Geog 3630: Introduction to Urban Geography

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*Tuesday/Thursday 11-:12:15 372 3527*

*GGY Room 200D Office Hours Tu/Th 12:15-1:00*

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course examines historical and contemporary processes of urbanization, primarily in the European and North American contexts. We are concerned particularly with how these processes are expressed geographically, resulting in the differentiation of space and the creation of distinctive places. Urban geography requires a spatial approach: understanding and explaining the “why of where” as we study the overall spatial patterns of a city or a system of cities.

This course covers a range of topics relevant to cities including:

* historical development
* governance
* social patterns
* economic roles
* planning & design
* contemporary problems
* and the linkages among all of these.

We will examine the geography of urbanization at several scales, ranging from the development of the North American urban system to the experiences of neighborhoods within cities.

**PREREQUISITES**

This course is open to all students, ideally those who have already had some exposure to urban studies, formally or informally, in any discipline. However, this is not a necessary requirement. Whatever your previous exposure to urban studies, this course is designed on the assumption that each of you is an *active learner* and that each of us has a responsibility to *contribute* to the group's learning as well as our own. I expect your full engagement in all aspects of the course from your preparation of the reading materials to your thoughtful engagement in class discussions and activities.

**STUDENT OUTCOMES**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

* Articulate the historical “evolution” of cities in Western Society.
* Explain the basic links between urbanization and economic structure, cultural values, and the natural environment.
* Construct an understanding of how cities are structured internally and externally among regional and global systems of cities.
* Apply knowledge of the contemporary city – its structure, problems, and prospects.
* Demonstrate an emerging methodology for studying city landscapes through participant-observational methods.

**REQUIRED READINGS**

**Books** (you must acquire independently):

* Kaplan D. & Holloway S. (2014). *Urban Geography, 3rd edition*. New York: Wiley.

**Selected Chapters & Articles** (to be posted on elc):

* *The City Reader (3rd Edition)* Richard LeGates and Frederic Stout, eds. London: Routledge:
  + Engels F. (1845) The Great Towns, from *The Conditions of the Working Class in England in 1844*. pp. 50-58.
  + Jackson, K. (1985). The Drive-in Culture of Contemporary America, from *The Crabgrass frontier*, pp. 67-76.
  + Mumford, L. (1937). What is a City? From *Architectural Record*, pp. 92-96.
  + Jacobs J. (1961) The Uses of Sidewalks: Safety, from *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, pp. 114-8.
  + Wilson W.J. (1996) From Institutional to Jobless Ghettos, from *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor*, pp. 126-35.
  + Soja, E. (1989) Taking Los Angeles Apart, from *Postmodern Geographies*, pp. 189-200.
  + Howard, E. (1898) Author’s Introduction” and “The Town-Country Magnet”, from *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*, pp. 309-16.
  + Le Corbusier (1929) A Contemporary City, from *The City of Tomorrow and its Planning*, pp. 317-24.
  + Lynch, K. (1960). The City Image and its Elements, from *The Image of the City*, pp. 424-8.
  + White, W. (1988). The Design of Spaces, from *City: Rediscovering the Center*, pp. 429-36.
  + Jacobs, A. and Appleyard, D. (1987). Toward an Urban Design Manifesto, from *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, pp. 437-47.
* Beauregard, R. (1993). Representing urban decline: Postwar cities as narrative objects. *Urban Affairs Review*, 29, 87-202.
* Beauregard, R. (2001). Federal policy and postwar urban decline: A case of government complicity? *Housing Policy Debate*, 41, 129-51.
* Binnie, J., Holloway, J., Millington, S., and Young, C. (2006). *Cosmopolitan urbanism*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
* Cope, M. and Latcham, F. (2009). Narratives of decline: Race, poverty, and youth in the context of postindustrial urban angst. *The Professional Geographer*, 61(2), 150-63.
* Herscher, A. (2013). Detroit art city: Urban decline, aesthetic production, public interest. In M. Dewar and J. M. Thomas (Eds.) *The city after abandonment*, pp. 64-83. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
* Massey, D. and Denton, N. (1993). *American apartheid: Segregation and the making of the underclass*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
* Wilson, M. (1998). *Dancing in the dark: The inscription of blackness in Le Corbusier’s radiant city*, pp. 133-52. Nast, H. and Pile, S. (Eds.) *Places through the body*. London: Routledge

### COURSE OVERVIEW

1. Attendance and Participation (20%): Students should make a sustained effort to prepare for and participate in class meetings. While this is a lecture course, lecturing time will be heavily interspersed with in-class discussion. I place a high value on in-class participation, which means that your full attendance for the term will be important to your grade in the course. Full attendance means that you arrive for class on time, and do not make plans to leave until the class period is over.

2. Activities (55%): These four activities will build your first-hand knowledge of U.S. cities, processes of urbanization, as well as help acquaint you with urban and geographic studies as a discipline. Activities are due, and weighted, as follows:

Activity 1 Athens Bus Transect (10%) **Due on Jan 26**; be prepared to discuss in

class.

Activity 2 Urban Growth/Decline Ppr (15%) **Due on March 15**

Activity 3 Walking Tour: Normaltown (10%) **Meet in Normaltown** according to

assignment sheet **on March 17**; finished write-up **due on April 5**

Activity 3 The City in Film Paper (20%) **Due on April 28**

3. Final Exam (25%): A final exam will be given at the end of the semester (see course schedule, below). You will be required to write responses to short-answer (1-2 paragraphs) or long-answer (3-5 paragraphs) essay questions by which you will be able to demonstrate your knowledge of topics we have covered. You will be supplied with the questions prior to the exam, but you will be required to take the exam in-class.

### WEEKLY SCHEDULE

(*Unless noted otherwise, readings and assignments are due by class-time on the day they are listed*)

(*The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary. Any deviations will be announced to the class by the instructor in person or through email as needed*)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | DATE | **LECTURE.TOPIC** | **READING** |
| 1 | 1.12 | Introduction: What is a city and why/how do we study them? |  |
|  | 1.14 | No Class ***Begin Activity 1: Bus Transect Project*** | Ch 1  Reader: Mumford |
| **A Partial (and Eurocentric) History of Urbanization** | | | |
| 2 | 1.19 | Early Cities: Sumeria, Greece, Rome | Ch 2 |
|  | 1.21 | Cities of Medieval Europe |  |
| 3 | 1.26 | Layers of Urban Form: Paris  ***Activity 1 Due: Bus Transect Project* (Be prepared to discuss in class)** | Ch 13: 371-382 |
|  | 1.28 | Industrial Revolution: Manchester  ***Begin Activity 2: U.S. Urban Growth and Decline Paper*** | Reader: Engels |
| **Historical development of the American Urban System** | | | |
| 4 | 2.2 | Modeling Urban Systems, Central Place Theory, Rank Size Rule | Ch 4 |
|  | 2.4 | Eras of Urban Development  Railroad Era Case Study: Chicago and St. Louis | Ch 3 |
| 5 | 2.9 | Eras of Urban Development:  Highway Era Case Study: Houston & Los Angeles  (…and what happened to Chicago & Saint Louis?) | Ch 5 pp. 130-1 Reader: Jackson, Soja |
| **Urban Form and Structure** | | | |
|  | 2.11 | Central Business Districts; Models of Land Use and Urban Form | Ch 5  Reader: Burgess |
| 6 | 2.16 | Urban Ecology | Ch 7 |
|  | 2.18 | Immigration and the U.S. City | Ch 10 |
| 7 | 2.23 | Start Film: *Roger and Me* |  |
|  | 2.25 | Finish Film and discuss  Cities as Economic Landscapes: Rust Belt Cities & Flexible Accumulation | Ch 6  Ch 7 to p. 181 |
| **Social & Cultural Geographies of U.S. Cities** | | | |
| 8 | 3.1 | Race, Segregation, and the U.S. City | Ch 9 to p. 252  Selection: Massey & Denton |
|  | 3.3 | Blight, Urban Renewal and Public Housing | Ch 8 |
| 9 |  | **SPRING BREAK** |  |
| 10 | 3.15 | Gentrification ***Activity 2 Due: U.S. Urban Growth and Decline Paper***  ***Hand out Activity 3: Reading Normaltown*** |  |
|  | 3.17 | **Field walk: Exploring a Zone in Transition**  **Meet at corner of Prince and Oglethorpe/Satula** (by Sips cafe). Dress for the weather, with comfortable shoes. |  |
| 11 | 3.22 | Sprawl and Urban Poverty | Ch 9 pp. 253-68; Ch 12 pp. 358-66  Reader: Wilson |
|  | 3.24 | Re-urbanization? Gentrification, Cosmopolitanism & immigration at the turn of the 20th century | Ch 7 to p. 181 |
| 12 | 3.29 | Film: *New York: The City and the World* (2001) | Reader: J. Jacobs |
|  | 3.31 | Finish film |  |
| **Issues and Histories in Urban Planning** | | | |
| 13 | 4.5 | Discuss Film. Cover Gentrification  ***Activity 3 Due: Reading Normaltown*** | Reader: J. Jacobs |
|  | 4.7 | Urban Planning | Ch. 12 to p. 357; Reader: Howard; Le Corbusier  Selection: Wilson 1998 |
| 14 | 4.12 | The Suburbs, Sprawl, and Responses | Selection: Ewing; Knapp & Talen; Lehrer |
|  | 4.14 | The Suburbs, Sprawl, and Responses (cont.) |  |
| 15 | 4.19 | Perspectives on Urban Design: Legibility & Automobility | Reader: Lynch; Whyte; A. Jacobs & Appleyard |
|  | 4.21 | Governing the Contemporary City – Focus: Neoliberal Governance | Ch 11 |
| 16 | 4.26 | Urban Decline & Responses | Selection: Beauregard 1993 & 2001; Cope & Latcham 2009; Herscher 2013 |
|  | 4.28 | Wrap up  ***Activity 4 Due: The City in Film Paper*** |  |
| 17 | 5.10 | Final Exam Due to 200D 11am |  |

### ASSIGNMENT DETAILS

**Activity 1 – Athens Bus Transect**

For this activity, you’ll be asked to ride the Athens #7 Bus route for *at least* one full circulation (from Arch-to-Arch), and to describe and analyze the various urban environments you see. You’ll be given an assignment guide that will usher you through the activity, and will direct your attention to specific questions regarding particular locations along the route.

While I’d like you to think of this assignment as an exploratory “draft” of sorts (you don’t have to be right about everything, but you should be engaged in your attempt), I expect the findings you hand in to me to be *formalized* (typed out into complete sentences and paragraphs, 12-point font and single-spaced). I will collect this assignment in class on **January 26**; however I will return it to you the following class in order that it may act as a “touchstone” upon which we will ground things we learn throughout the semester, (in other words, please ***keep the assignment handy*** after it is returned). Please come to class on January 26 prepared to discuss your work.

Upon completion of this assignment, you will have developed a more thorough observational knowledge of Athens, as well as experienced a methodology of urban study geographer Alice Mah has termed ‘mobile methods’, which she describes as ‘seeing’ the city by moving through its flows.

Your work on this assignment will be assessed according to the following rubric:

An *A-quality* activity will include full responses to each question, spanning a paragraph each (at least 3 sentences). It will show a thoughtful and emerging engagement with the questions asked and the landscapes observed. It will further meet all formatting requirements.

A *B-quality* activity will include full responses to most questions, and will show a cursory engagement with the questions asked and the landscapes observed. It will further meet most formatting requirements.

A *C- or lower-quality* activity will include semi-complete responses to most questions, and will show a frequent lack of engagement with the questions asked and the landscapes observed. It will not meet most formatting requirements.

**Activity 2 – U.S. Urban Growth & Decline Paper**

For this assignment, you will be asked to write a 4-5 page paper exploring the growth and decline of major U.S. cities from 2000 to 2010. You will begin by sifting through the population data for the U.S. Census Bureau-defined metropolitan statistical areas, which I will supply. Next, you will describe trends/patterns you observe in this data. Finally, you will choose two exemplar cities – one growing, one declining – and explore the current events and/or histories of each, using this research to contextualize their respective growth and decline. This assignment requires internet-based research and your own analysis and reflections on the data you compile. I will collect this assignment in class on **March 15**.

Upon completion of this assignment, you will have expanded your knowledge of national urban demographic change by observing national patterns of growth/decline, as well as developed a deeper understanding of two cities in demographic flux. Methodologically, you will have acquired basic quantitative and case-study skills.

***Detailed Instructions:***

**Step One:** The Census Bureau has calculated the population change of all US metropolitan areas (cities of at least 50,000 people plus the socially and economically linked areas around them).  A list of all these areas, and their change in population from 2000 to 2010, is available at: <http://www.census.gov/population/www/cen2010/cph-t/cph-t-5.html> Go to this website and download one or more tables of population changes in US cities between 2000 and 2010. Download as an excel file the table called *Population Change for Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas in the United States and Puerto Rico (February 2013 Delineations): 2000 to 2010 (CPH-T-5)*

**Step Two:** Working in the excel spreadsheet, familiarize yourself with the data. Mark off all of the metropolitan areas (cities) with population growth rates between 2000 and 2010 that exceed 20%, and all of the metropolitan areas (cities) that declined (lost population) during that time.

**Step Three:** From the list generated in step two, pick two cities: one that experienced high growth between 2000-2010 (>20%), and one that declined in population (look for a negative % change) *(do not pick cities in Georgia, Chicago, or St. Louis!)*.  Go to a search engine (e.g. [Google](http://www.google.com), [Yahoo](http://www.yahoo.com), Lexis Nexis, etc.) and search on the name of each of your two cities to find out all you can about what is going on there.  The local newspaper is a great place to start (most have a “Metro” section, and many opinions and editorials will be on local issues).  Also: troll the Census Bureau’s website ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)) to find out more about the area.  They have several features that provide data, including “American FactFinder” and “State & County QuickFacts.”

**Step Four**: Write an essay that describes general patterns of growth and decline in cities in the United States from 2000 to 2010.  Use your two cities as case studies to illustrate factors that may affect population growth and decline.  In preparing and writing your essay, be sure to answer the following questions (Optional: You may want to prepare a map or maps):

* + In general, which US cities are growing and which are declining in population terms?  (Can you identify some sort of pattern? – a map will help).  To answer this question you should use the list of cities that have grown or declined more than 20% in population.  Describe and explain the patterns: do not simply provide a list of growing and declining places.  Characterize cities that are growing and cities that are declining in terms of region, physical location (on rivers, coasts, inland, etc), age, absolute size, economic base, climate, etc. *Use your knowledge of shifts in locational advantage under different technology regimes to characterize each group of cities.*
  + What are some reasons for successes (e.g. growing) and for suffering (declining) in the case of your two cities?  Suggest ways that these cities could a) continue their growth or b) turn around the decline and start to grow again. (This last part asks you to make an educated guess – explain your thinking.)
  + Population growth is often seen as a good indicator of economic vitality.  Do you agree, based on your two case studies?  (In other words, discuss whether the economies of your two cases seemed to improve or decline with population growth or decline.  The answer may be different for each place.)

**Activity 3 – Walking Tour: Walking Normaltown: A Neighbborhood in Transition**

For this in-class activity, you will be expected to attend a group walking tour of the commercial core and northern half of the Athens neighborhood of Normaltown. Adjacent to UGA’s Health Sciences Campus, Normaltown is undergoing tremendous change as this ‘inner-city’ landscape is redeveloped, gentrified, and infused with new land uses. Chiefly, we are concerned with Normaltown’s transitioning commercial and residential landscape. What signs of past or current divestment do you see? What signs of reinvestment/redevelopment, or gentrification do you see? Think about **structures** as well as **demographics** including **intended demographics**.

On this tour, you’ll be expected to record your impressions along our walk, and to follow the information I provide. Feel free to take photographs *respectfully*. You’ll then be expected to prepare a two-to-three page discussion of the neighborhood’s transition informed by your observations ***and*** by class materials (*hint: consider our discussions of central-city divestment and gentrification, particularly*). Put another way: how can you describe and explain Normaltown’s transitioning landscape in terms of past divestment and current reinvestment? After the tour, follow up by doing some internet snooping of news articles, Google Streetview (taken in 2012), or even rent advertisements. (This is not strictly required, but I highly recommend you do a little. There are images and articles easily available that will illustrate changes in more detail than I am able).

We will meet at classtime (11am) on **March 17** on the northeast corner of the Prince Avenue and Oglethorpe/Satula Avenue intersection in front of Sips Coffee. The tour should take about 45 minutes, and you will be expected to make observations and take notes (and take pictures, if you choose), which you will subsequently formalize according to an assignment sheet to be handed out later in the semester. (This assignment sheet will also help guide your observations.) I will collect your final write-up of this assignment in class on **April 5**.

By completing this assignment, you will have gained first-hand experience of a transitioning urban neighborhood and further honed your expertise in urban participant-observation. If you miss the tour, it is still possible to get a good grade on this assignment. However, you will need to walk the tour path yourself, as well as do substantial outside investigation since I will be unable to re-create the tour for you.

 

Tour-route: (1) Start at Sips; (2) cross Prince and walk along southeast side to Ike & Janes; (3) return to Oglethorpe/Satula, cross and walk along northwest side to Jay’s liquor; (4) retun to Oglethorpe/Satula and walk along northeast side of Prince down to Park; (5) turn north on Park and walk to Boulevard; (6) turn west on Boulevard and walk to Satula; (7) turn south on Satula and return to starting point.

**Activity 4 – The City in Film Paper**

For this activity, you will be asked to write a 4-5 page film analysis relating a film of your choosing to concepts you have learned in this course. Your textbook will be a key resource for this paper. You will be asked to do some limited electronic or print research into existing history/criticism of the film you have selected as well. You will be expected to draw on an understanding of at least one theme or concept you’ve learned in this course in order to discuss the movie from an urban/geographic perspective.

I will collect this assignment in class on **April 28**. Upon completion of this assignment, you will gain a deeper knowledge of how cities are represented in U.S. popular/mainstream media and culture. You will have additionally developed first-hand experience of cultural and/or aesthetic analysis as they are applied in urban studies.

Organization of the paper:

* Introductory paragraph – hook the reader, funnel from broad statement into a thesis sentence which provides a “road map” for the body of the paper.
* 2nd (or 2nd & 3rd) paragraph(s) – summarize the plot of the movie.
* Following paragraphs – build each paragraph around how an urban/geographic concept is represented in the movie. One theme may take more than one paragraph to develop. Be sure to address the following questions, which start narrowly and become increasingly broad and analytical moving down the list:
  + How is the geographic concept/theme represented? (Dialogue, narration, cinematography, etc.?)
  + What are the implications of the geographic theme/concept for the plot? Is it used to set the scene, does it remain central throughout the story line? How is it represented toward the end of the film? (Ask yourself whether the plot would make sense without the theme in question, and then work backwards to explain how the theme is important to the plot development)
  + In drawing on and illustrating geographic concepts, the film presumably teaches us something about geography. What do you learn about geography from watching the film? What are the broader implications of the treatment of the geographic themes/concepts in this film?
  + Throughout, utilize information you’ve learned from other **reviews** of your film, **but always return to your own analysis**
  + Tie your discussion **back to course material** as appropriate
* Conclusion

**POLICIES AND MISCELLANEOUS**

Attendance & Participation: Regular attendance and participation are vital for your learning in the class, far beyond the 20% of you final grade they are formally worth. This means being present and aware, and abstaining from the use of cell phones, computers, or other electronic devices. (Exception: if you would like to use your computer to take notes, I ask that you please sit in the front row). I will not generally take roll, but repeated absences will be noted, and will affect your grade accordingly.

Class Discussion: As noted, active participation is essential to your grade in this class. I am sensitive to the fact that some students are more comfortable speaking in class than others, but I encourage you all to actively engage with class readings and lectures so that you can form your own informed reactions and therefore want to participate in class discussion. Please see me if you have concerns about your ability to participate in this way.

Final Grades: My grading policy is simple – if you earn the points, you are guaranteed to following grades: A: 92-100%, A-: 90-91.9%, B+: 88-89.9%, B: 82-87.9%, B-: 80-91.9%, C+: 78-79.9%, C 72-77.9%, C-: 70-71.9%, D: 60-69.9%. I use a curve if, and only if, it is to your benefit.

Help! Please visit me right away if you are having difficulty with the course material. Coming to see me just before an assignment is due, or a test is being given, is a poor strategy for success. Material in this course will build upon earlier concepts and information; if you fall behind, it will become harder and harder to catch up. This is what office hours are for!

**Deadlines for assignments, as noted under Course Schedule, are FIRM.** Late homework and project assignments will lose 5% for each day they are late unless officially documented. Late in-class assignments will not be accepted at all. In each case, exceptions are possible only with documentation of a medical or family emergency.

**In-Class and Online Conduct**: The free exchange of ideas is an essential component of this course. In other words, you should feel free to express disagreement with me and each other over the content we explore. However, I do expect a degree of openness to difference from you, as course content (and discussion) is *supposed to* challenge your views and assumptions. What this means in practice is that each of us needs to adopt a *respectful* and *sensitive* attitude toward each other, so that this course remains a *safe space* for discourse, online and face-to-face.

* Participate in discussion. This means listening and/or reading other’s contributions carefully, and responding appropriately and on-topic.
* The “General discussion” forum on ELC may be used to post information and comments that do not relate directly to the class. You can also ask questions concerning technical or administrative issues in this forum.

**Academic Honesty**: Academic honesty is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity at the University of Georgia, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle. Consistent with this expectation, the university's culture of honesty requires students to be academically honest in all academic work and to not tolerate academic dishonesty of others. Academic honesty includes a commitment not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty violate the fundamental ethical principles of the university community and compromise the worth of work completed by others. Anyone in violation of these policies will receive a failing grade for the course.Detailed information about academic honesty can be found at: <http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/culture_honesty.htm>.

**An Invitation to Students with Disabilities:** The University of Georgia Geography Department follows the regulations outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act, and is committed to providing access for all people with disabilities. The University and this Department will provide accommodations if notified. Please call the University of Georgia Disability Resource Center—706.542.8719 (voice) or 706.542.8778 (tty)—for information about architectural access and to arrange for sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices, large print, audio, or Braille. This office is located at 114 Clark Howell Hall on the University of Georgia's campus.

**Acknowledgements:** The format and content of this syllabus and this course is based on the efforts of many scholars over time from several departments and institutions. Thank you to Drs. Steve Hollway and Hilda Kurtz of the Department of Geography at the University of Georgia, and Dr. Jason Henderson of the Department of Geography at San Francisco State University. This syllabus has also been informed by Drs. Kathleen deMarrais and Kathy Roulston of the Qualitative Research Program at the University of Georgia and by the University of Georgia Online Learning Consortium.

**Special Note:** The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary, and may be announced to the class by the instructor online or in face-to-face meetings.