

# **GEOG\*2230: Commodity Chains and Cultures of Consumption**

Department of Geography, Environment and Geomatics

University of Guelph, Fall 2023  
**Prerequisites: GEOG\*1200 or GEOG\*1220**

## **Instructor:**

Dr. Lauren Sneyd  
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## **Teaching Assistant:**

See TA contact announcement on CourseLink

**Office hours:** By appointment. See CourseLink for details.

## **Territorial Acknowledgement**

Acknowledging the territory on which we learn and work honours the relationship between lands/waters and the Indigenous ancestors and stewards of them. This acknowledgement is adapted from the University of Guelph Aboriginal Resource Centre and Student Life:

“The University of Guelph rests on the traditional territory of the Attawanderon people. We therefore acknowledge the Attawanderon people and offer our respect to Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Métis neighbours as the university and community strive to strengthen our relationships with them. We also recognize the significance of the Dish with One Spoon Covenant to this land. The Dish with One Spoon Covenant is a peace agreement made between Indigenous nations before the Europeans arrived. It characterizes our collective responsibility to each other and Mother Earth - we should take only what we need, leave enough for others and keep the dish clean.”

## **Course Description:**

This course is an introduction to the spatial structure, distribution, and social dynamics of economic activity. We will learn about key economic actors, institutions, and relationships and will examine extractive activities, manufacturing, retail, marketing and consumption. The theme of ‘environment and economy’ will run through the course. The course will build your expertise in four areas (the course is roughly divided according to these):

- Conceptual foundations
- Key economic actors
- Governing the Economy
- Social and Cultural Dimensions

Course material, activities, and assignments will reveal interconnections within and between these areas. We will use commodity chain analysis, case studies, discussion and argumentative essay writing to explore and reinforce course material.

### Course Objectives:

By the end of the semester, students should be able to do the following:

- Demonstrate an understanding of definitions and concepts covered in lectures and readings;
- Apply these to examine and assess different case studies and commodity chains;
- Reflect on the roles of different actors (government, firms, individuals) in commodity chains; and,
- Construct and support evidence-based arguments regarding contemporary patterns and processes in commodity production and consumption.

### Student Evaluation:

Seminar activities (4 x 5% each):	20%	Throughout
Commodity Chain Analysis (Assignment #1):	30%	October 20 11:59PM
Evidence-based Essay (Assignment #2):	25%	November 17 11:59PM
Take-home exam:	25%	December 11-15 11:59PM

### Required Text:

Coe, N.M., Kelly, P.F., Yeung, H.W.C. Economic Geography: A Contemporary Introduction (3<sup>rd</sup> ed). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

The textbook is available for purchase via the campus bookstore ([link](#)) and from other book sellers. If you decide to buy it from another source, please be sure that you get the correct edition. All other course readings are available through our Courselink website.

### Class Schedule

Our in-person course will be following a multi-modal (ie. use some virtual or online components) delivery. We will discuss what this may look like on Courselink and in class.

There will be four seminars with the TA that you must attend for this course. Some will be online and some will be in class. The dates and times of these meetings are listed below. You can find out which group you are in on CourseLink. A portion of your grade will be based on these seminar activities. Please note that there will be alternative assignments available for those who are unable to attend seminar activities. Please contact the TA to learn more about the alternative assignments if you meet the required accommodation criteria.

#### Week 1 (Sept 8) Introduction and course organization

#### Week 2 (Sept 13/15) Conceptual foundations: Thinking Spatially and Exploring 'the economy'

**Read:** Chapter 1 - Geography: How do we Think Spatially?