

**COURSE TITLE:
GRANDS ENQUETES**

UNDERSTANDING THE CITY

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Term 2: 2020-2021

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course focuses on sociological concepts and methods through the lens of the city. We will apply sociological concepts to the city that we can see when we walk around, the city of buildings and people; and also to the city that we *don't* notice – the city of sentiments, conflict, traffic flows, bike messengers, sewage networks, asset prices and municipal taxation, of animals and nature. This course uses key sociological readings, case studies, and in-the-news topics, to study the city as a complex space where buildings, people, animals, laws, policies, and international financial flows, intersect to produce our lived experience. The aim is for us to be able to see sociological concepts even as we walk around in the city. A key learning objective is close reading of texts, understanding the key argument of each text, and applying concepts to the real urban world.

The first four weeks explore foundational texts while the rest of the weeks address specific questions related to housing markets, social policy, violence, drugs, environmental change, segregation, urban infrastructure, urban regulations, and so on.

HOW THE CLASS WORKS

The class is focused on discussion of key sociological themes and debates from the readings, and student participation is central. The class comprises of lectures, discussions, and in-class exercises.

COURSE SCHEDULE (IN BLUE) AND CONFERENCE DE METHODE

C1: On the Street: studying life on city streets

M1: Observation methods [used in the first assignment]

C2: Location, Location, Location: thinking spatially and using maps

M2: Spatial methods / big data

C3: Follow the Money: the city as an engine of economic growth

M3: Field / stakeholder analysis / Case study [useful for the main term paper]

C4: Power to the City: the relationship of city and state government

M4: Field / stakeholder analysis / Textual analysis

C5: Home, Property and Belonging

M5: Logic and argumentation: using evidence to test hypotheses / Interview analysis
C6: [To zone or not to zone: American and European perspectives on city planning](#)
M6: Policy analysis
[C7: Just a Formality: housing in the developing world](#)
M7: Research argumentation / Comparative method / Case study [useful for the main term paper]
[C8: Prices and Bubbles: the housing market and its global impacts](#)
M8: Quantitative methods
[C9: Pipes, Tunnels, Sewers: infrastructure and the built environment](#)
M9: Research Argumentation
[C10: A Rising Tide: environmental crises in the city](#)
M10: Ethnography / Interview analysis
[C11: Living Together, Living Apart: racial and economic segregation](#)
M11: Quantitative methods / spatial methods
[C12: On the Street: drugs and urban violence](#)
M12: Quantitative methods

REQUIREMENTS

- Students are expected to read the assigned readings before each class. They are expected to participate actively in the class. The short notes that students will write before 8 of the 12 classes, are meant to prepare students for active engagement and discussion in class.
- For each reading, students are encouraged to outline:
 - (a) the main point of the reading
 - (b) the main concepts, definitions, and factual information
 - (c) how the reading links to real world urban questions and can be used in your papers

GRADES

1. Weekly notes [5% each or 40% in total]. [these will either be completed in class or the night before and uploaded – to be confirmed based on logistics]. In some weeks, there will be a question assigned from the reading. In other weeks, you will use the exercise to reflect on how the readings relate to some topic of your choice.
 - a. This is not a big written memo, and you should not think of this as a burdensome writing requirement. The purposes of this assignment are (1) to ensure that you read thoroughly and engage with the material before class, and (2) to give me information about what people are interested in discussing, so that I can plan our agenda and we can use our time to maximum advantage.
2. Three short papers on urban questions **due in week 4, 8, 12**. Ask a question, propose an argument and use the readings [60% total or 20% each]. Each paper will be 3-4 pages long, double-spaced, 1 inch margins, size 12 font.
 - a. One paper will involve observing phenomena in real life (e.g. observing how people behave in public transport, in a library, in a shopping mall, in a government office, on the street, in a public space, in a meeting, etc.).
 - b. The second paper will involve analysing a land use conflict in a city of

your choice.

- c. The third paper will add a comparison to the second paper, for instance, studying another city or studying the same phenomena at a higher level of government. The third paper will also revise the second paper following the feedback given by the instructor. This structure allows the student to have the experience of working on an original research paper on a topic and city of their choice with the opportunity to incorporate the feedback of the instructor.
- 3. The second and third paper form the basis of grading in the lecture (each worth 20 points, and an average taken at the end of the semester).

Please, note that the course is designed to prepare students for professional vocations. As in professional life, timely submissions are expected. Strict late penalties will apply to any late submissions.

Rules for cell phones, laptops and recordings : Cell phones should be turned off during class.

Zoom etiquette

- When you are listening, make sure your microphone is muted
- If you have a comment or question, indicate that using the chat function
- When possible, you are encouraged to turn on your camera
- Turn on the camera and microphone when you speak
- Be on time for the lecture
- Use your real name
- Avoid inappropriate backgrounds

WEEK 1: ON THE STREET

- **YOU CAN CHOOSE: EITHER**
- Kidder, Jeffrey L. 2009. Appropriating the city: space, theory, and bike messengers. *Theory and Society*, 38: 307–328.
- AND WITH THE JEFFREY PAPER, READ:
<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2019/jun/18/welcome-watch-or-ban-how-should-cities-deal-with-electric-scooters#comments>

OR

- Jacobs, Jane. The Uses of Sidewalks. Book chapter from *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 1961.
- AND WITH THE JACOBS PAPER, READ:
<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2019/may/20/from-bleak-to-bustling-how-one-french-town-beat-the-high-street-blues-mulhouse>

WEEK 2: LOCATION LOCATION LOCATION

- READ VERY CAREFULLY: Logan, John R. 2012. Making a Place for Space: Spatial Thinking in Social Science. *Annual Review of Sociology* 38: 507-24.
- EXPLORE the following websites:
 - a. NYC spatial analysis of sentiments
<http://www.necsi.edu/research/social/newyork/>
 - b. NYC racial segregation maps:
http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/07/08/us/census-race-map.html?_r=0

WEEK 3: FOLLOW THE MONEY

- Molotch, Harvey. 1976. The City as a Growth Machine: Toward a Political Economy of Place. *American Journal of Sociology*, 82 (2): 309-332.
- Read the following news articles:
 - a. http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/11/23/business/china-factor-real-estate.html?_r=1
 - b. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/jun/13/foreign-investors-snapping-up-london-homes-suitable-for-first-time-buyers>

WEEK 4: POWER TO THE CITY

- Brown, Dorothy A. 1995. Fiscal Distress and Politics: The Bankruptcy Filing of Bridgeport as a Case Study in Reclaiming Local Sovereignty. *Bankruptcy Developments Journal*, Vol. 11: 625-656 [read the first 10-15 pages]
- <https://mobile.nytimes.com/2017/07/06/upshot/blue-cities-want-to-make-their-own-rules-red-states-wont-let-them.html>

WEEK 5: HOME, PROPERTY AND BELONGING

- Varley, A. (2017) Property titles and the urban poor: From informality to displacement? *Planning Theory & Practice*, 18, pp. 385–404.
- Collier, D. (2011). Understanding process tracing. *Political Sciences and Politics*, No 4, 823-30.

WEEK 6: TO ZONE OR NOT TO ZONE

- Hirt , Sonia. 2012. Mixed Use by Default: How the Europeans (Don't) Zone. *Journal of Planning Literature*, 27: 375.

WEEK 7: JUST A FORMALITY

- Holland, Alisha. 2015. The Distributive Politics of Enforcement. *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 59 (2): 357-371.
- Nijman, Jan. 2008. Against the odds: Slum Rehabilitation in neoliberal Mumbai. *Cities*, 25 (2): 73-85.

WEEK 8: PRICES AND BUBBLES

- Aalbers, Manuel B. 2009. The Sociology and Geography of Mortgage Markets: Reflections on the Financial Crisis. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Volume 33 (2): 281–90.
- Marion Fourcade and Kieran Healy. 2017. Seeing like a market. *Socio-Economic Review*, 2017, Vol. 15, No. 1, 9–29

WEEK 9: PIPES, TUNNELS, SEWERS

- Comaroff, Joshua. 2017. On the Materialities of Air. *City*, 21, 5, 607-613.
- Stephen Graham. Disrupted Cities: When Infrastructure Fails (Chapter 1).
- <http://www.france24.com/en/20161008-notre-dame-des-landes-airport-nantes-protest-environment-ayrault>

WEEK 10: A RISING TIDE

- Fussell, Elizabeth . 2015. The Long-Term Recovery of New Orleans' Population After Hurricane Katrina. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 1-15.
- Auyero, Javier and Debora Swistun. 2007. Confused because exposed: Towards an ethnography of environmental suffering. *Ethnography*, Vol. 8(2): 123–144.
- <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2016/09/new-york-future-flooding-climate-change.html>

WEEK 11: LIVING TOGETHER, LIVING APART

- J. R. Logan and B. Bellman, Before *The Philadelphia Negro*: Residential Segregation in a Nineteenth-Century Northern City, *Social Science History* 40 (2016) 683–706.
- Issar, Sukriti. Working paper: The Religious And Racial Geography Of Late Nineteenth Century Mumbai [will be emailed to you].

WEEK 12: ON THE STREET

- Levitt, Steven D. and Sudhir Alladi Venkatesh. 2000. An Economic Analysis of a Drug-Selling Gang's Finances. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 115, No. 3 (Aug., 2000), pp. 755-789.
- Vargas, Robert and Lee Scrivener. 2018. Why Latino Youth (Don't) Call Police.