

SYLLABUS FOR SOC*K230: THE CITY

Course: SOC*K230

Course Title: The City

Course Schedule: T & R 9:30 – 10:45 a.m.

Instructor: Steven Neufeld

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Office Hours: Mon thru Thurs 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.; or by appointment

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—especially 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, sense of community, and social and psychological well-being
- Social issues and problems confronting U.S. cities, such as affordable housing, homelessness, residential segregation, poverty, crime, and urban sprawl
- 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

The course outcomes are as follows:

- I. Cultures and Societies: Understand and Analyze the causes and consequences of urbanization in comparative perspective
 - Understand the impact of the changing capitalist economy and government policies on the historical development of the American city
 - Identify and apply 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
- Understand the urban experience for individuals, including their social relationships and social and psychological well-being
- Contrast American cities with those in Europe, Asia, and developing countries
- Understand and analyze the causes and consequences of urban sprawl

II. Critical Thinking:

- Analyze policy solutions to urban growth and sprawl
- Compare and contrast national and local policy solutions to urban problems

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

- Massey, Douglas and Denton, Nancy. *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*, Harvard University Press, 1993.
- Marshall, Alex. *How Cities Work: Suburbs, Sprawl, and the Roads Not Taken*, University of Texas Press, 2001.
- Jon C. Teaford. *The Twentieth-Century American City, 2nd Edition*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.

V. Course Assignments and Evaluation

Your course grade will be based on the following factors:

- There will be three assignments each worth 10% of your final grade
- There will be a midterm exam worth 20% of your final grade and a final exam worth 25% of your final grade. The exams will be take-home essay exams that you will have one week to complete.
- There will be a final project consisting of **either** an original research paper **or** a service learning project based on 8 hours of volunteer service with some agency or organization addressing an urban issue. You will also provide a 15 minute in-class presentation based on your research paper or service learning project. The final project and presentation together will count for 25% of your final grade.

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 will help boost your final GPA for the course.**

All assignments and exams involve written work, and poor quality writing, including poor spelling and grammar, will negatively affect your grade. At a minimum, you should spell check all work before it is submitted. If you want assistance with your writing skills, I strongly urge you to visit The Writing Center in room C117.

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

Thurs, 1/21: Theoretical Perspectives on the City

Readings: None

Week 2: Introduction

Tues, 1/26: The Rise of Cities

Thurs, 1/28: The Industrial City

Readings: Park, "Human Ecology"; Zorbaugh, "The Natural Areas of the City"; Logan and Molotch, "The City as a Growth Machine" (handouts from Lin and Mele, Urban Sociology Reader)

Week 3: Urbanization in the United States

Tues, 2/2: Ecological Perspectives on the City

Thurs, 2/4: Professional Day—No Class

Readings: Teaford, 1-73

Assignment 1 handed out; due 2/11

Week 4: The Post-Industrial City

Tues, 2/9: Suburbanization

Thurs, 2/11: Trends in Urban Growth

Readings: Teaford, pp. 74-126

Week 5: Recent Trends

Tues, 2/16: Federal Government-City Relations

Thurs, 2/18: Globalization and the City

Readings: Teaford, pp. 127-169; Dear, "Los Angeles and the Chicago School: Invitation to a Debate" (handout from Lin and Mele, Urban Sociology Reader)

Week 6: Housing Policy and Homeownership
Tues, 2/23: Housing Policy in the U.S.
Thurs, 2/25: A Tour of Norwich

Readings: Massey and Denton, pp. 1-59

Exam 1 handed out; Due 3/4

Part II: Urban Problems and Issues

Week 7: Community and the Urban Experience
Tues, 3/2: The “Decline of Community” Thesis
Thurs, 3/4: Understanding Urban Neighborhoods

Readings: Wirth, “Urbanism as a Way of Life”; Putnam, “Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital (handout from LeGates and Stout, The City Reader)

Week 8: Spring Break—No Class

Week 9: Public Housing and Homelessness
Tues, 3/16: Public Housing
Thurs, 3/18: Homelessness

Readings: Massey and Denton, pp. 60-114

Assignment 2 handed out; due 3/25

Week 10: Poverty and Segregation
Tues, 3/23: Urban Poverty
Thurs, 3/25: Racial and Ethnic Segregation

Readings: Massey and Denton, pp. 115-185; *Urban Society* Article 42

Week 11: Crime
Tues, 3/30: Urban Crime and Its Decline
Thurs, 4/1: Community Policing

Readings: Massey and Denton, pp. 186-236; *Urban Society* Articles 34, 35, 36, 37

Week 12: Urban Growth and Politics
Tues, 4/6: Urban Growth
Thurs, 4/8: Urban Politics

Readings: Marshall, Introduction and chapters 1 and 2

Assignment 3 handed out; due 4/15

Week 13: Urban Sprawl and Sustainability
Tues, 4/13: Urban Sprawl
Thurs, 4/15: Sustainable Cities

Readings: Marshall, chapters 3 and 4; *Urban Society*, Articles 9 and 10

Part III: The City in Global Perspective

Week 14: Europe and Japan

Tues, 4/20: European Cities

Thurs, 4/22: Japan

Readings: Marshall, chapters 5 and 6

Week 15: Cities in Developing Countries

Tues, 4/27: Colonialism and Urban Development

Thurs, 4/29: Cities in Developing Countries

Readings: Marshall, chapters 7 and 8 and Conclusion

Week 16: Student Presentations

Tues, 5/4: Round I

Thurs, 5/6: Round II

Readings: None

Final Exam Handed Out; Due 5/13