REAL 946 – **Topics in Urban Economics**

Tuesday 3.30-6.30. Room: TBD

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Office hours: By appointment.

**Objectives:** This course will explore a range of topics related to current research in urban and regional economics: the modelling and estimation of agglomeration economies; the costs of cities and their internal structure with emphasis on land use regulations and transportation; amenities and the local supply of labour; the sizes and functions of cities. Both theory and empirics will be covered. Special attention will be devoted to building bridges with other fields including labour, international, public, IO, and development.
General issues:

1. This course hopes to achieve several objectives:
- Provide you with substantive knowledge about the economics of cities and regions.
- Foster your technical knowledge about a number of modelling aspects, econometrics techniques, and the link between the two.
- Make you think critically (and hopefully creatively) about existing research.
- Improve your ability to present complex research output in a clear and synthetic way.

2. The course builds on standard microeconomic theory (adapted to the complications introduced by space) and econometrics. Familiarity with standard first year microeconomics and empirical methods will be assumed. Given the range of problems that urban and regional economists face, no single empirical approach is expected to fully dominate.

3. The assessment will be made of:
- One replication assignment (30%) due at the beginning of the 4th class.
  [[Objective: to replicate the main results of a published paper]]
- One final report for a research proposal (50%) due at the end of term
  [[Establish a research question, briefly survey the relevant literature, discuss possible existing data to analyse the question, provide a research design and critically comment it. Preliminary data analysis may also be provided. Alternatively, research proposals for an applied theory paper are also possible. Research proposals need to be discussed with me beforehand.]]
- Class participation (20%)

4. Announcements and other related items will be emailed. Please stay up to date with the course. Most course materials (readings and data) will be posted on Canvas.

5. Class attendance is fundamental. A lot of what you will learn will be during the class and the class will strongly complement everything else.
Syllabus:

1/2. Agglomeration: Theory and empirics


- Further references to be given later.

2/3. Dispersion and land use


- Further references to be added.
4. Local labour supply and amenities


5. Systems of cities


6/7. **Topic to be determined depending on student interest.**

**Transportation**


**Transportation in general equilibrium (theory/quantitative)**


**Land use regulation**

- Baum-Snow, Nathaniel and Lu Han (2021) The Microgeography of housing supply. Processed, University of Toronto.


**Measurement and big data**


**Urban development: slums**


Urban resilience?


- Allen, Treb and Dave Donaldson. 2020. Persistence and Path Dependence in the Spatial Economy. Processed, MIT.


Other possible topics:

- Commuting and value of time (Le Barbanchon, Rathelot, Roulet QJE 2021, Goldsmchitz et al, unp 2021, Bucholtz et al unp 2020)
- Neighbourhood and urban change (Bergma et al. unp. 2020, Chetty et al. unp. 2020.)
- Structural modelling of housing supply (Murphy AEJ 2018, Bayer etal E 2016, Combes et al JPE 2021).
- Land assembly and institutions (Libecap and Lueck JPE 2011, Brooks and Lutz unp 2013).
- Microstructure of housing markets (Diamond McQuade and Qian AER 2019)
- Innovation and cities
- etc.