Political Science 344
Politics and Geography

Mondays, 1:14-4:05 PM
400 Encina Hall West
Instructors: Karen Long Jusko and Jonathan Rodden

This course introduces students to basics techniques for the exploration of political and economic geography while covering a range of substantive themes. Students will learn to produce and analyze maps and learn the basics of spatial data analysis, and apply these skills to a range of exciting questions at the intersection of political and economic geography.

This course begins with a brisk overview of attempts to answer some of the basic questions of economic geography and urban economics. What explains the spatial location of workers, firms, and economic activity? What explains the rise (and fall) of cities, suburbs, and residential segregation around the world? Can we draw any general conclusions about the spatial location of income groups?

We start with these questions in part because they have a variety of potential political consequences that have largely been ignored by political scientists, and the goal of the course is to explore them. First, we ask whether lessons from urban economics and economic geography have any implications for the geography of political preferences and voting behavior, and explore the ways in which the geographic distribution of preferences might interact with electoral institutions. Next, we explore geographic underpinnings of sectionalism, regionalism, and political polarization, revisiting and hopefully moving beyond debates about “red states and blue states.” We then examine the implications of geography for theories and empirical analyses of inter-personal redistribution and the welfare state. Next, we focus on contextual and “neighborhood effects” and then the measurement and causes of spatial dependence. We conclude with a week on macro-historical theories in which current political and economic outcomes are the product of some geographic factor whose impact can be traced back hundreds of years.

This is a specialized course for graduate students whose research interests touch upon political geography. Familiarity with basic tools of quantitative analysis, especially regression analysis, is assumed. Students will become familiar with ArcGIS and GeoDa software and learn the basics of creating maps, importing data, and analyzing spatial data. Classroom time will be split between discussions of the substantive readings and building tools of spatial analysis, and students will work individually and in groups with the software and tutorials. While we cover most of the basics that will be useful to political scientists, students interested in a full-fledged spatial statistics course will want to consider Statistics 253 and 352.
Evaluation

Students will be assigned regular “homework” to help in the completion of a larger project, and will present the results of two analytical assignments in class. Students will also write a short final paper that builds on these assignments. The final grade will be calculated as follows:

- Group analytical assignment, 25 percent (to be presented in class on February 1).
- Spatial model assignment, 10 percent (to be presented in class on March 8).
- Final paper, 35 percent (to be submitted by email, by March 19).
- Participation, 30 percent

Students with documented disabilities

Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) located within the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). SDRC staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the SDRC as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066, 723-1067 TTY).

Books and Software

Most of the assigned articles and papers are available on the Coursework website. The following books are available for purchase at the Campus Book Store or online:


Copies of ArcGIS and Extensions (Student Edition) will be distributed in class. ArcGIS can also be downloaded on to Stanford-owned machines (http://library.stanford.edu/depts/gis/download.html).

GeoDa and documentation, including tutorials, can be downloaded here:

http://geodacenter.asu.edu/
January 4  Course Introduction

Introduction to ArcGIS and other GIS resources at Stanford


NB. Julie Sweetkind-Singer (GIS & Map Librarian), Ron Nakao (SSDS), and Ben Stone (Humanities Resource Group) will visit our class to make a lead a discussion of GIS and other data resources at Stanford. Be prepared to outline a research question or topic, and can identify the type of data you would need to pursue this topic.

Homework Assignment: Immediately after the first session, download the software or visit one of the labs and familiarize yourself with the basics.

January 11  Geography, Trade, and Agglomeration Economies


Recommended:


Homework Assignment: Familiarize yourself with the basics of ArcGIS. Find shapefiles and relevant data, and generate a map that displays some aspect of economic production in a country that interests you. Post a pdf version of your map to the discussion section of Coursework.

January 18 Cities and Urban Form
(MLK Day -- Class to be re-scheduled)


Recommended:

January 25  **Substantive Topic: Income, preferences, and polarization**

**Methods Topic: An introduction to exploratory spatial data analysis**


February 1  **Substantive Topic: Districting**

**Methods Topic: Presentation of ESDA**


Recommended:


**February 8 Substantive Topic: Geography, redistribution, and the welfare state**


Recommended

February 15  Substantive Topic: The Source of Spatial Dependence and the Structure of Spatial Interactions

Methods Topic: Spatial Regression, and the Empirical Implications of Spatial Dependence
(President’s Day -- Class to be re-scheduled)


Recommended:


February 22  Substantive topics: Contextual effects

Methods topic: Modeling Context Conditionality


Recommended:


**Homework Assignment:** Work through Exercises 22-25 in the GeoDa tutorial.

**March 1**

**Substantive topics: Is geography fate? Geography, history, and identification strategies**

**Methods Topics: Geo-coding, dealing with historical maps**

*N.B. This week, Alberto Diaz-Cayeros will present a mini-lecture on geo-coding and working with historical maps and data, with examples from his current work-in-progress.*

- Alberto Diaz-Cayeros. TBA.


**March 8**  
*Presentations of Spatial Analysis*