

Spring 2011
Urban Geography

GEOG 341

Monday and Thursday: 11.10-12.25

Room: HN 1022

Stephen Boatright – Instructor

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Required Text (Available at Shakespeare and Co. 939 Lexington Ave.):

Knox, Paul and S. Pinch. *Urban Social Geography*, 6th ed. London: Prentice Hall. 2010

ISBN: 978-0-273-71763-8

Description:

In this course we will survey key concepts in urban geography and seek to apply them to the world we live in through class discussion and written assignments. We will orient ourselves historically by looking political economic development of the city from the early modern period, through Industrial Revolution, to the contemporary period of globalization. The course will then shift to focus on issues and phenomena that are radically changing the social and physical organization of the city. Class readings will be primarily concerned with cities in the West. This focus is in part a reflection of our living in New York City, but we will also query this perspective. What does it mean to use Western cities as a model for ‘the city’? How well do the concepts developed in the study of the West reflect the realities of non-Western cities?

Objectives and Expectations:

The main objective of this course is to develop students’ critical thinking skills so that they are able to coherently grapple with the diversity and dynamism of social and spatial phenomena. Specifically, we will try to make sense of the myriad aspects of the ‘urban’ by looking at the history of the modern city, the patterns of urban change, and the relationship between cities and globalization. As critical and creative thought must be coherently argued in language, this course will be writing intensive, and students will be expected to improve on all aspects of their writing, including grammar, syntax, and vocabulary. Moreover, as class readings will be compiled from a variety of sources, it will be of the utmost importance for students to cultivate a sensitive reading eye; so a further objective of the course will be to hone reading skills in order to understand how authorial intentions, semantic ambiguities, and cultural allusions add to and/or subtract from the texts.

Assessment:

This will be a writing and discussion intensive course. Students are required to hand in ten response papers over the course of the semester. Responses should related to the week’s readings and are due at the beginning of class on Thursdays. We will discuss the assignments for the longer papers and presentations at the beginning of the semester. All students will be expected to turn in well-composed and proofread writing assignments and to come to class prepared to engage in thoughtful and critical conversation.

Class Participation and Weekly Reading Responses (150 words):	15%
Three Papers (5 pages):	75% (25% each)
Final Presentation (10 minutes):	10%

Late assignments will be accepted up to one week after the original due date, after that no credit will be given. **Incompletes will not be given except in the case of exceptional and well-documented circumstances.**

All other readings will be made available in class.

Week-by-Week Syllabus:

Monday, January 31: Introduction

Thursday, February 3: Approaches to Studying Urban Geography
Urban Social Geography, Chapter 1

Monday, February 7: Early Modern Urbanization

Marx, Karl. 1992. *Capital: Volume 1: A Critique of Political Economy*. Penguin Classics. Chapters 13, 26-8

Thursday, February 10: The Modern City:

Urban Social Geography, Chapter 2

Monday, February 14: Neoliberalism

Hackworth, Jason. 2006. *The Neoliberal City: Governance, Ideology, and Development in American Urbanism*. Cornell University Press. Chapters 1&2

Thursday, February 17: Informal Communities – The Case of Lima, Peru

Mitchell, Timothy. 2005. "The work of economics: how a discipline makes its world." *European Journal of Sociology* 46, no. 2: 297-320.

Fettig, David, "Interview with Hernando de Soto." *Region*, 2001, Vol. 15, Issue 2

Monday, February 21: NO CLASS

Wednesday, February 23: Cultural Theory

Urban Social Geography, Chapter 3

Thursday, February 24: "Backwash" Episode 20 from *The Wire*, Season 2

Monday, February 28: Sociospatial Patterns

Urban Social Geography, Chapter 4

Thursday, March 3: Municipal Regulation

Urban Social Geography, Chapter 5

Monday, March 7: **(First Paper Due)** Gentrification

"Gentrification: Positive or Negative?" Chapter 6 from 'Gentrification' eds Lees, Slater, Wylie

Thursday, March 10: The Housing Crisis – Introduction

Urban Social Geography, Chapter 6

Monday, March 14: The Housing Crisis – Finance

Hackworth Chapter 3 /or/ Michael E. Stone 'Pernicious Problems in Housing Finance' in "A Right to Housing"

Thursday, March 17: The Housing Crisis – Foreclosure

Brett Christophers 'Complexity, Finance and Progress in Human Geography' in *Progress in Human Geography* 33(6) 2009

Monday, March 21: The Urban Quotidian

Urban Social Geography, Chapter 7

Simmel, Georg. "The Metropolis and Mental Life"

Wirth, Louis. "Urbanism as a Way of Life."

Thursday, March 24: The Urban Quotidian

Debord, Guy. 2000. "The Organization of Territory." in *Society of the Spectacle*. Black & Red,

de Certeau, Michel. 2002. "Walking in The City." in *The Practice of Everyday Life*. University of California Press.

Benjamin, Walter. 1986. "Paris: Capital of the 19th Century." in *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*. Schocken, March.

Monday, March 28: Urban Segregation

Urban Social Geography, Chapter 8

Gregory, Steven. 1999. "Introduction." in *Black Corona*. Princeton University Press.

Thursday, March 31: Slums and Illegal Immigration

Davis, Mike. 2004. "Planet of Slums." In *New Left Review*. Vol. 26 March-April.

Kennedy, Marie, and Chris Tilly. "'They work here, they live here, they stay here!'

French immigrants strike for the right to work--and win." *Dollars & Sense* July-Aug. 2008: 27+. *Academic OneFile*. Web. 5 Dec. 2010.

Monday, April 4: Sexuality and The City

Urban Social Geography, Chapter 11

Hubbard, P., R. Matthews, J. Scoular, and L. Agustin. 2008. Away from prying eyes? The urban geographies of 'adult entertainment.' *Progress in Human Geography* 32:3. 363-381.

Thursday, April 7: Disability and The City

Alex MacInnis. "Crybabies: Act III – The Squeaky Wheelchair Gets The Grease." *This American Life*. September 24, 2010.

<http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/415/crybabies>

Sothorn, Matthew. 2007. "You could truly be yourself if you just weren't you: sexuality, disabled body space, and the (neo)liberal politics of self-help." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 25, no. 1: 144-159.

Monday, April 11: **(Second Paper Due)**: The Social Construction of Place

Urban Social Geography, Chapter 9

Thursday, April 14: Creative Class

Peck, Jamie. 2005. Struggling with the Creative Class. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 1, no. 16 (December): 319-770.

Florida, Richard. 2002. "The Rise of the Creative Class." *Washington Monthly*.

<http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2001/0205.florida.html>

Monday, April 18: SPRING BREAK
Thursday, April 21: SPRING BREAK

Monday, April 25: SPRING BREAK
Thursday, April 28: *Urban Social Geography*, Chapter 10

Monday, May 2: Privatization of Public Space
Hammett, J., K. Hammett, and M. Cooper. (eds.) 2007. *Suburbanization of New York*. 1st ed. Princeton Architectural Press, January.
Low, Setha M. 2006. The Erosion of Public Space and the Public Realm: Paranoia, Surveillance and Privatization in New York City. *City*: 43-49.

Thursday, May 5: Global Cities
Sassen, Saskia. The Global City : Strategic Site / New Frontier. *City* 3: 79-95.
Bestor, Theodore C. 2001. Supply-Side Sushi: Commodity, Market, and the Global City. *American Anthropologist* 103, no. 1 (March): 76.

Monday, May 9: Conclusion
Urban Social Geography, Chapter 14
Thursday, May 12: Presentations

Monday, May 16: **(Third Paper Due)** Presentations

Statement on Academic Integrity:

Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures.