

SYLLABUS FOR SOC*K230: THE CITY

Course: SOC*K230

Course Title: The City

Course Schedule: On-Line

Instructor: Steven Neufeld

Office: C142

Phone: 860-215-9457

Email: sneufeld@trcc.commnet.edu

Office Hours: Mon and Wed 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m., and by appointment

I. Course Description and Outcomes

In the 20th century, urban areas became the dominant population centers in the U.S., and they are increasingly becoming the dominant population centers for persons throughout the world. In this course, we will look at urban areas (including both cities and suburbs) both in the U.S. and around the world from a sociological and a global perspective. This involves considering how the growth and functioning of cities are shaped by the national and global capitalist economy, by local and national politics and policies, and by social inequalities, especially social class and racial/ethnic inequalities in our society. Specifically, we will examine:

- The development of cities and suburbs in the U.S. and how they have been shaped by political and economic forces—especially capitalism and the development of the global capitalist economy
- The social organization of U.S. cities in terms of patterns in where different persons and activities and institutions are located
- Social issues and problems confronting U.S. cities, such as affordable housing, homelessness, residential segregation, poverty, and crime
- How urban issues and problems are shaped by and shape broader social inequalities in society, especially social class and racial/ethnic inequalities
- Characteristics of urban politics, including the question of who has political power and whose interests tend to be served in urban politics, as well as the limitations on urban political power
- The causes and consequences of urban growth in the U.S. and around the world
- Cities as causes and potential solutions to global problems of sustainability

II. Learning Objectives and Outcomes

Learning outcomes refer to knowledge, skills, and abilities you should develop from this course. The course will promote the following learning objectives and outcomes:

- Understand and apply major theoretical perspectives in sociology
- Demonstrate knowledge of major concepts and theories in the field of sociology
- Explain the impact of changing technology and changes in the national and global capitalist economy on urban growth and decline

- Demonstrate knowledge of the causes and consequences of various urban problems and issues
- Understand how social inequalities regarding race/ethnicity and social class affect and are affected by urban life and urban social organization
- Analyze and assess local and national policy solutions to various urban problems
- Identify different forms of urban government and explain different theories of urban political power
- Explain the causes and consequences of urban growth
- Understand and explain different ways to promote urban sustainability
- Contrast American cities with those in Europe, Asia, and developing countries

III. Course Readings

The required books for the class are:

- Edward Glaeser, *Triumph of the City: How Our Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Smarter, Greener, Healthier, and Happier*, Penguin Press, 2011
- Jon T. Teaford, *The 20th-Century American City: Problem, Promise, & Reality*, 3rd ed., Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016.

Some of the required weekly readings are available on-line as listed in the Course Schedule in Section VI. If you are unable to access the website by clicking on the link in the syllabus, you should copy and paste the website address into your browser. Assigned weekly readings should be done by the beginning of the week.

IV. Course Assignments and Evaluation

- There will be two written assignments, each worth 10% of your final grade.
- There will be three essay exams, each worth 20% of your final grade.
- You will receive an overall discussion grade based on your weekly discussion grades that will be worth 20% of your final grade.

Your overall discussion grade will be determined by calculating the average of your weekly discussion grades. Each week, you will receive a letter grade each week based on the number of posts you make, the quality of your posts, and how consistently you post throughout the week. Overall, your weekly discussion grade will depend on various factors such as:

- how long your posts are and how much effort you seem to be putting into them
- how relevant and responsive they are to the topics and readings that I ask you to in my posts
- the use of appropriate spelling, grammar, and language for a college course
- whether they are introducing new information (such as relevant websites, for example) and points that enhance the discussion
- whether you post intermittently throughout the week, as opposed to making all your posts at one time, especially at the end of the week

In order to receive an A grade for the week, you will need to post at least 3 times each week, and your first post must be made by midnight the day after the weekly discussion forum is opened. However, this alone will not necessarily guarantee an A if the above criteria are not satisfactorily met, and you are free to make more than 3 posts a week to help ensure that you receive a good grade. You are free to respond to the posts of other students, but you should address questions and topics raised by me throughout the week. Weekly discussions will be closed by 9:00 a.m. the following week when a new weekly learning module is posted.

All assignments and exams involve written work, and poor quality writing, including poor spelling and grammar, will negatively affect your grade. **You should proof read all work before it is submitted and use the Spell Check and Thesaurus functions that are available in Word or other software programs.** If you need assistance with your writing skills, I strongly urge you to visit The Writing Center in room C117.

All assignments and exams are due at specified times. Work received up to one day late will receive up to a partial letter grade deduction. Work received more than one day late will receive a full letter grade deduction. Once I have graded and returned assignments and exams, late work will no longer be accepted without my permission. **Failure to complete assignments and/or exams will hurt your final grade more than submitted work that receives an F but reflects appropriate effort.**

Students are expected to follow to standards of academic honesty. If there is a question about cheating or plagiarism, the college's **Academic Integrity Policy** (revised 8 January 2003) will be followed.

If you have a disability of any kind that may affect your progress in this course, please contact Matt Liscum, the TRCC Disability Service Provider (DSP) at 860-383-5240. His office is Room A-119 in the Counseling and Advising Office. Please note that accommodations cannot be provided until you provide written authorization from a DSP.

V. Cell Phone Policy

Students are notified that cellular phones and beepers are allowed in class or in the Learning Resource Center only if they are turned off or turned to a silent mode. Under no circumstances are phones to be answered in class. When there are extenuating circumstances that require that a student be available by phone or beeper, the student should speak to the instructor prior to class, so that together they can arrive at an agreement.

VI. Course Schedule

The following schedule is a tentative list of the lecture topics that are intended to be covered each week as well as the required readings for the week. Since the schedule is tentative, the dates for specific topics and readings may be revised during the course. Changes to the schedule will be announced in class.

Part I: The Development of the U.S. City

Sunday 1/22 Week 1: Theoretical Perspectives on the City

Readings:

- Glaeser, *Triumph of the City*, Introduction, pp. 1-15
- Wayne G. Lutters and Mark S. Ackerman, “An Introduction to the Chicago School of Sociology” at http://userpages.umbc.edu/~lutters/pubs/1996_SWLNote96-1_Lutters,Ackerman.pdf
- Scott Rodgers, “Urban Growth Machine”, International Encyclopedia of Human Geography, at http://www.publiclysited.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/Rodgers_2009_Urban_Growth_Machine.pdf
- Robert Kunzig, “The City Solution: Why Cities are the Best Cure for Our Planet’s Growing Pains”, *National Geographic*, December, 2011, at <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2011/12/city-solutions/kunzig-text>

Sunday 1/29 Week 2: The Industrial City

Readings:

- Teaford, *20th-Century American City*, chapters 1 and 2, pp. 1-44; chapter 3, pp. 45-63.

Sunday 2/5 Week 3: Suburbanization and the Decline of the Industrial City

Readings:

- Teaford, *20th-Century American City*, chapter 3 pp. 63-75; chapter 4 pp. 76-98; and chapter 5 pp. 99-129

Assignment 1 posted; due Sunday 2/19 by 9:00 a.m.

Sunday 2/12 Week 4: Central City Decline and Federal Policy towards Cities

Readings:

- Teaford, *20th-Century American City*, chapter 5 pp. 130-153
- Tony Favro, “Cities are the Most Neglected Layer of American Government”, at <http://www.citymayors.com/government/us-cities-government.html>
- Knowledge@Wharton, “America’s Big Cities: If They Get So Much Aid, Why are They Always in So Much Trouble?”, University of Pennsylvania, on-line at <http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/americas-big-cities-if-they-get-so-much-aid-why-are-they-always-in-trouble/>

Sunday 2/19 Week 5: Post-Industrialism and The City Today

Readings:

- Teaford, *20th-Century American City*, chapters 7 and 8 pp. 154-198

- Glaeser, *Triumph of the City*, chapter 2, pp. 41-67

Part II. Urban Problems

Sunday 2/26 Week 6: Urban Poverty

Readings:

- Elizabeth Kneebone, “U.S. Concentrated Poverty in the Wake of the Great Recession”, The Brookings Institution, on-line at <http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports2/2016/03/31-concentrated-poverty-recession-kneebone-holmes>
- Marc Parry, “The Neighborhood Effect”, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 5, 2012, at <http://chronicle.com/article/The-Neighborhood-Effect/135492/>
- Tony Favro, “Black American Men Hardest Hit by Dysfunctional U.S. Inner Cities”, at http://www.citymayors.com/society/us_blackmen.html

First exam posted; due Sunday 3/5 by 9:00 a.m.

Sunday 3/5 Week 7: Residential Segregation and Housing Discrimination

Readings:

- Glaeser, *Triumph of the City*, pp. 81-91
- Thomas Edsall, “Whose Neighborhood Is It?”, *The New York Times*, September 9, 2015, at <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/09/opinion/whose-neighborhood-is-it.html?action=click&pgtype=Homepage&module=opinion-c-col-right-region®ion=opinion-c-col-right-region&WT.nav=opinion-c-col-right-region>
- James Carr, “The Complexity of Segregation: Why It Continues 30 Years after the Enactment of the Fair Housing Act”, *Cityscape: A Journal of Policy Development and Research*, Vol. 4, No. 3, 1999, at <http://www.huduser.org/periodicals/cityscpe/vol4num3/carr.pdf>
- NPR, “Segregation in America: Dragging On and On”, February 18, 2011, at <http://www.npr.org/2011/02/18/133848837/segregation-in-america-dragging-on-and-on>

Sunday 3/12 Week 8: Spring Break—No Class

Sunday 3/19 Week 9: Affordable Housing and Homelessness

Readings:

- Thomas Edsall, “Where Should a Poor Family Live?”, *The New York Times*, August 5, 2015, at <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/05/opinion/where-should-a-poor-family-live.html?mabReward=CTM&moduleDetail=recommendations-2&action=click&contentCollection=The%20Upshot®ion=Footer&module=WhatsNext&version=WhatsNext&contentID=WhatsNext&src=recg&pgtype=article>
- Christopher Swope, “Section 8 is Broken”, National Housing Institute, January/February, 2003, at <http://www.nhi.org/online/issues/127/section8.html>

- “Does Section 8 Housing Hurt a Neighborhood?”, *The Gazette*, March 30, 2014, at <http://thegazette.com/2009/08/09/does-section-8-housing-hurt-a-neighborhood/>
- David L. Kirp, “Here Comes the Neighborhood”, *The New York Times*, October 20, 2013, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/20/opinion/sunday/here-comes-the-neighborhood.html?pagewanted=all>
- Kylyssa, “Why Homeless People Don’t Use Shelters”, HubPages, December 17, 2014, at http://kylyssa.hubpages.com/hub/why_homeless_people_avoid_shelters
- Kristen Brown, “Outlawing Homelessness”, The National Housing Institute, #106, July/August, 1999, at <http://www.nhi.org/online/issues/106/brown.html>.
- Monte Paulsen, “Seven Solutions to Homelessness”, The Tyee, January 8, 2007, at <http://thetyee.ca/Views/2007/01/08/HomelessSolutions/>
- Jason DeParle, “Kicked Out in America!”, *The New York Review of Books*, March 10, 2016, on-line at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2016/03/10/evicted-kicked-out-in-america/>

Assignment 2 posted; due Sunday 3/26 by 9:00 a.m.

Sunday 3/26 Week 10: Crime

Readings:

- Glaeser, *Triumph of the City*, chapter 4, pp. 93-116
- Christopher Jencks, “On America’s Front Lines”, *The New York Review of Books*, October 9, 2014, on-line at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2014/oct/09/americas-front-lines/?insrc=toc>
- Ray Sanchez, “‘No Regard’: 7 stark findings on Chicago Police Treatment of Blacks and Latinos”, CNN, April 15, 2016, on-line at <http://www.cnn.com/2016/04/15/us/chicago-police-task-force-disturbing-findings/>
- Marc Mauer, “Thinking about Prison and Its Impact in the 21st Century”, at http://moritzlaw.osu.edu/osjcl/Articles/Volume2_2/WalterCReckless/OSU-Reckless-PDF-3-17-05.pdf

Part III. Growth and Sprawl

Sunday 4/2 Week 11: Urban Politics

Readings:

- Tax Policy Center, “The State of State (and Local) Tax Policy”, at <http://www.taxpolicycenter.org/briefing-book/what-are-sources-revenue-local-governments>
- Emily Badger, “The Simple Math that Can Save Cities from Bankruptcy”, *The Atlantic Cities*, at <http://www.theatlanticcities.com/jobs-and-economy/2012/03/simple-math-can-save-cities-bankruptcy/1629/>
- W.P. Carey School of Business, “Eminent Domain: Drawing the Line on Property Rights”, at <http://research.wpcarey.asu.edu/economics/eminant-domain-drawing-the-line-on-property-rights/>

- Terri Cullen, *The Wall Street Journal*, “Figuring Out What’s ‘Just’ in Cases of Eminent Domain”, at <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB111955576205467888.html>

Second exam posted; due Sunday 4/9 by 9:00 a.m.

Sunday 4/9 Week 12: Urban Growth and Sprawl

Readings:

- Glaeser, *Triumph of the City*, chapter 9, pp. 223-270

Sunday 4/16 Week 13: Sustainable Cities

Readings:

- Teaford, *20th-Century American City*, chapter 7, pp. 239-262
- Glaeser, *Triumph of the City*, chapters 6 and 7, pp. 135-197

Sunday 4/23 Week 14: Cities in Western Europe and Japan

Readings:

- “The Best Cities in the World for Environment and Infrastructure”, CityMayors, at http://www.citymayors.com/features/quality_survey.html
- Elisabeth Rosenthal, “Across Europe, Irking Drivers is Urban Policy”, *The New York Times*, June 26, 2011, at http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/27/science/earth/27traffic.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1&_r=1&_r=1
- Bruce Stutz, “The New Urbanists: Tackling Europe’s Sprawl”, Yale Environment 360, Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, at http://e360.yale.edu/feature/the_new_urbanists_tackling_europes_sprawl/2118/
- “Japan Bans Urban Sprawl as Population Slips”, Terradaily, May 24, 2006, at http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Japan_bans_suburban_sprawl_as_population_slips.html

Sunday 4/30 Week 15: Cities in China and Developing Countries

Readings:

- Glaeser, *Triumph of the City*, 69-81
- Joe Meyers, “You knew China's cities were growing. But the real numbers are stunning”, World Economic Forum, June 20, 2016, at <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/06/china-cities-growing-numbers-are-stunning/>
- Adam Minter, “How Big Can China’s Cities Get?”, Bloomberg, August 25, 2016, at <https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2016-08-25/how-big-can-china-s-cities-get>
- Wade Sheperd, “The Impact Of China's New Urbanization Plan Could Be Huge”, Forbes, March 14, 2016, at <http://www.forbes.com/sites/wadeshepard/2016/03/14/the-impact-of-chinas-new-urbanization-plan-could-be-huge/#31d04e3717f1>

- Harding, “Nairobi Slum Life: Into Kibera”, 4-part series at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/2297237.stm>; <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/2297259.stm>; <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/2297265.stm>; and <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/2297279.stm>

Sunday 5/7 Week 16: Final Week

Final Exam Handed Out; Due Sunday 5/14 by 9:00 a.m.