

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

Department of Geography, Environment and Geomatics

University of Guelph, Fall 2024  
**Prerequisites: GEOG\*1200 or GEOG\*1220**

**Scheduled Time: 8:30-9:50, Tues /Thurs**  
Location: MCKN 116

## **Instructor:**

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

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**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 asses 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 (Five throughout the semester):	20%	Throughout
Commodity Chain Analysis (Assignment #1):	30%	October 18 11:59PM
Evidence-based Essay (Assignment #2):	25%	November 15 11:59PM
Take-home exam:	25%	December 9-13 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 five seminars with the TA that you must attend for this course. 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.

**Sept 5 Introduction and course organization**

**Sept 10/12 Conceptual foundations: Thinking Spatially and Exploring ‘the economy’**

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

**Sept 17/19 Conceptual foundations: What is ‘the economy’?**

**Read:** Chapter 2- The Economy: What does it Mean?

**Sept 24/26 Conceptual foundations: Uneven economic growth**

**Read:** Chapter 3 – Dynamics of Capitalism: Why is Economic Growth so Uneven?

**Seminar #1:** History of vaccine development

Tuesday: Groups 1 and 2

Thursday: Groups 3 and 4

**Oct 1/3 Conceptual Foundations: Networks/Connections**

**Read:** Chapter 4- Networks: How is the World Economy Interconnected?

**Oct 8/10 Governing the Economy: States and International Institutions**

**Read:** Chapter 9: States (9.1-9.3),

Chapter 10 - International Institutions

**Oct 17 Key actors: TNC’s and Consumers**

**NOTE:** Tuesday is Fall Study Break. University closed.

**Read:** Chapter 5: Transnational Corporations: How Do They Keep It All Together (pg. 137-142; 156-168)

Chapter 7: Consumers – Who Decides What We Buy?

**Watch:** Abbott, Jennifer, film director.; Gravitas Ventures (Firm), publisher. (2022) The New Corporation : The Unfortunately Necessary Sequel. Website: <https://thenewcorporation.movie>. The film is viewable here (make sure you log in): <https://stream-mcintyre-ca.subzero.lib.uoguelph.ca/uoguelph/title/25552>

**Oct 22/24 Key actors: Labour**

**Read:** Chapter 6: Labour – Are Migrant Workers the New Normal?

**Seminar #2:** Modern Slavery

Tuesday: Groups 1 and 2

Thursday: Groups 3 and 4

**Oct 29/ October 31 Governing the Economy: Environment**

**Read:** Chapter 11 – Environment: Does Global Climate Change Change Everything?

**Nov 5/7 Environment and Economy**

**Seminar #3:** Klein, this changes everything

Tuesday: Groups 1 and 2

Thursday: Groups 3 and 4

**Nov 12/14 Social and Cultural Dimensions: Identities**

**Read:** Chapter 13: Identities – Are Economies Gendered and Racialized?

**Nov 19/21 Social and Cultural Dimensions: Diverse Economies**

**Read:** Chapter 14 – Alternatives: Can We Create Diverse Economies?

**Seminar #4:** Alternatives and degrowth

Tuesday: Groups 1 and 2

Thursday: Groups 3 and 4

### **Nov 26 Course Summary/Exam Review**

**Read:** Anything you missed this semester!

Exam preparation

\*Seminar 5 will be announced in class and on courselink.

**Take home exam:** Take-home exam available Dec 9th, due Dec 13th by 11:59PM

### **Key requirements and details**

**Seminar activities:** There will be five seminars throughout the semester (see class schedule for dates) in which seminar/lab type exercises will take place. An announcement will be made on course link with further details about your assigned seminar. Students are required to attend the classes and complete the activity to the satisfaction of the instructor and/or TA by the end of the class session to receive marks. This will be illustrated to us by you completing the readings and participating in discussion. Students will need to prepare ahead of time for the seminar (e.g. by reading a specific newspaper article and watching a film). If you are unable to attend the seminar you may talk to the TA about an alternative assignment.

**Assignments:** Please download and read assignments #1 and #2 in their entirety. Also make yourself familiar with instructor policies (below) regarding grading, late assignments, and the student responsibility to ensure assignment files successfully upload to Courserlink. Keep reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments as you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

**Exam:** There will be a final take-home exam in this course. More details about the exam will follow.

### **Instructor Policy Statements**

**Illness:** The University will not require verification of illness (doctor's notes).

**Academic Integrity.** Students are expected to undertake this course with honesty and integrity, and to understand what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. If you have uncertainty about how to avoid plagiarism in your writing, please refer to the Academic Calendar, the university-produced tutorial (<https://academicintegrity.uoguelph.ca/plagiarism>) and/or see the course TA, a university librarian, or the instructor. Plagiarism and other types of misconduct will not be tolerated, and any instances will be treated seriously.

**Artificial Intelligence (AI)** AI systems such as ChatGPT poses potential threats to academic integrity. Unauthorized student use of AI systems undermines student learning, the achievement of learning outcomes and violates the University's academic misconduct policies. The University is committed to ensuring that the use of AI in teaching and learning complies with existing policies and regulations that govern academic and scholarly integrity. We continue to engage the University community, including students, as we work to refine academic integrity policies and their intersection with AI tools. We affirm the following:

- 1) Students' work must reflect their unique intellectual capacity and demonstrate the application of critical thinking and problem solving. Unauthorized use of AI to complete assessments violates the fundamental intellectual purposes of the University and does not demonstrate student achievement of course learning outcomes.
- 2) Submission of materials completed by AI, without permission of the instructor, constitutes an offence under the University's academic misconduct policies, either as a form of plagiarism or the use of unauthorized aids.

**Communication.** Please check your university email account and the 'news' section of the GEOG\*2230 Courselink page once every 1-2 business days. Any important information arising throughout the semester will be communicated by these means and the university mandates that students must check them. The instructor and TA will do their best to respond to emails within 1-2 business days. Questions with answers that can be found in course documents will receive short replies (e.g., "please see course syllabus"). Students must use proper punctuation and professional language when emailing the instructor or TA. **Students must include the course code in the subject line of the email or the email may be missed.**

**Assignment submission, grading and grade reviews, and monitoring your courselink gradebook.** It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they are clear on when, where, and in what format assignments are due, to track when in-class activities will occur, and in the case of assignments submitted via courselink, to double-check that the upload has worked successfully and that your uploaded files are not corrupt. When the instructor or TA encounters a corrupt or incorrect file during grading, they will contact the student and offer a chance to re-send; however, late deductions from the original due date will apply.

Course-work related deliverables will only be accepted as scheduled in the syllabus and seminar activity hand-ins will only be accepted on the day of your seminar (until the "quiz" closes). For assignments, a penalty of 10% of the total assignment grade will be deducted when a student misses the deadline; an additional 10% deduction will be made every 24 hours thereafter, including Saturdays and Sundays. Students who encounter problems due to a medical or personal reason should speak to the instructor as soon as possible (ideally on or before the due date).

It is the student's responsibility to check their courselink class gradebook regularly to ensure that all grades are entered and accurate. If any concerns arise with regards to assignment grades or grading, the student must email the instructor for TA. Requests to review or revisit assignment grades must be made within 10 days after they are released in the gradebook; thereafter, it is likely that the instructor will deny requests and that the grade will stand as final.

## **University Policy Statements**

**When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement.** When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the undergraduate calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration.

**Accessibility.** The University of Guelph is committed to creating a barrier-free environment. Providing services for students is a shared responsibility among students, faculty and

administrators. This relationship is based on respect of individual rights, the dignity of the individual and the University community's shared commitment to an open and supportive learning environment. Students requiring service or accommodation, whether due to an identified, ongoing disability or a short-term disability should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) as soon as possible.

For more information, contact SAS at 519-824-4120 ext. 56208 or visit the [SAS website](#).

**Academic Misconduct.** The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor. The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar.

**E-mail Communication.** As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly. E-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students. Include the course code in the subject line of the email. Please follow email etiquette.

**Drop Date.** Please review the 2024 schedule of dates for the he last date to drop one-semester courses, without academic penalty.

**Copies of out-of-class assignments.** Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

**Recording of Materials.** Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—**cannot be recorded, copied or distributed without the permission of the presenter**, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer. This includes all online course content.

**Resources.** The Undergraduate Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs.