



International Class at UIUC and Politecnico di Milano

International Economic Development Planning

UP 510

Spring 2025

Learning Outcomes

This class is a two-campus collaboration between UIUC with Politecnico di Milano in Milan (Italy). It embraces urban economic development in a global setting, with a special focus on industrial clusters, urban creativity and innovation, and entrepreneurship. In this class, we will learn theories, analytical methods, and development practices in a seminar- and discussion-based fashion from instructors and students from both campuses, introducing a wide range of global development approaches from first-hand experiences. More importantly, in this project-based class, we will team up with cross-continental peers to work on comparative projects, to explore effective ways of urban economic development, apply comprehensive methods to track the performance of different regions, and formulate policy recommendations to improve local development, create jobs, boost innovation, and prompt entrepreneurship.

After successfully completing this course, you will be able to:

- Apply economic development theories and analysis tools to solve concrete planning problems in both domestic and international settings
- Formulate evidence-based policy recommendations and adapt them to different political settings
- Communicate effectively with cross-cultural and cross-discipline audience
- Work effectively in international teams
- Articulate differences and commonalities in the US and Italian perspectives of economic development

You may also be able to:

- Identify benefits as well as challenges in international collaborations and confront challenges with communication and conflict resolution skills
- Identify your own pre-assumptions about the other culture/countries and reflect on how these shape your attitude and behaviors

Resources

All materials, including readings, assignments, and discussion questions are available on the Canvas site.

Course Policies

Kerry Fang (UIUC)

kfang@illinois.edu

Carolina Pacchi

(Politecnico di Milano)

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Class Meets

Wednesdays

8:00–10:50am

227 Temple Hoyne Buell Hall or Zoom

Office Hours

Mondays

2:00-3:00pm

232 Temple Hoyne Buell Hall

Email me ahead of time if you plan to come

Prerequisites

I prefer that you have taken UP545, the introductory economic development course, but it is not required.

Course Communication

I will send notifications through Canvas and students can reach me any time via emails. I respond within 24 hours unless on travel.

Student groups of four will be formed spontaneously to finish the project of this course. I encourage students to form diverse groups (e.g., some members strong in theory, while others strong in practice/cases; students with different backgrounds, etc.). Every group member should do their fair share.

Absence should be avoided whenever possible. If absence is absolutely necessary, talk to me early on in the semester so that I can make proper arrangement. Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, official university activities, and students whose dependent children experience serious illness. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. If your absence with justified cause (e.g., work-restricted religious holy days) coincides with one or more of the major grading events (e.g., presentations, class activates), come talk to me **early on** in the semester so that we can make proper accommodation.

In this course, I will distribute a large number of materials to assist your study through Canvas. These materials are copyrighted and can only be used by you for the purpose of advancing your education. None of the course materials can be shared with people outside of this class.

University Policy

This course also abides by policies of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, such as the Academic Integrity, Mental Health, Community of Care, etc.

Academic Integrity

Students should pay particular attention to Article 1, Part 4: Academic Integrity. Read the Code at the following URL: <http://studentcode.illinois.edu/>.

Academic dishonesty may result in a failing grade. Every student is expected to review and abide by the Academic Integrity Policy: <https://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1/part4/1-401/>. Ignorance is not an excuse for any academic dishonesty. It is your responsibility to read this policy to avoid any misunderstanding. Do not hesitate to ask the instructor(s) if you are ever in doubt about what constitutes plagiarism, cheating, or any other breach of academic integrity.

Mental Health

Significant stress, mood changes, excessive worry, substance/alcohol misuse or interferences in eating or sleep can have an impact on academic performance, social development, and emotional wellbeing. The University of Illinois offers a variety of confidential services including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, psychiatric services, and specialized screenings which are covered through the Student Health Fee. If you or someone you know experiences any of the above mental health concerns, it is strongly encouraged to contact or visit any of the University's resources provided below. Getting help is a smart and courageous thing to do for yourself and for those who care about you.

Counseling Center (217) 333-3704

McKinley Health Center (217) 333-2700

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800) 273-8255

Rosecrance Crisis Line (217) 359-4141 (available 24/7, 365 days a year)

If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

Community of Care

As members of the Illinois community, we each have a responsibility to express care and concern for one another. If you come across a classmate whose behavior concerns you, whether in regards to their well-being or yours, we encourage you to refer this behavior to the Student Assistance Center (217-333-0050 or <http://odos.illinois.edu/community-of-care/referral/>). Based on your report, the staff in the Student Assistance Center reaches out to students to make sure they have the support they need to be healthy and safe. Further, as a Community of Care, we want to support you in your overall wellness. We know that students sometimes face challenges that can impact academic performance (examples include mental health concerns, food insecurity, homelessness, personal emergencies). Should you find that you are managing such a challenge and that it is interfering with your coursework, you are encouraged to contact the Student Assistance Center (SAC) in the Office of the Dean of Students for support and referrals to campus and/or community resources.

Students with Disabilities

To obtain disability-related academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the course instructor as soon as possible and provide the instructor with a Letter of Academic Accommodations from Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES). To ensure that disability-related concerns are properly addressed from the beginning, students with disabilities who require assistance to participate in this class should apply for services with DRES and see the instructor as soon as possible. If you need accommodations for any sort of disability, please speak to me after class, or make an appointment to see me or see me during my office hours. DRES provides students with academic accommodations, access, and support services. To contact DRES, you may visit 1207 S. Oak St., Champaign, call 217-333-1970, e-mail disability@illinois.edu or visit the DRES website at <http://www.disability.illinois.edu/>. Here is the direct link to apply for services at DRES, <https://www.disability.illinois.edu/applying-services>.

Disruptive Behavior

Behavior that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students' ability to learn and an instructor's ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office for Student Conflict Resolution (<https://conflictresolution.illinois.edu>; conflictresolution@illinois.edu; 333-3680) for disciplinary action.

Emergency Response Recommendations

Emergency response recommendations and campus building floor plans can be found at the following website: <https://police.illinois.edu/em/run-hide-fight/>. I encourage you to review this website within the first 10 days of class.

Religious Observances

Illinois law requires the University to reasonably accommodate its students' religious beliefs, observances, and practices in regard to admissions, class attendance, and the scheduling of examinations and work requirements. Students should complete the Request for Accommodation for Religious Observances form should any instructors require an absence letter in order to manage the absence. In order to best facilitate planning and communication between students and faculty, students should make requests for absence letters as early as possible in the semester in which the request applies.

Sexual Misconduct Reporting Obligation

The University of Illinois is committed to combating sexual misconduct. Faculty and staff members are required to report any instances of sexual misconduct to the University's Title IX and Disability Office. In turn, an individual with the Title IX and Disability Office will provide information about rights and options, including accommodations, support services, the campus disciplinary process, and law enforcement options.

A list of the designated University employees who, as counselors, confidential advisors, and medical professionals, do not have this reporting responsibility and can maintain confidentiality, can be found here: wecare.illinois.edu/resources/students/#confidential.

Other information about resources and reporting is available here: wecare.illinois.edu.

Learning Assessments

The grading structure for this course is as follows:

1) Group project (80%)

This course centers around cross-continental joint projects studying topics involving international urban economic development with a comparative perspective from at least two regions around the world. This project applies students' understanding of theory and analysis methods to examine economic development in both countries. It helps develop the skills of critical thinking, team collaboration, comparative study, academic writing, and public speaking. This project starts in the third week and lasts till the end of the semester. It accounts for 80% of the final grade. Completion of this project is further broken down to smaller steps to ensure proper progress along the way and various chances for students to demonstrate their mastery of knowledge and skills. These steps are:

(a) Topic proposal presentation (15%)

Explain the region and key question you will study, provide a clear motivation for this study, and develop an initial methodological plan for conducting this study (including data sources and methods you plan to adopt)

(b) Progress presentation (20%)

Briefly revisit your research question, data, methodology, and present the results so far, and discuss plans for the next steps

(c) Reflective collaboration report (15%)

Report on your collaboration with international peers, how you contributed to each other's learning and projects, offer a comparative perspective related to class and/or project contents, and explain what you have learned from the collaboration.

(d) Final report and presentation (30%)

A complete written-up of the study and a presentation of the entire study

Detailed requirements, sample papers and grading rubrics are available on the Canvas site.

2) Class participation (20%)

Students are expected to participate in class discussion and other activities, such as presentations of course readings, preparing and answering questions related to course readings, and in-class exercises. Participation will be graded by three categories:

√+, converts to a score of 20: very active participation, impressive preparation, original thoughts and strong arguments

√, converts to a score of 14: active participation, very good preparation, valuable thoughts and logical arguments

√-, converts to a score of 7: fair participation, some preparation, thoughts and arguments that contribute to the class activities

To help students prepare for the class discussion, readings will be posted on the Canvas site one week before we cover them in class.

Grades

Grades are not given but earned. Your grade is determined by your performance on the learning assessments in the course and is assigned individually (not curved). If earning a particular grade is important to you, please speak with me at the beginning of the semester so that I can offer some helpful suggestions for achieving your goal. All assessment rubrics and scores will be posted on the course Canvas site. If you have questions about how something was scored, please email me to schedule a time for us to meet in my office.

Late work will **not** be accepted for course credit so please plan to have it submitted before the scheduled deadline. I am happy to discuss any of your grades with you, and if I have made a mistake I will immediately correct it. Any formal grade disputes must be submitted in writing and within one week of receiving the grade.

Final letter grades are assigned based on the percentage of total assessment points earned. To be fair to everyone I have to establish clear standards and apply them consistently, so please understand that being close to a cutoff is not the same this as making the cut ($89.99 \neq 90.00$). It would be unethical to make exceptions for some and not others.

Final Grade Cutoffs					
+	98	+	88	+	78
A	92	B	82	C	72
-	90	-	80	-	70
				D	62
				F	<60
				-	60

Get Some Help!

You are expected to take personal responsibility for you own learning. This includes acknowledging when your performance does not match your goals and doing something about it. If you find yourself in need, please visit Connie Frank CARE Center <https://odos.illinois.edu/community-of-care/CAREcenter> to seek for expert help. Tutoring is available through OMSA <http://omsa.illinois.edu/programs/tutoring/> and writing support is available through the University of Illinois Writers Workshop <https://online.illinois.edu/getting-started/other-important-info-for-online-students/writing-support>. Finally, if you just need someone to talk to, visit <https://counselingcenter.illinois.edu/>.



Course Schedule

All readings and assignments are due before class.

DUE BEFORE CLASS		DURING OUR CLASS MEETING
1/22		Overview • Icebreaking: Introduction of instructors, students, and the course

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of economic development • Comparative study <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blakeley, E., and Leigh, N. G. (2016). <i>Planning Local Economic Development: Theory and Practice</i>. 6th Edition. SAGE Publications, Inc. ISBN: 978-1506363998. Chapter 1.
Module I: Theory		
1/29		<p>(Zoom) Economic Development at National and Global Scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic development perspectives at the local, regional, national and global scale • How to compare competitiveness of regions across nations? <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Huggins, Robert & Hiro Izushi, 2009, Regional Benchmarking in a Global Context: Knowledge, Competiveness, and Economic Development, <i>Economic Development Quarterly</i>, 23(4), 275-293. • Yigitcanlar, T., & Lönnqvist, A. (2013). Benchmarking knowledge-based urban development performance: Results from the international comparison of Helsinki. <i>Cities</i>, 31, 357-369. (Optional) Joint Research Centre-European Commission. (2008). <i>Handbook on constructing composite indicators: methodology and user guide</i>. OECD publishing.
2/5		<p>(Zoom) Urban Theory I (Macro-level): Urban Agglomeration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is urban agglomeration? • How do urban agglomerations contribute to economic development? • How can planners leverage urban agglomerations to achieve economic development? <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glaeser, Edward. (1998). Are cities dying? <i>The Journal of Economic Perspectives</i>, 12(2), 139-160. • Davis, Donald, R., and David E. Weinstein. (2002). Bones, Bombs, and Break Points: The Geography of Economic Activity. <i>American Economic Review</i>, 92 (5): 1269-1289. • The Rise and Fall of Urban Economies - Lessons from San Francisco and Los Angeles (video): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ltfQ8sVwRbc
2/12		<p>Urban Theory II (Industry-level): Industrial Clusters and Innovation Districts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is industrial cluster? What is innovation district? • How do clusters and innovation districts benefit economic development?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •How do planners leverage industrial clusters and innovation districts to encourage economic development? <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Harrison, B. (2007). Industrial districts: Old wine in new bottles. <i>Regional Studies</i>, 41 (S1), S107-S121. •Falck, O., Heblich, S., & Kipar, S. (2010). Industrial innovation: Direct evidence from a cluster-oriented policy. <i>Regional Science and Urban Economics</i>, 40(6), 574-582. •Muro, M. & Katz, B. (2011). The new “cluster moment”: How regional innovation clusters can foster the next economy. •Yigitcanlar, T., Adu-McVie, R., & Erol, I. (2020). How can contemporary innovation districts be classified? A systematic review of the literature. <i>Land Use Policy</i>, 95, 104595.
2/19	Facilitate international group formation	<p>(Zoom) Urban Theory III (Micro-level): Proximity, Face-to-face Communication, Networking, and Urban Third Places</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Why is face-to-face communication important? •What type of cities can encourage social ties and face-to-face interactions? •What can planners do to encourage face-to-face communication? <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Storper, M., & Venables, A. J. (2004). Buzz: face-to-face contact and the urban economy. <i>Journal of Economic Geography</i>, 4(4), 351-370. •Florida, R. (2003). Cities and the creative class. <i>City & Community</i>, 2(1), 3-19 •Fang, L., Adalakun, F., & Goetemann, T. Brewing Entrepreneurship: Coffee and Startups. <i>Journal of Planning Education and Research</i>, 2024, 44(3), 1401-1414
Module II: Analytical Methods		
2/26		<p>(Zoom) Baseline Methods: Location Quotient & Shift-Share Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •What is location quotient? •What is shift-share analysis? •Application of location quotient & shift-share analysis
3/5	Topic proposal presentation due	<p>Spatial Analysis: Hot-Spot Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •What is hot-spot analysis? •Application of hot-spot analysis <p>Reading:</p> <p>Feser, E. J., Koo, J., Renski, H. C., & Sweeney, S. H. (2001). Incorporating spatial analysis in applied industry cluster studies. <i>Economic Development Quarterly</i>, 22(4), 324-344.</p>
3/12		<p>(Guest Lecture) More Statistics: Regression Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •What is regression analysis? •What is difference-in-difference?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Application of regression analysis <p>Readings: TBD by the guest lecturer</p>
3/19		Spring Break; No Class
3/26		<p>(Zoom) Qualitative Analysis: Space, Society, Forms of Production</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Analyzing urban spaces •Analyzing actors and practices •Interpreting their interaction <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silverman (2017) <i>Doing Qualitative Research</i>. Fifth edition. Sage University Press (Chapter 2. What You Can (and Can't) Do with Qualitative Research) • Gehl, B. Svarre (2013) <i>How to Study Public Life</i>. Island press (Chapter 1 Public Space, Public Life: an Interaction)
4/2	<i>Progress presentation due</i>	(Zoom) Progress Presentation
4/9		<p>Cutting-Edge Method 1: Network Analysis and Stakeholder Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •What is network analysis? •Application of network analysis technique <p>Readings:</p> <p>Granovetter, Mark S. 1973. The strength of weak ties. <i>American Journal of Sociology</i>, 78(6): 1360-1380.</p>
4/16		No Class, Professor at UAA.
4/23		<p>Cutting-Edge Method 2: Text Mining</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is text mining? • How to use text mining? • Apply text mining to projects <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to VOSviewer https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9dTWkNRxUtw • Schweitzer, L. (2014). Planning and social media: a case study of public transit and stigma on Twitter. <i>Journal of the American Planning Association</i>, 80(3), 218-238. • Wen, Y., Fang, L., & Hou, J. (2023). Journey of urban concepts: Mapping 30-years' meaning shifts of key terms in JAPA, JPER, and JPL. Working Paper.
Module III: Practical Strategies and Joint Projects		
4/30	<i>Reflective collaboration report due</i>	<p>(Zoom) Development Strategies and Policies in a Comparative Perspective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What commonly used development strategies and polices are there for economic developers?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have they evolved over time? • How do strategies differ across countries and regions? • How can you apply some of them to help with your projects? <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bradshaw, T. K., & Blakely, E. J. (1999). What are “third-wave” state economic development efforts? From incentives to industrial policy. <i>Economic Development Quarterly</i>, 13(3), 229-244. • Lowe, N., & Feldman, M. P. (2018). Breaking the Waves: Innovating at the Intersections of Economic Development. <i>Economic Development Quarterly</i>, 32(3), 183–194. • Fang, L. (2022). How Are Economic Development Districts Riding the Waves of Economic Development Strategies? <i>Economic Development Quarterly</i>, 36(4): 371–384
5/7	<i>Final report due by 5/9 midnight</i>	(Zoom) Final Project Presentation

Note: Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.