SOCI 222 Urban Sociology
Fall 2019
Tuesday and Thursday, 2:35-3:55pm
Arts Building W120

Instructor: Dr. Jan Doering
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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 may 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: 40%

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 Thursday, October 10 (week 6).

B) Final in-class exam: 50%

The format for the final exam will resemble the midterm. The exam will be cumulative and may thus include any material covered in class up to that point. It will be held in class on Thursday, November 14 (week 11).

C) Group work: 10%

Over the semester, we will do four group exercises (graded pass/fail, worth 1.5% of your overall course grade), which you will be able to complete in class. 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.

The division of labour within your group is up to you and your fellow students. If you have to miss a group exercise, you should therefore write your group members rather than the instructor. To encourage everyone’s participation, you will have the opportunity to evaluate your group members’ contribution by the end of the class. Each student’s peer evaluation grade will be computed as the simple average of the peer evaluations they receive and will constitute 4% of the overall course grade. 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 Thursday, October 10. The final exam is scheduled for 2:35pm on Thursday, November 14. If you have a conflicting commitment on either of these days (Model UN, etc.), do not take this course. Accommodations will be provided only in case of a medical emergency that clearly prevents you from taking the exam. You must present 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 remain unconvinced that you had to miss the exam. If you have to miss the midterm exam for acceptable medical reasons, the weight of that exam will be shifted onto the final exam, which will then count for 90% of your grade. If you have to miss the final exam for acceptable medical reasons, a make-up exam will be scheduled for the week following the final 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 should be submitted within a week of the date that we first returned the exams. Please note that I will regrade your entire exam, 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 wish 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 will 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:** Regardless of circumstances, I never give extra credit, because extra credit is unfair to the rest of the class. Please don’t ask for it.

• **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 the readings but also include material covered only in 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 “C” under Assignments and Grading) 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 on the syllabus, we reserve the right to ignore your email.
Schedule

Week 1. Tuesday, September 3 and Thursday, September 5. Introduction.

Week 2. Tuesday, September 10 and Thursday, September 12. The Chicago School (1).

Week 3. Tuesday, September 17 and Thursday, September 19. Tuesday: The Chicago School (2). Group exercise on Thursday.

Week 4. Tuesday, September 24 and Thursday, September 26. Tuesday: Individuals, groups, communities (1). Midterm review on Thursday.

Week 5. Tuesday, October 1 and Thursday, October 3. Tuesday: Individuals, groups, communities (2). Group exercise on Thursday.


Week 6. Tuesday, October 8 and Thursday, October 10. Tuesday: Individuals, groups, communities (3). The midterm exam will be held in class on Thursday, October 10.

Week 7. Tuesday, October 15 and Thursday, October 17. Tuesday: Order, disorder, and crime. Thursday: The Political Economy School (1).

Week 8. Tuesday, October 22 and Thursday, October 24. Tuesday: The Political Economy School (2). Group exercise on Thursday.

Week 10. Tuesday, November 5 and Thursday, November 7. Tuesday: Race and ethnicity (1). Review for the final exam on Thursday.

Week 11. Tuesday, November 12 and Thursday, November 14. Tuesday: Race and ethnicity (2). The final exam will be held in class on Thursday, November 14.

Week 12. Tuesday, November 19 and Thursday, November 21. Tuesday: Place and urban reputations.

Week 13. Tuesday, November 26 and Thursday, November 28. Tuesday: Course wrap-up. Group exercise on Thursday.