

SOCI 222 Urban Sociology

Fall 2017

Wednesday and Friday, 2:35-3:55pm

Stewart Biology Building N2/2

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Course Description

A growing majority of humans around the world lives in cities. Most of today's societal shifts in fashion, politics, lifestyle, and labour—to name just a few—materialize first and foremost in cities. In many ways, society itself has become an urban phenomenon. To understand society, therefore, we have to comprehend cities and urban life. Urban sociology is the study of the city's cultural, social, and material form and content. In this course, we will review and apply sociological approaches that help to understand various kinds of urban phenomena, including neighbourhoods, ethnic segregation, gentrification, urban lifestyles, and more.

Learning Goals

After completing this course, you should be able to:

- understand the role of cities in contemporary societies.
- analyze the shape and texture of city space as a function of social, cultural, and political forces.
- interpret how new communities—such as ethnic, gay, or lifestyle communities—and new forms of behaviour emerge in cities and how they are connected to urban space.
- examine place-based identities, how those identities emerge, and how they shape the local culture and economy.

Readings

I expect you to read all of the assigned material. Many required readings are included in a course pack, which is available at the McGill Bookstore. Additional required readings will be made available through *MyCourses*. Occasionally, we will work with the readings in class. In these cases, I will ask you to bring the course pack or other course material.

Assignments and Grading

A) Midterm exam: 30%

The midterm exam provides you with an opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of course content, including the material covered in the readings, lectures, and in-class exercises. The midterm exam will consist of a set of short answer questions. It will be held in class on Friday, October 13 (week 6).

B) Final in-class exam: 40%

The final exam allows you to demonstrate your mastery of course content. You will write a short essay, applying your knowledge to a particular issue. The exam may also include short answer questions. Please note that the final exam is cumulative and thus covers the entire course. The exam will be held in class on Friday, November 17 (week 11).

C) Group exercises: 25%

Over the semester, we will do six group exercises during the Friday sessions. The exercises will usually require you to apply course concepts to an empirical prompt, such as a movie segment or a set of newspaper articles. By the end of the class session, your group will submit one written report via MyCourses. Late submissions will not be accepted. This means that you will have to collaborate effectively with your group members and use your time efficiently. Assignments to groups will be strictly random—no reassignments will be made under any circumstances.

Group reports will be graded on a pass/fail basis. Consequently, each satisfactory group report will add approximately 4% to your final grade. Occasionally, groups may receive extra credit for exceptionally good reports. For each exceptionally good report, students within that group will receive an extra 0.5% that will be added to their final grade. Note that exceptionally good reports are by definition exceptional. “Pass” will be the default grade and you should not expect to receive extra credit. During the exercises, a teaching assistant will be present to support your work.

D) Group exercise peer evaluation: 5%

The division of labour within your group is up to you and your fellow students. To encourage everyone’s participation, you will evaluate your group members’ contribution to your group by the end of the class. Each student’s peer evaluation grade will be computed as the average of the grades that group members assign to that student. Do not complain to me about your peer evaluation grade—I will not alter it. It is up to you to take a productive role within your group that ensures a good peer evaluation.

Policies

- **Make-up policy:** The midterm exam is scheduled for 2:35pm on Friday, October 13. The final exam is scheduled for 2:35pm on Friday, November 17. If you have a conflicting

commitment on either of these days (Model UN, athletics tournament, etc.), do not take this course because no make-up exam will be offered to you. An exception can be made only in case of a medical emergency that clearly prevents you from taking the exam. You must provide me with evidence in the form of a valid doctor's note issued on the day of the exam. I reserve the right to reject your request for a make-up exam if I am unconvinced that you had to miss the exam. Make-up exams will be scheduled for the beginning of the week following the exam. They will usually take the form of an oral exam.

- **Regrading policy:** You have the right to request that your exam be regraded. However, in order to request this, you must submit a written notice that explains and justifies your grievance in detail. A hard copy of this notice must be submitted within a week of the date that we first returned the exams. Please note that I will regrade your entire exam or paper, not just specific passages that you may have flagged. Regrading may improve or lower your grade.
- **Inclusive learning environment:** As the instructor of this course I endeavour to provide an inclusive learning environment. If you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the [Office for Students with Disabilities](#), 514-398-6009. If you want to write your midterm and/or final exams at the OSD, you have to contact OSD several weeks in advance of the exam so arrangements can be made.
- **Academic integrity:** McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information). If you are caught engaging in fraudulent activity, you may fail the assignment in question or the entire course, and I may report you to the Dean of Students.
- **Language:** In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté.
- **Extra credit policy:** Except for exceptional group reports, I never give extra credit.
- **Attendance:** I do not take attendance. It is up to you to decide whether you want to come to class or not. However, please note that exams and exercises will test not only whether you have done the readings, but will also include material covered only in course lectures and in-course exercises. Neither the teaching assistant nor me will make this material available to you through alternative channels. If you attend class, please ensure that you arrive in time and that you do not have to leave early in order to avoid disrupting class. Furthermore, note that your group members may base their peer evaluation (see item "D" under grading and assignments) in part on whether you were present during group exercises.
- **Course communication:** You have to regularly check your email and read course-related email communication. Before emailing me or the teaching assistant, please consult the syllabus for relevant information. If the answer to your question is in the syllabus, we reserve the right to ignore your email.

Schedule

Week 1. Wednesday, September 6 and Friday, September 8. Introduction.

- Engels, Friedrich. 1845. *The Situation of the Working Class in England*. Excerpts from chapter 3, "The Great Towns." (Available through MyCourses).
- Lofland, Lyn H. 1973. *A World of Strangers. Order and Action in Urban Public Space*. New York: Basic Books. Chapters 2 ("The Preindustrial City) and 3 (The Early Industrial City), pp.29-65.

Week 2. Wednesday, September 13 and Friday, September 15. The Chicago School (1).

- Simmel, Georg. 1971 [1903]. "The Metropolis and Mental Life." Chapter 20, pp.324-339 in Donald Levine (ed.), *On Individuality and Social Forms*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Burgess, Ernest. 1925. "The Growth of the City: An Introduction to a Research Project." Pp.46-62 in *The City*, by Robert Park, Ernest Burgess, and Roderick McKenzie. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Shaw, Clifford R. and Henry D. McKay. 1969 [1942]. *Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 13, "Conclusion," p.315-326.
- Sampson, Robert J., Stephen W. Raudenbush, and Felton Earls. 1997. "Neighborhoods and Violent Crime: A Multilevel Study of Collective Efficacy." *Science* 277(5328):918–24.

Week 3. Wednesday, September 20 and Friday, September 22. The Chicago School (2).

- Cressy, Paul G. 1932. *The Taxi-Dance Hall: A Sociological Study in Commercialized Recreation and City Life*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 5, "The Life-Cycle of the Taxi-Dancer," pp. 84-106.
- Zorbaugh, Harvey W. 1929. *The Gold Coast and the Slum: A Sociological Study of Chicago's Near North Side*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 3, "The Gold Coast," pp. 46-68.

Week 4. Wednesday, September 27 and Friday, September 29. Individuals, groups, communities (1).

- Gans, Herbert. 1991. *People, Places, and Politics*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press. Chapter 4, "Urbanism and Suburbanism as Ways of Life," pp.51-69.
- Fischer, Claude S. 1975. "Toward a Subcultural Theory of Urbanism." *American Journal of Sociology* 80(6):1319–41.
- Wellman, Barry and Barry Leighton. 1979. "Networks, Neighborhoods, and Communities." *Urban Affairs Review* 14(3):363–90.

Week 5. Wednesday, October 4 and Friday, October 6. Individuals, groups, communities (2).

- Jerolmack, Colin. 2013. *The Global Pigeon*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 4, “The Turkish Pigeon Caretakers of Berlin: Primordial Ties in a Migrant Community,” pp. 109-132.
- Ghaziani, Amin. 2014. *There Goes the Gayborhood?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Introduction, pp.1-32.
- Lloyd, Richard. 2006. *Neo-Bohemia. Art and Commerce in the Postindustrial City*. New York, NY: Routledge. Chapter 5, “Living like an Artist,” pp.99-122.

Week 6. Wednesday, October 11 and Friday, October 13. Individuals, groups, communities (3).
The midterm exam will be held in class on Friday, October 13.

- Klinenberg, Eric. 2001. “Dying Alone: The Social Production of Urban Isolation.” *Ethnography* 2(4): 501-531.
- Goffman, Alice. 2014. *On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 7, “Clean People,” pp.165-196.

Week 7. Wednesday, October 18 and Friday, October 20. Order, disorder, and crime.

- Goffman, Erving. 1963. *Behavior in Public Places: Notes on the Social Organization of Gatherings*. New York, NY: Free Press. Chapter 6, “Face Engagements,” pp.83-104.
- Jacobs, Jane. 1961. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York, NY: Random House. Chapter 2, “The Uses of Sidewalks: Safety,” pp.29-54.
- Vargas, Robert. 2016. *Wounded City: Violent Turf Wars in a Chicago Barrio*. Chapter 5 (“Silence and the Art of Arson”), pp.121-147. New York: Oxford University Press.

Week 8. Wednesday, October 25 and Friday, October 27. The Political Economy School.

- Sassen, Saskia. 1991. *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Chapter 1, “Overview,” pp.3-16.
- Smith, Neil. 1996. *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City*. New York, NY: Routledge. Chapter 3, “Local arguments: From ‘consumer sovereignty’ to the rent gap,” pp.51-71.
- Zuberi, Daniyal. “Urban Inequality and Urban Social Movements” Pp.134-155 in *Urban Canada*, edited by H. Hiller. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

Week 9. Wednesday, November 1 and Friday, November 3. Race and ethnicity—segregation and enclaves.

- Abrahamson, Mark. 2006. *Urban Enclaves. Identity and Place in the World*. Second edition. New York, NY: Worth Publishers. Chapter 1, “An Overview,” pp.1-17, and chapter 6, “Chinatown in San Francisco and Little Taipei in Suburban Los Angeles,” pp. 93-114.

- Tavori, Iddo. 2016. *Summoned: Identification and Religious Life in a Jewish Neighborhood*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 7, “The Neighborhood as Moral Obstacle Course,” pp.122-144.
- Massey, Douglas S. and Nancy A. Denton. 1993. *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. Chapter 4, “The Continuing Causes of Segregation,” pp.83-114.

Week 10. Wednesday, November 8 and Friday, November 10. Urban politics.
Review session for the final exam on Friday.

- Katz, Michael B. 2012. *Why Don't American Cities Burn?* Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press. Chapter 3, “Why Don't American Cities Burn Very Often?,” pp.78-100.
- Barnard, Alex V. 2011. “‘Waving the Banana’ at Capitalism: Political Theater and Social Movement Strategy among New York’s ‘freegan’ Dumpster Divers.” *Ethnography* 12(4):419–44.
- Walks, Alan. 2015. “Stopping the ‘War on the Car’: Neoliberalism, Fordism, and the Politics of Automobility in Toronto.” *Mobilities* 10(3):402–22.

Week 11. Wednesday, November 15 and Friday, November 17. Gender in the city.
 The final exam will be held in class on Friday, November 17.

- Lee, Jooyoung. 2009. “‘Battlin’ on the Corner: Techniques for Sustaining Play.” *Social Problems* 56(3):578–98.
- Hoang, Kimberly Kay. 2014. “Flirting with Capital: Negotiating Perceptions of Pan-Asian Ascendancy and Western Decline in Global Sex Work,” *Social Problems* 64(4): 507-529.

Week 12. Wednesday, November 22 and Friday, November 24. Place (1).

- Suttles, Gerald D. 1984. “The Cumulative Texture of Local Urban Culture.” *American Journal of Sociology* 90(2):283–304.
- Gottdiener, Mark, Claudia C. Collins, and David R. Dickens. 1999. *Las Vegas: The Social Production of an All-American City*. Malden, MA: Blackwell. Chapter 3, “Media Vegas: Hype, Boosterism, and the Image of the City,” pp.68-93.

Week 13. Wednesday, November 9 and Friday, December 1. Place (2).

- Molotch, Harvey, William Freudenburg, and Krista E. Paulsen. 2000. “History Repeats Itself, But How? City Character, Urban Tradition, and the Accomplishment of Place.” *American Sociological Review* 65(6):791–823.
- Florida, Richard. 2012. *The Rise of the Creative Class, Revisited*. New York, NY: Basic Books. Chapter 10, “Place Matters,” pp.183-202.