

# CITY, SOCIETY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Anthropology/Sociology (ANSO) 265  
Spring 2003, TTh 2:40-4:10, Clough 100

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Office hrs: MW 11:30-12:30, TTh 4:15-5:15, or by appointment

## COURSE DESCRIPTION:

City, Society and the Environment is an interdisciplinary seminar that brings together students, faculty, and community experts interested in the analysis of urban environmental issues. It will serve as a solid introduction to a wide range of issues, debates, and problems associated with environmental sustainability in the city. In the first two weeks, the professor and students will read and discuss some general and classic works on the intersecting relationship between urban life, social relations, and the physical environment. With these broad methodological and theoretical frameworks, seminar participants will then proceed in the following weeks to examine specific environmental concerns relevant to the Memphis metropolitan area. The professor and students will spend some class sessions researching and discussing texts and materials (e.g. newspaper articles, organizational documents, city records) bearing on a relevant issue. Other sessions will function as panel discussions with campus and community-based experts on those same themes. This course has no prerequisites except a demonstrated interest in the above issues.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

**(1) Punctuality, Attendance and Participation** – A good portion of the work we do is in the classroom during lectures, discussion, and panel presentations. This means that regular punctuality, attendance and participation are required.

*Punctuality* - Make sure to arrive for class on time so as not to disturb others by coming in late. Attendance is taken at the beginning of class. It is your responsibility to alert me of your presence (at the end of class) if you do arrive late, otherwise you will be marked absent.

*Attendance* - You are expected to attend all classes during the semester. I do realize that certain circumstances will, from time to time, prevent you from attending class. It is your responsibility to make the decision, to alert me beforehand of official reasons for absences (athletics, college meetings, etc.), and to make up any work that is missed.

*Participation* – The seminar format depends on your regular participation. Active participation takes many forms including engaging in oral and written exercises, asking and answering questions, commenting on readings and lectures, contributing to a discussion, and one-on-one meetings with me in my office. Find the way that makes you most comfortable.

Your attendance, punctuality and engaged presence are essential for the course and count for **25%** of your final grade.

**(2) Formal Assignments** – In addition to active participation, there will be three formal assignments to complete during the semester. They are based on the topics treated and should reflect your understanding of the important issues discussed. Make sure to complete them by the due date indicated. Late

assignments defeat the purpose and will be penalized. Feel free to consult with me both before and after you do the assignment in order to get feedback on your ideas and progress.

*Discussion Leadership* – Each student will take on the role of discussion leader at least once during the semester. Join up with one or two other students, do the week’s reading or research, and prepare to lead the discussion for that week. The presentation should include a brief summary of the issues, various positions, and lines of discussion. Then help me guide the broader discussion with the rest of the class. Make sure to consult with me beforehand and see handout on oral presentations. Discussion leadership counts for 25% of your grade.

*Dossier* – A dossier is a collection of related materials. Over the course of the semester, keep a folder in which you collect materials relevant to each week’s topic and discussion. These materials include the following: assigned class readings, handouts, outside local and national newspaper articles and other media sources (at least one per week related to the week’s topic), questions you compose for the visiting experts (at least one per panel session), and notes from weekly discussions. It is your responsibility to maintain these collections on a timely and regular basis; I will periodically review them. Hand it in at the end of the semester. The dossier counts for 25% of your grade.

*End of the semester analytical essay* – Choose one of the urban environmental issues we cover during the semester and write a 10 page essay analyzing the key questions, theories, methods, data, and viewpoints available for understanding that issue. It will involve some outside research and collection of data but the emphasis is on analysis more so than on a catalogue of facts. Your dossier should function as a foundation for this essay. The essay counts for 25% of your grade.

Together, these formal assignments constitute **75%** of your final grade.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Purchase these books at the bookstore. I will announce and distribute any additional readings.

Erin Klinenberg, Heat Wave, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

### **WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS:**

#### **Week 1 –**

Thursday Jan 16 – No class

### **BACKGROUND**

#### **Week 2 - Introduction to Subject**

Tues Jan 21 – What shapes the relationship between humans and the environment?

Thurs Jan 23 – Heat Wave

### **Week 3 (TTh Jan 28, 30) – City, Society and the Environment**

Discussion Leaders:

Assignments: Research on heat waves and “natural disasters”

Tuesday Jan 28 – Heat Wave

Thursday Jan 30 – Heat Wave

### **Week 4 (TTh Feb 4, 6) – The Urban Environment of Memphis**

Discussion Leaders:

Assignments: Research environmental issues in Memphis, especially growth/development  
Bring questions for panelist

Tuesday Feb 4 – A History of Environmental Issues in Memphis  
Tom Charlier, The Commercial Appeal

Thursday Feb 6 - Pass out RDC packets

## **GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT AND PRESERVATION**

### **Week 5 (TTh Feb 11, 13) –**

Assignment: Read RDC packet; Bring questions for panel

Tuesday Feb 11 – Overton Park Tour with Don Richardson

Thursday Feb 13 – Riverfront Revitalization  
Benny Lendermon, President, Riverfront Development Corporation

### **Week 6 (TTh Feb 18, 20) –**

Assignment: Bring questions for panelists

Tuesday Feb 18 - Shelby County Mayor AC Wharton

Thursday Feb 20 - Pre/Historic Preservation and Urban Development  
Louella Weaver, Asst. Director, Chucalissa Museum  
Guy Weaver, Weaver and Associates, LLC

## **Week 7 (TTh Feb 25, 27) – Reflections on Development, Growth, and Preservation**

Discussion Leaders:

Assignments: Research on urban development in other contexts

Tuesday Feb 25 - Stephen Wheeler, “Planning Sustainable and Livable Cities”; S. Van der Ryn, S. Cowan, “An Introduction to Ecological Design”, The City Reader

Thursday Feb 27

## **TOXICS AND THE CITY**

### **Week 8 (TTh Mar 4, 6) – Background and Overview**

Discussion Leaders:

Assignments: Research on toxics in Memphis

Tuesday Mar 4 –

Thursday Mar 6 –

### **Week 9 (TTh Mar 11, 13) – Spring Break**

### **Week 10 (TTh Mar 18, 20) –**

Assignment: Bring questions for panel sessions.

Tuesday Mar 18 – Dr. Scott Nikaido, Rhodes College

Thursday Mar 20 – Balinda Moore, Concerned Citizens of CRUMP

### **Week 11 (TTh Mar 25, 27) –**

Assignment: Bring questions for panel sessions

Tuesday Mar 25 – Ron Riding, Environmental, Health and Safety Manager, Velsicol Chemical Corporation

Thursday Mar 27 – GIS Ground Water Analysis and Soil Sampling  
Dr. Carol Ekstrom, Rhodes College

**Week 12 (TTh Apr 1, 3) – Reflections on Toxics**

Discussion Leaders:

Assignments: Research on toxics in other cities

Tuesday Apr 1

Thursday Apr 3 -

**ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

**Week 13 (TTh Apr 8, 10) – Overview of environmental justice movement**

Discussion leaders:

Assignment: Research on environmental justice movement

Tuesday Apr 8 – United Church of Christ document  
Excerpts from Dumping in Dixie

Thursday Apr 10 -

**Week 14 – (TTh Apr 15, 17) –**

Assignment: Bring questions for panelists

Tuesday Apr 15 – Rita Harris, Environmental Justice Organizer, Sierra Club

Thurs Apr 17 - No class, Easter break

**Week 15 – (TTh Apr 22, 24) –**

Tuesday Apr 22 - Discuss final essays/individual meetings

Thursday Apr 24 – Judge Larry Potter, Memphis Environmental Court

**Week 16 – (TTh Apr 29, May 1) –**

Tuesday Apr 29 – No class, attend Research Symposium

Thursday May 1 - Discuss final essays/individual meetings

**Week 17 – (Tues May 6) – Dossier and Essay Due**