

Geography G314: Urban Geography

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Course Description and Objectives

We are living through a period where our urban and suburban lives are being restructured, and all sorts of problems make metropolitan living a challenge for some, and a survival struggle for many. Our cities are the most vibrant of places, yet they harbor threats to civil society and appear as divided and divisive as ever. How has this happened? What has caused, and is causing, the tremendous changes in our cities, their spaces, and their neighborhoods? What new forms of urban living are emerging, which both reflect continuities with the past and represent new urban structures?

This course introduces analysis of contemporary urban systems, with an emphasis on spatial and geographic patterns and processes. This course will make you more aware of the contradictions and conflicts inherent in the development of U.S. cities, and of the centrality of urban system development in the evolution of our national and international space economy. We will cover a considerable range of topics including economic influences, government management, urban form, land use, design, development, housing, migration, life cycles, urban ills, and planning as they apply to urban geography. To put it all in temporal context, we will modestly delve into the historical perspective and take a peak into the future.

The focus of our study will be worldwide in scope and variable in scale, addressing issues at regional, national, and global extents. Your professor is admittedly a North American specialist, so lectures will most likely lean toward developed world issues. Students are certainly encouraged to explore developing/undeveloped world trends as a diversity of research will benefit us all.

As a geography class, this course will *spatially* apply interdisciplinary research from other fields such as sociology, economics, political science, and ecology. While basic understanding of social science and its quantitative and qualitative methods is helpful for your success in this class, it is not a requirement. If you have concerns about your theoretical or methodological competence, please speak with your professor as soon as possible.

Textbook Readings

Required textbooks available at the campus bookstore/online booksellers/etc.:

Knox, P. L., & McCarthy, L. (2005). *Urbanization: An introduction to urban geography* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education. ISBN 0-13-142450-5

Readings for a particular day are to be completed before you come to class. In doing this, you will have the essential background knowledge to fully understand that day's lecture and participate in classroom discussion. The readings *supplement* the lecture content, neither is a *substitute* for the other.

Where topical or contemporary events arise, which help illuminate urban issues, there may be additional assigned readings drawn from journals or other texts. These additional readings will be posted online.

<u>Grading</u>		<u>Scale</u>	
First Exam Questions	10 points	200-194	A+
Second Exam Questions	10 points	193-186	A
Third Exam Questions	10 points	185-180	A-
		179-174	B+
First Exam	35 points	173-166	B
Second Exam	35 points	165-160	B-
Third Exam	40 points	159-154	C+
		153-146	C
Paper Executive Summary	10 points	145-140	C-
Final Draft Research Paper	40 points	139-134	D+
		133-126	D
Class Participation	10 points	125-120	D-
		119-0	F
Total	200 points		

There is no extra credit. Also, I do not curve the grades. No exceptions. Honest.

Exam Questions Assignments

To better engage the course material and anticipate what will be on the exam, students will be required to turn in sample exam questions. Prior to each of the exams, students will write, type, and turn in a mix of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions for my review.

A successful student will write exam questions that draw from lecture and textbook material. Good questions will also use correct grammar, spelling, and format. Excellent questions may be shared with the class prior to exams to aid in test preparation. More specific question writing instructions will be forthcoming.

Exams

There will be three exams administered in this course. Exams will have a mix of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. For students to succeed on exams they must know the material as well as how to express their ideas in a coherent manner using formal, academic English. A successful student will write legibly, spell words correctly, and use proper syntax on written responses.

Attendance on exam dates is mandatory. If you miss an exam, you will receive a zero on that exam unless you have had an emergency documented by a dated doctor's note or accident report attesting to your inability to make it to the exam.

Research Paper

Each student will write an original research paper on a topic approved by the professor. An executive summary or abstract of the proposed work will be turned in for approval. The paper should meet the necessary grammatical requirements expected of a social and behavioral science paper, be correctly referenced, and typed.

Finished papers will be approximately 3,500 words long and in a format similar to those used in academic journals. Further information on paper requirements will be forthcoming. In the meantime, for ideas you can view the paper requirements of the journal *Urban Geography* at [<http://www.bellpub.com/ug/index.html>].

Class Participation

Students who want full credit for participation will attend class, actively pay attention, take complete notes, contribute to the discussion, and ask intelligent questions. These model students will also refrain from walking in late/leaving early, talking at inappropriate times, reading the newspaper, cramming for another test, using a mobile phone, and generally annoying their fellow classmates and professor.

Late Assignment Policy

Students who want an opportunity to earn full credit for their sample test questions, executive summaries, and papers will turn these materials in on time. Any assignments turned in after the due date will be penalized 10% for each day late. Assignments turned in more than 3 days late will be scored a 0. **Students are encouraged to turn in assignments early. Remember, the due date is the last possible day something may be turned in; you can certainly turn your work in early.**

Communications

I reserve the right to send official communications to students by email with the full expectation that students will receive e-mail and read these e-mails in a timely fashion. Class communications will be sent to students' official college email addresses. Students are expected to check their e-mail on a frequent and consistent basis in order to stay current with class-related communications.

Students who choose to have their email forwarded from their official college email address to another address do so at their own risk. The college is not responsible for any difficulties that may occur in the proper or timely transmission or access to email forwarded to any other address, and any such problems will not absolve students of their responsibility to know and comply with the content of official communications sent to their official college email addresses.

Academic Integrity

Each must student do his/her own quality work to receive credit. The minimum penalty for academic misconduct is a zero credit for the entire work. Any academic misconduct will be dealt with in accordance with college policy, whose penalties for academic misconduct include failure of the course and/or expulsion from the college.

Schedule

Week 1	1/20 Course Introduction
Week 2	1/27 Before class, read Chapter 1: Urbanization and Urban Geography and Chapter 3: The Foundations of the American Urban System
Week 3	2/3 Before class, read Chapter 4: Urban Systems in Transition and Chapter 5: The Foundations of Urban Form and Land Use
Week 4	2/10 Before class, read Chapter 6: Changing Metropolitan Form First Exam Questions Due
Week 5	2/17 First Exam
Week 6	2/24 Before class, read Chapter 10: The City as Text-Architecture and Urban Design and Chapter 11: The Urban Development Process
Week 7	3/3 Before class, read Chapter 12: The Residential Kaleidoscope Paper Executive Summary Due
Week 8	3/10 No class – Spring Break
Week 9	3/17 Before class, read Chapter 13: How Neighborhoods Change Second Exam Questions Due
Week 10	3/24 No class - Association of American Geographers Conference
Week 11	3/31 Second Exam
Week 12	4/7 Before class, read Chapter 15: Problems of Urbanization Rough Draft Research Paper Due
Week 13	4/14 Before class, read Chapter 16: The Politics of Change-Urbanization and Urban Governance
Week 14	4/21 Before class, read Chapter 17: Urban Policy and Planning Final Draft Research Paper Due
Week 15	4/28 Before class, read Chapter 18: Urban Futures Third Exam Questions Due
Finals Week	Third Exam, date and time to be announced

I reserve the right to change the syllabus. If changes are necessary, a new syllabus will be issued to the students to reflect these changes.

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