topics and as such it will employ a blend of lectures, discussions, and videos. Many of the topics are covered well in the readings and may be better explored in the classroom through group discussion or Q and A sessions as opposed to expository lectures.

## **COURSE OVERVIEW**

The course will be divided into ten main sections, varying in length:

1. Introduction to Key Concepts
2. A Brief History of Economic Activity
3. Approaches to Economic Geography
4. Commodity Chains
5. Institutional Economics/Institutional Political Economy
6. Market Theory
7. Early 20th Century North America and Europe
8. Approaches to Trade
9. Rise of Neoliberal Policies
10. The Developing World
11. Success Stories in South East Asia
12. Trade Agreements
13. Modern Globalization
14. Contemporary Issues and Strategies
15. Local Economic Development

## **REQUIRED READING**

The recommended textbook for EAS 396 is Mackinnon and Cumbers' "An Introduction to Economic Geography, Globalization, Uneven Development, and Place. Readings will be assigned from about 1/3 of this book. Readings from other sources will be provided to students either electronically or by handouts.

## **GRADING**

Student grades will be determined using either of the following breakdowns (students can choose which breakdown they prefer). This is explained further below

Option A: Exam and Paper Focused

1. 6 Small Assignments .....	14%
2. Mid Term Exam .....	26%
3. Research Paper .....	30%
4. Final Examination (TBA) .....	30%

Or

Option B: Exam Focused

1. 6 Small Assignments .....	14%
2. Mid Term Exam .....	26%
3. Final Examination (TBA) .....	60%

### **Assignments (14%)**

There will be 6 assignments assigned throughout the term. These exercises will range from being worth 1 mark to 4 marks each. Examples of assignments include written work, such as a one page reflection on an assigned article, or highlighting work whereby important themes of an article are highlighted. Assignments should take less than one hour per mark (so a 4 mark assignment should take less than 4 hours to complete).

Late assignments will be devalued by 25% of possible total grade if handed in up to 24 hours after the time the assignment is due. They will be devalued by an additional 25% of the total grade per day (24 hour period) following that. Assignments more than 4 days late will not be accepted and a grade of zero will be given to the student.

### **Mid-Term Exam (26%)**

The mid-term exam will consist of definition, fill in the blank, and short answer questions. The mid-term exam will focus upon the material covered in lectures. Questions will not be drawn from the readings unless the topics were discussed in the lectures. The mid-term exam will be held in class on October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2008. The mid-term exam must be taken on the day specified in the syllabus. No excuses for absence from the mid-term exam or the final exam will be accepted other than those specified in Section 23.5.6 of the *University of Alberta Calendar*. In the case of an acceptable absence from the mid-term exam, the instructor will assign further work, have the student write another mid-term, or transfer the grade from the mid-term to the final exam.

### **Optional Research Paper (Option B: 30%)**

Students have the option of choosing to do an optional research paper in the course. Those choosing this approach must be aware that this is additional work that some other students may not choose to do. This option is provided for students who enjoy writing and who would rather have their grade dispersed across a larger number of projects/exams. Topics for the paper will be provided to students by Sept 15<sup>th</sup>. Important: As soon as a student provides me with a finished paper, they are making the choice to go with Option A of the Grading process. They cannot choose to go to option B. Any student not handing in a paper by noon (12pm) on Dec 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008 will be presumed to have chosen to defer the weight of the research paper to their final exam.

### **Final Exam (30% or 60% if no paper handed in)**

The location and time of the final exam is set by the University, but the tentative date is Wednesday December 10<sup>th</sup> at 2pm. The exam will be three hours. The final exam will cover material from the course as a whole.

### **Final Grades**

Final grades at the end of the course will be assigned using a combination of absolute achievement and relative standing in the course and will remain unofficial until approved by the Faculty Council or its designate (i.e. the departmental chair).

## **COURSE POLICIES**

*A Note on Attendance:* Learning in this course will take place largely in the lecture and discussion sessions, thus it is highly recommended that you attend regularly. It is highly unlikely that you will do well in this class without attending. Some class notes may be made available to students, but these will not contain the full material covered or presented in class.

All assignments must be in typed format. I will not accept any handwritten assignments. All written work must be in your own words (i.e. language composed uniquely by you), with the exception of quoted material which must be denoted by quotation marks ("") or by being offset from other text by being inset from the text on both the right and left margins of the paper. The source of the quoted material must be denoted as required in APA style.

If students have an issue or question regarding the grading of an assignment or exam, please provide me with the concern/complaint in writing with the assignment/exam. I will review the grading and return it to the student with any adjustments deemed necessary.

## **STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

Specialized Support and Disability Services (SSDS) provides assistance to University students whose disabilities involve any number of conditions affecting mobility, vision, hearing, learning or mental or physical health. Students who require accommodations in this course due to a disability affecting mobility, vision, hearing, learning, or mental or physical health are encouraged to discuss their needs with Specialized Support and Disability Services (2-800 Students' Union Building). And please feel free to talk to me about any matter related to Special Needs.

## **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

"The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at [www.ualberta.ca/secretariat/appeals.htm](http://www.ualberta.ca/secretariat/appeals.htm)) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University."

*Policy about course outlines can be found in 23.4 (2) of the University Calendar.*