

HTS 3012
Urban Sociology

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Course Description: The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the field of urban sociology by exploring the history and current conditions of cities. This course will be geared toward viewing the city as a simultaneously social, cultural, and political economic phenomenon, with particular attention to the following: a) urbanization and the structure of cities; b) suburbanization; c) urban growth and economics; d) race and segregation; e) immigration; g) culture; h) gender and sexuality; and i) housing and social policy. This class will give students a strong overview of some of the major issues related to urban life, politics, and economics.

Course Objectives:

- To identify and understand key concepts, theories, and research traditions in the field of urban sociology.
- To examine the people, cultures, and everyday experiences of urban and community life.
- To develop your sociological imagination and enable you to critically evaluate our social world in an urban/suburban context.

Course Prerequisites: None

Required Readings:

Textbook: *The Urban Sociology Reader, 2nd edition*. Edited by Jan Lin and Christopher Mele. 2013. Routledge. (Abbreviated by *USR*)

Other readings will also be required; however, they will be posted to T-Square as PDFs or hyperlinks to web readings.

Grades and Assignments (1000 total points for course)

Weekly discussion questions and summaries (120 points): Every week, students should post two discussion questions on the T-Square discussion board before the beginning of the week on Sunday by 9pm related to the readings that could be potentially discussed in class that week. In other words, if you want to post something about the 2nd week of class readings, post on the Sunday before that week starts. You will write a total of 6 postings for the semester (this means you can

skip several weeks). These questions should involve critical thinking skills thus critical questions of the authors' arguments are allowed. For each question, you should also provide a few sentences explaining the relevance of your question to the readings. Weekly questions and summaries will receive a 20 for excellent questions, a 15 for average, and a zero (0) for no posting at all. Both questions can be posted in one post for the week (you do not have to do separate postings for each question).

For example, a good question would be: *"In the Growth of the City by Ernest Burgess, the author outlines his concentric circle theory of the growth of cities. In particular it argues that a city core is typically surrounded by poorer communities, and as you move farther away from the city center you encounter more affluent and orderly communities. Do all cities in the United States follow this pattern? And how might the growth of cities be different in European or non-Western cities?"* An example of a poor question would be *"What is concentric circle theory?"* (Note: You are welcome to ask clarifying questions during class or by email. They just will not work for the weekly questions portion of your grade.) If students are clearly not reading, I reserve the right to change this portion of the grade to random pop quizzes on the readings.

Classroom participation (140 points): Students are expected to be in class whenever possible and participate in discussion of the readings. It is difficult to participate when you are not in class. Occasionally, in class writing assignments may also be assigned to aid in the writing assignments for the class.

Video Reflections 1 and 2 (140 points): Students are required to write two Critical Video Reflection papers for the course that are worth 70 points apiece. These two assignments will require you to compare and contrast the information in a documentary or film to what we read in the class. These assignments will be 2-3 pages a piece. The first is due 2/1 by 9pm and must be focused on the documentary Urbanized (which we will watch in class). The second is due 4/6 by 9pm and can be any film on the syllabus or outside film approved by me in advance.

Autobiographical sketch (200 points): The goal of this assignment is for you to critically reflect on your own life and both describe and analyze the place you have lived has shaped your own life. Have the places (or place) you have lived given you any opportunities or restricted others? How has your community shaped the person that you are today? How has your experience been different from others that grew up in the same community? The first draft, at least 3 pages long, will account for 75 points (Due 1/19 by 9pm). Autobiographical sketch revision, a total of 5-7 pages, will account for 125 points (Due 3/15 by 9pm). The revision should take into

account my comments and the topics covered during the semester. More information about this assignment will be provided as the semester progresses.

Critical urban issues report (200 points): The major writing component of the class will be a report that goes in-depth on a particular aspect of a topic covered in class related to urban, suburban, and community sociology. In this assignment, you will not only provide a summary of the literature on your topic, but you will also critically analyze what you read by discussing its strengths and weaknesses. This paper will be formally written with proper citation of sources. The research paper will be broken up into two components: 1) The first (due 4/21 by 9pm; 125 points) is a 3- to 5-page summary of an urban social problem or phenomenon outlining three key sub-topics related to the key critical issue and potential solutions or future actions to address them; and 2) 5-10 minute presentation (75 points) of your report during the last full week of class.

Final Exam (200 points): Before finals week, I will provide you with 5 final exam topics and the general idea about what the essay questions will be. During the last week of class, I will send you the essay questions via email. You will choose 3 of them, and submit your answers to T-Square Monday May 1st by 2:20pm. These questions will be cumulative and cover material spanning the entire class. The exam questions will be based off of the class readings, the lectures, and the movies we watch in class. Any material that you mention in your paper that is not in the textbook or assigned readings should be properly cited. More information about this assignment will appear later in the semester.

Final Grades Rubric out of 1000 points possible (what appears on your transcript)

900 and above = A

800-899 = B

700-799 = C

600-699 = D

Less than 600 points = F

COURSE OUTLINE

NOTE: The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus as needed throughout the semester. If a change must occur, the instructor will inform the students in advance.

Week 1: Introduction to Class and the History of the Industrial American City

January 9-13

- T-Square, Sam Warner, "Evolution and Transformation: The American Industrial Metropolis, 1840-1950."

- USR, Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life." p. 32-41

Week 2: The Social Ecology of Urban Space

January 18-20

- USR, Park, "Human Ecology." p. 83-90
- USR, Burgess, "The Growth of the City." p. 91-99

Assignment due 1/19 by 9pm: First Draft of Autobiography

Week 3: Urban Planning

January 23-27

- USR, Jacobs, "The Uses of City Neighborhoods." p. 50-58
- T-Square, Richard Fausset, "A Glorified Sidewalk, and the Path to Transform Atlanta

<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/12/us/atlanta-beltline.html? r=0>

In-Class Movie: Urbanized

Optional Reading:

<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/11/13/magazine/design-issue-redesigned-public-spaces.html>

Week 4: Suburbanization

January 30–February 3

- T-Square, Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*, Chapters 9 and 14
- T-Square, Author Unknown. "Essay: A Planet of Suburbs." *The Economist*.
<http://www.economist.com/suburbs?fsrc=scn/fb/wl/pe/es/placesapart>

Assignment due 2/1 by 9pm: First Video Reflection

Optional Reading:

<http://grist.org/cities/donald-glover-atlanta-fx-tv-show-poverty-suburbs-sprawl-mass-transit/>

Week 5: The City as a Growth Machine

February 6-10

- USR, Logan and Molotch, "The City as a Growth Machine." p. 109-117
- USR, Gottdiener and Pickvance, "Partnership and the Pursuit of the Private City." p. 118-126
- T-Square, Richard Florida, "The Most Famous Models for How Cities Grow Are Wrong." *Citylab* by *The Atlantic* magazine.

<http://www.citylab.com/design/2013/08/most-famous-models-how-cities-grow-are-wrong/6414/>

Week 6: Segregation and Racial and Economic Inequality

February 13-17

- USR, Massey and Denton, "Segregation and the Making of the Underclass." p. 192-201
- USR, Wacquant and Wilson, "The Cost of Racial and Class Exclusion in the Inner City." p. 182-191
- T-Square: "America's Great Housing Divide: Are You a Winner or Loser? Atlanta", Washington Post

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/business/wonk/housing/atlanta/>

Optional Reading:

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/drsarahbond/2016/10/25/5-gis-projects-that-are-changing-the-way-we-understand-racism/#1d4df1902a44>

<http://www.citylab.com/design/2016/10/a-comprehensive-atlas-of-us-racial-equity/505157/>

Week 7: Housing, Gentrification, and Social Policy

February 20-24

- T-Square, Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*, Chapter 12
- T-Square, Written by David Eads and Helga Salinas. Photos by Patricia Evans. "Demolished: the End of Chicago's Public Housing." *NPR*:
<http://apps.npr.org/lookatthis/posts/publichousing/>
- T-Square, Read the 7 short "The 'Pros and Cons of Gentrification' Debates" published by the *New York Times*:
<http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2014/04/13/the-pros-and-cons-of-gentrification>.

In-Class Video: The Atlanta Way

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aa5n_ZivShE

Outside Movie: The Pruitt-Igoe Myth (optional)

Week 8: Culture and the City

February 27- March 3

- USR, Zukin, "Who Culture? Whose City?." p. 349-357
- USR, Florida, "Cities and the Creative Class." p. 358-369
- T-Square, Grazian, David. 2013. "Digital Underground: Musical Spaces and Microscenes in the Post-Industrial City." Pp. 127-151 in *Music Performance*

and the Changing City: Post-industrial Contexts in Europe and the United States. Edited by C. Wergin and F. Holt. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Week 9: Urban Schools and Educational Inequality

March 6-10

- T-Square, "From Public Schools, Segregation Then, Segregation Since." by Richard Rothstein
<http://www.epi.org/publication/unfinished-march-public-school-segregation/>
- T-Square, "Why Don't We Have Any White Kids?" by Kleinfeld, New York Times.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/13/education/at-explore-charter-school-a-portrait-of-segregated-education.html?pagewanted=1>

In-Class Movie: *Separate and Unequal* (Can Use for Video Reflection 2)

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/separate-and-unequal/>

Week 10: The City as an Immigrant Destination

March 13-17

- USR, Portes and Manning, "The Immigrant Enclave." p. 202-213
- USR, Lin and Robinson, "Social Disparities in the Expansion of the Chinese Ethnoburb of Los Angeles." p. 214-224
- T-Square, "Conclusion: The Second Generation Advantage", Excerpt from *Inheriting the City* by Kasinitz et al.
http://www.faculty.umb.edu/lawrence_blum/courses/CCT627_10/readings/kasinitz_children_of_immigrants.pdf

Assignment due 3/15 by 9pm: Second Draft of Autobiography

Optional Reading/Listening:

<https://psmag.com/ghosts-of-white-people-past-witnessing-white-flight-from-an-asian-ethnoburb-b550ba986cdb#.l3cyom3r>

<http://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2016/4/8/helping-local-ethnic-restaurants-flourish-through-social-enterprise>

Week 11: Spring Break!

March 20-24

NO CLASS!!!

Week 12: Family, Gender, and Sexuality in the City

March 27-31

- T-Square, “Angela Whitaker’s Climb.” by Isabel Wilkerson in *Class Matters* published by the New York Times.
- T-Square, “In Ticuani, He Goes Crazy: The Second-Generation Negotiate Gender.” by Robert Courtney Smith
- USR, Adler and Brenner, “Gender and Space: Lesbians and Gay Men in the City.” p. 270-277

Optional Listening:

<http://news.wabe.org/post/closer-look-atlanta-lgbt-history-pride-and-more>

Week 13: Health and Environmental Inequalities in the City

April 3-7

- T-Square, “The Patterns of Pollution: A Report on Demographics and Pollution in Metro Atlanta” March 2012 by GreenLaw
<http://greenlaw.org/Files/GreenLaw/2012/PatternsofPollution,FINAL,GreenLaw3-26-2012.pdf>
- T-Square, “Exposed and Confused: An Ethnographic Account of Environmental Suffering” by Javier Auyero & Debora Swistun
[http://ceas.iscte.pt/ethnografeast/Javier%20Auyero/auyero\(1\).pdf](http://ceas.iscte.pt/ethnografeast/Javier%20Auyero/auyero(1).pdf)

Assignment due 4/6 by 9pm: Second Video Reflection

Week 13: Urban Politics, Race, Class, and Power

April 10-14

- T-Square, Pattillo, Chapter 2, “The Black Bourgeoisie Meets the Truly Disadvantaged.”
- T-Square, Pattillo, Chapter 3, “White Power, Black Brokers.”

Outside Movie: *Street Fight (optional)*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-h4Zutazzs>

Week 14: The Future of Cities and Beginning of Presentations

April 17-21

- USR, Low, “The Erosion of Public Space and the Public Realm.” p. 401-404
- USR, Harvey, “The Right to the City.” p. 429-432
- T-Square, “America’s Urban Future.” By Vishaan Chakrabarti. *New York Times*. <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/17/opinion/americas-urban-future.html>.

Assignment due 4/21 by 9pm: Critical Urban Issues Report

Week 15: Presentations

April 24

- Readings TBA (if assigned at all)

Week 16: Final Exam

Monday May 1st

[Assignments Due: Final Exam due by 2:20pm via T-Square]