**Community Development** & **Urban Policies**

**Class Meetings**
Spring Semester 2012  
W 1:10-4:00  
112 Payne

**Faculty**
Dr. James Curtis Fraser (Urban Geographer), Vanderbilt University, HOD & the Institute for Energy & the Environment  
Make Contact! 102B Mayborn ➔ Phone: (615) 343-7638 ➔ Email: pavement@vanderbilt.edu

Please send all assignments ➔ pavement@vanderbilt.edu

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**Course Description**
This course aims to introduce students to concepts of community development in the context of urban change in the United States. In this context, the course helps students understand the context in which community development work operates (i.e., public policy, structures of disadvantage, and economics). Theory around the nature of urban development, neighborhood change and community organizing/development will be discussed as they pertain to the practical knowledge and skills needed to operate effectively in the broad field of urban community development.

**Course Goals**
By the end of this course, we hope you will be able to do the following:

1. Define, in multiple ways, the process of urban redevelopment and neighborhood change in all their complexity, contradictions, and paradoxes

2. Understand in some detail the actors (individuals, organizations, and government) and ideological and theoretical perspectives that are both driving and resisting these processes

3. Understand the impact that urban public policy has on communities and development in urban areas across the United States, surveying a range of domains (i.e., human-environment relations, social welfare, ability to claim home space in the city)

4. Lead a class discussion, demonstrating an in-depth understanding of and producing potential solutions for community problems, using resources beyond those covered in the course

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**Readings (Books)**
In addition to these core books, additional readings will be provided on OAK.


Commitments

**Discussion Leader and Essays**
Throughout the semester you will be responsible for taking a lead on covering readings. This will entail a 5-7 minute discussion that highlights what you found to be salient themes from the chapter. Please provide specific passages that illustrate your points. This is not a formal presentation (no power points, please). Everyone will have done the reading so go beyond a summary of the material. Your presentation needs to facilitate conversation in class connecting theory and practice (praxis). In preparation for the As part of this task you will need to write a three-page essay that demonstrates clarity of understanding and a synthesis of the material highlighting the themes you will be discussing in class. Please submit your essays to me at pavement@vanderbilt.edu by 5:00 pm the evening prior to the class.

**Topic-Driven Writing**
During the semester we will occasionally write papers exploring specific topics. These will be developed during our class discussions. For example, it would be nice to produce a working paper on the development of the fairgrounds and how, over time, this has affected South Nashville.

**Class Projects and Products**
While in-class discussions are a significant component of the course, experiential learning provides an opportunity to embody the material. This project work will be focused on issues that localize in and around Chestnut Hill. We will form workgroup teams around topics that have been salient to the Chestnut Hill neighborhood, and these will include working in collaboration with nonprofits, government agencies, private sector entities, and residents. Some anticipated project opportunities include: developing proposals to address access to food with Castanea, Vanderbilt School of and Math, Vanderbilt’s Owen Business School, metro agencies; the production of affordable housing with The Housing Fund, Urban Housing Solutions, and MDHA; expanding opportunities for youth in education, after school programming and related topic with Harvest Hands and other relevant entities (possibly the Head Start folks in the neighborhood, as well as other community resources like Trevecca and local churches; and, working on neighborhood design to create healthy environmental conditions that will support residents and others operating in the neighborhood.

The goal of this experience is to do good work and also document how the work unfolds, what you learn about the different stakeholders involved, how people frame the issues as well as potential interventions, and how you see people connecting their own biographies to their work (including ourselves). The output will be two-fold including an artifact for the stakeholders with whom you are working, and a class paper that synthesizes your understanding of community development as it pertains to the area you choose to focus upon. This paper will incorporate a range of materials beyond the class readings, and we will discuss this further throughout the semester.

**Bio**

**Dr. James Fraser** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Human and Organizational Development in Peabody College at Vanderbilt University, a member of the graduate faculty at Duke University, and a steering committee member of the Vanderbilt Institute on Energy and the Environment. He was previously a Senior Associate Research at the Center for Urban and Regional Studies (CURS) and an Associate Research Professor in the Department of Geography at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

**Dr. Jason Adkins** has worked on a farm for men in recovery from drug and alcohol addiction for three years before working for Sonfarm, an educational farm for at-risk youth that teaches food self-sufficiency skills. Presently, Jason works for the J. V. Morsch Center for Social Justice at Trevecca Nazarene University where he teaches Environmental Justice and serves as the Environmental Projects Coordinator for the campus. Through gardening and education, he works with students and neighbors to build food sources on Trevecca’s campus and in the food desert outside the campus where he lives. Jason is a fairly polite Christian anarchist with five beautiful children and a beautiful wife named Stephani--journeying together with some radical friends in an abandoned suburb of empire who get excited about discovering skills and tactics to live outside the death-dealing powers of this broken world and who, on some days, believe that a new world on the way. He holds a BA in Religion and in English, Trevecca Nazarene University; MLitt
in Religion from University of Newcastle, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, United Kingdom; is the Vice-president of Tennessee Organic Growers Association; and, most importantly, is a member of the Chestnut Hill Cornhole championship team.
## Class Schedule: Spring 2012

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  *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, And The Poor In Twentieth-Century U.S. History* (Introduction, Chapters 1&2)                                                                                                                                 |             |
| 18 January | SOCIO-SPATIAL IDENTITIES, MODERNITY AND POVERTY POLICY | *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, And The Poor In Twentieth-Century U.S. History* (remaining chapters)                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Essay       |
| 25 January |                                            | **Wednesday 18**  
  Ben 3  Amanda 4  Alicia 5  Robbie 6  Lauren 7  
  **Wednesday 25**  
  Walker 8  Laura 9  Donald 10  Nikki, Juliet 11  
  **Wednesday 8**  
  Lauren 1  Amanda 2  Robbie 3  Nikki 4  
  **Wednesday 15**  
  Alicia 5  Laura/Juliet 6  Donald (Schwartz)  Walker (Dreier)  
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Ben 1 Robbie 2 Lauren 3  
Write a draft story from project work and discussions about the work (these could be discussions with anyone including conversations and interviews with people you worked around. | Present essay for feedback (and turn it in to other students (writing groups))                  |
Laura 4 Walker 5  
Write a draft of an essay including literature you have engaged to understand the project experience. | Present essay for feedback (and turn it in to other students (writing groups))  
Discuss final products for community partners                                                                                             |
Presentation of final products for partners  
Planning community BBQ event for Saturday, April 28th.                                                                                       |
| 14 April  | BBQ                                        | Let’s have fun with this event. It is a way to express gratitude for each other and to celebrate a great semester.                                                                                   |                                                                                                |