SIM SUMMER INSTITUTE
ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS, INNOVATION, AND CREATIVE CULTURES

Course Title: “Economic Geographies of Competitiveness and Innovation”

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Class Room and Time: SIM (New Extension Building); Room 2.29; Mondays and Wednesdays;
9am to 12noon; June 27 to Aug 5, 2011

Aims:
• To explore the concepts of competitiveness and innovation from an economic-geographical perspective;
• To develop a multi-scalar perspective on competitiveness and innovation;
• To illustrate the range of theoretical perspectives on competitiveness and innovation;
• To demonstrate the policy applications of competitiveness and innovation in various contexts in Asia, North America and Europe;
• To explore notions of competitiveness, innovation and creative culture in the Singaporean context.

The course will be divided into two major sections. The first section will focus on firm and locational competitiveness as they relate to innovation and creative cultures. By the end of this section, you should be able to understand how firms are shaped, and are shaping the global economic, institutional, and cultural environment. Special attention will be paid to firms in Asia and Singapore.

The second section will explore innovation from an explicitly geographical perspective. It will investigate how innovation can be understood at different spatial scales – namely the national, local/regional and
the global – and also how network approaches can add to our appreciation of innovation processes. Throughout we will be critical about definitions of innovation and their applicability to different sectors and geographical contexts.

**Intended learning outcomes:**
By the end of the course unit, you should be able to:
- Demonstrate an understanding of the concepts of competitiveness and innovation;
- Recognize the geographical underpinnings of competitiveness and innovation;
- Critically evaluate the merits of different theoretical interpretations of competitiveness and innovation;
- Critically evaluate the policy applications of competitiveness and innovation;
- Illustrate your arguments with examples drawn from around the world, with particular reference to Singapore.

During this course unit, you will be encouraged to develop the following abilities and skills:
- Critical thinking, reflection and self-awareness;
- Information handling skills, evaluation and analysis of different kinds of evidence;
- An ability to assess the merits of contrasting theories, explanations and their policy implications;
- An ability to develop, articulate and sustain structured and reasoned written and oral arguments;
- To communicate with a diverse group of people through presentations;
- Inter-personal and group working skills;
- Motivation and self-directed learning.

**Grading**
Your grade for this course will be based on two discussion/presentation elements and two written coursework projects.

Discussions and Presentations 1 = 25%
Project 1 = 25%
Group Presentations 2 = 20%
Coursework project 2 = 30%

Total = 100%
Outline of lectures and readings

**Week 1 (27th June / 29th June): Competitiveness: firm, location, and strategy**

**1A) Firms, Competitiveness and the Creative Industry**


Discussion:
- Read “A Gandhian approach to R&D”

**1B) Competitiveness: Case Studies**

   - Read also Singapore’s “Creative Industries Development Strategy” report

* Students’ Presentations:

Discussion: Video Conference with Founder of MainStay, Medical startup company, Minneapolis
Video: Volkswagen factory in Germany [http://www.youtube.com/embed/nd5WGLWNlIA?rel=0](http://www.youtube.com/embed/nd5WGLWNlIA?rel=0)

**Week 2: (4th July / 6th July): Co-Creation and Competitiveness**

**2A) Co-Creation**


Discussion: Google’s CEO on innovation (conversation with Eric Schmidt about innovations in technology [http://www.charlierose.com/view/interview/458](http://www.charlierose.com/view/interview/458) and the Virtual Choir - [http://www.ted.com/talks/eric_whitacre_a_virtual_choir_2_000_voices_strong.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/eric_whitacre_a_virtual_choir_2_000_voices_strong.html)
(2B) Wikinomics


Discussion: Building a museum of museums on the web
(http://www.ted.com/talks/amit_sood_building_a_museum_of_museums_on_the_web.html)

*Students’ Presentations: Case Studies (The Local Motor, Facebook, Wikipedia, Amazon Mechanical Turks, KIVA, CNN’s iReports)

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Week 3 (11th July / 13th July): Regional Competitiveness: Asia

(3A) Asian Re-innovators


(3B) Regional Competitiveness: Asia and US

* Students’ Presentations


============== Project 1 due ==============

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Week 4 (18th July /20th July)

(4A): Definitions and Theories of Innovation and Knowledge


**4B: National Innovation Systems**


**Week 5 (25th July / 27th July)**

**5A: Regional/Local Innovation Systems**


**Student presentations**


**5B: Global Innovation Networks**


**Student presentations**


**Week 6 (1st August / 3rd August)**
(6A): Service Sector Innovation


Student presentations

(6B): Innovation – Singapore


Student presentations

=============== Project 2 due ===============