SOCI 332: The Urban World

Course Overview
We are living in an increasingly urban world. According to the United Nations in 2011:

For the first time in history, more people live now in urban than in rural areas. In 2010, urban areas are home to 3.5 billion people, or 50.5 per cent of the world’s population. In the next four decades, all of the world’s population growth is expected to take place in urban areas, which will also draw in some of the rural population through rural to urban migration.

In this course, we will examine this urban world. The course will beginning by asking, what is a city? What makes city life different than living elsewhere? We will turn to classical urban sociology and significant changes in cities in the 1950s and 1960s. While we will talk about many cities during this course, we will focus specifically on Washington, DC. The course will also explore the global urban literature, as a means to understand what shapes cities, urban inequalities, and urban experiences today. Are cities sustainable not only environmentally but also socially, politically, and economically? The final classes will examine transnational social movements that seek to make cities more sustainable. Each student will choose a DC neighborhood to study throughout the semester. Students will use a variety of methods to study their neighborhood and report their findings through social media and in a research paper.

Course Objectives
By the end of this course, students should be able to
• Discuss major terms, themes, and debates in urban sociology.
• Analyze and evaluate scholarly readings in urban sociology and urban studies.
• Conduct studies of urban life using such methods as interviews, statistical data, mapping, ethnography, archival research, and photography.
• Collect, analyze, and interpret sources to construct a research paper on Washington, DC neighborhood of your choice using the appropriate sociological conventions.
• Use blogging and other social media to communicate findings.
• Devise analytical, practical, or creative responses to global problems or issues.

Course Schedule

Part I: Introduction
Mon., Aug. 27: Introduction
Wed, Aug. 29: Introduction: What is a city?

*Mon, Sept. 3: Labor Day, no class*

- Due Project #1: What is Simmel arguing? Do you agree with him?
- Due: Create a blog and post Project #1 to it.


**Part II: The Global Economy in U.S. Cities**

Mon., Sept. 17: Urban Renewal in DC, Southwest DC area
- Due Project #2: Discuss your visit to DC. Relate your experiences to our readings and class discussions. Feel free to include photos of objects or places.


Mon., Sept. 24: Urban Political Economy

Wed., Sept. 26: Urban Renewal and its Consequences
- In-class clips: “The Myth of Pruitt-Igoe”
Mon., Oct. 1: Is Gentrification the Continuation of Renewal? SW DC today.
- Due Project #3: Choose a neighborhood in DC you would like to study. Discuss why you have chosen this neighborhood. You can always choose a different neighborhood later.


Part III: Social Movements against Urban Renewal
*Mon., Oct. 8: Columbus Day, no class, MEET on TUESDAY, OCT. 8*

Tues., Oct. 9: The Community Revolts, Capitol Hill area
- Due Project #4: What is urban renewal? What does Jane Jacobs think about it?

Wed., Oct. 10: The Community Revolts

Mon., Oct. 15: The Community Revolts: Global Black Power in DC, Shaw Area


*Mon., Oct. 22: MIDTERM*

Part IV: Globalization and Cities

- Return midterms

Mon., Oct. 29: The Global Shift and Global Cities
**Wed., Oct. 31:** Global Finance in Cities
- Discussion of research proposal and research paper.
- Due Project #5: How is your DC neighborhood global?

**Mon., Nov. 5:** Global Finance in Cities

**Wed., Nov. 7:** Global Gentrification
- Neighborhood Info DC will be explained in class.

**Mon., Nov. 12:** Global Gentrification and Security

**Part V: The Sustainable City:**
*Transnational Social Movements against Urban Renewal*

**Wed., Nov. 14:** Urban Agriculture
- McClintock, Nathan, and Jenny Cooper. 2009. “Cultivating the Commons: An Assessment of the Potential for Urban Agriculture on Oakland’s Public Land.”

**Mon., Nov. 19:** Transnational solidarity, Slum Dwellers International
- Due Project #7: Are there any transnational social movements in your DC neighborhood?

*Wed., Nov. 21: Thanksgiving Break, no class*

**Mon., Nov. 26:** The Right to the City Movement
- [http://www.righttothecity.org/](http://www.righttothecity.org/)
- Research Paper Proposal Due in class.
**Wed., Nov. 28:** Alternative Economics, Diverse Economies
- Due Project #8: Is your DC neighborhood sustainable? How might it become more sustainable?

**Mon., Dec. 3:** Alternative Economics: Cooperatives in DC

**Wed., Dec. 5:** Deep Democracy

**Research Paper due during Final Exam period: Mon., Dec. 17, 2012: 1:30-4:15pm**

**Course Requirements**
There are four components to the course:
- Class participation: 10%
- Short projects (6 out of 8): 15%
- Midterm exam: 25%
- Research project: 50% total
  - Research proposal: 10%
  - Research paper: 40%.

*Class Participation:* Participation includes attendance, being on time, bringing the reading, having read the reading, asking questions, and participating in discussion.

*Short Projects:* The short projects are meant to be quick applications of what we have learned in class and are preparation for the research paper. They can be as short as a paragraph. Each short project should be posted to each student’s blog before class begins. I will talk in class about setting up a private blog.

*Research Proposal*
The research paper proposal is 2 to 3 pages long, in which you will describe your topic, discuss some issues brought up in class, and provide a one-page bibliography.

*Final research paper*
The *research paper* for this course will help you to synthesize the different topics and debates in this course, as well as learn about a specific case study, a DC neighborhood you have chosen. The basic questions for the research paper are: How is this DC neighborhood shaped by global forces? Do these global forces make this neighborhood more or less sustainable? How might it become more sustainable?
The research paper can be turned in by email or to my departmental mailbox on the day of our final exam. You cannot turn in your paper at the last day of class because you will be expected to take into account the issues brought up in our final class meetings of the semester. Your research paper should be 8-10 pages long. I will provide more information about the research paper later in the semester and will be available for discussions about your paper. Please feel free to talk with me about any aspect of the course throughout the semester. I will be glad to talk with you.

**Late Policy**

For each day that any written work is late that grade will be reduced by a step (e.g., an A paper will become an A- paper one day after the due date, a B+ paper two days after the due date, etc).

**Grading scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Required Texts**


The required articles and book chapters are available on Blackboard (mymason.gmu.edu). For Blackboard, use the same log-in and password as your Mason email account. **You will need to bring the printed readings to class on the assigned day.** I do not allow the use of laptop computers during class time because students have not been able to resist looking at the internet. Therefore, you will need to print up the readings either at home or on campus. While you will be spending money on printing, you will be saving money on books. Please give yourself enough time to print the readings and read them carefully. You should always read with a pen in hand to make notes in the margins.
Additional Items:

- **Academic Integrity**
  I will not tolerate plagiarism. Mason is an Honor Code university; please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else’s work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

- **Mason Email Accounts**
  Students must use their MasonLIVE email account to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. See http://masonlive.gmu.edu for more information.

- **Office of Disability Services**
  If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS. http://ods.gmu.edu

  - **Writing Center**: A114 Robinson Hall; (703) 993-1200
    http://writingcenter.gmu.edu

  - **University Libraries “Ask a Librarian”**
    http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html

  - **Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)**: (703) 993-2380
    http://caps.gmu.edu

- **University Policies**
  The University Catalog, http://catalog.gmu.edu, is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university academic affairs. Other policies are available at http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/. All members of the university community are responsible for knowing and following established policies.