

**GEO4602/5934**  
***Urban Geography***  
**Fall 2011, HCB 314**  
**Monday/Wednesday, 12:20-1:50**

Instructor: Joseph Pierce  
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**Course Description**

This course offers an opportunity for students to explore, understand, and apply the theories and methods that urban geographers use to examine cities—in particular, for American cities over the past 150 years. We will discuss the different geographical approaches to evaluating cities and “the urban process” as we try to understand two related questions:

- 1) **How and why did these cities come to be the way they are now?** and
- 2) **How might planners, governments, and activists act to make them better in the future?**

This course is organized around a series of case studies of American cities. Students will be expected to work both individually and in groups to develop responses to these cases that attempt to answer the two questions above, using the approaches that we will introduce over the course of the semester.

**Course Objectives**

**Objective 1:** Students will be able to **discuss key concepts and theories** in urban geography.

*Evaluation:* Students will be evaluated regarding this objective through *class discussion* and *short reaction papers*.

**Objective 2:** Students will be able to **recognize and evaluate patterns of urban development which reflect the major strands** of 20th and 21st century American urban scholarship.

*Evaluation:* Students will be evaluated regarding this objective through *class discussion* and *project preparation reports* (see assignments below).

**Objective 3:** Students will be able to **apply their understanding of U.S. urban scholarship to various case studies** by choosing appropriate theories from the course materials to justify specific (hypothetical) interventions.

*Evaluation:* Students will be evaluated regarding this objective through *project preparation reports*, *case study projects*, and the *final presentation*.

## Prerequisites and Fulfillment of Requirements

There are no prerequisites for this course.

### Required Readings

There is one required text for this course:

1. Richard T. LeGates and Frederic Stout, eds. 2007. *The City Reader*, Fourth Edition. London and New York: Routledge.

This text will be *extensively* supplemented by materials provided in-class or via Blackboard. Some of the readings are “real world” documents that are not designed to clearly state their point of view on our in-class themes. As a result, it is your responsibility to link the readings to the specific themes of lectures and discussions from week to week.

*Undergraduate Students:* Assignments and readings specifically for undergraduates (e.g., not for graduate students) will be *listed in italics in the course schedule*. **Graduate Students:** Readings and assignments specifically for graduate students will be **listed in bold in the course schedule**. Undergraduates are welcome to complete these additional readings; graduate students will be held accountable for them both in writing and in class discussion.

Any readings or assignments that are in any other form of text are required of all students. If you have any questions about whether or not you are expected to complete a reading, please ask! You will be held accountable for it.

### Assignments and Grading

There are three repeating types of assignments in this course (defined below) and one final assignment. These, along with your participation in class discussion, form the portfolio which will be assessed to produce your grade. All written assignments should use the following format: 12 point Times New Roman, double spaced, 1 inch margins, with a single-spaced heading that includes the assignment name, date turned in, and your name on the first line, with the title of the piece on the second.

*Four Short Reaction Papers: (Undergraduates only)* Reaction papers are formal writing assignments, 2-3 pages long. They should include a very brief summary of the readings you are responding to, but should focus on your reaction to the readings, how they relate to each other, and how they do or do not help demonstrate the theme from a particular week. Each paper must respond to *at least* three individual readings. You may turn in a reaction paper in any of the first ten weeks of class, but you can only turn in a reaction paper in response to *that* week’s readings. In other words, if you turn in a paper in week 8, it must respond to the readings assigned for week 8.

**30% of grade**

**Two Medium-length Response Papers: (Graduate students only)** Response papers are formal writing assignments, 7-8 pages long. They should include a very brief summary of the readings you are responding to, but should focus on synthesizing the readings from a sequence and presenting an argument about the unit readings. Each paper must respond to *at least* three individual readings. You may turn in a reaction papers alongside two of the three case studies.

**30% of grade**

**Two Project Preparation Reports:** Due one week before group projects are due, the preparation reports are written individually. A report should be 1-2 pages, and describes your contribution to the project, what theoretical approach from the readings you are using, why you chose that perspective, and any challenges that you are having in putting together your project. More detailed instructions will be given as the due dates approach (see course outline below).

**5% of grade**

**Two Case Study Projects:** Case studies are longer documents (8-12 pages) that you and a group of 4-5 students (assigned by the instructor) produce together. Each project will be due just after the conclusion of a course segment (see schedule at the end of syllabus), and will address a case study based on a particular city at a particular moment in history. All projects will include a written case introduction, a problem statement, and a proposed intervention that might improve the city for its residents; but a project may also include maps, models, charts, etc. as needed. More detailed instructions will be given as the due dates approach (see course outline below).

**30% of grade**

**One Final Paper:** Each student will write a 10 page paper on how to intervene in a particular urban challenge that you identify in the city of Tallahassee, FL. More detailed instructions will be given as the due dates approach (see course outline below).

**20% of grade**

**Graduate Students:** The final paper described here will be replaced by an article-length research paper. More details will be provided under separate cover.

**Ongoing Class Participation:** Student participation in class discussions and in-class project processes is critical to the function and success of this course. We will often move back and forth between small group discussion and full-class discussion. Being in class, on-time, prepared and in an appropriate head space to actively engage in learning is an important element of your evaluation. In addition to discussion of the readings, there will be in-class opportunities to present (usually in small groups) your written projects to one another.

**15% of grade**

**Quizzes:** I reserve the right to insert reading verification quizzes into the course at any time of my choosing. Quizzes, if proctored, will be brief short-answer or multiple-choice

instruments at the beginning of class, in class, and will each account for 2.5% of your total grade. Other assignments will be proportionally reduced in grade value.

**A word about grading:** As is true for many of my colleagues, I try to guide students regarding what qualifies as good without setting an outer bound for what is excellent. We will discuss in further detail what I am seeking in each of these assignments as they approach, but what I value most is your creative engagement with reading materials and the various assignments as a vehicle for learning. I urge you to make assignments your own by *discussing with me* outside of class whether your proposed approach will satisfy the requirements of the assignment.

Numeric grades on assignments will translate to letter grades on the following scale:

92 to 100.0% = A	77 to 79 = C+
90 to 92 = A-	73 to 76 = C
87 to 89 = B+	70 to 72 = C-
83 to 86 = B	60 to 69 = D
80 to 82 = B-	0 to 59 = F

### **Class Policies**

**Classroom Ground Rules:** Every student deserves an academic environment in which they are free to intellectually explore and participate in discussion safely and comfortably. All students are expected to abide by basic ground rules and avoid disparaging or inflammatory comments to their classmates.

**Classroom Technology:** Mobile phones, texting, email, messaging, facebook, etc.—any personal communication or use of technology for non-classroom purposes—is not permitted. I reserve the right to prohibit the use of laptops in the classroom if I have concerns regarding focus and attention to class activities. Classroom technology is a privilege! Don't ruin it for your classmates.

**University Attendance Policy:** Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

**Late Work:** Timely submission of assignments is key to the smooth functioning of the class. Late work must be excused by the instructor, should reflect a serious, documented excuse, and will be marked down 10% per day. No assignments will be accepted more than 1 week late. Grade disputes must be addressed to the instructor *within two weeks* of the grade being posted online; you are responsible for keeping up with your grades as they are posted to the course website.

**Academic Honor Policy:** The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to “. . . be honest and truthful and . . . [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University.” (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at <http://dof.fsu.edu/honorpolicy.htm>.)

**Free Tutoring from FSU:** For tutoring and writing help in any course at Florida State University, visit the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) Tutoring Services' comprehensive list of tutoring options - see <http://ace.fsu.edu/tutoring> or contact [tutor@fsu.edu](mailto:tutor@fsu.edu) for more information. High-quality tutoring is available by appointment and on a walk-in basis. These services are offered by tutors trained to encourage the highest level of individual academic success while upholding personal academic integrity.

**Americans With Disabilities Act:** Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request. For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Student Disability Resource Center  
874 Traditions Way  
108 Student Services Building  
Florida State University  
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167  
(850) 644-9566 (voice)  
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)  
[sdrc@admin.fsu.edu](mailto:sdrc@admin.fsu.edu)  
<http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/>

**Syllabus Change Policy:** Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

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*Syllabus continues with course schedule on the following page.*

## Course Schedule for Urban Geography

Each week we meet twice except as interrupted by holidays. You are expected to have read all of the assigned material before the first class session; any written assignments are due *before* the beginning of the second session unless otherwise noted. In other words, if you turn in a reaction paper for week three, you must hand it in before I begin addressing the class on the Wednesday of that week.

**NOTE:** I often add one or two brief current events-based readings a week ahead. *Please check Blackboard for additional readings.* These *will* be included in class discussion and are eligible for inclusion in your Reaction Papers.

### ***SEGMENT ONE: What is an American City?***

#### **Week One: Introduction and Early Cities (Aug 29, 31)**

*Key Questions:* What is a city? Why did cities form? What did early American cities look like?

*Readings:*

- Soja, E. 2000 “Putting Cities First: Remapping the Origins of Urbanism” in Bridge, G. and S. Watson, *A Companion to the City*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell, pp. 26-34
- **Toennies, Ferdinand. 2001[1887]. *Community and Association (Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft)*. Cambridge University Press, Harris and Hollis. pp. 17-91.**

*Due:* Create student bio page on Blackboard.

#### **Week Two: Developing an American Urbanism (Sep 5,7)**

*Key Questions:* How did American cities evolve up to the 1880s? What, if anything, was specific about American cities compared to other parts of the world?

*Readings:*

- Jackson: Chap 1 (pp. 8-18)
- Olmsted (pp. 307-313. In Richard T. LeGates and Frederic Stout, eds. 2007. *The City Reader*, Fourth Edition. London and New York: Routledge.)
- Howard (pp. 314-321. In LeGates and Stout.)
- **Wirth, Louis. 1938. Urbanism as a way of life. *American Journal of Sociology* 44:1-24.**
- **Guterman, Stanley. 1969. In defense of Wirth’s “Urbanism as a way of life.” *American Journal of Sociology* 74:492-499.**

*Due: Students may turn in a Reaction Paper.*

**Week Three: American Suburbanization, Part 1** (Sep 12,14)

*Key Questions:* How and why did American urban form change from 1880-1936?

*Readings:*

- Jackson: Introduction, Chs. 2, 5, and 6, pp. 3-11; 20-44; 87-102; 103-115
- Mumford (pp. 85-89. In LeGates and Stout.)
- Burgess (pp. 150-157. In LeGates and Stout.)
- **Walker, Richard. 1981. A theory of suburbanization: capitalism and the construction of space in the United States. In *Urbanization and urban planning in capitalist society*, ed. M. Dear and A. Scott. London: Methuen.**

*Due: Students may turn in a Reaction Paper.*

**Week Four: American Suburbanization, Part 2** (Sep 19,21)

*Key Questions:* How and why did American cities change from 1945-1985?

*Readings:*

- Jackson: Chs. 9, 10, 13, and 14, pp. 157-171; 172-189; 231-245; 246-271
- Walker, R., and R.D. Lewis 2005 “Beyond the crabgrass frontier: industry and the spread of North American cities, 1850-1950” in Fyfe, N. and J. Kenny, *The Urban Geography Reader*. New York: Routledge, pp. 121-127.
- **Nijman, Jan. 2000. The paradigmatic city. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 90:135-145.**

*Due: Students may turn in a Reaction Paper.*

***SEGMENT TWO: Economic Transformation and ‘American Cities’ as ‘Global Cities’***

**Week Five: The Restructuring of the Global Economy** (Sep 26,28)

*Key Questions:* What happened to American cities in the 1960s and 1970s? What does this have to do with global economic trends?

*Readings:*

- Fishman (pp. 69-77 in LeGates and Stout)

- Webber (pp. 473-477 in LeGates and Stout)
- Sassen (pp. 197-206 in LeGates and Stout)
- **Brenner, Neil, and Nik Theodore. 2002. Cities and the Geographies of “Actually Existing Neoliberalism.” *Antipode* 34(3): 349-379.**
- **Castells, Manuel. 1999. Grassrooting the Space of Flows. *Urban Geography*, 20(4): 294-302.**

*Due: Students may turn in a Reaction Paper. Graduate students may turn in a response paper.*

### **Week Six: “Global Cities” (Oct 3,5)**

*Key Questions:* What does it mean for a city to become “global?”

*Readings:*

- Jackson: Chs. 3, 7, 11, & 12, pp. 45-72; 116-137; 190-218; 219-230;
- Laquian, (pp. 489-498 in LeGates and Stout)
- Chakravorty, S 2005 “From colonial city to globalizing city? The far-from-complete spatial transformation of Calcutta,” in *The Urban Geography Reader*, pp. 84-92.
- **Marcuse, Peter, and Ronald van Kempen. 2000. Conclusion: A Changed Spatial Order. In P. Marcuse and R. van Kampen, eds., *Globalizing Cities: A New Spatial Order?***

*Due: Students may turn in a Reaction Paper.*

### **Week Seven: International Culture in American Cities (Oct 10,12)**

*Key Questions:* How “global” are global cities in terms of inhabitants? How does internationalism, or cosmopolitanism, change cities?

*Readings:*

- Introduction, Conclusion In Massey, D. *World City*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

*Due: First Project Preparation Report. Students may turn in a Reaction Paper. (One must now be completed.)*

## ***SEGMENT THREE: Race, Class, Gender, Power***

### **Week Eight: The L.A. School (Oct 17,19)**

*Key Questions:* What is “The L.A. School?” What, if anything, is special or interesting about the case of Los Angeles?

*Readings:*

- Sorkin, “See you in Disneyland” pp. 335-353, in *Readings in Urban Theory*
- Fishman, “The American Metropolis at Century’s End: Past and Present Influences” in *Housing Policy Debate*
- Benton, L. 1995. “Will the Real/Reel Los Angeles Please Stand Up?” *Urban Geography* 16(2) 144-164
- **Dear, M. 1998. “Postmodern Urbanism,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 88(1) 50-72.**

*Due:* First Case Study Project (New York City circa 1970). *Students may turn in a Reaction Paper. (Two must now be completed.) Graduate students may turn in a response paper.*

**Week Nine: Unhoused Part 1** (Oct 24,26)

*Key Questions:* What does it mean to be unhoused (for themselves and for others)? How do American cities deal with, and respond to, unhoused populations?

*Readings:*

- Duneier: Introduction and Part I, pp. 3-111
- **Dear, M. 1996. “In the City, Time Becomes Visible,” in *City: Los Angeles and Urban Theory at the End of the Twentieth Century*. Berkeley, U of C Press.**

*Due:* *Students may turn in a Reaction Paper. (Three must now be completed.)*

**Week Ten: Unhoused Part 2** (Oct 31,Nov 2)

*Key Questions:* What lessons can be drawn from the experiences of the unhoused to other populations in American cities? What lessons *cannot* be drawn? Why?

*Readings:*

- Ch. titled “When you gotta go,” and Part V, pp. 173-187; 293-330
- Ch. 4, “Fortress L.A.” In Davis, M 1990 *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* New York: Verso.
- **Blomley, N. 2007. “How to turn a beggar into a bus stop: law, traffic, and the ‘function of the place.’” *Urban Studies* 44:1697**
- **Blomley, N. 2009. Homelessness, rights, and the delusions of property. *Urban Geography* 30(6) 577.**

*Due:* *Students may turn in a Reaction Paper. (All four must now be completed.)*

**Week Eleven: Urban Economic Power** (Nov 7,9)

*Key Questions:* What is economic “power?” How is it distributed in American cities?

*Readings:*

- Engels (pp. 50-58 in LeGates and Stout)
- Logan J. and H. Molotch 2002 “The City as a Growth Machine” in *Readings in Urban Theory*, pp. 199-238
- Ch. 7, “Junkyard of Dreams” In Davis, M 1990 *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* New York: Verso.
- **Harvey, D. 2003. “The right to the city.” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*.**

*Due:* Second Project Preparation Report.

**SEGMENT FOUR: Today’s Urban Trends, Tomorrow’s American Cities**

**Week Twelve: “New Urbanism” vs. Resurgent Urbanism** (Nov 14,16)

*Key Questions:* What is New Urbanism? What does “resurgent urbanism?” mean? What are the differences between these two concepts?

*Readings:*

- Florida (pp. 129-135 in LeGates and Stout)
- Duany and Plater-Zyberk (pp. 192-196. In LeGates and Stout)
- *Note:* there *will* be additional current events readings this week.
- **Talen, E. 2008. New Urbanism, social equity, and the challenge of post-Katrina rebuilding in Mississippi. *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 27:277.**

*Due:* Second Case Study Project (Los Angeles circa 1995). **Graduate students may turn in a response paper.**

**Week Thirteen: Information Technology and Urban Design** (Nov 21)

*Key Questions:* How do trends in technology, particularly regarding communication, change the function (and purpose) of cities in the U.S.? Is this the same internationally? Why?

*Readings:*

- Greenfield, A., and Shepard, M. 2007 *Urban Computing and its Discontents*. Situated Technologies Series, The Architectural League of New York

- **W.J. Craig and S.A. Elwood, How and Why Community Groups use Maps and Geographic information. *Cartography and Geographic Information Systems* 25 2 (1998), pp. 95–104**

*Due:* A one-paragraph description of your final paper topic. (You should be working on your final paper.)

**Week Fourteen: “Sustainable” Cities (Nov 28,30)**

*Key Questions:* What makes a city “sustainable?” Is it the same as what makes a city “green?” How is the idea of sustainable cities changing urban form?

*Readings:*

- Nugent, R., 2000, “Measuring the Sustainability of Urban Agriculture.” In Koc, M *For Hunger-Proof Cities: Sustainable Urban Food Systems*. IDRC.
- Agyeman, J, and Evans, B, 2004, “‘Just’ Sustainability: The emerging discourse of environmental justice in Britain? *The Geographical Journal* 170.
- Introduction, Ch. 1 (pp. 1-30) Fitzgerald, J. *Emerald Cities: Urban Sustainability and Economic Development* Boston, MA: Oxford University Press.

*Due:* Nothing. (You should be working on your final paper.)

**Week Fifteen: Utopia, Dystopia, Planning (Dec 5,7)**

*Key Questions:* How do we think about urban futures? What comes next?

*Readings:*

- Thomas More’s *Utopia*.
- D. Harvey, “spaces of utopia,” Ch. 8 in *Spaces of Hope*, pp. 133-181.
- Additional readings on Blackboard

*Due:* Final papers.