

**Geography 120**  
**Urban Geography: A Global Perspective**  
**Fall 2009**  
112 Walker  
MWF 1:25pm – 2:15pm

Instructor: Thomas Sigler

Office: 215 Walker

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1-3pm and by appointment

Contact Information: Email: tjs316@psu.edu; Mailbox: 302 Walker

Teaching Assistant: Crista Livecchi

Teaching Assistant Contact Information: cml296@psu.edu; Mailbox: Walker 304

Teaching Assistant Office Hours: Thursdays, 10am-12pm or by appointment in 336 Walker

**Required Course Texts:**

- *Urbanization*, Paul L. Knox and Linda McCarthy, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition
- Additional readings will be made available on ANGEL

**Course Description:** For the first time in human history, urban dwellers came to outnumber rural residents in the year 2000. The influence of cities extends to nearly every point on the globe. Urban areas, however, differ dramatically from other spaces in their physical structure, economic base, governance patterns, and the lived experiences of their residents. Cities are characterized by striking inequalities in living conditions and varied forms of cultural expression. In short, contemporary cities are vibrant and complex phenomena formed by conflicting social forces and economic processes. This course examines urban settlements and analyzes the processes of urbanization from a global perspective.

**Course Objectives:** The goal of this class is to provide students with basic information, concepts and analytical tools to understand contemporary processes of urbanization and urban change. An overriding theme in the course is examining the relationship between global and local factors in these processes. Critical areas of inquiry include the economy of cities, politics, social interaction, urban social movements, land use, and urban structure. A significant portion of the course focuses on urbanization in the Global South.

**Learning Outcomes:** By taking this course, students will 1) become familiar with the major approaches in urban geography for examining urban forms, structures and change and 2) develop critical reading and analytical skills.

**Requirements**

Readings. All assigned readings are listed in the Syllabus Schedule below. You are expected to have read the assigned material prior to attending the corresponding lecture. The majority of the assigned readings will be from the textbook, *Urbanization*, SECOND edition, by Knox and McCarthy, which is available in the Penn State Bookstore.

During certain weeks, there will also be supplementary readings from other sources. These will be posted under the 'lessons' tab on ANGEL. The lectures will draw on major themes from the readings as well as material not discussed explicitly in the readings. The exams will cover material from both the lectures as well as the readings. You will also be responsible for the material covered in films shown in class.

Examinations. There will be three exams over the course of the semester (see Schedule below for dates). The exams will be a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and/or essay, and they will cover material from the lectures, readings, and films. Each exam will only include material covered since the previous exam. The last exam will be given during finals week.

Research Assignments. There will be three short research assignments. Specific details of the assignments will be provided in class at least two weeks prior to their due date. If you need assistance with research techniques beyond that which is provided in class, please see the teaching assistant before the due date. Late assignments will be penalized 10 points (out of 100) for each day overdue.

All direct quotations must be properly cited in the body of the text (providing the author's last name, the date, and page number) as well as in the bibliography using APA or other standard formats. If you are not familiar with proper formatting please see me during my office hours. Additionally, if you present specific information that is not common knowledge (*e.g.* statistics), you are required to include an in-text citation (including the author's last name, date, page number, etc.) to document the source of such information.

Attendance and Participation. All students are required to attend the course lectures. There will be material discussed in lectures and films that is not covered in the course readings, which will be tested on the exams. In order to do well on exams, therefore, attending lectures is crucial. Attendance will be monitored through four "pop" quizzes, and absences may be excused only for family or medical emergencies with proper documentation. Make-up quizzes and exams will only be permitted with documentation of family or medical emergencies. All make-up exams will be in the form of essay questions based on the material covered in class and the readings.

Pop Quizzes. Over the course over the semester, there will be four "pop" quizzes. These quizzes will test information from that day's assigned reading and/or information covered in the previous lecture. The purpose of these quizzes is a) to encourage students to keep up with the readings and b) to monitor attendance. Pop quizzes will consist of 2 questions. However, each quiz will be worth 3 percentage points, as students will receive one point just for taking the quiz. For example, students scoring 1/2 will receive 2 points and students scoring 2/2 will receive all three 3 points. If you take all four quizzes and answer all of the questions correctly, you will receive 12% (out of 10%) for the quiz component of your grade.

“Video and Discussion” Classes. On several occasions, we will watch videos from the Bullfrog Films series *City Life*. Each 30-minute video deals with a different urban issue in a unique setting. The purpose of these videos is to foster connections between theoretical material and real-world issues. You will be responsible for material presented in these films as well as material from subsequent classroom discussion. This material will be tested on exams and you may be asked to call upon these videos in your research assignments.

## **Grading**

Your final grade will be based on the following calculation:

1 <sup>st</sup> exam:	15%
2 <sup>nd</sup> exam:	15%
3 <sup>rd</sup> exam:	15%
1 <sup>st</sup> research assignment:	15%
2 <sup>nd</sup> research assignment:	15%
3 <sup>rd</sup> research assignment:	15%
Pop Quizzes:	10%

Final grades will not be curved. The following ranking system will be used to determine final grades for the course:

A:	93-100
A-:	90-92
B+:	87-89
B:	83-86
B-:	80-82
C+:	77-79
C:	70-76
D:	60-69
F:	<60

Note: Final grades will not be rounded up to the nearest whole number, or letter grade. For instance, if you have a total of 92.75, you still get an A-, rather than an A (see above). In order to get an A, you must have a 93 or higher. There will be no extra-credit opportunities in the course.

Class Schedule. The course schedule for lectures and important dates (*e.g.* exams, paper due dates) is listed below. I shall do my best to stick to the syllabus schedule, although I reserve the right to modify it if something unexpected comes up during the semester.

## **Policies**

Office Hours. I strongly encourage you to come to my office hours. As the course instructor, my main goal is to help you learn, so if you have any questions about the material, or the class in general, you are more than welcome to come speak with me during office hours. If you are not available during that time, email me to set up an appointment.

Teaching Assistant. Teaching assistants provide academic support for students just as instructors do. In particular, your teaching assistant will be doing the majority of the grading for this course. If you have a question about the course material, do not hesitate to contact your teaching assistant for help or clarification. Questions about grades should also generally be directed to your teaching assistant. If you feel that you would like to speak directly with the instructor, I am happy to field questions about anything during my office hours or by email. Please remember to be courteous in all correspondence. ☺

Note to Students with Disabilities. Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, contact the Office for Disability Services, ODS located in room 116 Boucke Building at 814-863-1807(V/TTY). For further information regarding ODS, please visit their web site at [www.equity.psu.edu/ods/](http://www.equity.psu.edu/ods/). Instructors should be notified as early in the semester as possible regarding the need for reasonable academic adjustments.

Email and ANGEL: Send all email to me using the email address listed on the first page of the syllabus ([tjs316@psu.edu](mailto:tjs316@psu.edu)) or via the ANGEL web page for the course. I will do my best to respond promptly to your questions. You can access ANGEL by typing the following into a web browser: [cms.psu.edu](http://cms.psu.edu). You will then be prompted to type your Penn State User ID and Password. Next, click on the course GEOG 120.

To make sure that you will receive Angel emails, please do the following in Angel: Click on the "Communicate" tab, and then click on "View Inbox". Click on "Preferences" and fill in your forwarding address (i.e. write your Webmail address and if you prefer you can also write another email address that you normally use). Make sure that the "Forwarding mode" is set to "Forward mail and keep as new" and make sure to save your settings! If you send an email through Angel, please make sure to check "Send a copy to each recipients' internet email". NOTE: ANGEL ONLY WORKS WITH MOZILLA FIREFOX.

Deadlines. The first two exams will be given during the regularly scheduled lecture times on the dates listed in the syllabus schedule (see below). The 3<sup>rd</sup> exam, which is not cumulative, will be given during finals week. Students cannot re-take exams. Make-up exams can only be taken if the student has official, written documentation of a death in the family or a personal medical emergency. Late assignments will be marked down one letter grade per day. Late submissions will be accepted for partial credit until the next-to-last week of class.

Academic Dishonesty. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will result in an automatic 'F' for the course grade, as well as possible disciplinary action by the university. This consists of cheating on exams or plagiarism on the papers. Plagiarism includes using another author's work as your own or fabricating information or citations in your paper. Properly citing sources is absolutely fundamental to academic writing, so if you have any questions about whether you are adequately citing your sources, please discuss them with me during office hours. For further information on the EMS College's academic dishonesty policy, see the following website:  
<http://www.ems.psu.edu/students/integrity/index.html>

## SCHEDULE

Day	Date	Topic	Assignment
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### Week 1

Mon	8/24	Introduction and Overview	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>
Wed	8/26	Basic Concepts in Urban Geography	Knox and McCarthy 1-16
Fri	8/28	A Tale of Two Cities: New York and Los Angeles	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>

### Week 2

Mon	8/31	Origins and Growth of Cities, Part I	Knox and McCarthy 21-39
Wed	9/2	Origins and Growth of Cities, Part II	Knox and McCarthy 39-51
Fri	9/4	Regional Perspectives and National Systems	"The World Goes to Town" from <i>The Economist</i> , May 5, 2007. V. 383, Iss.8527

### Week 3

Mon	9/7	NO CLASS: UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>
Wed	9/9	Urban Land Use & Planning, Part I	"The Long Emergency" by James Kunstler, <i>Rolling Stone</i> , Available online at <a href="http://www.rollingstone.com/news/story/7203633/the_long_emergency">http://www.rollingstone.com/news/story/7203633/the_long_emergency</a>
Fri	9/11	<b>FIRST PAPER ASSIGNED</b> Urban Land Use & Planning, Part II	"Orlando Beyond Disney", from National Geographic, March 2007. Available online at <a href="http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2007/03/orlando/allman-text">http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2007/03/orlando/allman-text</a>

### Week 4

Mon	9/14	Video: Saving Pennsylvania	Knox and McCarthy 139-169; "Et in Suburbia Ego" from <i>The Economist</i> , May 5, 2007. V. 383, Iss.8527
Wed	9/16	Migration and Neighborhood Change	Knox and McCarthy 53-76; 100-112
Fri	9/18	Housing Problems and Policy	Knox and McCarthy 79-89

### Week 5

Mon	9/21	Video and Discussion: Is Walmart Good for America?	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>
Wed	9/23	Urban Retailing	Knox and McCarthy 115-137
Fri	9/25	Urban Transportation	Knox and McCarthy 439-452

**Week 6**

Mon	9/28	Video and Discussion: Barcelona Blueprint <b>FIRST PAPER DUE</b>	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>
Wed	9/30	Exam Review	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>
Fri	10/2	<b>EXAM 2</b>	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>

**Week 7**

Mon	10/5	The Economy of Cities	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>
Wed	10/7	Urban Labor	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>
Fri	10/9	Poverty, Deprivation, and Inequality <b>SECOND PAPER ASSIGNED</b>	Knox and McCarthy 407-438

**Week 8**

Mon	10/12	Social Diversity and Urban Space	Knox and McCarthy 377-399
Wed	10/14	Gender, Sexuality, and Urban Space	Knox and McCarthy 399-403
Fri	10/16	Responses to Economic Change, Part I	Knox and McCarthy 455-492 and <i>City as Spectacle: Culture and the Reimagining of Cities</i> (ANGEL)

**Week 9**

Mon	10/19	Responses to Economic Change, Part II	Knox and McCarthy 273-292
Wed	10/21	Guest Lecture: Poverty in the US	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>
Fri	10/23	The Slums of Slumdog	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>

**Week 10**

Mon	10/26	Politics, Power, and Social Justice	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>
Wed	10/28	Urban Focus: Panama City <b>SECOND PAPER DUE</b>	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>
Fri	10/30	Video and Discussion: The Other Side	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>

**Week 11**

Mon	11/2	World Cities, Global Cities, Etc. <b>THIRD PAPER ASSIGNED</b>	Knox and McCarthy 89-100
Wed	11/4	Global Urban System: Cities in the Global South	Knox and McCarthy 171-194
Fri	11/6	Guest Lecture: The Environmental Impacts of Urban Form	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>

### Week 12

Mon	11/9	20 Years after the Berlin Wall: The Soviet City	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>
Wed	11/11	Exam Review	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>
Fri	11/13	<b>EXAM 2</b>	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>

### Week 13

Mon	11/16	Migration and Housing in the Global South <b>THIRD PAPER DUE</b>	“The Strange Allure of Slums” from <i>The Economist</i> , May 5, 2007.V. 383, Iss.8527
Wed	11/18	Urban Economies of the Global South	Knox and McCarthy 89-100
Fri	11/20	Video and Discussion: Lines in the Dust	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>

### Week 14

Mon	11/23	NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>
Wed	11/25	NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>
Fri	11/27	NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>

### Week 15

Mon	11/30	Poverty, Power, and Politics in the Global South	Knox and McCarthy 197-222
Wed	12/2	Health and Environmental Issues in the Global South	Knox and McCarthy 225-242
Fri	12/4	Digital Cities & SRTEs	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>

### Week 16

Mon	12/7	Transportation Issues	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>
Wed	12/9	The Future of Cities	Knox and McCarthy 525-535
Fri	12/11	Exam Review	* <i>No Assigned Reading</i>