This is a practicum class as it revolves around practical research that could be of use to a local government, namely researching entrepreneurial clusters. You will be working in teams that will actually undertake the research. From the 2005 class, the entire Madison, WI team was invited and went to the University of Wisconsin, Madison to do research and present their findings at the business school. Amy Nelson did her Master’s thesis on Madison and co-wrote a paper for the Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Another student in the class Jessica Mullan wrote her Master’s thesis with me on a contract with the InterAmerican Development Bank. The UC Davis map was posted on the UC Davis CONNECT website and was presented at the Davis City Council in December 2007. Finally, the 2009 class prepared a paper that has now been accepted by the top geography journal, the Journal of Economic Geography. Finally, working with Brian Pon, now a geography Ph.D. student, we recently had a paper published in the Journal of Industry, Competition, and Trade.

This class can become a building block for your future or be treated as a fun class where you will learn more about how regions and industries grow and evolve, while being inserted in global value chains. We will work together and discuss your work as we go along. Brad Christensen, a 2nd Year Geography Ph.D. student, will assist in the class. The class is small, so this is an opportunity for you to work closely with a faculty member. Because of the small size, I have chosen four possible research locations, we will consense on as many of these as are necessary to form 3-4 person groups.

1) Research on technology-based firm spin-offs from the University of California, Berkeley
2) Study the development of the hospitality industry cluster in the Napa Valley
3) Examine the current industrial structure in the Napa Valley
4) Study the development of an wine industry cluster in the Russian River Valley in Sonoma County

The goal of this class is to understand the co-development of regions and industries. Because value-adding activity occurs in locations, and, very frequently, locational activity is often connected with other spatially dispersed activities it is necessary to also understand what in the social science and business literature are termed “value chains.” The case studies to be researched in this class were chosen because through the research you will be able to understand the dynamics to which the academic readings. One of the emphasizes in this class is the role of entrepreneurship and local pioneers in organizing and motivating groups to undertake economic activities. Given the increased globalization, communities in developed nations are finding that they must compete against regions in developing nations that can offer cost advantages that are simply overwhelming. However, this is not impossible as the case studies we are proposing are regions that have overcome cost disadvantages and become globally competitive. Understanding the ways in which this happened may be useful in your further community development activities.

The case studies you will be doing hopefully will be of some interest to the communities or groups we will study this quarter.

Class Organization

The class meets once a week. During the first half of class we will discuss the readings and in the second half each group will describe what it accomplished during the week, its plans for the next week, and any obstacles or new ideas it had during the week.

Required reading

Readings are an essential part of the course and are a necessary background for discussion. I have deliberately limited the readings this quarter to provide you with more time for the research portion. If you are interested in any of the topics specifically, I have provided further readings and/or the names of significant contributors to these areas. Many of the
The authors of the articles you are reading have also authored other important papers on similar topics and a Google search will provide you with still more material.

**Course requirements**

The course grade will be based upon a system partly to be determined by the second week of class in discussion with you:

- Participation: 10%
- Midterm Progress Report: 30%
- Term paper: 60%

**Participation:** Participation is an integral aspect of the class because we will be discussing your projects, accomplishments and theoretical gains. All students will have to contribute to make this work. You are also expected to have cogent and coherent comments on the assigned reading because of the importance of the readings to the project.

**Midterm Progress Report:** This will be an update on the progress you have made. You will make a 15-minute presentation concerning the tasks and accomplishments of each group member. In the presentation, you will reflect upon what you have learned and how this correlates with your readings.

**Final paper:** This will be the core of the grading. Each student will write a paper integrating the readings with what they have learned from the research project. The paper will have three major components:

1. The effective use of the readings to think through the genesis, role and operation of clusters and the development and importance of local entrepreneurial support networks. Here, it will be important to consider the role of local jurisdictions, non-governmental players such as regional entrepreneurship advocacy organization, and non-politician civic leader(s).
2. The integration of what you learned from the research experience that can shed light on issues raised in the readings. For example, in the case of the region I studied the local university president catalyzed the formation of the industry by these actions, even while local government seemed entirely unaware of this budding formation etc. Here, the readings and your local learning are integrated.
3. An appendix reflecting upon the research process, what you found effective, what should have been done differently, and how the assignment/class should have been structured differently to provide you with better support etc.

**Class Presentations:** In the final regularly scheduled class session, each group will make an in-class presentation of approximately 40 minutes on their research. This is ungraded, but is a very important part of the class because you can discuss your work with all of us.

**Class Meetings and Readings**

1. **Monday, October 1 – Welcome and Introduction**

Discussion of the class, forming teams, choosing locations.

Slide show on the previous research accomplishments. Articles from previous class efforts:


Johnson, Christopher, Martin Kenney, and Donald Patton. “Searching for a Cluster: Venture Capital Investments in Clean Technology.”
2. Monday, October 8 – State of the Art on Topics of Study


3. Monday, October 15 – Networks, Hierarchies, and Markets


4. Monday, October 22 – Global Value Chains


5. Monday, October 29 – Social Capital and Sociology


OPTIONAL


6. Monday, November 5 -- Innovative Clusters


OPTIONAL: There is an enormous literature on this topic. For example, see the numerous articles in World Development, Economic Geography, and Regional Science in the last decade. More recently, business journals such as Organization Science have also begun to contribute to this discussion. For example, biotechnology has attracted innumerable studies of its networks and geography. Important authors in this area include but are not limited to, in alphabetical order: Maryann Feldman, Maureen McKelvey, Jason Owen-Smith, and Walter Powell.


7. Monday, November 12 – Holiday, No class.

8. Monday, November 19 -- Cluster Support Institutions


OPTIONAL: The research on clusters and networks of venture capital is enormous.


9. Monday, November 26 – Clusters, Knowledge and Coevolution


OPTIONAL: Key authors in cluster studies not assigned include Allen Scott and Michael Storper

10. Monday, December 3 – In Class Presentations