

## **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

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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 20<sup>th</sup> 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:

- 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.
- Annual Editions, *Urban Sociology, 13<sup>th</sup> Edition*, Dubuque, IA: McGraw Hill/Dushkin, 2008.

### **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

1/24: The Rise of Cities

Readings:

- Jackson, pp. 1-44
- Urban Society, Article 1

Week 2: Urbanization in the United States

1/29: The Industrial City

1/31: Ecological Perspectives on the City

Readings:

- Jackson, 45-72; 87-115

Week 3: The Post-Industrial City

2/5: Suburbanization

## 2/7: Trends in Urban Growth

### Readings:

- Jackson, pp. 116-156
- *Urban Society*, Article 29

## Week 4: Recent Trends

2/12: Lincoln's Birthday—No Class

2/14: Globalization and the City

### Readings:

- Jackson, pp.157-218
- *Urban Society*, Articles 13, 20, 21, 22, and 25

## Week 5: The Urban Experience

2/19: Perspectives on the Urban Experience

2/21: The “Decline of Community” Thesis

### Readings:

- Jackson, pp. 219-282
- *Urban Society*, Article 5 (article about city character and identity)

## Week 6: Urban Neighborhoods

2/26: Understanding Urban Neighborhoods

2/28: A Tour of Norwich

### Readings:

- Jackson, pp. 283-305
- *Urban Society*, Article 16

Exam 1 Handed Out; Due 3/9

## **Part II: Social Problems and Issues**

## Week 7: Housing and Housing Policy

3/4: Housing Policy in the U.S.

3/6: Homelessness

### Readings:

- Shannon, Kleniewski, and Cross, Chapter 5, handout
- *Urban Society*, Article 7

## Week 8: Poverty and Segregation

3/11: Urban Poverty

3/13: Racial and Ethnic Segregation

Readings:

- Marshall, Introduction and chapters 1
- *Urban Society*, Articles 18, 19, 23, and 41

Week 9: Spring Break—No Class

Week 10: Crime

3/25: Urban Crime and Its Decline

3/27: Community Policing

Readings:

- Marshall, chapters 2 and 3
- *Urban Society* Articles 4, 34, 35, 36, 37

Week 11: Urban Sprawl

4/1: Urban Sprawl

4/3: The New Urbanism

Readings:

- Marshall, chapters 4 and 5
- Articles 3, 24

Week 12: Urban Government and Urban Growth

4/8: Urban Government

4/10: Urban Renewal and Urban Growth

Readings:

- Marshall, chapters 6 and 7;
- *Urban Society*, Articles 2, 9, 10, 12, 28, and 32

### **Part III: Global Cities**

Week 13: Europe and Japan

4/15: European Cities

4/17: Japan

Readings:

- *Urban Society*, Article 33
- Shannon, Kleniewski, and Cross, Chapter 9, handout

Week 14: Cities in Developing Countries

4/22: Cities in Developing Countries

4/24: Sustainable Cities

Readings:

- Shannon, Kleniewski, and Cross, Chapter 10, handout

Week 15: Student Presentations

4/29: Round I

5/1: Round II

Readings:

- Marshall, chapter 8 and Conclusion

Week 16: Conclusion

5/6: Concluding Remarks

Readings: None

Final Exam Handed Out; Due 5/12