

Introduction to Urban Studies

Instructor: Dr. Kristina Gibson
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Office Hours: TH 5-6PM and by appointment

Course Description:

From the University of Connecticut's official course descriptions:

Introduction to the analysis of urban development with particular stress on those problems pertinent to the American central city.

Our urban areas are the products of contentious histories that encompass political, geographic, cultural, economic and social forces. The objective of this class is to introduce the diverse study of urban systems and to develop a critical understanding of the histories, ideas, and processes that shape contemporary urban areas.

Course Materials and Requirements:

Gottdeiner, M. and Hutchinson, R. (2006). *The New Urban Sociology*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Klinenberg, E. (2002). *Heat Wave: A Social Autopsy of Disaster in Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Rybczynski, W. (2007). *Last Harvest: How a Cornfield Became New Daleville*. New York: Schribner.

- Readings will be assigned weekly to supplement lecture material and will guide class discussions. I will call upon students for their opinions and commentary concerning the readings in each class – it is essential to keep up with assigned reading material.
- There will be four short take-home exams. Each exam will be a written assignment that will address concepts covered in text, lectures, and in-class discussions. Essays must be typed and are due on the date marked in the class schedule. Exam topics will be assigned the week prior to their due dates.

- Each student will complete a poster project describing a local urban issue. Class time will be set aside to work on these projects toward the end of the semester. The final two class periods will be used to present posters to the class.
- Participation is necessary to do well in this class. At the end of every class, students will submit a short written question or comment concerning the day's material. This will count toward the participation grade.

Course Assessment: (100 pts)

Four take-home exams – 40 pts

Poster Projects and Presentations – 40 pts

Class Participation (including written class comments and discussion) – 20 pts

Schedule of Classes:

PART I: THE CITY

Week 1 (8/30/07): Introduction – What is Urban Studies?

- Discussion of main themes and overview of the course
- The American urban landscape
Cognitive Mapping Exercise

PART II: EARLY URBANISM

Week 2 (9/6/07): The Walking City

Reading:

White, E.B. (1949). "Here is New York" In *City Life*. Shoenfeld, O. and MacLean, H. eds. New York: Grossman. Pp. 225-241. (e-reserve)

Gottdeiner & Huchinson: Chapter 1 (pp. 1-20).

- Map Reading – New York City
- Form and Function
- Peoples and Environments Interacting
- Reading the City: home, neighborhood, community

Week 3 (9/13/07): Political and Social Organization

Reading:

Gottdeiner & Huchinson: Chapter 2 (pp. 21-41).

Crane, S. (1893). *Maggie: a girl of the streets*. (e-reserve)

- Early Immigrant Neighborhoods
- Nation Building
- Transportation

PART III: INDUSTRIAL CITIES

Week 4 (9/20/07): The Chicago School of Urban Ecology

Reading:

Gottdeiner & Huchinson: Chapter 3 (pp. 43-64).

- Chicago and the World's Fair
 - City Beautiful Movement
- Take home exam due: 9/20/07*

Week 5 (9/27/07): Melting Pots vs. Mosaics

Reading:

Gottdeiner & Huchinson: Chapters 4 & 5 (pp. 65-103).

- Enclaves and Ghettos
- Modernity and Planning the Ideal City
- Utopias and Dystopias

PART IV: CONTEMPORARY CITIES

Week 6 (10/4/07): Deindustrialization & Post-Fordist Economies

Reading:

Faludi, S. (1999). "Nothing But Big Work: From Shipyards to Space, the Closing of the American Job." In *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man*. New York: William Morrow & C., pp. 51-101. (e-reserve)

- Film: Roger & Me
- Take home exam due: 10/4/07*

Week 7 (10/11/07): Suburbanization

Reading:

Gottdeiner & Huchinson: Chapter 6 & 7 (pp. 105-153).

Steinberg, T. (2006). "The Levitt Legacy" in *American Green: The Obsessive Quest for the Perfect Lawn*. New York: Norton & Co., pp. 17-37. (e-reserve)

- Railroad-towns to Levittown
- Gender, Race, and Class in Urban and Suburban landscapes

Week 8 (10/18/07): Poster Project Work – Proposals Due, In-class work

Reading:

Rybczynski: Part I (pp. 1-91).

Week 9 (10/25/07): The Contemporary City – Part I

Reading:

Rybczynski: Part II (pp. 99-175)

- Social Issues: Gentrification and uneven urban development
 - New Urbanism
- Take home exam due: 10/25/07*

Week 10 (11/1/07): The Contemporary City – Part I continued

Reading:

Rybczynski: Part III (pp. 187-269)

Gottdeiner & Huchinson: Chapter 8 & 9 (pp. 155-197).

- Social Issues: Poverty & Racism
- New public spaces and the public sphere
- Community Gardening

Week 11 (11/8/07): Poster Project Work – Outlines Due, In-class work

Reading:

Gottdeiner & Huchinson: Chapters 10 & 11 (pp. 199-251).

Week 12 (11/15/07): The Contemporary City – Part II

Reading:

Gottdeiner & Huchinson: Chapter 15 (pp. 339-357).

- Social Issues: Homelessness
 - Governance and community politics
 - Surveillance, Policing and Social Control
- Take home exam due: 11/15/07*

Week 13 (11/22/07): FALL BREAK! NO CLASS

Reading:

Klinenberg pp. 1-164

Week 14 (11/29/07): The Contemporary City – Part III

Reading:

Klinenberg pp. 165-242

Gottdeiner & Huchinson: Chapters 13 & 14 (pp. 281-335).

- Social Issues: Urban Disasters
- Chicago Heat Wave and Hurricane Katrina
- Third World Urbanism in the First World

Week 15 (12/6/07): Poster Presentations

Week 16 (12/13/07): Poster Presentations