

GEOG 5210 Urban Geography

Spring 2024

Instructor: Ipsita Chatterjee

Time: Mondays and Wednesdays 9.30AM-10.50AM

ENV 345

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Preamble: As the world becomes progressively urban, cities serve as primary sites for life and livelihood yet, while being centers of affluence, consumption, fashion and cultural gratification, cities are also ridden with problems of crime, inequality, segregation, poverty, exclusion and alienation to often produce conflicted worlds of pleasure and pain. All of us have lived in cities, or will have some engagement with urban life, it is therefore imperative that we clearly and comprehensively understand our urban worlds by asking and answering questions like: Why is homelessness so common? Why are some Rust Belt cities like Detroit on the decline? Why are some Sun Belt cities like Austin flourishing? Why are cities in the Third World experiencing a growth of slums? How can decaying cities be revived? Given our massive consumption demands, are cities socially and environmentally sustainable? Grappling with such questions will allow us to comprehend our contemporary urban realities clearly and critically. This class explores contemporary urban issues like inner city decay and suburbanization; poverty, crime and terrorism; race, class and segregation; identity and culture; environmental sustainability and greening; 'Disneyfication' and consumerism; globalization and the megalopolis; landscape, planning and exclusion. The readings and class discussions grapple with these urban issues from both theoretical and empirical perspectives and from the First World as well as Third World contexts. Students are expected to critically engage with the readings and develop their own perspectives through literature reviews and essays.

List of important dates:

2/12 Book review due

2/21 Take home assignment 1 due

3/6 Take home assignment 2 due

3/18 One-page proposal for end-term paper due

3/27 Take home assignment 3 due

4/10 Take home assignment 4 due

4/22 first draft of research paper (End term paper) due in class

4/22, 4/24, 4/29 and 5/1 End term paper presentations

5/1 End term paper due in class

Required Reading: There are the two required books for the class:

Fyfe, N. R., and J. T. Kenny, eds. 2005. *The Urban Geography Reader*. New York: Routledge.

Chatterjee, I. 2014. *Displacement, Revolution, and the New Urban Condition*. Sage.

These books are available at the University bookstore and **must** be procured either from that store or elsewhere by the first week of classes.

Additional readings: All additional readings that are not in the books listed above are posted on CANVAS. Please go to CANVAS (unt.instructure.com) – go to the course website (GEOG 4210/5210: Urban Geography) and then click on “module” on the left to access the readings arranged by folders and labeled by topic numbers that correspond to the schedule included later in this syllabus. Use Firefox, Google chrome as your browser for swift downloading of the readings.

Course Requirements:

Class participation and note taking: In each class, students must come prepared, i.e. having read the readings thoroughly and be prepared to ask questions and participate in the discussion. In each class, the instructor will lecture on the topic of the day and she will initiate questions and discussions directed randomly at the students present to gauge whether the class is following, and whether they have read the assigned materials, and in general to help connect academic concepts with real life in our urban worlds. She may call upon specific students to explain some concepts from the readings to estimate whether the students are doing the readings. The instructor will use this information to assign participation grades at the end of the semester. In doing so, the instructor will broadly reflect on: has the student been an active learner for most of the classes, i.e. has she/he done reasonably in the surprise quizzes, has she/he engaged in discussions, presented summaries coherently, and asked insightful questions throughout the semester?

The students are expected to take regular notes based on the class lecture. The class lectures will clarify, explain, synthesizes difficult concepts, and extensive notes taken during lecture would be most helpful in contributing to the take-home paper assignments.

Book Review exercise: The students can choose one book from the list:

David Harvey’s Social Justice and the City

David Harvey’s Rebel Cities

Mike Davis’ Planet of Slums

Mike Davis’ City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles

Ed Soja’s Seeking Spatial Justice

Henri Lefebvre’s Urban Revolution

Jane Jacob’s Death and Life of Great American Cities

Ipsita Chatterjee’s Displacement, Revolution, and the New Urban Condition

In not more that 5 pages (line spacing no less than 1.0, 1 inch margin on all sides) the student must review the meta message(s) of the book, providing in a page or two a general synthesis, brief comments on each chapter,

then deal in details with 2-3 ideas or concepts that she/he finds most interesting, informative, and/or controversial, discussing why so (about 1 page), the remaining space should be reserved for critique and conclusion. The assignments will be submitted at the beginning of class on the day it is due noted in the schedule and on the first page of the syllabus. Assignment submitted later in that class will result in loss of 3 points. **No submission will be accepted after the class unless in case of medical or family emergency.**

Take-home assignments: Each student must write 4, 3 page papers (.5 inch margin or more on all sides, and font size 11-12, and line spacing of 1 to 1.5). The assignments will be submitted in class on the assigned dates noted in the schedule and also on the first page of the syllabus. The paper will be collected at the beginning of class, any student that comes in class late and submits late will have 3 points deducted. **No late submission will be accepted after class unless there are medical conditions or pressing family emergency.** The questions for the assignments will be discussed in class at least a week before they are due. The students must use the readings pertaining to the questions and the class notes to answer the questions. When you quote or paraphrase from an article or book, you may use in-text citations for those ideas, for example -- (Smith, 2002, p. 21). If you choose to quote verbatim, you must cite the source, date of publication, and page number, both to be intellectually honest about where the idea's origins, and to direct your reader to the page/article so that s/he may delve into the idea more fully. Your instructor will be glad to help you in citing the sources well. Provide a bibliography for your sources, this can exist beyond the page limit. The students are **encouraged** to visit the teaching assistant during their office hours with a first draft of their take-home assignments BEFORE they are due in class. The teaching assistant will help edit the first draft and provide comments/suggestions; the student must incorporate these before making her/his final submission.

Topics:

Topic 1/paper 2: How according to Harvey, the urban process is integral towards understanding the human condition under capitalism? (Use the concepts of over accumulation, exploitation, crisis in the primary circuit, crisis in the secondary circuit (2007 housing crisis), flow of capital as it moves from one circuit to another to answer the above question, (Hint: topic 3 readings)

Topic 2/paper 2: What is an entrepreneurial turn in city governance, and why according to Harvey is it exploitative of the poor/middle class, labor, and the environment? Can you think of an example of urban entrepreneurialism in your neighborhood, town, or anywhere else in the real-world and connect it to one or two issues discussed under urban entrepreneurialism? (Hint: topic 4 readings).

Topic 3/ paper 3: Is the "turf grass aesthetic" a superficial commodification of nature to aid accumulation at the cost of environment and society? Build your argument **either** in favor or against this question. How according to Neil Smith, is suburbanization and gentrification inextricably linked? (Hint: topic 6 readings) (7.5+7.5=15 points).

Topic 4:/paper 4: Use Sassen's concept of 'global cities' to explain how some cities in the global north have indeed gone global? Use either one or both of the last two readings of topic 7 and any other material to explain how neoliberal globalization has certain detrimental impacts on the urban poor in the global south. (7.5+7.5=15 points) (Hint: use readings from topic 7).

Proposal for research paper: Students will be required to submit a 1-page research proposal for their end term paper. In the proposal, students will be required to identify a research topic (in order to know how to choose a topic see under "Final paper" below), Frame not more than 2-3 issues that they will be exploring under this broad topic, provide a brief list of specific theoretical concepts (discussed in class) that she/he will use in exploring this sub-topics, provide sources of data that will be used to substantiate some of the identified issues and clarify how the student will get hold of this data. I will evaluate the feasibility of the research proposal and provide feedbacks

-- students will be allowed to proceed with their end term paper only when they have submitted their proposal and received my feedback. Failing to submit a proposal will result in the loss of 3 points. The one page proposal will be submitted in class on the assigned date in the schedule below and on the first page of the syllabus by the beginning of class time that day (9.30AM).

First draft for research paper: First draft of the end term paper must be at least 60 per cent complete (must have “introduction” where topics are identified, some literature and conceptual discussion, some data presented).

Failure to submit first draft will result in the loss of 15 points. Students are expected to improve on their first drafts based on comments provided by the instructor. The one page proposal will be submitted in class on the assigned date in the schedule below and on the first page of the syllabus by the beginning of class time that day (9.30AM).

End-term research paper presentation: Each student will present their final paper in the last two weeks of classes; the presentations will be held in alphabetical order based on the last names of students. The presentation should include the main question that is under investigation, the literature surveyed, the case study, findings, your conclusion etc. Students are expected to ask questions and provide constructive criticisms to the other presenters. Presentation grades will depend on the presenter’s ability to present her/his report in an interesting and clear manner within the time allotted, special attention will be paid to whether the presenter has been able to use the class readings in her/his investigation. **Absence on the day of your presentation will result in loss of 8 points.**

Being absent as audience in other student’s presentation will result in the loss of 3 points per day missed.

End-term research paper: The paper should not exceed 12 pages (line spacing of 1 to 1.5, 0.5-inch margin or more on all sides, 11-12 font size), bibliography can exist beyond 12 pages. It could be topics picked from the class like: capitalism and housing crisis, suburbanization and white flight, lawn and environmental degradation, gentrification and class displacement, urban inequality and poverty, malls and loss of authenticity, neoliberal urban renewal and poor removal, globalization and city beautification or a combination of these. The paper must incorporate some concepts and a substantive review of literature studied in the class to ground her/his chosen research topic. This literature review and conceptual discussion must then lead to one or two more specific questions (within the boarder topic) that the student will explore in her/his 12 page paper. The student must then do some original research either from web based sources, news paper reports or direct interview, observation, recording, photographs to gather data to answer her/his questions leading to some final conclusions. The larger research topics chosen can also be grounded with the help of locally collected empirical materials from Denton or the student’s hometown. For example: you can go to the Golden Triangle mall in Denton and collect interviews/ and observations on malls to substantiate your larger research topic on say, “City as Spectacle”, or interview people in the middle-class neighborhoods of Oakmont regarding their lawning habits and pesticide use, or interview people in “Our Daily Bread,” a local community soup kitchen to flesh out your arguments on poverty and homelessness, or go to “Keep Denton Beautiful” to study their beautification program, or even go to the local farmer’s market and interview people to understand how the city is used a site for alternative non-corporate economic activities, or do a comparison between an up-market organic store like Wholefoods and a lower end store like Dollar Tree to understand class differences in urban consumption. In this case, your case materials are local and should provide window into larger conceptual issues used in class. Make sure you quote your interviewees correctly as you build you analyze and present your data. Special attention will be paid to the originality of the research, its social relevance, how well the student has been able to link the theoretical/conceptual part of her/his paper with the empirical work. Any theory or concept borrowed from the readings must be cited. Provide a bibliography for your sources, this can exist beyond the page limit. The final version of the newspaper report will be submitted in class on the assigned date in the schedule below and on the first page of the syllabus by the beginning of class time that day (9.30AM).

Attendance: Attendance in class is mandatory. Students must procure leave of absence, or notify the instructor in case of absence. Absence on the days of submission of first draft and final presentations will result in loss of points.

Late submission policy: No assignment or final paper will be accepted at a later date, although I am happy to accept it at an earlier date. In case you fall sick in the day of submission, the instructor is happy to accept an email attachment and/or may allow an extended deadline if appropriate documentation is provided. A late paper will be accepted only in case of proven medical emergency or family emergency documented with evidence, or in the case of a student representing UNT at an event on the submission date.

Grading:

Attendance, participation: 5 points

Reaction papers: 12 points x4=48 points

Book review: 12 points

1 page proposal for final paper = if not submitted then -3

First draft of final paper: 15 points

Final paper presentation: 8 points

Final draft of final paper: 12 points

Absence as audience on the presentation days : -3 from total

Final Grades -- Grades will be computed on the following scale:

A	85 to 100 points
B	75 to <85 points
C	65 to <75 points
D	55 to <65 points
F	< 55 points

Bargaining for higher grades and requesting that you be bumped up if in the borderline is not acceptable, the instructor will under all circumstances follow the following grading scale strictly.

Academic integrity: Academic dishonesty includes cheating during exams, copying assignments from each other, or using materials from other published sources and claiming them as your own without appropriate citation (plagiarism). Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and if discovered will result in loss of grade, or even an "F".

Disability Accommodation: The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

Spring 2024 Schedule

(All additional are readings on CANVAS)

1/17

Introduction to the course

1/22

Topic1: Introduction to Urban Geography

- **Johnston, R.** 2000. Urban Geography. In *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, eds. R. J. Johnston, D. Gregory, G. Pratt and M. Watts, 875-878. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.
- **Fyfe, N. R., and J. T. Kenny.** 2005. Introduction. In *The Urban Geography Reader*, eds. N. R. Fyfe and J. T. Kenny, 1-11. New York: Routledge.

1/24, 1/29

Topic 2: Morphology of cities

Readings:

- **Burgess, E. W.** 2005 (1925). The Growth of the City: An introduction to a Research Project. In *The Urban Geography Reader*, eds. N. R. Fyfe and J. T. Kenny, 19-27. New York: Routledge.
- **Hoyt, H.** 2005 (1939). The Pattern of Movement of Residential Rental Neighborhoods. In *The Urban Geography Reader*, eds. N. R. Fyfe and J. T. Kenny, 28-36. New York: Routledge.
- **Ullman, E. L.** 2005 (1945). The Theory of Location for Cities. In *The Urban Geography Reader*, eds. N. R. Fyfe and J. T. Kenny, 37-45. New York: Routledge.
- **Harris, C. D., and E. L. Ullman.** 2005 (1945). The Nature of Cities. In *The Urban Geography Reader*, eds. N. R. Fyfe and J. T. Kenny, 46-55. New York: Routledge.
- **Johnston, R.** 2000. Rank-size rule. In *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, eds. R. J. Johnston, D. Gregory, G. Pratt and M. Watts, 672. Malden: Blackwell Publishing

1/31, 2/5, 2/7

Topic 3: City, space and capital

Reading:

- **Harvey, D.** 2005. The Urban Process under Capitalism: A Framework for Analysis. In *The Urban Geography Reader*, eds. N. R. Fyfe and J. T. Kenny, 109-120. New York: Routledge.
- **Harvey, D.** 1976. Labor, Capital, and Class Struggle around the Built Environment in Advanced Capitalist Societies. *Politics and Society*, vol. 6(3), p. 265-295
- **Harvey, D.** 2012. The Urban roots of Capitalist Crisis. In *Rebel Cities*, 27-66. New York: Verso.

2/12, 2/14, 2/19

Topic 4: City, economy, restructuring

Reading:

- **Harvey, D.** 1989. From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism. *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography*, vol. 71(1) pp3-17

- **Harvey, D.** 1990. Flexible Accumulation through Reflections on 'Post-Modernism in the American City. *Perspecta*, vol. 26, pp.251-272
- **Florida, R.** and Jonas, A. (1991) U.S. Urban Policy: The Post-War State and Capitalist regulation. *Antipode* 23.4, 349-384.

2/12: Book Review due

2/14: First take-home assignment discussed in class, due on 2/21

Topic 1: How according to Harvey, the urban process is integral towards understanding the human condition under capitalism? (Use the concepts of over accumulation, exploitation, crisis in the primary circuit, crisis in the secondary circuit (2007 housing crisis), flow of capital as it moves from one circuit to another to answer the above question, (Hint: topic 3 readings)

2/21, 2/26

Topic 5: Fordism/post-Fordism, the Mall and postmodern landscapes

Readings:

- **Goodwin, M., and J. Painter.** 2005. Local Governance, the Crisis of Fordism and the Changing Geographies of Regulation. In *The Urban Geography Reader*, eds. N. R. Fyfe and J. T. Kenny, 179-190. New York: Routledge.
- **Goss, J.,** 1993. The "magic of the mall": an analysis of form, function, and meaning in the contemporary retail built environment. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 83(1), pp.18-47.
- **Goss, J.,** 1999. Once-upon-a-Time in the Commodity World: An Unofficial Guide to Mall of America. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 89(1), pp.45-75.
- **Dear, M., and S. Flusty.** 2005. Postmodern Urbanism. In *The Urban Geography Reader*, eds. N. R. Fyfe and J. T. Kenny, 138-151. New York: Routledge.

2/21: first take-home assignment due

2/28, 3/4, 3/6, 3/18

Topic 6: Suburbanization, gentrification and the "Eco-city"

Readings:

- Robbins, P. and Sharp, J.** 2003 Producing and consuming chemicals: The moral economy of American lawns. *Economic Geography* 79(4) 425-451
- **Smith, N.** 2005. Gentrification, the Frontier, and the Restructuring of Urban Space. In *The Urban Geography Reader*, eds. N. R. Fyfe and J. T. Kenny, 128-137. New York: Routledge.
 - **Cugurullo, F.** 2016, Urban eco-modernisation and the policy context of new eco-city projects: Where Masdar City fails and why. *Urban Studies*, vol. 53, no. 11, pp. 2417-2433.

2/28: Second take-home assignment discussed in class, due on 3/6

Topic 2: What is the entrepreneurial turn in city governance, and why according to Harvey is it exploitative of the poor/middle class, labor, and the environment? Can you think of an example of urban entrepreneurialism in your neighborhood, town, or anywhere else in the real-world and connect it to one or two issues discussed under urban entrepreneurialism? (Hint: topic 4 readings).

3/11 and 3/13 Spring break, no classes.

3/18: One-page proposal for end-term paper due

3/20, 3/25

Topic 7: Globalization of cities

Reading:

- **Harvey, D.** 2001. Time-space compression and the postmodern condition. In Held D and McGrew A (eds.) *The Global Transformations Reader* Polity Press, Cambridge pp. 82–91
- **Castells, M.** 2001. The Network Society. In: Held, D McGrew A (eds.) *The Global Transformations Reader*. Polity Press, Cambridge, pp. 76–81.
- **Sassen, S.** 2002. Locating cities on global circuits. *Environment and Urbanization* 14 (1): 13-30.
- **Brenner, N. and Theodore, N.** 2002 Cities and Geographies of actually existing Neoliberalism
- **Bunnell, T and Barter, P.A, and Morshidi, S.** 2002. City Profile Kuala Lumpur metropolitan area: A globalizing city region. *Cities* 19(5), 357-370.
- **Chatterjee, I.** 2014. New Urban Politics. In *Displacement, Revolution, and the New Urban Condition*, 11-46 Washington: Sage (Ch. 2)

3/20: Third take-home assignment discussed in class, due on 3/27

Topic 3: Is the “turf grass aesthetic” a superficial commodification of nature to aid accumulation at the cost of environment and society? Build your argument **either** in favor or against this question. How according to Neil Smith, is suburbanization and gentrification inextricably linked? (Hint: topic 6 readings) (7.5+7.5=15 points).

3/27, 4/1, 4/3, 4/8

Topic 8: Displacement, inequality, and injustice

Readings:

- **Davis, M.** (2004) Planet of Slums, *New Left Review*, 26: 5 – 34.
- **Wolch, J.** 2005. From Global to Local: The Rise of Homelessness in Los Angeles during the 1980s. In *The Urban Geography Reader*, eds. N. R. Fyfe and J. T. Kenny, 200-210. New York: Routledge.
- **Pulido, L., S. Sidawi, and R. O. Vos.** 2005. An Archeology of Environmental Racism in Los Angeles. In *The Urban Geography Reader*, eds. N. R. Fyfe and J. T. Kenny, 229-240. New York: Routledge.
- **Chatterjee, I.** 2014. Accumulation, Estrangement, Displacement. In *Displacement, Revolution, and the New Urban Condition*. Washington: Sage (Ch. 3).
- **Chatterjee, I.** 2014. Resettlement and Territorialization of Exploitation. In *Displacement, Revolution, and the New Urban Condition*. Washington: Sage (Ch. 4).
- **Baviskar, A.** 2003. Between violence and desire: space, power, and identity in the making of metropolitan Delhi. *International Social Science Journal* 55 (175): 89-98.

Third take-home assignment due on 3/27

4/3: Fourth take-home assignment discussed in class, due on 4/10.

Topic 4: Use Sassen’s concept of ‘global cities’ to explain how some cities in the global north have indeed gone global? Use either one or both of the last two readings of topic 7 and any other material to explain how neoliberal globalization has certain detrimental impacts on the urban poor in the global south. (7.5+7.5=15 points) (Hint: use readings from topic 7).

4/10, 4/15

Topic 9: City, space and violence

Readings:

- **Chatterjee, I** 2009. Violent Morphologies: Landscape, border and scale in Ahmedabad conflict. *Geoforum*, Vol.40(6), November, pp 103-113

- **Graham, S.** 2004. Constructing Urbicide by Bulldozer in the Occupied Territories. In *Cities, War, and Terrorism*, ed. S. Graham, 192-213. Malden, MA: Blackwell .
- **Gregory, D.** 2003 Defiled Cities. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, vol. 25(3), pp.307-326

4/17

Topic 10: Right to the city

Readings:

- **Davis, M.** 2004. The urbanization of empire. *Social Text* 81, vol. 22(4), Winter, pp. 9-15
- **Harvey, D.** 2008. The right to the city. *New Left Review* 53, Sept-Oct, pp. 23-40
- **Marcuse, P.** 2009. From critical urban theory to right to the city. *City* 13(2-3), 185-197

4/22: The first draft of end-term paper due at the start of class. Failing to turn-in the first draft will result in loss of 10 points.

4/22, 4/24, and 4/29, 5/1

End-term paper presentations – **attendance mandatory, absence will result in loss of 8 points for missing your own presentation and 3 points for being absent in someone else's presentation day.**

5/1

Please submit final version of newspaper report. **Failing to submit will result in loss of 12 points.**