Spring 661: Urban and Regional Economic Development: Global Classroom – Spring 2015

1 Meeting Mondays: 9:30 AM to noon in College Park, USA and 5:30 PM to 8:30 PM in St. Petersburg, Russia

2 Global Class between Urban Studies and Planning, University of Maryland, College Park and the Higher School of Economics, St. Petersburg, Russia

Course description:

Since the 1980s, industrial districts have proliferated worldwide. Industrial districts are government-created, bounded geographical areas that generally support firms in the same industry with public policy, such as industry specific zoning, financial incentives, and/or tax relief. The theory of agglomeration economies explains that economic efficiencies and enhanced productivity occurs where when firms in the same industry co-locate. The concept is that when similar firms co-locate in an industrial district, those firms can reduce production costs and expand markets, and thereby become more competitive in the international market place. The types of industrial districts vary widely, ranging from high technology parks, bio tech parks, heavy industry parks, and medical parks to name some of the more common.

We will create cross-country teams to 1) examine the policies in the U.S. and Russia that create industrial districts, 2) compare these policies, 3) employ cluster analysis techniques to evaluate the extent to which these districts create more competitive industries, with job and output growth, or merely relocate firms from one part of the city to another at public expense. By conducting this class in a Global framework, students will have a chance to compare and contrast the reasons for and success of this development policy in two different political and economic environments. Is this a policy that promotes growth everywhere in both countries, or in just some environments in each country, or in just some industries in each country?

This course will cover the 1) the theory of agglomeration economies, 2) the techniques of shift share analysis and cluster analysis, and give students the 3) theoretical and technical skills to become economic development professionals in their own countries, and 4) a broader understanding of the urban development and management issues we all have in common, independent of the country.

The global class will include 1) a virtual classroom meeting one time a week, 2) on-line modules to teach shift share and cluster analysis, 3) creation of cross-country groups that will communicate on a platform of their own choosing, and 4) learning to create a webinar for presenting findings to public officials in both Russia and the U.S. We will use Adobe Connect to facilitate this joint Russia – U.S. class.

To register, students should get approval from Dr. Marie Howland (mhowland@umd.edu) if they are not a URSP or URPD graduate student.