GRADUATE SEMINAR IN URBAN SOCIOLOGY
SYD 6418
(cross-listed with GEO 6603, Cities and Regions in Global Perspective)

FALL 2020
Tuesdays 12:30-3:10 PM
Remote via Zoom and Canvas

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Office Hours: Thursday, 11 to 1 PM, and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

This course provides an overview of the major subtopics and debates in urban sociology, with integration of research from urban geography, urban anthropology and the broad field of urban studies. In this class students will develop and sharpen their expertise in the field of urban studies, and hone their own research agendas with an urban perspective. We will start with classical work focused on American cities but will integrate a considerable amount of material using comparative, international, and global perspectives. Some of the questions this course will address are: How have modern cities developed? How does urban life impact culture, social ties, inequality, and subjective experience? How are contemporary cities changing? What pressures are cities experiencing as a result of heightened economic, demographic, and ideological globalization? What are some of the mechanisms and effects of social exclusion and inclusion in contemporary cities? What are recent trends and impacts of racial and income based residential segregation? What are the experiences of immigrant communities in cities? How have recent structural trends affected concentrated urban poverty? What are the causes and dynamics of homelessness in major urban areas? What are recent dynamics of crime and policing, and how might we create a society without their deleterious effects? What drives gentrification and how is it affecting communities? How have recent changes in welfare policy affected poor people in urban areas? How have structural pressures affected the ability of local governments to provide services? What are some of the political challenges involved in addressing contemporary urban social problems? Throughout the semester, students will work on a literature review paper that helps them make progress towards a field exam, MA essay, publishable research article, or other professional output.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Since this is a student-centered, discussion-based seminar we will share responsibility in addressing the above questions in our meetings. Students will engage in the following activities.

1. **“Reflection Papers” for Reading Assignments:** Each week, you will prepare a “reflection paper” based on the reading assignments for that week. Your papers should contain the following components: a) a critical assessment of what you identify as the two or three major ideas, findings, arguments, and/or innovations (theoretical or methodological) in the reading assignments (do not just summarize, you need to synthesize and critique); and b) an articulation of at least two questions or arguments that cut across the readings and can be used as the basis for discussion. These should be a few to several solid paragraphs and are to be posted on-line by midnight the day before the class meets.

2. **Discussion Leading:** Each week, a student (or students, depending on enrollment) will lead the seminar discussion of that week’s readings. You should summarize your major observations of the readings (not the entire readings) and state your focal questions for discussion in less than 10 minutes. You will continue to lead the discussion for that meeting. For the week that you are discussion leader, you do not have to post a reflection paper.

3. **Participation:** Since the quality of the seminar depends greatly on student participation, you are to be prepared to discuss ALL of the readings assigned for each meeting. Thus, you should read closely all of the readings assigned for each week. You are also expected to provide feedback on other students’ presentations.

4. **Research Paper:** You are required to write an original literature review paper based on a sociological research question related to urbanism. Since I would like this class to be helpful to your own research, I encourage you to meet with me to discuss how to come up with a question that fits within the focus and responsibilities of your graduate studies. In general, your papers will be 3,000 to 5,000 words. I will provide more specific instructions on the paper early in the semester. This paper will be due at the end of finals week. You will also be required to submit a draft towards the end of the semester and revise it. I encourage you to think about this paper practically (although not at the expense of your intellectual curiosity). So, think about how you might turn the paper into a field exam, literature review for a publishable paper or research proposal, MA paper, and the like.

5. **Research Paper Presentations:** In the middle and the end of the semester, you will make a 15- to 30-minute presentation on your research paper and receive feedback from your colleagues.

SEMINAR GRADES:

Your grade for the seminar will be based on the quality of your performance with respect to the above course requirements. The allocation of points to these requirements is as follows:

1. Reflection Papers: 20%
2. Discussion Leading: 15%
3. Discussion Participation: 10%
4. Research Paper Presentations: 20%
5. Research Paper: 35%
TOTAL 100%

SEMINAR READINGS:
Unless otherwise indicated, readings are available on-line through the FIU library website either through electronic reserves (for most book chapters), electronic versions of journals (for articles), as e-books, or online.

SEMINAR OUTLINE:

Aug 25. Introduction


Recommended Readings
City and Community 2006 (5:3) special issue on Jane Jacobs.
Remembering Jane Jacobs (5 minute documentary clip on youtube)

Sept 1. Development of Modern Cities and Urban Sociology


Recommended Readings


Michael Dear (2002). “Los Angeles and the Chicago School: An Invitation to a Debate,” City and Community. 1(1):5-32. (If you have time, also skim comments and responses in the issue by Andrew Abbott and Harvey Molotch).
Urban Sociology Seminar

Alex Stepick, Guillermo Grenier, Max Castro, Marvin Dunn. (2003). This Land is Our Land: Immigrants and Power in Miami. Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press. (Chapter 1) EBOOK


Recommended Readings


Sept 15. Global Cities, Politics, and Comparative Urbanism


Recommended Readings


Sept 22. Race and Residential Segregation

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Recommended Readings


Sept 29. Immigration, Ethnic Enclaves, and Identity


Recommended Readings


**Oct 6. Concentrated Poverty, Criminalization and Violence**


**Recommended Readings**


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Oct 13. **Homelessness (Housing Deprivation)**


Matthew D. Marr, Rebecca Young, Jacquelyn Johnston, and Karen Mahar (in press) “Spatial Dynamics and Subjective Experiences of Service Hubs Addressing Homelessness in Neoliberal Miami” in Geerhardt Kornatowski, Toshio Mizuuchi and Taku Sugano (Eds.) Diversities of Urban Inclusivity: Perspectives beyond Gentrification in Developed City-regions. New York, NY: Springer. (Marr will provide a pdf)

**Recommended Readings**


Urban Sociology Seminar

Oct 20. Place and Community


Recommended Readings


Oct. 27. Student In-Progress Presentations/Workshopping

Nov 3. Gentrification and Displacement

Fullilove, Mindy Thompson (2004). Root Shock: How Tearing up City Neighborhood Hurts America, and What We Can Do About It. One World/Ballentine Books. (Chapter 1)


Recommended Readings


Nov. 10 Urban Social Movements

Ananya Roy and Hilary Malson (Eds). Housing Justice in Unequal Cities. UCLA Institute on Inequality and Democracy (available at unequalcities.org)

Recommended Readings


Nov. 17 Student Research/First Draft Due

Nov. 24 Student Presentations

FINALS WEEK. FINAL PAPERS DUE BY MIDNIGHT DEC. 4