

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 – 3:30 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 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. Course Objectives and Outcomes

The course will promote the following learning objectives and outcomes:

- 1) **Critical Thinking:** To analyze and evaluate argumentation and persuasion in order to improve, refine, and refute it.

- Understand and apply theoretical perspectives in urban sociology regarding the social organization and functioning of cities
 - Understand how social inequalities of race/ethnicity and social class affect and are affected by urban life and urban social organization
 - Assess national and local policy solutions to various urban problems
- 2) Global Awareness: To examine the effect of historical and contemporary national and international events and trends on social, political and cultural institutions.
- Understand the impact of globalization on cities around the globe
 - Understand and analyze the causes and consequences of urban growth
 - Contrast American cities with those in Europe, Asia, and developing countries
 - Examine the positive and negative impacts of cities on global social problems
- 3) Communication: To understand and convey ideas using reading, writing, speaking, and listening
- 4) Information Literacy: To assess what information is needed to answer questions and solve problems and to retrieve, evaluate, and use that information effectively.

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 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.

V. Course Assignments and Evaluation

- There will be two written assignments, each worth 10% of your final grade.
- There will be three essay exams that you will have a week to complete, and each exam will be 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, 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 check all work before it is submitted. 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.

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

Thursday 1/19 Week 1: Theoretical Perspectives on the City

Readings:

- Glaeser, *Triumph of the City*, pp. 1-15
- 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

Thursday 1/26 Week 2: The Industrial City

Readings: Teafor, *Metropolitan Revolution*, pp. 8-48

Thursday 2/2 Week 3: The Post-Industrial City

Readings:

- Teafor, pp. 49-89
- Glaeser, *Triumph of the City*, pp. 41-67

Assignment 1 posted; due Mon 2/13 by 9:00 a.m.

Thursday 2/9 Week 4: Federal Policy towards Cities

Readings: Teafor, *Metropolitan Revolution*, pp. 90-164

Thursday 2/16 Week 5: The City Today

Readings: Teafor, *Metropolitan Revolution*, pp. 165-204

First exam handed out; due Thursday 2/23 by 9:00 a.m.

Part II. Urban Problems

Thursday 2/23 Week 6: Urban Poverty

Readings:

- Catherine E. Kuhn, "The Causes and Consequences of Concentrated Urban Poverty", at <http://www.communityinvestmentnetwork.org/nc/single-news-item-states/article/the-causes-and-consequences-of-concentrated-urban-poverty/>
- The Brookings Institute, "Concentrated Poverty in America: An Overview", at http://www.frbsf.org/cpreport/docs/cp_overview.pdf.

Thursday 3/1 Week 7: Racial Residential Segregation

Readings:

- Glaeser, *Triumph of the City*, pp. 81-91
- "Housing Discrimination" at http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=4875
- Carr, "The Complexity of Segregation: Why It Continues 30 Years after the Enactment of the Fair Housing Act", at <http://www.huduser.org/periodicals/cityscape/vol4num3/carr.pdf>
- "Segregation in America: Dragging On and On", at <http://www.npr.org/2011/02/18/133848837/segregation-in-america-dragging-on-and-on>

Thursday 3/8 Week 8: Crime

Readings:

- Glaeser, *Triumph of the City*, pp. 93-116
- Wilson, "Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety" (on-line at <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1982/03/broken-windows/4465/>)
- 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

Assignment 2 posted; due Friday 3/15 by 9:00 a.m.

Thursday 3/15 Week 9: Housing Policy and Public Housing

Readings:

- Swope, "Section 8 is Broken", at <http://www.nhi.org/online/issues/127/section8.html>
- Morris, "Discrimination and Mortgage Lending in America", at <http://www.naacplv.org/lending.pdf>

Monday 3/26 Week 11: Affordable Housing and Homelessness

Readings:

- Squidoo, "Why Homeless People Don't Use Shelters", at http://www.squidoo.com/why_homeless_people_avoid_shelters
- SFGate.com, "City's Shelters Clean, Safe, but Shunned When Its Dry", at http://articles.sfgate.com/2007-10-18/bay-area/17266029_1_homeless-coalition-shelters-homeless-people/2
- North County Times, "In Life on the Streets, Homeless Say They Find a Way to Survive", at http://www.nctimes.com/news/local/article_808bcc6f-c38d-5560-8c09-89012216a6ba.html
- Ali Ismail, "U.S. Cities Criminalize Homelessness", at <http://www.wsws.org/articles/2009/aug2009/hmls-a10.shtml>.

Second exam handed out; due Monday 4/2 by 9:00 a.m.

Part III. Growth and Sprawl

Monday 4/2 Week 11: Urban Politics

Readings:

- Public Policy Institute of California, "Should Local Fiscal Authority be Strengthened?", at http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/rb/RB_1299FSRB.pdf
- Reuters, "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>

- National League of Cities, “Revenue and Spending Trends”, at <http://www.nlc.org/find-city-solutions/research-innovation/finance/revenue--spending-trends>
- W.P. Carey School of Business, “Eminent Domain: Drawing the Line on Property Rights”, at <http://www.knowwpcarey.com/article.cfm?aid=189>
- Terri Cullen, *The Wall Street Journal*, “Figuring Out What’s ‘Just’ in Cases of Eminent Domain”, at <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB111955576205467888.html>

Monday 4/9 Week 12: Urban Growth and Sprawl

Readings:

- Teafor, *Metropolitan Revolution*, pp. 239-262
- Glaeser, *Triumph of the City*, pp. 135-163; 165-193

Monday 4/16 Week 13: Sustainable Cities

Readings:

- Glaeser, *Triumph of the City*, pp. 199-220
- Witold Rybczynski, “The Green Case for Cities”, at <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2009/10/the-green-case-for-cities/7661/>;

Monday 4/23 Week 14: Europe and Japan

Readings: Glaeser, *Triumph of the City*, pp. 223-270

Monday 4/30 Week 15: Cities in Developing Countries

Readings:

- 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>

Monday 5/7 Week 16: Final Week

Final Exam Handed Out; Due Monday 5/14 by 9:00 a.m.