

GRADING GUIDE – HUMAN GEOGRAPHY (bachelor SGO and master HGO)

Course code and semester-year: SGO2200 spring 2020

Type of examination: [underline the option that applies]

Written school exam / take-home exam / term paper given topic / term paper self-chosen topic

About exams at SGO/HGO: A good examination paper contains solid knowledge, logical and coherent reasoning and a systematic structure. The answer to a discussion question/task must examine, analyze, and connect different parts of the curriculum.

1. The answer responds to the question/task given in a precise and exhaustive way.
2. The answer demonstrates knowledge.
3. The answer must be well written: coherent and using good academic language.
4. Key concepts – those at the core of the answer – must be defined.
5. The answer demonstrates analytical capacity and reflection.

About this course:

This course provides a broad overview of economic globalisation and technological change, and implications for regional development. The main textbook "Global Shift" by Peter Dicken (2015) is supplemented by selected journal articles to provide in-depth insight into theories or cases. Given the complexity and inter-relatedness of sub-topics covered, the examination questions formulated to allow critical thinking and reflection.

Particular circumstances relating to teaching and examination spring 2020:

Campus including the library and the bookstore was closed on March 12 due to the Corona situation. After this, students worked elsewhere and teaching was provided largely in the form of pre-recorded lectures. The learning requirements of the course remain as originally formulated, however, the main book (Dicken, 2015) is not available electronically and students have engaged far less in interactive lectures and seminar activities than planned. Particularly broad exam questions than can be discussed and answered in different ways using Dicken (2015) and/or journal articles available online (and during the exam) have this year been formulated to account for the situation.

About specific questions/tasks:

Six-hour long form home assignment in Inpera. The students are to answer all three questions. The three answers are to be weighted equally. The exam text specified that students should feel free to make cross-references between their answers to individual questions and/or use examples even though neither are expected.

Question 1:

The industrial activities that are present today in regions or countries tend to channel future development in certain directions, at the expense of others. Briefly discuss why this is the case. Elaborate on why some industrial configurations (the actual blend of economic activities/sectors that are present today in a country or region) might be more beneficial for development than others are.

Guidelines

This broad question concerns the basic dynamics of industrial evolution as presented in the curriculum by Hidalgo et al (2007) and Hausmann (2016), extending into Sæther et al (2016) and Fagerberg et al (2018) where the 'innovation system' concept is presented. In Dicken (2015), evolution is discussed explicitly in the context of technological change, and more generally in the context of agglomeration. It is expected that

students understand the importance of diversification and change in territorial industrial structures. Discussions of how such changes are nurtured or constrained by knowledge & technology (and capital) accumulated by the country through past and current industrial activity draw in the direction of a good marking. Benefits and/or drawbacks of current industrial activities can be discussed in light of agglomeration theory and/or the product space/economic complexity approach. Such discussions are required for an excellent grade to be achieved. Discussion of innovation-based competitiveness and of co-evolution between actors and institutions in fostering such competitiveness draw in the direction of high marking.

Question 2:

Describe what is meant by a global production network (GPN). Discuss why different types of GPN linkages might form in different types of regions or countries, and how they can affect development.

Guidelines:

Global production networks (GPNs) can be defined as interconnected nodes and links that extend spatially across national boundaries and integrates parts of national and subnational systems (Coe et al. 2008). Compared to Global Value Chain analysis that focus specifically on transactional relationships centred on the production of a single commodity, GPNs aim to capture interlinked ‘networks of networks’ and concerns not only the interaction between lead firms and suppliers but also the whole range of actors that contribute to influencing and shaping global production. Such include the larger industrial complexes of places that are linked by GPNs, and extend into consumers and labour, governments and civil society organizations. Following Dicken (2015), different types of linkages can be approached from the perspective of different coordination mechanisms (captive, relational, modular, market or hierarchy) and/or different linkage structures (dependent, developmental). Students who discuss the motivation for GPN presence and the type of linkages/structures established in light of key host economy characteristics (e.g. level of development, specific industrial configurations/economic complexity, markets and/or resources offered) should be rewarded with a good grade. Discussions that use e.g. Dicken (2015), Fagerberg et al (2018) and/or Meyer & Sinani (2009) to also discuss different influences from GPNs on host economies (capital injection, local firm stimulation, knowledge diffusion, employment creation) in light of host economy characteristics should be awarded with a high marking.

Question 3:

Discuss how states can work to facilitate industrial development within their territories

Guidelines:

This question aims at what Dicken (2015) refers to as the roles of states as containers, and as regulators. It concerns issues that span from the ideology of state intervention, to specific forms such as technology & innovation policies, FDI attraction/regulation and industrialisation strategies. A distinction is by Dicken made between older industrialized economies, and economies that more recently have industrialized or are in the process of doing so. Supplementary readings on the curriculum (Block, 2008; Sæther et al, 2011; Fagerberg et al 2018) emphasize how states in the former group, in various ways, work to incentivize technological development and maintain innovation systems to facilitate continuous upgrading in the economy based on the capabilities & resources already possessed. Block (2008) follows Hausmann (2016) in recognizing that such strategies assume that a certain level of development has already been reached, and that policies aiming to ‘acquire’ industrial capabilities through e.g. inward FDI promotion might be required in less developed economies. Thus, a good grade should be awarded to students who recognize the different ways that states can promote industrial development. If the candidate is able to distinguish between policies relevant in different contexts (e.g. developed vs. less developed countries), this draws in the direction of a high marking. The same applies if students follow e.g. Hausmann (2016) and discuss the role of the state in acquiring certain capabilities that are ‘critical’ because their absence constitute bottlenecks to further development.

