

University of Waterloo
Department of Economics
Econ 483 – Section 1
Topics in Urban Economics
Spring 2016
Monday and Wednesday, 10-11:20 PAS 2086

Instructor Information

Instructor: Ryan George

Office: HH 218

Office Phone: 519-888-4567 ext. 33169 (please do not leave voice mails)

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 12-1 pm or by appointment

Email: r22georg@uwaterloo.ca

The instructor will only respond to emails that include “Econ 483” in the subject line of the message.

Course Description

The course examines the spatial dimension of economic activity by considering the location decisions of consumers and firms, the spatial distribution of industry and employment, and urban land use. We will study how spatial relationships inform many economic behaviours and contribute to urban development, and the reproduction of inequality.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

By following the course students should

- learn how economists have adapted conventional micro- and macro-economic theory to study the economy of cities;
- gain an appreciation for interdisciplinary urban studies;
- develop their capacities to carry out research, write and speak publicly about theories, empirical work and policy questions.

Required Texts

Edward Glaeser, *Triumph of Cities: How Our Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Smarter, Greener, Healthier and Happier*, (New York: Penguin, 2011).

Jan K. Brueckner, *Lectures on Urban Economics*, (Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 2011).

Readings Available on LEARN

- Announcements, guidelines for coursework.

Course Requirements and Assessment

Assessment	Date of Evaluation	Weighting
Short Writing Assignment	Wednesday, May 25 th	10%
Seminar Participation	8 Wednesday meetings	20%
Research Essay		
- Proposal	Wednesday, June 8 th	5%
- Final Paper	Wednesday, July 13 th	27.5%
- Presentation	July 18, 20 25 during class	2.5%
Final Examination	Exam Period (scheduled by Registrar's Office)	35%
<hr/>		
Total		100%

Short Writing Assignment: Review Glaeser Chapter (10% of final grade)

In an essay of 1000-1250 words (4-5 double spaced pages) students will offer a summary of the main themes and an evaluation of the arguments of one *numbered* chapter of Edward Glaeser's *The Triumph of Cities*. A sign-up list will be circulated in class. Due in class Wednesday, May 25th.

Seminar Participation (20% of final grade)

Over the course of the term there will be eight (8) scheduled seminar discussions during the Wednesday meeting time.

Students are expected to prepare for the discussion by doing the assigned reading and preparing notes. Students should be prepared to i) identify the argument of each author, and discuss how effective it is; ii) offer comments on the research questions, general approach taken and the practical and policy implications of the research.

Student evaluation will depend upon the quality of contributions, not just the quantity, meaning the value of comments and questions offered in stimulating and developing discussion.

The discussions are an opportunity for students to improve how they speak on analytical subjects, but they also form part of the process of learning the material.

Research Essay: Proposal, Paper, Presentation (5% + 27.5% + 2.5% of Final Grade)

Students will be expected to prepare a research essay on a topic related to those studied in the course. Essays may be of a case-study, literature review, or empirical research form.

- *The Proposal* (5% of final grade): A proposal for the essay is due on **June 8th** . It should be approximately 500 words in length, and include a *research question*, and a discussion of the relevance of sources and scholarly literature to studying the problem raised. A bibliography must be appended to the proposal.

- *Final Essay* (27.5% of final grade): The research essay itself is due **July 13th** in class. It should be a well-structured essay including an introduction with ***a clear thesis statement***, a main body that includes ***an argument*** in support of the thesis statement and a discussion of sources used, and a conclusion. The length of the essay ought to be between 12 and 14 double spaced pages (12 point font), amounting to approximately 3000-3500 words. All uses of other authors' writing must be clearly documented with footnotes or endnotes, and a bibliography.

- *Research Presentation* (2.5% of final grade): Students will be expected to present their research to the class during the final two weeks of the course meetings.

Final Examination (35% of Final Grade)

The comprehensive final exam will be scheduled during the formal exam period. The exam will require students to write several short essays in which they will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the models relating to urban economics and take a position in debates that were encountered.

Course Outline

Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due
1	May 2	Introduction and Historical Survey	
	May 4	Location of Industry	<i>Lecture:</i> Brueckner Ch.1
2	May 9	Concentration of Industry – New Economic Geography	
	May 11	Seminar #1	<i>Seminar:</i> Glaeser Intro, Ch.1-6
3	May 16	Agglomeration Economies	
	May 18	Seminar #2	<i>Seminar:</i> Glaeser 7-9, conclusion
Short Writing Assignment Due Wednesday May 25th			
4	May 23	HOLIDAY – NO CLASS	
	May 25	Hierarchy of Cities	<i>Lecture:</i> McCann “Spatial Distribution of Activities”
5	May 30	Monocentric City Model	<i>Lecture:</i> Brueckner Ch.2-3
	June 1	Seminar #3	<i>Seminar:</i> Krugman, “Space”, Henderson “Medium Sized Cities”
Essay Proposal Due Wednesday June 8 in class			
6	June 6	Housing Demand and Tenure Choice	<i>Lecture:</i> Brueckner Ch.6
	June 8	Seminar #4	<i>Seminar:</i> Krivo “Housing and Wealth Inequality”, Ley and Tutchener “Immigration, Globalisation and House Prices”
7	June 13 and 15	Housing Supply and Real Estate Seminar #5	<i>Seminar:</i> -Green “The American Mortgage” Wyly et al, “Race, class and Rent” Crook, “Knowing the Area”
8	June 20	Housing Markets and policy	<i>Lecture:</i> Brueckner Ch.7

Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due
	June 22	Seminar #6	<i>Seminar:</i> Skaburskis “Filtering” Kadi “Market Based Housing Reforms”
9	June 27 and 29	Local Public Goods and Finance Seminar # 7	<i>Lecture:</i> Brueckner Ch.8 <i>Seminar:</i> Hamilton, “Zoning”, Inman “Rethinking Federalism”
10	July 4 and 6	Spatial Segregation and Poverty Seminar #8	<i>Lecture:</i> Brueckner Ch.10 <i>Seminar:</i> - Filion et al. “The Entrenchment of Urban Dispersion” - Nechyba and Walsh, “Urban Sprawl”
Research Essay Due Wednesday July 13 in class			
11	July 11 July 13	Cities and Poverty in Developing World Conclusion	Lecture: TBA
12	July 18 July 20	Research Presentations	
13	July 25	Research Presentations	

Course Readings

Jan K. Brueckner, *Lectures on Urban Economics*, (Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 2011).

A.D.H. Crook, Ed Ferrari and Peter A. Kemp, “Knowing the Area: The Management of Market and Business Risks by Private Landlords in Scotland”, *Urban Studies*, Vol. 49(15), 2012: 3347-3363.

Pierre Filion, Trudi Bunting and Keith Warriner, “The Entrenchment of Urban Dispersion: Residential Preferences and Location Patterns in the Dispersed City” *Urban Studies*, Vol. 36 (8), 1999: 1317-1347.

Richard K. Green and Susan M. Wachter, ‘The American Mortgage in Historical and International Context’ *Journal of Economic Perspectives* Vol. 19, No. 4, Fall 2005, pp. 93-114.

Bruce W. Hamilton, “Zoning and Property Taxation in a System of Local Governments,” *Urban Studies* vol. 12, No. 2, 1975, pp. 205-211.

Edward Glaeser, *Triumph of Cities: How Our Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Smarter, Greener, Healthier and Happier*, (New York: Penguin, 2011).

Vernon Henderson, "Medium Sized Cities," *Regional Science and Urban Economics* vol. 27, 1997, pp.583-612.

Robert P. Inman and Daniel L. Rubinfeld "Rethinking Federalism" *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 11(4) (Autumn, 1997): 43-64.

Justin Kadi, and Richard Ronald, "Market-Based Housing Reforms and the 'Right to the City': The Variegated Experiences of New York, Amsterdam and Tokyo" *International Journal of Housing Policy* 14(3) Sept 2014: 268-292.

Krivo, K. J., & Kaufman, R. L. (2004). Housing and wealth inequality: Racial-ethnic differences in home equity in the United States. *Demography*, 41(3), 585–605.

Paul Krugman, "Space: The Final Frontier," *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 12, No.2, Spring 1998, pp.161-174.

David Ley and Judith Tutchener "Immigration, Globalisation and House Prices in Canada's Gateway Cities," *Housing Studies*, vol. 16, no.2 (2001), 199-223.

McCann, "Spatial Distribution of Activities" Chapter 3 in *Modern Urban and Regional Economics*.

Thomas J. Nechyba and Randall P. Walsh, "Urban Sprawl" *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 18(4) Autumn 2004, 177-200.

Andrejs Skaburskis, "Filtering, City Change and the Supply of Low-priced Housing in Canada," *Urban Studies* Vol. 43 (3) March 2006: 533-558.

Elvin Wyly, Markus Moos, and Daniel J. Hammel, "Race, Class and Rent in America's Subprime Cities", in *Subprime Cities: The Political Economy of Mortgage Markets*, (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp.242-289.

Missed Seminars and Late Penalties

If a student is unable to attend a seminar meeting for documented reasons her/his participation mark will be calculated on the basis of the remaining meetings. Late assignments and essays submitted without documented reasons will be penalized with a *5% reduction* in the grade per day.

Electronic Device Policy

To avoid disruptions to the learning environment handheld devices must be turned off during the lecture and laptops must be used strictly for lecture-related purposes. If a student's use of a laptop becomes a distraction for adjacent students that student will be asked to discontinue its use.

Attendance Policy

Lectures are an important component of the learning process and should be attended regularly.

Economics Department Deferred Final Exam Policy

Deferred Final Exam Policy found at <https://uwaterloo.ca/economics/current-undergraduates/policies-and-resources/deferred-final-exam-policy>.

Cross-listed course

Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, a PHIL/PSCI cross-list will count in a Philosophy major average, even if the course was taken under the Political Science rubric.

FACULTY OF ARTS STATEMENTS

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71 - Student Discipline](https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71) (<https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71>)

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70](#)

- [Student Petitions and Grievances](https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70) (https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70), Section 4.

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read [Policy 72 - Student Appeals](https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-72) (https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-72).

Other sources of information for students:

[Academic Integrity website \(Arts\)](https://uwaterloo.ca/arts/current-undergraduates/student-support/ethical-behaviour)

https://uwaterloo.ca/arts/current-undergraduates/student-support/ethical-behaviour

[Academic Integrity Office \(UWaterloo\)](https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/)

https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Note for students with disabilities: The [AccessAbility Services](https://uwaterloo.ca/disability-services) office (https://uwaterloo.ca/disability-services), located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (NH 1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.

Turnitin.com: Text matching software (Turnitin®) will be used to screen assignments in this course. This is being done to verify that use of all material and sources in assignments is documented. In the first week of the term, details will be provided about the arrangements for the use of Turnitin® in this course.

(Note: students must be given a reasonable option if they do not want to have their assignment screened by Turnitin®. See [guidelines for instructors](#) for more information.)