

SYLLABUS FOR SOC*K230: THE CITY

Course: SOC*K230
Course Title: The City
Course Schedule: On-Line
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Office Hours: 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 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
- 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
- Urban areas from a global perspective, including comparisons with cities in Europe, Asia, and developing countries.

Course Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- 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 various 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 are to be done during the week they are assigned. 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

- There will be three exams, each worth 15% of your final grade. The exams will be essay format, and you will have several days to complete them. The second and third exams will not be cumulative.
- There will be two written assignments, each worth 7.5% of your final grade.
- A discussion question will be posted each week in the weekly learning module. You will receive a letter grade each week based on the quality and quantity of your

participation as described in the Course Information. Your overall discussion grade will count for 20% of your final grade.

- There will be a final project worth 20% 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.

All assignments and exams involve written work, and poor quality writing, including typographical errors and poor spelling and grammar, will negatively affect your grade. **At a minimum, you should spell check all work before it is submitted.** If you need assistance with your writing skills, I strongly urge you to use The Writing Center in the library on campus. You can contact them by email at TRWritingCenter@trcc.comnet.edu or by phone at 860-892-5773.

Online 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.

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

Week 1 1/20: Theoretical Perspectives on the City

Readings: Lutter and Ackerman, "An Introduction to the Chicago School of Sociology" at http://userpages.umbc.edu/~lutters/pubs/1996_SWLNote96-1_Lutters,Ackerman.pdf; Molotch, "Strategies and Constraints of Growth Elites" at http://sociology.ucsc.edu/whorulesamerica/power/molotch_1988.html

Week 2 1/27: The Industrial City

Readings: Teaford, 1-73

Week 3 2/3: The Post-Industrial City

Readings: Teaford, pp. 74-126

Week 4 2/10: The City Today

Readings: Teaford, pp. 127-169

Week 5 2/17: The Urban Experience

Readings:

First exam handed out; due 2/24

Part II. Urban Problems

Week 6 2/24: Housing Policy and Public Housing

Readings: Massey and Denton, pp. 1-82

Week 7 3/3: Affordable Housing and Homelessness

Readings: Massey and Denton, pp. 83-147

Week 8 3/10: Racial Segregation

Readings: Massey and Denton, pp.148-

Week 9 3/17: Urban Poverty

Readings: Massey and Denton, pp. -236

Week 10 3/24: Crime

Readings: Wilson, "Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety" (on-line at <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1982/03/broken-windows/4465/>); Bobo and Thompson, "Racialized Mass Incarceration" (on-line at <http://www.wjh.harvard.edu/soc/faculty/bobo/pdf%20documents/RacMassInc.pdf>)

Second exam handed out; due 3/31

Part III. Growth and Sprawl

Week 11 3/31: Urban Politics

Readings: Marshall, Introduction and chapter 1

Week 12 4/7: Urban Growth and Sprawl

Readings: Marshall, chapters 2 and 3

Week 13 4/14: Sustainable Cities

Readings: Marshall, chapters 4 and 5

Week 14 4/21: Europe and Japan

Readings: Marshall, chapters 6 and 7

Week 15 4/28: Cities in Developing Countries

Readings: Marshall, chapters 8 and Conclusion

Week 16 5/5: Finals Week

Final Exam Handed Out; Due 5/11