# Economic Geography (a.a. 2021/2022)

## Prof. Alessandro Quarenghi

***OBIETTIVO DEL CORSO E RISULTATI DI APPRENDIMENTO ATTESI***

***Obiettivo del corso***

The aim of the course is to enable students to employ the main concepts and frameworks developed in the discipline to understand and research contemporary, territorially based economic processes at a global and local scale. The course is divided into two parts: the first outlines the history of the discipline by focusing on its research issues; the second part explores the relationship between technological innovation and the global international system, focusing on the global impact of the so-called ‘Fourth Industrial Revolution’ on firm and country competitiveness.

The course will enable students to:

- gather basic knowledge of how economic processes interact on a global, regional, state, and local scale;

- understand how specific agents (Labour, Company, and State) and drivers (Innovation, Entrepreneurship, Accessibility) create and shape economic change;

- be able to interpret the main contemporary global economic geographical processes in terms of their influence on local economic geographies;

- acquire general knowledge of how specific socio-cultural variables (culture, gender, etc.) and contexts influence local and individual economic processes and behaviours;

- interpret country competitiveness data and trends outlined in international reports (World Economic Forum, *The Global Competitiveness Report*; and Institute for Management Development, *World Competitiveness Yearbook*);

- link the process of technological innovation and contemporary new technologies to changes in local and global societies, polities, and economic territories.

The course will apply theoretical knowledge to empirical cases.

***Risultati di apprendimento attesi***

*Conoscenza e comprensione*

Once they have successfully completed the course, students:

1. will have a sound knowledge of the main concepts and frameworks developed within the discipline;
2. will have comprehended how territorially based variables and contexts allow and influence economic processes;
3. will have acquired theoretical tools that enable them to understand specific contemporary global and local economic geographical processes.

*Capacità di applicare conoscenza e comprensione*

Once they have successfully completed the course, students:

1. will have analysed and interpreted local case studies by applying the theoretical knowledge gathered during the course;
2. will have improved their ability to research and work in small teams;
3. will have further developed their presentation skills and refined techniques that allow them to effectively communicate research findings to an audience of peers.

***PROGRAMMA DEL CORSO***

**First part: concepts and issues**

1. Definition of the field and brief history of the discipline
2. Key Agents in Economic Geography: Labour, Company, State
3. Key Drivers of Economic Change: Innovation, Entrepreneurship, Accessibility
4. Industries and Regions in Economic Change: Industrial Location and Clusters, Regional Disparity, Post-Fordism
5. Global Economic Geographies: Core-Periphery, Globalization, Circuits of Capital, Global Value Chains
6. Socio-Cultural Contexts of Economic Change: Culture, Gender, Institutions, Embeddedness, Networks
7. Emerging Themes in Economic Geography: Knowledge Economy, Financialization, Consumption, and Sustainable Development

**Second part: the global international system, competitiveness, and technological change**

1. The international system and innovation
2. Firm and country competitiveness
3. Contemporary technological change and innovation: the ‘Fourth Industrial Revolution’ and its global impact.

***BIBLIOGRAFIA***

Lecture notes and additional material provided by the instructor can be downloaded from the Course Blackboard page. The main references, however, are:

Y. Aoyama, J. T. Murphy, S. Hanson, *Key Concepts in Economic Geography,* Sage, London, 2011.

Cantwell J., “Innovation and Competitiveness”, in Fagerberg J., Mowery D.C., and Nelson R.R. (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Innovation*, Oxford University Press 2006.As a working paper (2003), available at <http://globalbusiness.rutgers.edu/Working_papers/jc_ohib.pdf> and <https://core.ac.uk/reader/205876810>

Milner, H. V., Solstad S. U., *“*[*Technological Change and the International System*](https://scholar.princeton.edu/hvmilner/publications/technological-change-and-international-system)*”,* working paper 2020. Available at <https://scholar.princeton.edu/sites/default/files/technology_diffusion_and_the_international_system.pdf>

O′Sullivan D., Dooley L., *Applying Innovation*, Sage 2009, Chapters 1, 2, 3 (pp. 1-71). Available at <https://tinyurl.com/yxbeegjq>

The World Economic Forum (WEF), *The Global Competitiveness Report 2019*. Available at <http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_TheGlobalCompetitivenessReport2019.pdf>

***DIDATTICA DEL CORSO***

The course will combine lectures, in-class analyses, and discussions of case studies researched and presented (15-20 minutes) by small groups of students (2-3 students per group). Guest speakers will be invited to give guest lectures during the course.

***METODO E CRITERI DI VALUTAZIONE***

The evaluation of the course is based on a final exam and a case study group presentation.

1. Case study group presentation: at the beginning of the course students will be divided into groups (2-3 students per group) and, following the guidelines provided during the course and in agreement with the instructor, choose a case study. The group will be asked to research the agreed case study and deliver a short presentation (15-20 minutes). The presentation will be assessed with regard to research effort and delivery:

* research effort will be assessed in terms of depth of research, comprehensiveness, relevance, reliability and precision of information provided, and originality of findings.

The evaluation of the research effort will account for 25% of the final grade.

* presentation delivery will be assessed in terms of effectiveness and originality.

The evaluation of the presentation delivery will account for 25% of final grade.

Note:

In the exceptional event that a student is unable to participate in the case study group presentation, for reasons known to the instructor and with his prior approval, the student will be asked to choose a case study following the guidelines provided by the instructor and with his agreement, research the agreed case study, and submit a short essay (2000 words, bibliography excluded, 10% tolerance) at the beginning of the final exam. The short essay will be assessed in terms of:

- research effort (depth, comprehensiveness, relevance, precision and reliability of information provided, and originality of findings), which will account for 25% of the final grade;

- structure and academic writing (clarity, use of chosen referencing method, language), which will account for 25% of the final grade.

1. The final exam will be written, and knowledge-based: it aims to assess students’ knowledge of the discipline as covered during the course and in the bibliography provided.

Students will be asked to answer 2 out of 4 open questions. An example of a past exam will be available to students on the Course Blackboard page.

The evaluation will be based on conceptual precision, overall knowledge of the pertinent issues, and ability to link issues and concepts to explain economic geographical processes.

The exam will account for 50% of the final grade.

***AVVERTENZE E PREREQUISITI***

The course is taught and assessed in English, so proficiency in written and spoken English is essential, as is active participation during the course.

Office hours: Monday, 11.30-12.30 during the lecturing weeks; by appointment by email during the rest of the year.