

**Geography 302**  
**Global Economic Geographies**  
**Spring 2018**

**Key Information**

Instructor: Kris Olds, Professor  
Department of Geography  
Office: Room 346, Science Hall, 550 North Park Street  
Class: Tuesdays 6:00 - 8:00 pm, Rm 350 Science Hall  
General Office Hours: W 12:00-2:00 pm; or by appointment  
302 Project Hours: W 2:00-4:00 pm; F 1:00-3:00 pm  
Tel: 608-262-5685; 608-514-2265 (mobile)  
Email: [olds@geography.wisc.edu](mailto:olds@geography.wisc.edu)  
Course tech: Given the size and nature of this course this term, we will not be using the Canvas LMS. However, we will be using UW-Madison's versions of Box, Google Docs, and numerous data bases as well as associated citation managers via the UW Library system.

**Introduction**

This intermediate-level 4 credit undergraduate course will examine diverse perspectives on the complex reconfiguration of global economic geographies. We will pay particular attention to the evolving debate about the nature and significance of *globalization*, and the role of economic, political and technological processes in shaping geographically specific development processes.

In terms of broad structure, we initiate the course with a focus on different ways of understanding the concept and phenomenon of globalization, and the uneven spatial outcomes of what the economic geographer Peter Dicken calls *global shift*. We do this via intense engagement with Dicken's seminal text *Global Shift: Mapping the Changing Contours of the World Economy* (7<sup>th</sup> edition, Guilford Press). We will pay particular attention to the role of the state, as well as the role of the firm (especially transnational corporations) and TNC-driven global production networks (GPNs) in enabling and shaping the forces of globalization. Given this level of focus we will also learn about bargaining processes between TNCs and states.

The course will then focus on how global shift unfolds in different sectors (e.g. logistics and distribution services). Given our base in Madison, WI, we have a perfectly timed and nationally significant development initiative – Foxconn Technology Group's recently announced plan to develop a \$10 billion liquid crystal display (LCD) plant by 2020 at a 1,000-acre site in southeastern Wisconsin – to use as a detailed case study. The Taiwanese firm, Hon Hai Precision Industry Co., Ltd., trading as Foxconn Technology

Group, has a fascinating history and has played a significant role in East Asian industrial transformation via the firm's role in global production networks (including those associated with Apple's iPhone). The Foxconn in WI case study is designed to 'make real' relevant forces, processes, concepts, and debates, about global shift. This stage of the course will revolve around engagement with a series of guest speakers (academics politicians, government officials, college/university leaders and staff) with deep expertise regarding the Foxconn in WI development process and debate. Dr. Henry Wai-chung, author of *Strategic Coupling: East Asian Industrial Transformation in the New Global Economy* (Cornell University Press, 2016) will also join us, via his base in Singapore, to contextualize the Foxconn in WI development initiative in global perspective.

The third, and final part of the course will involve the production of an overview report on the Foxconn in WI development process. This report is designed to provide a comprehensive chronology and preliminary analysis of this important example of evolving global economic geographies. In alignment with the Dicken and Yeung texts, we'll be paying attention to sectors (information and communication technology, ICT), the firm, the state, and firm-state relations. We'll also be attempting to understand how the State of Wisconsin is attempting to 'capture value' within global production networks. Given the project-heavy nature of this course, you are expected to allocate a considerable amount of time to the project alone, in association with your fellow students, and via regular meetings with me during Geog 302-specific project hours (see above).

By the end of the course, Geog 302 students should be able to:

- Define global production networks
- Explain the key forces shaping the globalization of economic activity
- Explain the role of the state in economic development, as well as the evolving coevolution of states, firms, and global production networks in East Asian industrial transformation
- Discuss the roles of key stakeholders, and stakeholder relationships, in shaping the Foxconn in WI development process
- Outline the main perspectives on the potential impacts of the Foxconn in WI development project
- Demonstrate how to profile a transnational corporation via the acquisition of empirical data and the development of a coherent case study

## Readings

There are two required texts for this course:

Dicken, Peter (2015) *Global Shift: Mapping the Changing Contours of the World Economy*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition, New York: Guilford Press. ISBN: 9781462519552  
<https://www.guilford.com/books/Global-Shift/Peter-Dicken/9781462519552>

Yeung, Henry Wai-chung (2016) *Strategic Coupling: East Asian Industrial Transformation in the New Global Economy*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press. ISBN: 978-1-5017-0255-6  
<http://www.cornellpress.cornell.edu/book/?GCOI=80140100059400>  
<https://muse-jhu-edu.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/book/45691/>

Additional reports, news stories, etc., regarding the Foxconn in WI issue will be circulated throughout the term as well.

In addition, for those of you with core interests in these types of issues, it is highly recommended that you subscribe to the *Financial Times* newspaper, the best internationally-oriented newspaper regarding the themes we are grappling with in the course. We'll discuss your possible interest in a group subscription during Week 1.

## Course Requirements

Geography 302 a 'learning by doing' style of class. What this means is we are going to engage with relevant issues via a relatively diverse range of activities. The objective is to engage with the topic of global economic geographies via a range of activities, facilitate the acquisition of important research and communications skills, and produce a product you can save and use in your portfolio when you apply for jobs and/or further education.

The mark breakdown is as follows:

Responsibilities	Percentage of Grade
General Participation	15%
<i>Strategic Coupling</i> Book Review	10%
Stakeholder Research, Engagement & Reflections	25%
Foxconn in WI Project	50%

## Weekly Schedule and Required Readings

### Part I – Global Shift

- WEEK 1 -- Tuesday 23 January – Course Launch  
Read: Dicken, chapter 1
- WEEK 2 -- Tuesday 30 January – Patterns/Technologies/Firms/Networks  
Read: Dicken, chapters 2-5
- WEEK 3 -- Tuesday 6 February – Project Studio (incl WSB Librarian)
- WEEK 4 -- Tuesday 13 February -- States/States & Firms/Outcomes & Impacts  
Read: Dicken, chapters 6-11
- WEEK 5 -- Tuesday 20 February – Project Studio  
Read: Dicken: chapters 15-17
- WEEK 6 -- Tuesday 27 February – *Global Coupling* (w Henry Wai-chung Yeung, NUS)  
Note: Yeung book review due by 1:00 pm, Monday 26 February

### Part 2 – Hon Hai Precision (Foxconn) and Wisconsin: Stakeholder Perspectives

- WEEK 7 -- Tuesday 6 March – Session 1
- WEEK 8 -- Tuesday 13 March – Session 2
- WEEK 9 – Tuesday 20 March – Project Studio

### RECESS – 24 March to 1 April

- WEEK 10 – Tuesday 3 April – Session 3
- WEEK 11 -- Tuesday 10 April – Session 4

### Part 3 – Hon Hai Precision (Foxconn) and Wisconsin: Applied Case Study Project

- WEEK 12 - Tuesday 17 April – Project Studio
- WEEK 13 - Tuesday 24 April – Project Studio
- WEEK 14 - Tuesday 1 May – Project Studio  
Project report to be published on Friday 4 May

*My overall course policy is to be relaxed and open to discussion, queries, feedback and calls for assistance or advice – do not be shy if you want to speak in class, see me at just before the start or at the end of class, or arrange to meet in my office!*