

SOC U516
Seminar in Urban Sociology
Fall 2004

General Information:

Classroom: 220 Ryder Hall

Time: Tuesday and Friday 8:00-9:40am

Instructor: Mark Melnik

Office: 525 Holmes Hall

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Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday 10:00-11:00am, or by appointment.

Course Description and Objectives:

The course focuses on important topics in the study of urban areas within sociology. Themes include residential segregation, suburbanization, neighborhood development and change, the economic development of cities, fiscal crisis, gentrification, urban crime, and public and private urban policies.

This is a seminar course that focuses heavily on group discussion. My objectives for this course are to expose you to a wide variety of readings, provide you with opportunities for written and verbal critique, help you to practice communication and discussion with peers, and to foster interest and excitement around the keys issues in urban sociology.

Prerequisites:

Junior or Senior standing in Sociology.

SOC U247-Urban Social Problems

Text and Class Materials:

Required: Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom, *Place Matters: Metropolitcs for the 21st Century*, 2001

Required: Klinenberg, *Heat Wave*, 2002.

Required: Course Packet at Gnomon Copies (325 Huntington Ave).

Student Evaluations:

Your grade will be based on 100 total points.

Research Paper 35%

12 "Points of Interest": ½ %each (6% total)

Two Take Home Essays: 12% each (24% total)

Group Discussion Leads: 25%

Class Participation: 10%

100 %

Your grade will be determined on the following scale:

93-100 = A	83-86 = B	73-76 = C	63-66 = D
90-92 = A-	80-82 = B-	70-72 = C-	60-62 = D-
87-89 = B+	77-79 = C+	67-69 = D+	59 > = F

Group Discussion Leads (25%)

Pairs of students will be responsible for moderating class discussions during the semester. Moderators should begin class with a 5-10 minute oral summary of the articles followed by a plan for facilitating discussion among the students. Moderators are encouraged to be creative in their methods, within reason, and to use relevant materials (newspaper & magazine articles, television reports, in class demonstrations, etc.) to facilitate discussion. Written article outlines, the plan for discussion, and any supplemental readings, tasks, demonstrations, should be turned in to the instructor at the beginning of each class. Grading will be determined by the moderators' familiarity with the material and success in facilitating discussion.

Class Participation (10%)

I typically do not like having a portion of the grades determined by class participation for two main reasons: (1) It is hard to evaluate and (2) some students feel uncomfortable talking in class. That said, seminars should be discussion based. As a result, I expect every student in the class to come to class prepared to demonstrate that they have read and thought through the material. Students who do not participate in group discussions on a regular basis should not expect to do well in the course.

Points of Interests (POI) (6%)

In order to help facilitate class discussion, students are expected to do a "points of interest" for each separate author/source assigned during the week. For example, if you are to read three chapters in the book, you are to turn in one point of interest for the author (i.e. for example week 11 has three chapters from one book. Week 3 has three separate readings, so three separate POIs). Points of interest can be a question about the reading, a critique of the author's argument, or a comment on how this reading relates to other aspects of urban sociology. POIs do not need to be detailed, but they should be thoughtful comments that demonstrate that you are engaging with the readings. Do not turn in POI like, "This reading was confusing" or "I liked this reading". These may be factual comments, but they don't really demonstrate that you thoroughly read the material. If you are going to write things like "This reading was confusing" or "I liked this reading" make sure you back it up with why you felt that way. Each point of interest really doesn't need to be much longer than a few sentences to a paragraph in length, but again they should demonstrate that you are engaging with the readings.

For weeks with a Discussion Lead, I would like students to post their POIs on the discussion board of the class website by noon the day before the discussion (typically on Mondays). This way the group who is presenting can have an idea of what the others in the class are thinking about regarding the readings. If it is a week without a Discussion Lead, then you can just type up and turn in you POIs to me in class on Tuesday.

Two Take Home Essays (12% each--24% total)

During the semester, I will hand out two take home essays. I'll give you a little over a week to work on them. The question(s) will focus primarily on the issues covered up to the assignment of the essay and will ask you to connect some of the topics we have been discussing in more detail. Students are encouraged to include outside readings in their take home essays, but it is not required. Rather, you can focus on the readings already assigned for the course. Each take home essay should be around 4-5 pages.

Research Paper (35%)

Pairs of students will write a 15-20 page paper that investigates in-depth an issue directly relevant to the themes of this course. You may elaborate on an issue covered in lecture and readings or select a topic based on your own particular interests. In so doing, students have a number of different ways that they can approach the paper. Students could choose to:

- Review the debates in the academic literature concerning a topic and propose possible solutions.
- Compare case studies in the academic literature centered around your topic and analyze how these situations are the same and/or different and discuss what implications this may have on your topic at large.
- Conduct qualitative research on some type of urban issue (youth center, homeless shelter, school, community organization, etc).
- Conduct secondary data analysis using quantitative methods to analyze an issue (this would probably require that you have had statistics). Students could utilize the Boston Renaissance Research Kit (BRRK) or the Boston Indicators project as just two possible examples.

However your group chooses to handle your topic, I expect a high level piece of work. In that, students are expected to use academic sources (sociological journals, academic books, etc) and site appropriately. In addition, students should demonstrate senior level application of the theories and methods typically used in sociology.

Tentative Schedule

Week One: 9/9

- Introduction to the course
- **No POI (obviously)**

Week Two: 9/13-9/17

- **POIs due Thursday 9/17**
- Simmel- "The Metropolis and Mental Life."
- Park -"Human Ecology"
- Wirth- "Urbanism as a Way of Life"
- Tabb and Sawers-"Editors' Introduction" (Marxism and the Metropolis)
- Mollenkopf- "Introduction" (The Contest City)

Week Three: 9/20-9/24

- Watch “Roger and Me” (9/21)
- **POIs on discussion board on 9/23 by noon**
- **1st Discussion Lead (9/24)**
- Bradbury, et al “Urban Decline and the Future of American Cities”
- Bluestone and Harrison- “Capital v. Community”
- Linkon and Russo- “Deindustrialization and the Struggle over Memory”

Week Four: 9/27-10/1

- **POIs on discussion board on 9/27 by noon**
- **2nd Discussion Lead (9/28)**
- Chapters 1-4 in Drier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom

Week Five: 10/4-10/8

- **POIs on discussion board on 10/4 by noon**
- **3rd Discussion Lead (10/5)**
- Liebow- “Tally’s Corner” Intro and Conclusion
- Wilson- “The Meaning and Significance of Race”
- Anderson- “Drugs, Violence and Street Crime”
- **Take Home Essay #1 Assigned (10/8)**

Week Six: 10/11-10/15

- **POIs on discussion board on 10/11 by noon**
- **4th Discussion Lead (10/12)**
- Wilson- “The Fading Inner-City Family”
- Gimenez- “Reflections on ‘The Feminization of Poverty: Myth or Reality’”
- Peake- “Toward a Social Geography of the City”

Week Seven: 10/18-10/22

- **Take Home Essay #1 Due (10/19)**
- Newman- “Getting a Job in the Inner City”
- Chapter 5 in Drier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom

Week Eight: 10/25-10/29

- **POIs on discussion board on 10/25 by noon**
- **5th Discussion Lead (10/26)**
- Fitzgerald and Leigh- “Redefining the Field of Local Economic Development”
- Savitch and Kantor- “Urban Strategies for a Global Era”
- Kantor- “The Dependent City and Urban Politics”
- Kantor- “The Future of the Dependent City”

Week Nine: 11/1-11/5

- **POIs on discussion board on 11/1 by noon**
- **6th Discussion Lead (11/2)**
- Betancur- “The Politics of Gentrification: The Case of West Town in Chicago”
- Grogan and Proscio-“Introduction”
- Grogan and Proscio-“We Can Sure as Hell Do Better Than *This*”
- Grogan and Proscio-“New Stores-and New Customers-on Main Street”

Week Ten: 11/8-11/12

- Watch “Holding Ground” (11/9)
- **POIs on discussion board on 11/11 by noon**
- **7th Discussion Lead (11/12)**
- Medoff and Sklar- “Remembering”
- Medoff and Sklar-“Creating the Dudley Street Initiative
- Medoff and Sklar-“Don’t Dump on Us: Organizing the Neighborhood”
- **Take Home Essay #2 assigned (11/12)**

Week Eleven: 11/15-11/19

- **POIs on discussion board on 11/15 by noon**
- **8th Discussion Lead 11/16**
- Sassen- “Cities in a World Economy”
- Sassen- “The Urban Impact of Economic Globalization”
- Sassen- “The New Inequalities within Cities”

Week Twelve: 11/22-11/26

- **POIs on discussion board on 11/22 by noon**
- **Take Home Essay #2 due (11/23)**
- **9th Discussion Lead (11/23)**
- Klinenberg- Chapters Intro through 3

Week Thirteen: 11/29-12/3

- **POIs on discussion board on 11/29 by noon**
- **10th Discussion Lead (11/30)**
- Klinenberg- Chapters 4 through conclusions

Week Fourteen: 12/6-12/10

- Finishing touches
- **No POI (obviously)**

Final Paper Due 12/13 by noon in my email inbox or the sociology department!

I reserve the right to make changes to the schedule as necessary during the semester.