

# Geography 331: Urban Social Geography

Fall 2018

Wednesday – Friday 11:35-12:55, Burnside 306

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**Course Description:** This course approaches cities and urban environments emphasizing social relationships in all their complexity and diversity while analyzing how they shape and produce urban space and place. The course covers several approaches and themes in urbanism and urban geography literature so that students can gain familiarity with and form their own opinions on debates and arguments defining the field. It starts with structuralist approaches to uncovering or imposing order in the social makeup of the city, particularly as regarding economic exploitation, class structures, and Marxian urbanism, including on specific topics such as the policing of public spaces, gentrification, and displacement. It then moves on to a difference centered approach in which non-economic factors such as gender, race, sexuality, ethnicity and citizenship status are introduced as spatially constituted and productive of meaning and spatiality. The course then proceeds to recent attempts to truly globalize urban studies. This section of the class will explore the Worlding and postcolonial urbanism literatures to reveal a world of cities as truly diverse and interconnected, including in ways that have been overlooked.

**Prerequisites:** GEOG 216 or GEOG 217 or permission of the instructor.

## Evaluation:

Requirement	Value	Date
Test #1	30%	October 19
Test #2	40%	November 23
Final Group Project	30%	November 28, 30 or December 5

**Readings:** Course readings are posted on 'myCourses'. You are expected to complete the assigned readings before class and be prepared to discuss them.

**In-Class Tests:**

The three in-class tests will be a combined essay and short answer format covering topics discussed in class and within assigned readings. If a student misses any test they must contact the instructor and, given a valid reason (emergency or illness) and appropriate documentation, they may take a make-up exam.

**Group Project:**

For the final group project students will form groups and choose a site within or an aspect of the City of Montreal and explore it in relation to the themes covered in class. Sites can include a neighborhood, building, monument or park and topics can include anything covered in class as long as it is tied to a specific place in the city. Topics must be approved by the instructor whom is available to meet with students during office hours to discuss any element of the project. On the final two weeks of class groups will present their site or topic chosen with a presentation including visual aids that can include a PowerPoint presentation, a poster, video footage...etc. Copies of these materials must be presented to the instructor on the day of the presentation. Presentations should take up no more than 15 minutes. Projects will be graded on the depth of analysis which they treat their site or topic of choosing to and the degree to which students it to themes and materials covered in class.

**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/integrity](http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity) for more information).

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or French any written work that is to be graded. For information on

university and department policies for student assessment, please go to  
<http://www.mcgill.ca/geography/studentassessment>

### **Schedule:**

#### **September 5 & 7 – Intro to course & urban social geography; Marxist critique, social justice, and the city, and spatial science**

**Overview:** This week we will be discussing the development of a critical/radical urban social geography in the 1970s as a reaction to the Quantitative Revolution within geography and growing inequalities in many large cities. The Marxist critique is introduced and discussed in its influence on urban geography and critiques of this work.

### **Readings:**

Lefebvre, H. 1996. The right to the city. In *Writing on Cities*, eds. E. Kofman and E. Lebas, 147-159. Oxford, UK; Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers

Harvey, David. "The right to the city." (2008): 23-40.

Harvey, D. (1972). Revolutionary and counter revolutionary theory in geography and the problem of ghetto formation. *Antipode*, 4(2), 1-13.

#### **September 12 & 14 – Postmodern Urbanism and Consumption; Entrepreneurial urbanism**

**Overview:** This week we will be moving forward to the 1980s and 90s to discuss the development of the postmodern and poststructural urban geography cannon and its critiques of and engagements with structural Marxism. We will also be discussing changes in the nature and economies of cities in the wake of neoliberalism, globalization, and technological advancements and how urban studies has responded to them theoretically. Concepts introduced this week include neoliberalism, post-fordism, managerialism, entrepreneurialism, and time-space compression.

### **Readings:**

Dear, Michael and Steven Flusty (1998) 'Postmodern Urbanism,' *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 88: 50-72.

Jacobs, Jane M. and Ruth Fincher (1998) 'Introduction,' Chapter 1 of R. Fincher and J. Jacobs (eds) *Cities of Difference*. New York: Guilford Press, pp. 1-23.

Hall, T., & Hubbard, P. (1996). The entrepreneurial city: new urban politics, new urban geographies? *Progress in Human Geography*, 20(2), 153-174.

## **September 19 & 21 – Urban Political Ecology and Environmental Racism**

**Overview:** This week we will be discussing the production of urban natures, urban metabolisms, sustainability practices in cities, the impact of climate change on cities, and environmental racism.

### **Readings:**

Gibson-Wood, H., & Wakefield, S. (2013). "Participation", white privilege and environmental justice: Understanding environmentalism among hispanics in Toronto. *Antipode*, 45(3), 641-662.

Colasanti, K. J., Hamm, M. W., & Litjens, C. M. (2012). The city as an "agricultural powerhouse"? perspectives on expanding urban agriculture from Detroit, Michigan. *Urban Geography*, 33(3), 348-369.

Pulido, L. (2000). Rethinking environmental racism: White privilege and urban development in Southern California. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 90(1), 12-40.

## **September 26 & 28 –Gentrification**

**Overview:** This week we will be discussing the move back to the inner city by capital and the white middle/upper classes following the suburbanization of the early/mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and the transformation of inner cities. Concepts introduced and topics discussed include bid-rent theory, sweat equity, rent gap thesis, emancipatory city, and the creative class.

### **Readings:**

Lees, L. (2008). Gentrification and Social Mixing: Towards an Inclusive Urban Renaissance? *Urban Studies*, 45(12), 2449-2470.

Peck, J. (2005). Struggling with the creative class. *International journal of urban and regional research*, 29(4), 740-770.

Smith, N. (2002). New Globalism, New Urbanism: Gentrification as Global Urban Strategy. *Antipode*, 34(3), 427-450.

### **October 3 & 5 – Suburbia and its Transformations; Segregation, Urban Fractionalism, and City Regionalism**

**Overview:** This week we scale outwards from the inner city to consider suburbia and the metropolitan area of cities as a whole. Topics of discussion include suburbanization, the suburbanization of poverty, metropolitan fractionalism, redlining, busing, suburban segregation and gated communities, and city-regionalism.

#### **Readings:**

Cox, K. R., & Jonas, A. E. (1993). Urban development, collective consumption and the politics of metropolitan fragmentation. *Political Geography*, 12(1), 8-37.

Low, S. (2001). The Edge and the Center: Gated Communities and the Discourse of Urban Fear. *American Anthropologist* 103(1): 45-58.

Gainsborough, J. F. (2001). Bridging the City-Suburb Divide: States and the Politics of Regional Cooperation. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 23(5), 497-512.

### **October 10 & 12 – Revanchism and Public Space**

**Overview:** This week we will be discussing conceptualizations of 'the public' and 'public space,' who belongs and whom is excluded, with a special focus on homelessness and the concept of revanchism.

#### **Readings:**

Mitchell, D. (1997) 'The annihilation of space by law: The roots and implications of anti-homeless laws in the United States,' *Antipode* 29(3): 303-335.

Sylvestre, M.-E. (2010). Disorder and Public Spaces in Montreal: Repression (and Resistance) Through Law, Politics, and Police Discretion. *Urban Geography*, 31(6), 803-824.

Smith, N. (2001). Global social cleansing: Postliberal revanchism and the export of zero tolerance. *Social Justice*, 28(3 (85), 68-74.

### **October 17 & 19 – Policing and the City; Citizenship and Borders; Test #1**

**Overview:** This week we will continue the discussion on public space from the previous week but with an emphasis on policing and immigration enforcement to create racialized 'others' excluded from proper citizenship.

#### **Readings:**

Derickson, K. D. (2017). Urban geography II: Urban geography in the Age of Ferguson. *Progress in Human Geography*, 41(2), 230-244.

Staeheli, L. A. (2003). Cities and citizenship. *Urban Geography*, 24(2), 97-102.

Darling, J. (2017). Forced migration and the city: Irregularity, informality, and the politics of presence. *Progress in Human Geography*, 41(2), 178-198.

### **October 24 & 26 – Feminism, Gender and Urban Space**

**Overview:** This week we delve into the difference that gender makes in urban space and the contributions feminist geographies have made to urban studies including intersectionality and a critical analysis of masculinity.

#### **Readings:**

Bondi, L., & Domosh, M. (1998). On the contours of public space: a tale of three women. *Antipode*, 30(3), 270-289.

Gilbert, M. (1998). 'Race,' space and power: the survival strategies of working poor women. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 88(4), 595-621.

Longhurst, R. (2000). Geography and gender: Masculinities, male identity and men. *Progress in human geography*, 24(3), 439-444.

Brownlow, A. (2005). A geography of men's fear. *Geoforum*, 36(5), 581-592.

## **October 31 & November 2 – Sexuality and the City**

**Overview:** This week we will focus on the impact that sexuality and gender identity has on perceptions and experiences of urban space and on the urban form with an emphasis on the development of gay villages as safe spaces and arguments about their decline.

### **Readings:**

Bell, D., & Binnie, J. (2004). Authenticating queer space: Citizenship, urbanism and governance. *Urban studies*, 41(9), 1807-1820.

Doan, P. L. (2007). Queers in the American city: Transgendered perceptions of urban space. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 14(1), 57-74.

Oswin, N. (2008). Critical geographies and the uses of sexuality: Deconstructing queer space. *Progress in Human Geography*, 32(1), 89-103.

## **November 7 & 9 – Postcolonial Cities; Slums and Subaltern Urbanism**

**Overview:** This week we move beyond North America and Europe to consider postcolonial and Global Southern cities and the critiques of and contributions to Western/Northern centered urban geographies that have been made by scholars working in the global peripheries including ordinary cities and worlding.

### **Readings:**

Roy, A. (2011). Slumdog cities: Rethinking subaltern urbanism. *International journal of urban and regional research*, 35(2), 223-238.

Schindler, S. (2014). Understanding urban processes in Flint, Michigan: Approaching 'subaltern urbanism' inductively. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 38(3), 791-804.

Ong, A. (2011). Introduction: Worlding Cities, or the Art of being Global. *Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of being Global*, 1-26.

## **November 14 & 16 – Immigration and Transnational Urbanism; Multiculturalism, Cosmopolitanism and Cities of Difference**

**Overview:** This week we will continue to cities as global entities connected to each other in systems of exchange and commerce as well as in immigration. Topics of discussion include the role that immigration has played in the development of the multicultural urban landscape including ethnic enclaves and ethnoburbs and the insights to thinking cities globally from transnational urbanism.

### **Readings:**

Yeoh, B. S. (2004). Cosmopolitanism and its exclusions in Singapore. *Urban Studies*, 41(12), 2431-2445.

Luis, E. G., & Smith M.P (1998). The Locations of Transnationalism. In *Transnationalism from below* (pp. 3-34). Routledge.

Anderson, K. J. (1987). The idea of Chinatown: The power of place and institutional practice in the making of a racial category. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 77(4), 580-598.

## **November 21 & 23 – Mobile and Relational Urbanism; Planetary Urbanism; Test #2**

**Overview:** In our final week of new materials we continue on the track of thinking cities globally and relationally but with a focus on how urban policies are mobilized between cities. There is an introduction to the concept of planetary urbanism as well and renewed attempts to rethink urbanization as a totality. The final test in the class will be on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### **Readings:**

Massey, Doreen (1994) 'A global sense of place,' In her *Space, place and gender*, Cambridge: Polity, pp. 146-156.

Robinson, J. (2011). Cities in a world of cities: the comparative gesture. *International journal of urban and regional research*, 35(1), 1-23.

Kanai, J. M. (2014). On the peripheries of planetary urbanization: globalizing Manaus and its expanding impact. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 32(6), 1071-1087.

Merrifield, A. (2013). The urban question under planetary urbanization. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 37(3), 909-922.

**November 28 & 30 – group presentations**

**December 5 – finish group presentations**