



GEOG 510

Economic Geography

4 credits

<https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/130852>

Instructional Mode: Face-to-face

Meeting Time and Location: Mondays and Wednesdays 2:30–3:45pm in Sterling 1335

How credit hours are met: Three hours of classroom instruction, one hour of supervised project work, and an average of six hours of out of class work each week.

Instructor: Dr. Stephen Young

Office Hours: Fridays 2:30-3:30pm in Science Hall 234 or by appointment

Email: sjyoung3@wisc.edu

Course Description

Put most simply, economic geography involves analyzing and explaining *what* kind of economic relations form *where*, and *why*. More specifically, economic geographers are interested in how economic, political, cultural and environmental processes intertwine to produce uneven landscapes of development, prosperity and poverty. As you will see in the opening weeks of this course, this is a heterodox subfield that covers an array of topics and in which a range of theories and methodologies are put to use.

This course is not just about learning how to think critically about the world economy from a textbook, however. It primarily involves *doing* economic geography. As such, between weeks 3 and 14 we will focus our discussion and work on the idea of Universal Basic Income (UBI). In recent years, UBI has gained traction across the world – from Finland, to Namibia, to Iran – as a way to address economic insecurity. The idea itself appears to be simple: all individuals regularly receive a specified amount of money from the state without any conditions attached. Yet, once we delve a little deeper, all kinds of questions present themselves: how much money should people receive? How would the scheme be paid for? Why should rich people receive a basic income? Will people stop working if they receive unconditional money? Do you have to be a resident or a citizen to qualify for a basic income? At what scale should the program operate? And so on.

In the second half of the course, we will explore these questions in more depth by tackling a “real world” question. Namely, if Dane County wanted to pilot a basic income program, how should it going about implementing and evaluating one? As a class, we will compile a report that could be presented to local politicians, policy-makers and NGOs on the practical and political issues that

UBI raises in Dane County. The report will situate the idea in historical context, differentiate UBI from other welfare programs, draw lessons from experiments with UBI that have taken place in other parts of the world, and survey the local social and economic landscape into which such a program might be launched. In the final week of class, we will return to the academic subfield of Economic Geography to see how our own project could challenge or extend some of the current key debates.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course all students should be able to:

- Understand core concepts in economic geography
- Identify key drivers of social and spatial inequalities
- Explain the strengths and limitations of basic income programs using evidence
- Outline an effective way of introducing and monitoring a basic income in Dane County
- Conduct research and communicate findings effectively

Grading

The grading for this course follows the standard UW–Madison rubric. I only award an “incomplete” grade to students who have completed most of the class in good faith but experienced a medical or family-related issue that prevented them from finishing all the coursework on time. Please contact me as early as possible if you feel this applies to you.

Readings

You do not need to buy any books for this course. Each week, we will read a mix of book chapters and articles but I will provide all of these readings for you via the course canvas site. You must complete all the readings by the Tuesday class unless otherwise instructed.

Assessment

You will be assessed in 4 different ways in this course.

Basic Income in Dane County Project (40%)

A significant portion of your grade will be based on your contribution to the group report that we will be putting together over the course of the semester. Everyone will be given specific tasks to do for the report, which could include writing, creating graphs or tables, and editing, depending on people’s particular strengths. We will make sure that the distribution of work is as fair as possible.

Participation in Class (25%)

You will be graded based on your participation in the class discussions. Participating fully means coming to class every week having completed all the readings and ready to talk about the key issues raised by them.

Short paper (20%)

You will submit a short paper to me on March 13, which will be a discussion and synthesis of the one of the topics covered between weeks 3 to 8. Although your paper will be graded on its own merit the idea is that each of these individual contributions will ultimately help to form the first half of the final project report.

Reflection (15%)

At the end of semester, you will turn in a 1000 word paper reflecting on your experience of working on the basic income project. The paper will be an opportunity to share your own thoughts on the desirability and feasibility of the report and also the process of working on a goal-oriented group project.

Academic Integrity

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UW-Madison's community of scholars in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest academic integrity standards. Academic misconduct compromises the integrity of the university. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these acts are examples of academic misconduct, which can result in disciplinary action. This includes but is not limited to failure on the assignment/course, disciplinary probation, or suspension. Substantial or repeated cases of misconduct will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards for additional review. For more information, refer to studentconduct.wiscweb.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform me of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. I will work either directly with the student or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

Diversity & Inclusion

Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.

Weekly Schedule

1a. Jan 23: Introductions

Week 2: An Overview of Economic Geography

2a. Jan 28: History of Economic Geography

2b. Jan 30: Beyond a politics of the anti?

Reading: Selections from Barnes, T. and Christophers, B. 2018. *Economic Geography: A critical introduction*.

Week 3: Genealogies of UBI

3a. Feb 4: A history of the idea of Basic Income

3b. Feb 6: Wages for Housework

Reading: Selections from Federici, S & Austin, A. 2017. *Wages for housework: The New York Committee 1972–77*.

Selections from Weeks, K. 2011. *The Problem with Work: Antiwork Politics and Postwork Imaginaries*

Week 4: Why Now?

6a. Feb 11: Claiming A Rightful Share

6b. Feb 13: Bullshit jobs

Reading: Selections from Graeber, D. *Bullshit jobs: A theory*

Selections from Ferguson, J. 2015. *Give a Man a Fish: Reflections on the New Politics of Distribution*

Week 5: Alternatives to UBI

4a. Feb 18: Basic Income vs. other redistributive programs

4b. Feb 20: Basic income and the welfare state

Reading: Wright, E.O. 2006. Two redistributive proposals—universal basic income and stakeholder grants.

Selections from Murray, C. 2016 ed. *In our hands: A plan to replace the welfare state*

Week 6: Dissenting Voices

5a. Feb 25:

5b. Feb 27:

Reading: Selections from Downes, A. & Lansley, S. 2018. *It's Basic Income: The global debate*

Experiments I: global south

7a. March 4: Africa, Asia, and Latin America

7b. March 6: Project workshop

Reading: Selections from Davala, S. et al 2015. *Basic Income: Transformative Policy for India*
Selections from Downes, A. & Lansley, S. 2018. *It's Basic Income: The global debate*

Experiments II: global north

8a. March 11: Europe and North America

8b. March 13: Project workshop

Reading: Amy Downes & Stewart Lansley 2018. *It's Basic Income: The global debate*

Week 9: Spring break

Week 10: Basic income in Dane County

10a. March 25: The local economy

10b. March 27: Divisions of Labor

Reading: TBD

Week 11: Project work

11a. April 1: No class – work on assignment

11b. April 3: No class – work on assignment

Reading: TBD

Week 12: How to implement a basic income scheme

12a. April 8: Implementation Strategies

12b. April 10: Implementation Strategies

Reading: TBD

Week 13: How to evaluate a basic income scheme

13a. April 15: Evaluation Strategies

13b. April 17: Evaluation Strategies

Reading: TBD

Week 14: Final Project

14a. April 22: Practice presentation

14b. April 24: Presentation of course project

Reading: No reading

Week 15: Revisiting Economic Geography

15a. April 29: Current and future directions

15b. May 1: Course reflections

Reading: TBD