

SYLLABUS FOR SOC*K230: THE CITY

Course: SOC*K230

Course Title: The City

Course Schedule: On-Line

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Office Hours: Mon and Wed 2:00 - 4:00 p.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 Metropolitan Revolution: The Rise of Post-Urban America*, Columbia University Press, 2006.

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.

As I explained in the course information, your weekly discussion grade overall will be determined by the number of times you participate in the weekly discussion, the quality of your contributions, and how consistently you participate throughout the week. For example, if you make 4 brief posts in a 15 minute span on one day at the end of the week, you will earn a poor grade for that week's discussion. You should respond to my initial post as directed, and then several times during the week after that as the discussion proceeds, addressing additional questions that I raise in my posts. You will be expected to post at least 4 times during the week at a minimum to receive an A for the week, although 4 posts will not necessarily guarantee you an A. The weekly discussions will be locked once 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 1/24 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
- Harvey Molotch, "Strategies and Constraints of Growth Elites" at http://www2.ucsc.edu/whorulesamerica/power/molotch_1988.html

- 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 1/31 Week 2: The Industrial City

Readings:

- Teaford, *Metropolitan Revolution*, chapter 1, pp. 8-48

Sunday 2/7 Week 3: Suburbanization and the Decline of the Industrial City

Readings:

- Teaford, *Metropolitan Revolution*, chapter 2, pp. 49-89
- Glaeser, *Triumph of the City*, chapter 2, pp. 41-67

Assignment 1 posted; due Sunday 2/21 by 9:00 a.m.

Sunday 2/14 Week 4: Federal Policy towards Cities

Readings: Teaford, *Metropolitan Revolution*, chapters 3 and 4, pp. 90-164

Sunday 2/21 Week 5: Post-Industrialism and The City Today

Readings:

- Teaford, *Metropolitan Revolution*, chapters 5 and 6, pp. 165-238
- 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/>

Part II. Urban Problems

Sunday 2/28 Week 6: Urban Poverty

Readings:

- 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 3/6 by 9:00 a.m.

Sunday 3/6 Week 7: Residential Segregation and Housing Discrimination

Readings:

- Glaeser, *Triumph of the City*, pp. 81-91

- “Housing Discrimination”, America: The National Catholic Review, July 17, 2006, at <http://americamagazine.org/node/147776>
- Christie Thompson, “Disparate Impact and Fair Housing: Seven Cases You Should Know About”, ProPublica, February 12, 2013, at <http://www.propublica.org/article/disparate-impact-and-fair-housing-seven-cases-you-should-know>
- 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 3/13 Week 8: Affordable Housing and Homelessness

Readings:

- 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>
- 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/>
- 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/>

Assignment 2 posted; due Sunday 4/3 by 9:00 a.m.

Sunday 3/20 Week 9: Spring Break—No Class

Sunday 3/27 Week 10: Education

Readings:

- Eduardo Porter, “Education Gap Between Rich and Poor Is Growing Wider”, *The New York Times*, September 22, 2015, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/23/business/economy/education-gap-between-rich-and-poor-is-growing-wider.html?ribbon-ad-idx=3&rref=business&module=Banner&version=context®ion=Header&action=click&contentCollection=Business%20Day&pgtype=article>

- Diane Ravitch, “Schools We Can Envy”, *The New York Review of Books*, March 8, 2012, at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2012/mar/08/schools-we-can-envy/>
- Andrew Delbanco, “The Two Faces of American Education”, *The New York Review of Books*, October 10, 2013, at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2013/oct/10/rhee-ravitch-two-faces-american-education/?page=1>
- Nick Anderson, “Charter Schools: Two Studies, Two Conclusions”, *The Washington Post*, November 30, 2009 at http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2009-11-30/news/36815587_1_charter-schools-charter-movement-school-scores

Sunday 4/3 Week 11: 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>
- 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

Exam #2 posted; Due Sunday 4/10 by 9:00 a.m.

Part III. Growth and Sprawl

Sunday 4/10 Week 12: Urban Politics

Readings:

- Tony Favro, “Cities are the Most Neglected Layer of American Government”, at <http://www.citymayors.com/government/us-cities-government.html>
- Lisa Lambert, ‘U.S. Cities’ Fiscal Pain May Become Chronic: Survey”, at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/09/27/us-usa-states-cities-idUSTRE78Q4FN20110927?feedType=RSS&feedName=domesticNews>
- 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/>
- 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 4/17 by 9:00 a.m.

Sunday 4/17 Week 13: Urban Growth and Sprawl

Readings:

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

Sunday 4/24 Week 14: Sustainable Cities

Readings:

- Teaford, *Metropolitan Revolution*, chapter 7, pp. 239-262
- Glaeser, *Triumph of the City*, chapters 6 and 7, pp. 135-197

Sunday 5/1 Week 15: Cities around the Globe

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&](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/27/science/earth/27traffic.html?pagewanted=all&_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.terraily.com/reports/Japan_bans_suburban_sprawl_as_population_slips.html
- Glaeser, *Triumph of the City*, 69-81
- 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 5/8 Week 16: Final Week

Final Exam Handed Out; Due Sunday 5/15 by 5:00 p.m.