

Arianna Martinez
LaGuardia Community College
Fall 2007

Urban Sociology #1859

Room: C-457

Tuesday: 1pm-3:15pm

Thursday: 2:15pm-3:15pm

Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 10:30-11:30am or by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This class is designed to introduce students to urban sociology and urban society more broadly. We will examine historical, theoretical, and practical issues regarding cities. Since this is a sociology class, we will focus on the social and structural characteristics of metropolitan areas. As we are mostly urban dwellers, special attention will be paid to what we can learn from our experiences in New York City and Queens specifically.

This course will begin briefly with the history of urbanization. Then continue more extensively with theories of urban sociology. Next, we will examine the present state of urban areas, focusing on the increasingly important issue of global urbanization. Important themes in this course will include: race, gender, class and migration.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Students are required to attend classes on a regular basis, complete assigned readings in a timely manner, submit writing assignments on the assigned due date, participate in class, and take all formal examinations.

This class is a writing intensive course. As such, students are required to submit weekly writing assignments. There will be TWO journals, one will be for in-class writing and the other will be for on-your-time assignments.

Reading Response Journal -

There will be twenty-minute in class academic writing assignments on **TUESDAYS**. These will not be graded like a quiz, but I will read them. They will count as attendance for that day and they will alert me to who is doing the reading and who is not (part of your grade). The question/s to write about will be on the board. You can begin writing as soon as you arrive to class.

The written responses will also be the basis for our class discussions. You will be encouraged to share your thoughts. [You should never write your responses on a piece of scrap paper – have a notebook that you hand-in to me weekly, so that all your short essays are in one place.]

Urban Observation Journal -

There will also be at home writing assignments each week. These assignments will be creative and hopefully fun. We will discuss and share them on **THURSDAYS**. These will be graded with a letter grade.

The Urban Observation Journal will, like its title implies, be a collection of urban observations focusing on **one New York City neighborhood** that you are intimately acquainted with (where you live now, where you grew up, where you spend all your free-time). We will use multiple mediums (writing, photography, etc) to explore this place and by the end of the semester we will incorporate the entire class' research into an **interactive map** (most likely Google map).

Urban Observation Journal Writing Assignments

1. Use a disposable camera OR digital camera to take a minimum of 10 photographs. They should all be of ONE neighborhood you intend to focus on for the duration of the semester. Burn them onto a CD and bring them to class. **Write about ONE of the photographs**, what it represents to you, why it is important to you, where it is, & what your connection to this location is.
2. Write about your neighborhood in the style of Jane Jacobs. Is it safe? If so why? Do people walk on the sidewalks or drive mostly? Do kids play in the street? Is it mostly residential or are there businesses and busy blocks? Does it have diverse uses? What are the uses? Is there a diversity of people living there? Who and from where?
3. Write about a public space in the style of William Whyte. Sit in a public space that is in the neighborhood you have been exploring. Write about how and why it is a public space. Who is using this space? What are they doing – talking on cell phones, eating lunch, jogging, playing with their kids in the park? Then write about what you like or what you hate about it. Are there recommendations you have thought of on how to make it a better public space?
4. Pick an issue that is important in this neighborhood – gentrification, immigration, food security, unemployment, transportation, some new urban development project, etc. Write about how this issue is impacting the neighborhood.
5. Find your neighborhood on **Google Earth**. Find your neighborhood on **Google Map**. Write about how these digital maps of your neighborhood are similar and different. What were you able to see on these maps (restaurants, roads, parks, etc)? Did either map make you think about your place in a new way? If so how? Is there something about your neighborhood that you love that isn't represented? If so what? Could you see your house, your favorite park, shoe store, etc? What kinds of informational layers exist for your area and what if anything did you learn from them?
6. Interview someone who has been living in or working in this neighborhood for many years (an immigrant, African American and/or women). Come up with your questions in advance! Ask them questions like: when and why they ended up in the neighborhood? What they like about it? How has the neighborhood changed? Did they like it better before or now and why? Write a written summary of your interview with them, but also attach the raw interview.

7. Find census data from last 20 years and analyze it, write a journalism type piece about the neighborhood changes. What was the population of your neighborhood in 1980 and compare that to 2000. What was the ethnic and racial make-up of this community in 1980 and how has it changed? Find other dramatic changes in the data and discuss them.
8. Find an interesting venue within your neighborhood either public art piece, unique store, museum, library, farmers market, etc that is important to the neighborhood. Review it like a travel guide.

NOTE: You are allowed to miss ONE - it cannot be assignment #1 or assignment #4. Also, please be sure to save and store all out-of-class writing assignments electronically.

MIDTERM EXAM:

There will be an in-class midterm exam, which will be open note, but ONLY from your Reading Response Journal. It will help you answer the questions if you have done the readings throughout the semester and written thoughtfully. Not sure about the final exam yet – I'll get back to you on that.

FINAL RESEARCH PAPER:

Submit a 8-page research project on one neighborhood in New York City and an issue that is impacting the neighborhood.

The 8-page research project should adhere to the following guidelines: 1) include a cover page; 2) format with double spacing and one inch margins; 3) footnotes and citations should follow an acceptable style format; 4) include a bibliography with a minimum of 8 entries (books and articles) and four LEXIS/NEXIS sources - for a total of 12 entries. The 8-page minimum is linked to the actual essay and does not include the cover page or the bibliography.

The criteria for approaching and organizing the research paper will be fully discussed in class. **Each Urban Observation Journal entry will be useful for the final paper, but assignment #4 will be the origins of your research paper. Whichever issue you choose to write about in an exploratory manner, will then be researched fully and developed into a research paper.**

NOTE: Students are highly encouraged to discuss their research project with the instructor during regularly scheduled office hours and students experiencing problems in their writing should make an appointment with the LaGuardia Writing Center.

FIELD TRIPS:

There will be two field trips. Stay tuned for more information about these. The instructions associated with the fieldtrips will be distributed and discussed prior to the field trips. If a given student cannot attend because of employment responsibilities, religious reasons, or family obligations please speak with the instructor.

GRADING:

The final grade will be based on: Mid-term Exam (20%); Final Research Paper & Map (30%); Reading Response Journal (25%); and the Urban Observation Journal (25%).

LIBRARY TOUR:

Early in the academic semester students will be required to participate in a formal tour of the LaGuardia Library. The library tour will provide an overview of the academic resources available to students as they structure, research, and craft their high-stakes research project and weekly writing assignments.

REQUIRED TEXT AND COURSE READINGS:

The textbook will serve as the general frame of reference for the course. The required text is:

- *Nancy Kleniewski. (2006). Cities, Change & Conflict, Belmont, CA: Thomson Higher Education. Third Edition. {Text will be on reserve in the library}*

Throughout the course of the semester I will also assign short excerpts from great urban thinkers and/or newspaper articles addressing contemporary urban issues. Below on the “Course Schedule” you will notice some readings with an * next to them, this means they are available on ERES. Articles I assign in class that are not currently listed will also be available on ERES (but may also be accessible via the New York Times website OR using the LEXIS/NEXIS database, which is available via the LaGuardia Library electronic homepage.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

Week One

Tues. Sept. 11, 2007
Thurs. Sept. 13, 2007
HOMEWORK

Introduction to class & TimeOutNY article
NO CLASS
Jane Jacobs Reading*
William Whyte Reading*
Urban Observation Assignment #1

Week Two

Tues. Sept. 18, 2007

Thurs. Sept. 20
HOMEWORK

Classes follow Thursday schedule!
Discuss Urban Observation #1
When the Levees Broke (documentary film)
Examining Urban Issues
Theoretical Perspectives
Cities in World History
Urban Observation Assignment #2

Week Three

Tues. Sept. 25
Thurs. Sept. 27

Readings & In-class writing
Discuss Urban Observation #2

HOMEWORK

Urban Development in the United States
Cities, Suburbs and Metropolitan Areas
Herbert J. Gans Reading*
Urban Observation Assignment #3

Week Four

Tues. Oct. 2
Thurs. Oct. 4
HOMEWORK

Readings & In-class writing
Urban Observation #3
Cities in Europe
Cities in the Third World
Shadow Cities chapter*
Urban Observation Assignment #4

Week Five

Tues. Oct. 9
Thurs. Oct. 11
HOMEWORK

Readings & In-class writing
Urban Observation #4
Immigrants in the City
New York Times Magazine Article on Latinos*
Urban Observation Assignment #5

Week Six

Tues. Oct. 16
Thurs. Oct. 18
HOMEWORK

MIDTERM in-class
Urban Observation #5
African Americans in Cities
W.E.B. Dubois Reading*
Urban Observation Assignment #6

Week Seven

Tues. Oct. 23
Thurs. Oct. 25
HOMEWORK

Readings & In-class writing
Urban Observation #6
Social Class and Neighborhoods
Saskia Sassen Reading*
Urban Observation Assignment #7

Week Eight

Tues. Oct. 30
Thurs. Nov. 1
HOMEWORK

Readings & In-class writing
Urban Observation #7
Women in Cities
Dolores Hayden*
Urban Observation Assignment #8

Week Nine

Tues. Nov. 6
Thurs. Nov. 8

Readings & In-class writing
Urban Observation #8

HOMEWORK

The Urban Economy
Local Government and Finances
Federal Policy

Week Ten

Tues. Nov. 13
Thurs. Nov. 15
HOMEWORK

Readings & Writing
COMPUTER LAB to work on MAPS
Urban Unrest and Social Control
Planning for the Future of Cities
Mike Davis Reading about LA*

Week Eleven

Tues. Nov. 20
Thurs. Nov. 22
HOMEWORK

Readings & Writing
NO CLASS
Research paper

Week Twelve

Tues. Nov. 27
Thurs. Nov. 29
HOMEWORK

Field Trip
COMPUTER LAB to work on MAPS
Research paper

Week Thirteen

Tues. Dec. 4
Thurs. Dec. 6
HOMEWORK

Readings & Writing (make-up)
to be announced...
Research paper

Week Fourteen

Final Exam WEEK

NOTE: OTHER VERY IMPORTANT COURSE POLICIES AND INFORMATION WORTH KNOWING BLEOW...

PLAGIARISM:

Writing, reflection, and academic integrity are central elements in the development of intellectual growth. In this light, the college has established an **Academic Integrity Policy** that describes **procedures** and **penalties** for students who are suspected of academic dishonesty. In effect, cheating, plagiarism, and academic fraud are a serious breach of academic integrity and will be promptly addressed by the instructor and the college.