

Introduction to Urban Studies

Winter 2010
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Department of Urban Studies and Planning

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Wayne State University

Tuesdays - Thursdays 9:35 – 11:25 AM

0150 General Lectures

Cross-listed: GPH 2000, HIS 2000, PS 2000, SOC 2500, US 2000

Office hrs: T/Th 12:00 – 1:00 and by appt.

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Overview

This course is designed to provide students with an introductory understanding of urban developmental history, contemporary urban life, current and historic social issues, race and ethnicity, economics, environmental issues, governance and politics, primarily in the Western context. In addition to classic European and American urban theorists, students will be introduced to contemporary urban theory and nascent urban developmental trends. Where appropriate, the influence of public policies that shape cities will be examined in depth, while respecting the *sine qua non* role of laissez-faire economics in urban development.

Structured as a survey course, topics are presented with relatively broad overviews, and assigned readings and presentations are tailored similarly. Traditional class instruction is augmented with classroom discussion, multimedia presentations, and guest speakers.

In sum, the course will provide a sound basis for the continued study of urban affairs.

Course Materials and Blackboard System

The following required course texts are available from the Marwil Bookstore:

Bluestone, Stevenson and Williams, The Urban Experience – Economics, Society and Public Policy (1st ed.), Oxford University Press, 2008. ISBN 978-0-19-531308-6

Additional course materials may be distributed throughout the semester on the course Blackboard system. Be sure to familiarize yourself with Blackboard if you are not familiar with it, and check often for course announcements. Additionally, the bulletin board feature will be active, allowing students who miss class for what would obviously be very extenuating circumstances to post requests to other students for the material that they missed.

Suggested additional reading, but not recommended for purchase:

John Macionis and Vincent Parillo, Cities and Urban Life, Prentice Hall, 2006.

E. Barbara Phillips, City Lights, Oxford University Press, 1996.

Organization

While a standard lecture and discussion format will be used in this course, it is unrealistic to presume that your instructor should be the sole purveyor of urban issues and problems. Accordingly, several guest lecturers have agreed to provide a perspective on issues in their professional fields. Be advised that students are responsible for and will be tested on material presented by guest lecturers.

Assigned readings are listed in the syllabus. Be advised that a significant portion of lecture material will be independent of assigned readings. Additional readings may be distributed throughout the semester. Be advised that **all** readings are fair game for examinations, irrespective of the amount of time spent discussing them in lecture.

Note: Because of unforeseen events and the schedules of guest speakers, this syllabus is subject to change. I will advise students of any such changes as far in advance as is possible.

Assessment

Course grading is based on the following: Three periodic examinations covering lecture notes, reading material, presentations, and guest speakers. Periodic exams are non-cumulative, objective in structure, and count 30 percent each toward the final course grade. The lowest

periodic exam score will be dropped. A final exam, comprehensive to the whole course, counts for the remaining 40 percent of the course grade.

Exam I:	30%
Exam II:	30%
Exam III:	30% (drop lowest of Exams I, II, III)
<u>Final Exam:</u>	<u>40%</u>
	100%

Students who earn a grade of A- or higher *on all three* periodic exams do not have to sit for the final exam, and will receive a final grade based on the average of the three periodic exams.

Important Note on Exams: Students choosing to arrive more than 5 minutes late to an examination will not be issued an exam. No exceptions.

Though there is no formal attendance policy, regular attendance is expected. Course notes, handouts, and required readings are the responsibility of the student. A word to the wise: In my courses, there is a very high correlation between excessive absences and sub par final grades.