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 and urban anthropology. We will start with classical work focused on American cities but will integrate a considerable amount of material using comparative, international, and global perspectives. Given the course’s cross-listing with Asian Studies, there will be special attention to cities in the region, especially Japan and China, but we will certainly explore other regions. Some of the questions this course will address are: How have modern cities developed? What does it mean for culture, social ties, stratification, and subjective experience to live in a city? 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 the recent trends and impacts of residential segregation? What are the experiences of recent immigrants? How have recent structural trends affected concentrated inner city poverty? What are the causes and dynamics of homelessness in major urban areas? What is 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?

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Since this seminar is designed to be student-centered, we will share responsibility in addressing the questions above through discussion of course readings. Much of my responsibility has been met by organizing the readings. Thus, you will be responsible for bringing this design to a fruitful form in the classroom by engaging in the following activities.

1. “Reflection Papers” for Reading Assignments: Each week, you will prepare a “reflection paper” for the reading assignments of that week. Your papers should generally 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 before to the class meets. Late assignments will not be accepted. You will be given more specifics about how to post these at our first meeting. Discussion leaders do not have to post for their week.

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 about 10 minutes to allow the class adequate time to discuss them.

3. **Discussion 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 have read closely all of the readings assigned for that week.

4. **Research Paper:** You are required to write an original literature review paper based around a sociological research question related to urbanism. I encourage you to meet with me in office hours 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.

5. **Research Paper Presentation:** In the last week of class (before finals week), you will make a 15 to 30 minute (depending on enrollment) presentation on your research paper.

**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 Presentation: 20%
5. Research Paper: 35%

**SEMINAR READINGS:**

Readings are available on-line through the library website either through electronic reserves (for book chapters), electronic versions of journals (for articles), or as e-books. *(AS)* indicates readings focused on Asia.

**SEMINAR OUTLINE:**

**Jan 6.** Introduction

Skim through the *City and Community* 2006 (5:3) special issue on Jane Jacobs. (optional)

**Jan 13. Development of the Modern City and Urban Sociology**


**Suggested Readings**


**Jan 20. MLK DAY—NO CLASS!!!**

**Jan 27. Schools of Urban Sociology-- Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, Beijing?, Tokyo?, Miami?**


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).


**Suggested Readings**

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


Feb 3. **Global Cities, World Cities, Comparative Urbanism**


**Suggested Readings**


Feb 10. Residential Segregation


Suggested Readings


Feb 17. Immigration, Ethnic Enclaves, and the Second Generation


Suggested Readings

URBAN SOCIOLOGY SEMINAR/MARR


Li Zhang (2001). Strangers in the City: Reconfigurations of Space, Power, and Social Networks Within China’s Floating Population. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. (Chapters 1,2)

Feb 24. Concentrated Poverty


Suggested Readings


**Mar 3. Criminalization of Poverty, Welfare Reform, and Social Service Organizations**


*Suggested Readings*


**Mar. 10-14 SPRING BREAK!!**

**Mar 17. Homelessness**


*Suggested Readings*


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Mar 24. The Creative Class


Suggested Readings


Mar 31. Culture, Consumption, and Bohemia
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Suggested Readings


Apr 7. Gentrification


Suggested Readings


Apr. 14 Student Presentations

FINALS WEEK. FINAL PAPERS DUE