

## URBN 201-01 Introduction to Urban Studies, Spring 2007

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Urban Studies 201 (27711)  
Introduction to Urban Studies  
Spring 2007

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### *Overview*

This class is designed to introduce students to the discipline of urban studies and the topics it encompasses; expose students to the diverse issues and problems that face urbanized areas and their citizens; and provide a framework for examining and understanding how cities work and how they have developed over time.

Some of the subjects we will study and discuss:

- ❑ What are the different perspectives from which a city can be viewed? What qualities make a city "successful" or "livable," from those perspectives?
- ❑ The physical development of cities - from architecture to infrastructure - and its impact on residents, neighborhoods, and the local economy;
- ❑ How decisions in a city are made - where governance, politics, and power intersect - and how citizens can influence and shape those decisions;
- ❑ The many institutions, from the block club to city hall, that educate, serve, support, and connect (or separate) the citizens of a city.

The class will consist of lectures, reading, and class discussion. These will be focused around seven broad topic areas. Although these are presented in a linear manner (below), students will be expected to "look ahead" on the syllabus and think about (1) ways in which the characteristics of cities are interrelated, and (2) issues, such as poverty and urban revitalization, that cut through most urban studies discussions.

### *Class Requirements*

- ❑ Midterm Exam - 20 percent of grade
- ❑ Final Exam - 30 percent of grade
- ❑ Class Attendance and Discussion - 20 percent of grade
- ❑ Written reports (3 @ 3-5 pp) - 30 points

### *Required Readings*

- The City Reader. Third Edition. Richard T. Legate and Frederic Stout, editors.
- Urban Society Annual Editions. Selected articles will be distributed or left on reserve at the library.
- Smart City Memphis blog: <http://smartcitymemphis.blogspot.com/>, authored by Carol Coletta, CEOs for Cities.

Course Overview: Introduction and requirements. 1/11

Focus Area 1: How we see and understand cities. 1/16

- Come to class prepared to discuss your own personal experiences in cities (and towns), contrasting at least one other place you have lived with Memphis from the perspective of politics, built environment, local economy, or another characteristic. (No written assignment needed.)

Reading:

"How to Study Cities," Richard Legates. City Reader.

Focus Area 2: Urbanization Past, Present and Future. 1/18 - 1/25

- The history of cities
- Types of cities and urban forms
- Urban development in the U.S.
- Global cities

Readings (all from City Reader):

"The Urban Revolution," V. Gordon Childes

"The Polis," H.D.F. Kitto

"The Great Towns," Friedrich Engels

"The Teleserviced City," William J. Mitchell

"Impact of New Technologies and Globalization on Cities," Saskia Sassen

Focus Area 3: Urban Communities. 1/30 - 2/8

- Social connections
- Concepts and measurement of the metropolitan area
- Population movement - from rural to urban/suburban - and its impacts
- Examining the suburbs

Readings:

"The Need for a New Vision for the Development of Large U.S. Metropolitan Areas," Anthony Downs. City Reader.

"The Drive in Culture of Contemporary America," Kenneth T. Jackson. City Reader.

"Beyond Suburbia: The Rise of the Technoburb," Robert Fishman. City Reader.

"Patio Man and the Sprawl People," David Brooks. Urban Society.

Focus Area 4: The Sociology of Cities. 2/13 - 2/27.

- Race, class, and ethnicity, and social rank
- Immigration - historical and contemporary impacts
- Urban problems: crime, poverty, health, and education
- The city as a social institution

Readings:

"What is a City?" Lewis Mumford. City Reader.

"Movers and Shakers," Joel Kotkin. Urban Society.

"Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," Robert D. Putnam. City Reader.

"Broken Windows," James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling. City Reader.

Focus Area 5: Metropolitan Politics and Governance. 3/1 - 3/22.

- Evolving forms and structures of city government
- The context of local government and the federal role
- The "players" - elected officials, machine politics, reformers, etc.
- Community power & coalitions

Readings:

"A Ladder of Citizen Participation," Sherry Arnstein. City Reader.

"The Death and Life of America's Cities," Fred Siegel. Urban Society.

Focus Area 6: The City as Place. 3/27 - 4/3.

- Urban spaces: public, private, and social
- The design of cities
- Urban growth patterns and the issue of sprawl

Readings:

"Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns," Frederick Law Olmstead. City Reader.

"The Town-Country Magnet" (and introduction), Ebenezer Howard. City Reader.

"The Neighborhood, the District and the Corridor," Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk. City Reader.

"Home from Nowhere," James Howard Kunstler. Urban Society.

Focus Area 7: Urban and Regional Economies. 4/10 - 4/24.

- Local occupations and industries
- The underground economy
- Local cities and the global economy
- Poverty
- Public finance - how cities support themselves
- Urban economic development.

Readings:

"The Competitive Advantage of the Inner City," Michael Porter. City Reader.

"Financing Urban Revitalization," Beth Mattson-Teig. Urban Society.

"As Cities Move to Privatize Water, Atlanta Steps Back," Douglas Jehl. Urban Society.

"The Rise of the Creative Class," Richard Florida. Urban Society.