

SYLLABUS FOR SOC*K230: THE CITY

Course: SOC*K230

Course Title: The City

Course Schedule: T & R 12:30 – 1:50 p.m.

Instructor: Steven Neufeld

Office: Mohegan Campus Annex Room 1

Phone: 860-383-5233

Email: sneufeld@trcc.commnet.edu

Office Hours: Mon & Wed 9:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m.; Tues & Thurs 10:00 a.m.-11:00 p.m.;
or by arrangement

I. Course Description

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 means we will examine the development and functioning of urban areas in the U.S. and around the world, and how they are shaped by local, national, and global forces. Specifically, we will examine:

- The development of cities and suburbs in the U.S. and how they have been and continue to be shaped by political and economic forces—and especially by the capitalism and the spread of a global capitalist economy.
- The social organization of U.S. cities in terms of patterns in where different persons and activities and institutions are located
- The urban experience for individuals, including their social relationships and social and psychological well-being
- The role and status of neighborhoods and racial and ethnic communities
- Social issues and problems confronting U.S. cities, such as housing and homelessness, racial and ethnic segregation, poverty, crime, and urban education
- 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
- Issues of economic development and revitalization, including urban planning, urban revitalization, as well as attempts to control growth and sprawl
- Urban areas from a global perspective, including comparisons with cities in Europe, Asia, and developing countries.

II. Learning Objectives

At the end of this course, a successful student will possess the following knowledge, skills, and abilities:

- Understand the impact of both the changing capitalist economy and government policies on the historical development of the American city
- Analyze and identify key characteristics and patterns regarding the social organization of cities
- Understand how social inequalities of race and class affect urban life and urban social organization
- Discuss the problem of urban growth and sprawl and proposed solutions
- Critically assess the effectiveness of federal and local urban policy efforts in addressing urban problems
- Contrast American cities with those in Europe, Asia, and developing countries

III. 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.

IV. Course Readings

Assigned readings are to be done before coming to class. The required readings for the class are:

- Shannon, Kleniewski, and Cross, *Urban Problems in Sociological Perspective, 4th Edition*, Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 2002.
- Jackson, Kenneth T. *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Marshall, Alex. *How Cities Work: Suburbs, Sprawl, and the Roads Not Taken*, University of Texas Press, 2001.

V. Course Assignments and Evaluation

Except for the first week of the course, you will submit one page written responses to some portion of the readings for the week. These responses will be due the Thursday of the week the readings are due and will not be accepted late. You will be given a check plus, check, or check minus based on the quality of your work. These weekly responses will count for 15% of your final grade.

Additionally, there will be a mid-term exam worth 20% of your final grade and a final exam worth 30% of your final grade. The exams will be take home essays in essay format, and the final exam will **not** be cumulative.

Finally, there will be a project at the end of the class consisting of an original research paper and corresponding presentation. The project can be done individually or in groups of 2 or 3. This will also count for 25% of your final grade.

Instead of doing a research paper for your final presentation, you will have the option of doing a service learning project as the basis for your final paper and presentation. This will involve writing a paper and providing a final presentation based on 10 hours of volunteer service with some agency or organization addressing an urban issue.

All exams and assignments must be typed. Late work will be penalized accordingly. Failure to complete assignments and/or exams will count more negatively towards your final grade than work that receives an F but reflects some level of effort.

Class participation can help boost your final GPA for the course.

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 and Organization of the U.S. City

Week 1: Introduction

1/23: The Rise of Cities

1/25: Theoretical Perspectives on the City

Readings: Jackson, pp. 1-44.

Week 2: Urbanization in the United States

1/30: The Industrial City

2/1: Ecological Perspectives on the City

Readings: USPS, pp.1-35; Jackson, 45-72; 87-115.

Week 3: The Post-Industrial City

2/6: Suburbanization

2/8: Suburbia and American Culture

Readings: UPSP, Chapter 2, pp.37-62; Jackson, pp. 116-156.

Week 4: Recent Trends

2/13: Trends in Urban Growth

2/15: Globalization and the City

Readings: Jackson, pp.157-218.

Week 5: The Urban Experience

2/20: Perspectives on the Urban Experience

2/22: The “Decline of Community” Thesis

Readings: UPSP, Chapter 3, pp. 63-91; Jackson, pp. 219-282??.

Week 6: Urban Neighborhoods

2/27: Understanding Urban Neighborhoods

3/1: A Tour of Norwich

Readings: Jackson, pp. 283??-305.

Exam 1 Handed Out; Due 3/9

Part II: Social Problems and Issues

Week 7: Housing and Housing Policy

3/6: Housing Policy in the U.S.

3/8: Homelessness

Readings: USPS, Chapter 5, pp. 129-153

Week 8: Poverty and Segregation

3/13: Urban Poverty

3/15: Racial and Ethnic Segregation

Readings: UPSP, Chapter 4, pp. 91-128; *Urban Society* Article 42; Marshall, Introduction and chapters 1

Week 9: Spring Break—No Class

Week 10: Crime

3/27: Urban Crime and Its Decline

3/29: Community Policing

Readings: Marshall, chapters 2 and 3; *Urban Society* Articles 34, 35, 36, 37

Week 11: Environmental Issues

4/3: Urban Sprawl

4/5: Sustainable Cities

Readings: Marshall, chapters 4 and 5

Week 12: Urban Growth and Development

4/10: The “Growth Machine” and “The Creative Class”

4/12: Urban Renewal and Revitalization

Readings: Marshall, chapters 6 and 7; *Urban Society*, Articles 9 and 10

Part III: Urban Politics/Global Cities

Week 13: Europe and Japan

4/17: European Cities

4/19: Japan

Readings: UPSP, Chapter 9, pp. 259-296

Week 14: Cities in Developing Countries

4/24: Colonialism and Urban Development

4/26: Cities in Developing Countries

Readings: UPSP, Chapter 10, pp. 297-319

Week 15: Student Presentations

5/1: Round I

5/3: Round II

Readings: Marshall, chapter 8 and Conclusion

Final Exam Handed Out; Due 5/10