

SOC 215: Urban Sociology

Syllabus, Winter 2017

Meetings 2:30 – 3:50 on Mondays and Wednesdays
Condon 109

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Course Webpage Available on Canvas

Contact For simple questions, email is the best way to reach me or your TA. We will respond to your messages within 72 hours. For more involved questions or discussions, please use our office hours.

Course Description and Objectives:

The purpose of the course is to introduce students to some of the traditional and new approaches to the study of social life in cities. Topics include theories of urbanism and urban living, segregation, migration, neighborhood effects, gender and identity, and suburbs. Although the primary focus will be on cities in the United States, lectures will occasionally be extended to cities outside of the U.S. Because urban studies draws from additional disciplines, such as economics, geography, and political science, the course will bring in many perspectives when discussing the study of cities. The course expects no prior knowledge about urban sociology or sociology in general.

By the end of this course you should have:

- a) a road map of a good number of research streams in the study of urban sociology;
- b) greater analytical and conceptual skills;
- c) an understanding of some of the major themes and methodological research traditions within the field;
- d) increased abilities for theorizing and researching urban people and places; and
- e) improved abilities to lead and facilitate classroom learning and discussions.

Prerequisites:

There are no prerequisites for this class. This is an introductory course, but it is helpful if you read or watch the news regularly during the quarter. Many examples we discuss in the class will come from current events. You will also be expected to think through problems clearly and communicate your thoughts effectively. This course is designed to help you practice these skills.

Required Textbook:

Gottdiener, Mark, Ray Hutchinson, and Michael T. Ryan. 2014. *The New Urban Sociology (5th Edition)*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Buying a used copy is fine. Any required readings other than chapters from the textbook will be available from the course website.

You should note that some of the ideas discussed in class will not be covered in the required readings. Likewise, some topics in the required readings may not be reiterated in class. It is important that you both do the readings and participate in class and think through how the readings and lectures connect.

Assignments and Grading:

Your course grade will be based on the following:

- **Three Quizzes (25% Each, For a Total of 75% of Your Total Grade)**

There will be three quizzes administered over the course of the quarter, two administered during class time and one during finals week. All quizzes will be non-cumulative. These exams will be mostly multiple-choice, although I reserve the right to also include some short-answer and/or essay questions. Some suggestions for preparing as we go: During each week, review your lecture notes, readings, etc. and try to identify portions of the material that are unclear. Raise these questions during class and we'll clarify the material. Note that all of the material from required readings, class lectures, and discussions is fair game for the exams. **Exams are closed-book, closed-laptop, and closed-phone.**

Make-up exams will be given only to students with a serious and legitimate medical problem or a death in the immediate family. You must contact me at least three hours before the exam if you are going to miss the exam and provide official documentation of the reason for your absence. Make-up exams shall be administered no later than 7 days after the original exam date, except under circumstances where medical problems make this impossible. You should also note that the make-up exam is likely to be appreciably more difficult than the original even if your absence is excused.

- **Three Response Papers (5% Each, For a Total of 15% of Your Total Grade)**

Throughout the quarter, I will post news items on the course website. I expect you to apply at least one concept that you have learned in the course to analyze the news item. How does the news item link to the concepts and theoretical debates we have been discussing? How does the course help us understand the larger context in which the news item takes place? These response papers are to be one page long and will be given full credit if the response piece *correctly* uses *at least one* concept from the class in its analysis.

The due dates for these response papers are non-negotiable. Any response papers turned in after the posted due date will be assessed a 20% late penalty for every day (or partial day) that the assignment is overdue.

- **Participation (10%)**

This course includes extensive in-class activities where you will discuss the details of concepts we learn in class. Your participation in these activities will count towards your grade. On 8 randomly

determined class days, your work from these in-class activities will be turned in. You will receive two participation points for each of the in-class activities that you turn in. To receive full credit for participation in the course, you must turn in at least 5 in-class activities. In other words, if you miss three in-class activities, you still get full participation credit. More than three absences will decrease your participation grade. Missed in-class activities cannot be made up for any reason.

Academic Accommodations:

To request academic accommodations due to disability, please contact the Disability Resources for Students Office, 011 Mary Gates Hall, (206) 543-8924. I will be happy to provide academic accommodations if you have a letter requesting such from the Disability Resources for Students Office. Please feel free to see me after class or during office hours to discuss this.

Things You Should Do to Succeed in This Class:

This course tries to engage you in active rather than passive learning. That means it is not a standard lecture course. *Every* class session will involve in-class activities and discussions. The following things will help you to succeed in this kind of course:

1. Show up to all class sessions and complete all assignments on time.
2. Read and study the assigned texts *before* class. This is where you will learn the content of the course.
3. Treat others in the class with respect. This means turning your cell phone ringer off, not talking loudly during lectures, etc. This also means respecting and listening to other people's viewpoints during class discussions. You are not to engage in personal attacks even when you strongly disagree with another person's point of view.
4. I strongly encourage you to regularly read or watch the news during the quarter. While you do so, think critically about what is being said or not said, as well as what may have caused various current events and what their consequences might be.
5. Most importantly, ASK QUESTIONS. If you are confused, others likely are too. You will be doing your classmates a favor, and make it easier to keep up, by asking the question early.

Academic Honesty:

All students are expected to do their own work on all assignments and exams. Students representing the work of others as their own or cheating in any other way will receive a zero for the assignment in question and may fail the course or be referred to the college for disciplinary action.

Schedule of Topics and Required Readings:

All class formats will be as follows: a combination of lecture, small group discussion, and a review of results from the small group discussion as a class. From time to time, I reserve the right to change the format as needed to fit the goals of the course.

Note that the dates listed below are subject to change. Changes will be announced in class and/or on the class website.

NOTE: NUS = A Reading from *The New Urban Sociology*

Dates	Topics	Required Reading	Due Dates and Notes
1/4	Introduction to the Course, and the Beginnings of Urban Sociology	None	
1/9	The Chicago School	NUS, Chapter 3	
1/11	Critical Urban Sociology	NUS, Chapter 4	<i>No Class on MLK Day, 1/16</i>
1/18	Theories of Urbanism	Re-read NUS, pp. 58-61 Gans, "Urbanism and Suburbanism as Ways of Life"	
1/23	The Community Question, and the Responses to It	NUS, Chapter 8	<i>Response Paper #1 Due at 9am on 1/20 on Course Website</i>
1/25	QUIZ #1		
1/30	Segregation & The Underclass Debate	Henderson, "Apartheid American-Style"	
2/1	Concentrated Poverty and Collective Efficacy	Press, "Can Block Clubs Block Despair?"	
2/6	Drugs, Gangs, and Crime	Harding, "Living the Drama" [Reading and Video]	
2/8	Ethnic Enclaves	NUS, Chapter 7	
2/13	Gender and Sexuality	Foran, "How to Design a City for Women" Florida, "Why Gayborhoods Matter"	<i>Response Paper #2 Due at 9am on 2/17 on Course Website</i>

2/15	QUIZ #2		
2/27	The U.S. Suburbs	NUS, Chapter 6	<i>No Class on Presidents Day, 2/20, and 2/22</i>
3/1	Gentrification	Grabinsky and Butler, "The Anti-Poverty Case for 'Smart' Gentrification" [Parts 1 and 2]	
3/6	Cities Beyond the United States	NUS, Chapters 10 and 11	
3/8	Connections Between Urban Sociology and Urban Planning	NUS, Chapter 12	<i>Response Paper #3 Due at 9am on 3/10 on Course Website</i>
3/14	FINAL EXAM, 2:30-4:20, Condon 109		