

Soc 152a
Brandeis University
Spring 2009
MW 3:40-5:00
Pearlman 113

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office hours: M 2:00-3:00
W 1:00-2:00
and by appointment

Urban Life and Culture

This course examines the experience of urbanism, with an emphasis on the social dimensions of life in the cities. While the course includes historical material on the development of urbanism, we will focus on changing conditions within the American city. Two themes in particular will run through the class: the relationship between urbanism and diversity, and the tension between social control and tolerance in urban environments. We will begin by considering some classic theoretical frameworks for understanding urban life. We then discuss how transportation systems structure social life and the urban environment. Following an examination of the heterogeneity of the city, we turn to analyses of how residential, employment, and leisure patterns have changed in response to major shifts in the economic foundations of North American cities. Finally, we consider the future of the city by examining new forms of urban development and the built environment.

Requirements

Students are expected to keep up with the readings, attend class, and participate in discussions. In addition, you will complete: (1) A short paper covering readings and other course material. (2) A group project consisting of designing and writing up a sociological tour of some community in the Boston area. This will include planning a route and specifying points of interest. The object is to describe the sociological significance of neighborhoods, residential and commercial structures, recreational spaces, and infrastructural elements, relating these places to concepts from readings and lectures where appropriate. You will be divided into groups of approximately five; each group will turn in a single report. Half your grade for this project will be based on what your group produces, half will be based on your individual contribution. (3) A take-home final.

Evaluation

Short paper (4-6 pages)	25%
Tour report (15-20 pages)	30%
Take-home final	35%
Participation	10%

Students are expected to uphold standards of academic integrity. Except for the group project, each student is expected to turn in work completed independently. It is not acceptable to use the words or ideas of another person without proper acknowledgement of that source. This means that you must use references and, where appropriate, quotation marks to indicate the source of any phrases, sentences, or ideas not your own -- whether they are found in written materials or on the Internet, and whether they are created by a published author, another student, or your parent. Violations of University policies on academic integrity may result in failure in the course or on the assignment, and could end in suspension from the University. Students with questions about standards of

academic integrity are advised to consult Section 4 of Rights and Responsibilities from the Brandeis Student Handbook and/or speak to me.

If you are a student who needs academic accommodations because of a documented disability, you should contact me, and present your letter of accommodation, as soon as possible. If you have questions about documenting a disability or requesting academic accommodations, you should contact Beth Rodgers-Kay in Academic Services at 736-3470. Letters of accommodation should be presented at the start of the semester to ensure provision of accommodations. Accommodations cannot be granted retroactively.

The following books are available for purchase in the bookstore:

Mike Davis, *Magical Urbanism: Latinos Reinvent the US City*. London: Verso, 2000.

Jonathan Kozol, *Rachel and Her Children: Homeless Families in America*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2006 [originally published 1988].

Richard Lloyd, *Neo-Bohemia: Art and Commerce in the Postindustrial City*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

These books are also on reserve at the library.

The readings for Weeks 2 & 3 are on the Latte site for this class.

All other readings are contained in a custom course packet. Information on how to purchase this will be announced in class.

On Latte, I have also included an area with links to local organizations and other resources related to issues we will be discussing in class. This may be useful for those who would like to pursue these issues further, either during the course or sometime in the future. I will be adding to this site as the course progresses, so you may want to check it periodically.

Course Schedule

Introduction: The City in Social Theory and the Social Imagination

week 1
Jan 14 no assignment

week 2
Jan 20-21 Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life." In Kurt H. Wolff, ed., *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*. New York: The Free Press, 1950 [originally published 1902-03], pp. 409-424.

Lewis Mumford, "The Culture of Cities." In Philip Kasinitz, ed., *Metropolis: Center and Symbol of Our Times*. New York: New York University Press, 1995 [originally published 1938], pp. 21-29.

Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life." In Philip Kasinitz, ed., *Metropolis: Center and Symbol of Our Times*. New York: New York University Press, 1995 [1938], pp. 58-82.

Robert Redfield and Milton B. Singer, "The Cultural Role of Cities." *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, Vol. 3, No. 1, October 1954, pp. 53-73.

Urban Arteries

week 3
Jan 26-28

The Culture of the Streets

Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Vintage, 1992 [originally published 1961], chaps. 2-3.

week 4
Feb 2-4

The Culture of the Automobile

Stephen Davies, "Reckless Walking Must Be Discouraged!: The Automobile Revolution and the Shaping of Modern Urban Canada to 1930." *Urban History Review*, Vol. 18, No. 2, October 1989, pp. 123-138.

Joseph Interrante, "The Road to Autopia: The Automobile and the Spatial Transformation of American Culture." In David L. Lewis and Laurence Goldstein, eds., *The Automobile and American Culture*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1983, pp. 89-104.

Mimi Sheller and John Urry, "The City and the Car." *International Journal of Urban & Regional Research*, Vol. 24, No. 4, December 2000, pp. 737-757.

Jane Holtz Kay, *Asphalt Nation: How the Automobile Took Over America, and How We Can Take It Back*. New York: Crown, 1997, chap. 2.

Michael Bull, "Automobility and the Power of Sound." In Mike Featherstone, Nigel Thrift and John Urry, eds., *Automobilities*. London: Sage, 2005, pp. 243-259.

Diverse People, Diverse Cultures

week 5
Feb 9-11

The City as Subcultural Haven

Claude S. Fischer, "Toward a Subcultural Theory of Urbanism." *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 80, No. 6, May 1975, pp. 1319-1341.

Manuel Castells, *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983, chap. 14.

Patricia Leigh Brown, "Gay Enclaves Face Prospect of Being Passé." *New York Times* October 30, 2007, pp. A1, A22.

week 6
Feb 23-25

Immigration and Ethnicity

Mike Davis, *Magical Urbanism: Latinos Reinvent the US City*. London: Verso, 2000, chaps. 1-5, 8-9, 13-14.

short paper due Monday, February 23rd

Economic Restructuring and Its Consequences

week 7
Mar 2-4

Deindustrialization

Loïc Wacquant, *Urban Outcasts: A Comparative Sociology of Advanced Marginality*. Cambridge: Polity, 2008, Prologue; chaps. 3 & 4. [24, 23, 13]
Recommended: chap. 6.

week 8
Mar 9-11

Homelessness

Jonathan Kozol, *Rachel and Her Children: Homeless Families in America*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2006 [originally published 1988], Overview; Part One, chaps. 1-5; Part Two, chaps. 1-3; Part Three, chaps. 1-3.

week 9
Mar 16-18

Gentrification

Richard Lloyd, *Neo-Bohemia: Art and Commerce in the Postindustrial City*. New York: Routledge, 2006, chaps. 4-6.

tour progress report due Monday, March 16th

week 10
Mar 23-25

City of Services

Richard Lloyd, *Neo-Bohemia*, chaps. 7-10.

week 11
Mar 30-Apr 1

The Tourist City

- Peter Eisenger, "The Politics of Bread and Circuses: Building the City for the Visitor Class." *Urban Affairs Review*, Vol. 35, No. 3, January 2000, pp. 316-333.
- Susan G. Davis, "Space Jam: Media Conglomerates Build the Entertainment City." *European Journal of Communication*, Vol. 14, No. 4, December 1999, pp. 435-459.
- Judy Mattivi Morley, "Albuquerque, New Mexico, or Anywhere, USA?: Historic Preservation and the Construction of Civic Identity." *New Mexico Historical Review*, Vol. 74, No. 2, April 1999, pp. 155-178.
- Bruce Ehrlich and Peter Dreier, "The New Boston Discovers the Old Tourism and the Struggle for a Livable City." In Dennis R. Judd and Susan S. Fainstein, eds., *The Tourist City*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999, pp. 155-178.
- Charles C. Euchner, "Tourism and Sports: The Serious Competition for Play." In Dennis R. Judd and Susan S. Fainstein, eds., *The Tourist City*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999, pp. 215-232.

Planned Urbanism and the Regulation of Space

week 12
Apr 6-8

Standardizing Commerce

- Bernard J. Frieden and Lynne B. Sagalyn, *Downtown, Inc.: How America Rebuilds Cities*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989, chaps. 10 & 11.
- Charles Ruteiser, "Making Place in the Nonplace Urban Realm: Notes on the Revitalization of Downtown Atlanta." In Setha M. Low, ed., *Theorizing the City: The New Urban Anthropology Reader*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999 [1997], pp. 317-341.
- Robert Hollands and Paul Chatterton, "Producing Nightlife in the New Urban Entertainment Economy: Corporatization, Branding and Market Segmentation." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol. 27, No. 2, June 2003, pp. 361-385.

Tour report due Wednesday, April 8th

week 13
Apr 20

Surveillance and Social Control

- Edward J. Blakely and Mary Gail Snyder, "Divided We Fall: Gated and Walled Communities in the United States." In Nan Ellin, ed., *Architecture of Fear*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997, pp. 85-99.
- Trevor Boddy, "Architecture Emblematic: Hardened Sites and Softened Symbols." In Michael Sorkin, ed., *Indefensible Space: The Architecture of the National Insecurity State*. New York: Routledge, 2008, pp. 277-304.

Hille Koskela, "'The Gaze without Eyes': Video-Surveillance and the Changing Nature of Urban Space." *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 24, No. 2, June 2000, pp. 243-265.

week 14
Apr 27-29

New Urbanism

Jill Grant, *Planning the Good Community: New Urbanism in Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge, 2006, chaps. 1 & 8.

David Harvey, "The New Urbanism and the Communitarian Trap: On Social Problems and the False Hope of Design." In William S. Saunders, ed., *Sprawl and Suburbia*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2005 [1997], pp. 21-26.

Robert H. Kargon and Arthur P. Molella, *Invented Edens: Techno-Cities of the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008, chap. 7.

Take-home final due Friday, May 1st (seniors)
Wednesday, May 6th (all others)