

Urban Sociology

Sociology 426-01

Spring 2000

Tuesday Evenings from 6:00 to 8:40 PM

Peck Hall 319

This course is brought to you by Dr. Jim Fraser. My office hours are on Tuesday afternoons and Wednesdays by appointment in room 316 of Peck Hall. You may contact me by leaving a message in my mailbox in 316 Peck or by e-mail at fraser18@bellsouth.net. You may also feel free to call me at (423) 645-6789. I would prefer that you consider meeting with me at least once this semester before the mid-term in order to discuss your interests as they pertain to the writing assignments for this class. Since we only meet one night a week it will be necessary for you to be at class on time every week as well as prepared to discuss the daily topics.

Why Study Urban Sociology?

One of the most relevant reasons to study metropolitan areas is that most of us live in them. Another reason to study urban sociology is that most of us have lived in metropolitan areas for so long that we may not have stopped to think how these spaces emerged and have changed over time. For some of us, our personal biographies have been shaped by the meanings we attach to these spaces in which we perform our everyday activities, and, in turn, we are active creators of meaning that defines space. This may sound "far out" but we will be exploring these issues throughout the semester.

Think for a minute about the symbolic meaning behind urban gardens that are housed in once vacant lots. The people who build these spaces not only change the physical environment but infuse the space with symbolic meaning, perhaps a message that people still live in the area and possess hope.

Think about the spaces that you find yourself in on a regular basis and start to examine the meanings that you infuse into the built environment. Since people experience environments differently, based on the type of relationship the individual has with it, I would like you to think of built environments as having a *symbolic field of meaning* or a *universe of meaning* (Berger and Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality).

Another reason to understand the rise of urbanization is that it allows us to examine the ways in which many different components of our society impact each other. Inevitably, the study of metropolitan areas leads us to an examination of all institutions that make up our society. By the end of class you will be able to start conceptualizing the relationships between people, places, and institutions!

The Course Objectives

The following course objectives will guide us through our exploration of the history of cities and metropolitan areas around the globe.

- 1) To understand the origins of metropolitan areas and cities, and to identify the roles of institutions in this process (i.e., religion, politics, economy).

- 2) To identify the differences between cities during different time periods (i.e., feudal cities versus emerging cities in the U.S.).
- 3) To identify the central organizing principles of activities in cities (i.e., class, race, gender, age, immigrant status).
- 4) To understand and compare different ideas as to the consequences of urbanization (i.e., Toennies, Simmel, Wirth), and to identify the different approaches to studying metropolitan areas (i.e., urban ecology, sociospatial approach).
- 5) To understand and utilize the research methods we would use to examine neighborhoods in metropolitan areas.

Class Participation

It is very important that you come to each class prepared to discuss the daily topics.

You need to keep a journal that you will write in every week. The format of the entries should include analytical observations that you find interesting in your reading and research. These should be explicated by using examples and citing sources of additional materials you use so that everyone will be able to find them. The entries should contain your thoughts and a critique of the assigned readings. Remember, a critique is not a list of complaints about the reading. Rather, it is a review of the material and a demonstration of your ability to employ the material in critical thought. Each journal entry should be done prior to the class we will be discussing the topic. **So, read, daydream, think of some questions that the reading left you with or think about how the reading made sense to you, explore your ideas by obtaining more information from the web or other sources if you are interested, and then put the package together with citations in your journal.** (see syllabus for some required journal topics)

Pedagogy: the art or profession of teaching

In addition to the text, I will be providing you with other materials including web pages, articles, films, art, and literature. You will be expected to contribute to the course by finding resources on assigned topics. The pedagogical approach I take is that we all construct knowledge that is important, so be prepared to discuss topics in class.

Required Reading

The first is The New Urban sociology (2nd edition) by Mark Gottdiener and Ray Hutchison (2000). I will also hand-out articles to the class which you all will need to read and add to your collection of materials for this class.

Pick One Book for Project

Beauregard, Robert A. *Voices of Decline: The Postwar Fate of US Cities.*
 Gans, Herbert. *The Urban Villagers.*
 Garreau, Joel. *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier.*
 Jackson, Kenneth. *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States.*
 Kasinitz, Philip. *Metropolis.*
 Lofland, Lyn. *The Public Realm.*
 Logan, John, and Harvey Molotch. *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place.*
 Rusk, David. *Cities Without Suburbs.*
 Smith, Neil. *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City.*
 Weiher, Gregory R. *The Fractured Metropolis*
 Zukin, Sharon. *The Cultures of Cities.*

Grades

Your final grade will be calculated from your assignments in the class.

1. 15 journal entries for class discussion due the evening of the topic (10 pt. each=150 points).
2. Book Project (100 points)
3. Activities (50 points)
4. Two, take-home examinations (100 points each=200 points)

Additional Requirements for Graduate Students

1. One additional book assignment (75 points)
2. Choose a date to lead the discussion of assigned material (25 points)

Grade Scale (undergraduate)

450-500 A
400-449 B
350-399 C
325-349 D
324 and Below F

Grade Scale (graduate)

540-600 A
480-539 B
420-479 C
390-419 D
389 and Below F

Late Work

You have quite a few opportunities to make points and I do not want to stop the flow of the class, so no late work will be accepted. If you miss class you must fax your journal prior to 4:00PM the day of the class at (615) 898-5427. I will be glad to share my lecture notes, but you may also find it important to talk with other students for information.

American Disabilities Act

Please let me know if you have any situation that might be relevant to the class experience. I will do everything I can to make the class accessible to all students. I can also assist in finding solutions around campus.

Show and Tell

Please no snakes! If you have any book, artifact, newspaper clipping, family member or friend, music, food, beverages, or items that you think would add to the class, then please feel free to bring them in to show us and tell about your thoughts.

Dates to Remember

January 10 Classes begin
January 17 Martin Luther King Holiday - no classes
Feb 28 - March 4 Mid-semester
March 27 - April 1 Spring Break
April 21 Holiday - no classes
April 22 Saturday classes meet
May 2 Last day of classes
May 3 - 9 Final Examinations
May 13 Commencement

Remember the last day to drop our class with a "W" is February 29, 2000.

Class Schedule

Week One (January 11)

1. We will open class with introductions and then cover the syllabus.
2. We will watch the film, THE PROMISE OF *SOCIOLOGY* .
3. We will cover the first chapter of the Gottdiener text (p1-18).
4. In class activity- identifying your connection to the built environment around you and city slides.

Journal Topics / Suggestions (bold suggestions required)

What are the different population trends in some U.S. and global cities (choose a couple), what impacts could the population trends cause (create your answer)?

What is the relationship between the study of urban sociology and the following: global capitalism, political economy and real estate, and culture.

What is your understanding of the sociospatial approach?

Name three cities/metropolitan regions you are interested in studying.

Week Two (January 18)

1. We will discuss the second chapter of the Gottdiener text (p.21-40).
2. Class activity- drawing a timeline for chapter two focusing on the development cities. This is something you might think about and write down your ideas.
3. Check out these sites on Ancient Rome and Athens:
http://www.cgocable.net/~jstam/History_of_Rome.html
<http://www.sikyon.com/index.html>

Journal Topics / Suggestions (bold suggestions required)

Compare and contrast classic and medieval cities. How did the architecture patterns change and what did this represent?

During the rise of industrialism extended commodity production emerged as a dominant form of transaction. Describe the benefits and costs of this development to people (i.e., discuss capitalism).

Note: you might want to look up more information a specific city during one of these time periods.

Week 3 (January 25)

1. We will discuss chapter three in the Gottdiener text (p41-56).
2. We will see a film, THE WOMEN OF *HULL* --*HOUSE*.
3. We will see a film, NEW YORK UNDERGROUND. If you want to see this plan to stay after for about an hour.

Journal Topics / Suggestions (bold suggestions required)

What was the impact of the development of transportation technology in cities like New York and Chicago?

What are the legacies of colonialism in the United states?

What was the importance of railroad projects and what impact did they have on the American landscape? Check out the following websites (<http://icrrhistorical.org/> and <http://216.156.132.138/Default.htm>)

What was the Hull House and who was Jane Addams? Check the following websites and find others (<http://www.chipublib.org/004chicago/timeline/hullhouse.html> and <http://www.chipublib.org/004chicago/chihist.html>)

Week 4 (February 1)

1. We will cover chapter four in the Gottdiener text (p59-75).
2. We will complete an in-class activity on comparing the use of space in suburban neighborhoods since the 1950s.
3. We will see part of the film, THE PROMISED LAND : TAKE ME TO CHICAGO. If you want to see the entire film plan to stay an extra hour of class.

Journal Topics / Suggestions (bold suggestions required)

What spatial trends affected the business environment of cities between 1930-1960?

Describe the factors that have led to mass suburbanization (include push and pull factors).

What migration in the United States was occurring during the beginning of suburbanization?
What tensions do you arose (you create the answer).

Week 5 (February 8)

1. We will cover chapter five in the Gottdiener text (p.77-102).

Journal Topics / Suggestions (bold suggestions required)

What shifts in the economy affected cities and metropolitan regions between 1960 to the present?

What is uneven development and how has it been associated with a polarization of classes of workers?

How is it that the authors argue suburbs are segregates by race and class? Does this interact with gender (create your own answer and use the text)?

Why would one argue that the suburb has taken over the dominant position that the city once held?

What are the three "pillars" of the sunbelt and how have they been supported?

Look up some unemployment rates on the web for sunbelt cities and compare them to frostbelt cities. What patterns do you see. Remember to bring in website citations.

Week 6 (February 15)

1. We will do a special activity!

Journal Topics / Suggestions (bold suggestions required)

TBA

Week 7 (February 22)

1. We will cover chapter six in the Gottdiener text (p.103-126).
2. We will all be reporting on our books for the first time. Be prepared to introduce your book.

Journal Topics / Suggestions (bold suggestions required)

What is the difference between the study of urbanization and urbanism? Include some of the sociologists as examples.

How does Simmel describe urbanism through the example of Hans?

How does Louis Wirth set himself as different from the human ecology approach of Park, Burgess, and McKenzie?

What lessons can we take from Thrasher's work, *Gangland Chicago*?

What type of work did the early urban ecologists conduct?

Week 8 (February 29)

1. We will cover chapter seven of the Gottdiener text (p.127-150)

Journal Topics / Suggestions (bold suggestions required)

Define and discuss the idea of uneven development.

What are Lefebvre's contributions to urban studies?

Describe the class conflict approach to understanding metropolitan areas.

What is the growth machine perspective?

Outline the sociospatial approach to understanding metropolitan areas.

Week 9 (March 7)

1. We will cover chapter eight in the Gottdiener text (p.152-182).
2. There will be a presentation on culture in the city.

Journal Topics / Suggestions (bold suggestions required)

Describe the concept of class stratification. What other dimensions are used in our society to stratify people?

How is space gendered?

Discuss the theories of immigrant adjustment.

Week 10 (March 14)

1. We will cover chapter nine in the Gottdiener text (p. 183-205).
2. We will have a presentation on research methods.

Journal Topics / Suggestions (bold suggestions required)

Describe the purpose and technique of social network analysis.

What do the authors have to say about neighboring and neighborhoods?

Week 11 (March 21)

1. We will cover chapter ten in the Gottdiener text (p. 207-237).
2. We will have a presentation on housing issues in metropolitan areas.

Journal Topics / Suggestions (bold suggestions required)

Discuss the merits of each of the four theories of urban problems.

Take a position on the relationship between poverty and race. Discuss the assumptions that lead you to conceptualize the issue the way you have (think of your own answer in addition to the text).

What are issues surrounding housing in metropolitan areas?

Why do the authors claim there is a fiscal crisis in some urban areas?

MARCH 27TH IS SPRING BREAK!!!

Week 12 (April 4)

1. We will cover chapter eleven in the Gottdiener text (p. 239-260)
2. We will have a presentation on the connections between global, national, metropolitan, and neighborhood politics.

Journal Topics / Suggestions (bold suggestions required)

Describe the theories of local politics that the authors present. Which perspective appeals to you?

What are some of the politics of local government and community development?

Week 13 (April 11)

1. We will cover chapter twelve and thirteen in the Gottdiener text (p. 261-307).
2. We will watch a film on global development, LABOR AND CAPITAL MOBILITY.

Journal Topics / Suggestions (bold suggestions required)

Compare and contrast urbanization in Western Europe, Eastern Europe, and Japan.

What issues do metropolitan areas face when competing in the global marketplace?

What patterns in of urbanization exists for the least developed and affluent countries of the world?

Week 14 (April 18)

1. We will cover chapter fourteen in the Gottdiener text (p. 307-334).
2. We will have a presentation on metropolitan planning and sustainable environments.

Journal Topics / Suggestions (bold suggestions required)

What different types of environmental quality issues that urban areas face (think of your own answer in addition to the text)?

What is the relationship between the built environment and the way in which people experience metropolitan life. Discuss the utopian schemes of some cited thinkers.

What do you think the social consequences are for people who live in gated communities and planned communities like Seaside, FL.?

Week 15 (April 25)

1. We will cover chapter fifteen in the Gottdiener text (p. 335-357).
2. We will have book reports/discussions from students in class.

Journal Topics / Suggestions (bold suggestions required)

What are your impressions of urban sociology as a discipline?

What have been the main concepts that have interested/affected you in this class?

