

SOCI 222 Urban Sociology

Fall 2021

Tuesday and Thursday, 10:05am-11:25pm

Arts Building W-120

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Office hours: Thursdays, 2-3pm

Please sign up online: <https://calendly.com/jandoering>

Leacock 826 or via Zoom

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Course Description

A growing majority of humans around the world lives in cities. Most of today's societal shifts in fashion, politics, lifestyle, and labour—to name just a few—materialize first and foremost in cities. In many ways, society itself has become an urban phenomenon. To understand society, therefore, we have to comprehend cities and urban life. Urban sociology is the study of the city's cultural, social, and material form and content. In this course, we will review and apply sociological approaches that help to understand various kinds of urban phenomena, including neighbourhoods, ethnic segregation, gentrification, urban lifestyles, and more.

Learning Goals

After completing this course, you should be able to:

- understand the role of cities in contemporary societies.
- analyze the shape and texture of city space as a function of social, cultural, and political forces.
- interpret how new communities—such as ethnic, gay, or lifestyle communities—and new forms of behaviour emerge in cities and how they are connected to urban space.
- examine place-based identities, how those identities emerge, and how they shape the local culture and economy.

Readings

I expect you to read all of the assigned material. You do not need to purchase books or a course reader for this class. All readings are available on MyCourses under the “content” tab. However, after the end of add/drop period (Tuesday, September 14), you must read the assigned readings on Perusall, a peer-based online reading tool. Perusall enables you to discuss the readings together with other students. Please note that engaging the readings on Perusall is a course requirement and will constitute part of your grade (see “Assignments and Grading”).

Assignments and Grading

A) Midterm exam: 35%.

The midterm exam provides you with an opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of course content, including the material covered in the readings, lectures, and in-class exercises. It will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions. The midterm exam will be held during class time (but online) on Thursday, October 7 (week 6). Please note that this is the Thursday before Thanksgiving. If you cannot take the exam that day, please look for a different class. I cannot offer alternative arrangements for travelling purposes.

B) Final exam: 40%

The final exam will cover all course content, including the material covered in the readings, lectures, and in-class exercises, and it may consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. It will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions and possibly a short essay. The final exam will be held during class time (but online) on Thursday, November 18 (week 12). If you cannot take the exam that day, please look for a different class.

C) Perusall reading grade (average of pass/fail credit per assigned reading): 15% total

After the end of add/drop period (Tuesday, September 14), you are required to engage the course readings by using Perusall, a browser-based, collaborative reading tool. Perusall enables you to discuss the readings together with other students. Perusall will grade your reading engagement on a pass/fail basis for each single reading. It considers the quantity and quality of comments and the degree to which your comments engage and also inspire other students.

In order to receive credit for completing a reading, you have to a) complete the reading in full before the course meeting for which I have assigned it (deadline: 10:00am), and b) engage the reading by substantially commenting on passages, asking pertinent question, and addressing the comments and questions that other students have logged. Note that you won't receive credit if you complete your reading late or if you do not substantially engage the reading by logging comments on questions on Perusall.

At the end of the course, your overall Perusall reading grade will be the simple average of your pass/fail grades for each assigned reading. For example, if I had assigned only four readings and you would have received credit for three readings, your reading grade would be 75%.

D) Group work: 10% total

Over the semester, we will do three group exercises (graded pass/fail, worth 2.5% of your overall course grade). These exercises are designed to take approximately 1.5 hours. You can complete them in class, but you can also do them remotely and/or outside of class if your group prefers working in a different environment or at a different time. It is up to you to coordinate this with your group members. For each exercise, your group must submit one written report via

MyCourses no later than 48 hours after the exercise has been introduced. Late submissions will not be accepted. This means that you will have to collaborate effectively with your group members and use your time efficiently. Assignments to groups will be strictly random—no reassignments will be made under any circumstances. The division of labour within your group is up to you and your fellow students. If you have to miss a group exercise, you should therefore write your group members rather than the instructor.

To encourage everyone's participation, you will have the opportunity to evaluate your group members' contribution by the end of the class. Each student's peer evaluation grade will be computed as the simple average of the peer evaluations they receive and will constitute 2.5% of the overall course grade. Do not complain to me about your peer evaluation grade—I will not alter it. It is up to you to take a productive role within your group that ensures a good peer evaluation. Please note that submitting your peer evaluation grades is mandatory and late submission will not be accepted. If you do not submit a complete evaluation for all of your group members before the deadline (to be announced), you will receive a zero for own participation grade, independent of the grades your group members may have given you.

Course Policies and Statements

- **Land acknowledgment:** McGill University is on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. We acknowledge and thank the diverse Indigenous people whose footsteps have marked this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.
- **Inclusive learning environment:** As the instructor of this course I endeavour to provide an inclusive learning environment. If you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the [Office for Students with Disabilities](#), 514-398-6009.
- **Copyright and the reproduction of course material:** Instructor-generated course materials (e.g., lectures, notes, summaries, exam questions) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without the explicit permission of the instructor. Specifically, you may not reproduce or place in the public domain lecture and course session recordings. Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow-up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.
- **Academic integrity:** McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information). If a student is caught engaging in fraudulent activity, the student may fail the assignment in question or the entire course, and I will report that student to the Dean of Students. Note that to support academic integrity, your assignments may be submitted to text-matching software to check for plagiarism.
- **Language:** In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque

étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté.

- **Make-up policy:** There will be no make-up option for the midterm exam. If you have to miss the midterm exam, I will shift the weight to the final exam, which will then count for 75% of your final course grade. There are no make-up options for Perusall reading assignments or for group work components. If you have to miss group assignments, communicate with your group members rather than the course instructor.
- **Regrading policy:** You have the right to request that your exam be regraded. If you request a regrade, please note that I will regrade your entire assignment, not just specific passages that you may have flagged. Regrading may improve or lower your grade.
- **Attendance:** I do not take attendance. It is up to you to decide whether you want to attend course meetings or not. However, please note that exams and exercises will test not only the readings but may also include material covered only during course meetings. Furthermore, your group members may base their peer evaluation (see item “D” under Assignments and Grading) in part on whether you attended group work meetings.
- **Policy regarding extra credit and “rounding up” grades:** Regardless of circumstances, I never give extra credit, because extra credit is unfair to the rest of the class. I also never “round up” grades or change the relative grade weights. Please don’t ask!
- **Course communication:** You have to regularly check your email and read course-related email communication. Before emailing me or the teaching assistant, please consult the syllabus for relevant information. If the answer to your question is on the syllabus, we reserve the right to ignore your email.
- In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

Schedule

Week 1. Thursday, September 2. Introduction.

Week 2. Tuesday, September 7. What is Urban Sociology & The Preindustrial City.

- Lofland, Lyn H. 1973. *A World of Strangers. Order and Action in Urban Public Space*. New York: Basic Books. Chapter 1 (“The Preindustrial City”).

Week 2. Thursday, September 9. The Industrial City, Class, and Ethnoracial Diversity.

- Engels, Friedrich. 1845. *The Situation of the Working Class in England*. Excerpts from chapter 3, “The Great Towns.”
- Selections from W.E.B DuBois’s *The Philadelphia Negro*.

Week 3. Tuesday, September 14. The Chicago School (1): Theoretical Foundations.

- Simmel, Georg. 1971 [1903]. “The Metropolis and Mental Life.” Chapter 20 in Donald Levine (ed.), *On Individuality and Social Forms*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Burgess, Ernest. 1925. “The Growth of the City: An Introduction to a Research Project.” Pp.46-62 in Robert Park, Ernest Burgess, and Roderick McKenzie (eds.), *The City*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Week 3. Thursday, September 16. The Chicago School (2): Neighborhood Processes. Reminder: you must engage this and all subsequent readings on Perusall.

- Sampson, Robert J. 2011. *Great American City: Chicago and the Enduring Neighborhood Effect*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 7 (“The Theory of Collective Efficacy”).

Week 4. Tuesday, September 21. The Chicago School (3): Urban Ethnography.

- Cressey, Paul G. 1932. *The Taxi-Dance Hall: A Sociological Study in Commercialized Recreation and City Life*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 5 (“The Life-Cycle of the Taxi-Dancer”).
- Zorbaugh, Harvey W. 1929. *The Gold Coast and the Slum: A Sociological Study of Chicago’s Near North Side*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 3 (“The Gold Coast”).

Week 4. Thursday, September 23. Group exercise 1 will be introduced. It will be due 48 hours later.

Week 5. Tuesday, September 28. Communities in the Contemporary City (1): Subcultures.

- Fischer, Claude S. 1975. “Toward a Subcultural Theory of Urbanism.” *American Journal of Sociology* 80(6):1319–41.
- Lloyd, Richard. 2006. *Neo-Bohemia. Art and Commerce in the Postindustrial City*. New York, NY: Routledge. Chapter 5 (“Living like an Artist”).

Week 5. Thursday, September 30. Review session for the midterm exam in class.

Week 6. Tuesday, October 5. Communities in the Contemporary City (2): Challenges of Fragmentation and Isolation.

- Lawrence, Bonita. 2004. “Real” *Indians and Others*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press. Chapter 8 (“Maintaining an Urban Native Community”).
- Klinenberg, Eric. 2001. “Dying Alone: The Social Production of Urban Isolation.” *Ethnography* 2(4): 501-531.

Week 6. Thursday, October 7. The midterm exam will be held in class.

Week 7. Friday, October 15. The Microsociology of Urban Interactions.

- Goffman, Erving. 1963. *Behavior in Public Places: Notes on the Social Organization of Gatherings*. New York, NY: Free Press. Selection from chapter 6 (“Face Engagements”).
- Anderson, Elijah. 1990. *Code of the Street*. New York: W.W. Norton. Chapter 2 (“Campaigning for Respect”).

Week 8. Tuesday, October 19. The Political Economy School (1): Theoretical Foundations.

- Logan, John R., and Harvey Molotch. 2007. *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Excerpt from chapter 4 (“Homes: Exchange and Sentiment in the Neighborhood”).

- Harvey, David. 2008. “The Right to the City.” *New Left Review* (53):23–40.

Week 8. Thursday, October 21. The Political Economy School (2): Global Capitalism.

- Hoang, Kimberly Kay. 2014. “Flirting with Capital: Negotiating Perceptions of Pan-Asian Ascendancy and Western Decline in Global Sex Work,” *Social Problems* 64(4): 507-529.

Week 9. Tuesday, October 26. Group exercise 2 will be introduced. It will be due 48 hours later.

Week 9. Thursday, October 28. The Political Economy School (3): Gentrification.

- Lees, Loretta. 2008. “Gentrification and Social Mixing: Towards an Inclusive Urban Renaissance?” *Urban Studies* 45(12):2449–70.
- Doering, Jan. 2020. *Us versus Them: Race, Crime, and Gentrification in Chicago Neighborhoods*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapter 3 (“Racial Displacement in Action?”).

Week 10. Tuesday, November 2. Race and ethnicity (1).

- Fong, Eric and Brent Matthew Berry. 2017. *Immigration and the City*. Malden, MA: Polity Press. Chapter 5 (“Immigrant Businesses and Ethnic Economies”).
- Massey, Douglas S. and Nancy A. Denton. 1993. *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. Chapter 4 (“The Continuing Causes of Segregation”).

Week 10. Thursday, November 4. Screening of *A Village Called Versailles* in class.

Week 11. Tuesday, November 9. Race and ethnicity (2).

- Valverde, Mariana. 2012. *Everyday Law on the Street. City Governance in an Age of Diversity*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 8 (“Mosques and the Politics of Local Planning”).
- Hyra, Derek S. 2017. *Race, Class, and Politics in the Cappuccino City*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 5 (“Race, Class, and Sexual Orientation”).

Week 11. Thursday, November 11. Urban politics.

- Barnard, Alex V. 2011. “‘Waving the Banana’ at Capitalism: Political Theater and Social Movement Strategy among New York’s ‘freegan’ Dumpster Divers.” *Ethnography* 12(4):419–44.
- Trounstein, Jessica. 2018. *Segregation by Design: Local Politics and Inequality in American Cities*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 7 (“Segregation’s Negative Consequences.”)

Week 12. Tuesday, November 16. Optional review session for the final exam.

Week 12. Thursday, November 18. The final exam will be held in class.

Week 13. Tuesday, November 23. Screening of *The Times of Harvey Milk* in class.

Week 13. Thursday, November 25. “Place” and urban reputations.

- Suttles, Gerald D. 1984. “The Cumulative Texture of Local Urban Culture.” *American Journal of Sociology* 90(2):283–304.
- Gottdiener, Mark, Claudia C. Collins, and David R. Dickens. 1999. *Las Vegas: The Social Production of an All-American City*. Malden, MA: Blackwell. Chapter 3 (“Media Vegas: Hype, Boosterism, and the Image of the City”).

Week 14. Tuesday, November 30. Group exercise 3 will be introduced. It will be due 48 hours later.

Week 14. Thursday, December 2. Course wrap-up.