

Urban Sociology
Soc 260, Spring 2008
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:50 – 10:00; PPHAC 235

Professor Daniel Jasper

PPHAC 316

Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 10:00-11:30; Fridays 8:30-9:30; Or by appointment

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Course Overview: The city has been a central focus of sociology since the beginning of the discipline. This course will examine the uniqueness of the city as a site and context of social life. We will adopt a multi-disciplinary sociological perspective to identify and analyze cities and city life. We will look at spatial dimensions of cities; the culture of cities; the distinct economic and political structures of urban areas; and how urban areas are connected to regions and nations. We will pay particular attention to the ways that cities are changing as a result of post-industrialization and globalization.

Through this course, students will

- 1.) develop their skills as sociological observers by documenting urban life.
- 2.) become familiar with the sociology of urban spaces and urban life.
- 3.) be able to identify the structural features of urban areas.
- 4.) be familiar with the distinct traits of different types of cities.
- 5.) further develop their writing and oral presentation skills.

Texts:

There are three required texts that each student should purchase:

Duneier, Mitchell (1999). *Sidewalk*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Mele, Christopher (2000). *Selling the Lower East Side*. Minnesota.

Short, John Rennie (2006). *Urban Theory: A Critical Assessment*. Palgrave.

Additional texts will be available online, through Reeves Library, or will be distributed.

Assignments and Expectations:

This course is designed as a participatory seminar where all participants have an equal role in the work and success of the collective endeavor. Therefore, the most important expectation for all students in this course is to take the work of documenting and thinking about cities seriously. This entails a continual exploration of and reflections upon urban space and how people go about their lives in those spaces. Students are thus expected to spend time **in** urban environments. Fortunately, publicly available transportation allows

for easy access to a variety of urban areas, including New York, Philadelphia, and Newark, as well as Allentown, Bethlehem, and Easton.

Readings and assignments throughout the semester are designed to encourage this exploration and reflection. Each week, students will (1) prepare discussion questions for assigned readings; (2) keep a journal of urban experiences and reflections; and (3) participate in shared discussions. During the semester, each student will have the opportunity to (4) document urban space and life; (5) reflect critically and personally about urban life through a series of formal essays; and (6) prepare an annotated bibliography focused on one aspect of urban life. This work will culminate with (7) a final portfolio. Students will have the opportunity to (8) share their work with the other participants and (9) provide feed back to other participants on their work. For the points associated with each of the requirements, see grading sheet appended to this syllabus. Detailed instructions for each assignment will be provided during class time.

Students should plan on spending 8 – 10 hours per week on this course.

Course Outline

The following outline is a guide, it is subject to change as the semester progresses.

Week 1 (January 15 & 17) Introduction to the Course

Short, ch. 1

Duneier, Appendix (No Response Questions Due)

Week 2 (January 22 & 24) Mapping Urban Space

Duneier, Part One

Week 3 (January 29 & 31) What Makes the Urban Urban?

Duneier, Part Two

Short, chs. 2-3

Week 4 (February 5 & 7) Controlling the City

Duneier, Parts Three and Four

Preliminary Documentary Assignment Due February 5

Week 5 (February 12 & 14) Dynamics of the City

Short, chs. 4-7

Week 6 (February 19 & 21) Dynamics of the City, part 2

Short, chs. 8-11

First Reflective Essay Due February 21

Week 7 (February 26 & 28) Dynamics of the City, part 3

Short, chs. 12-14

March 3 – 7: Spring Break, No Classes

Week 8 (March 11 & 13) Neighborhoods in Transition: A Case Study of LES
Mele, chs. 1-3

Second Reflective Essay Due March 13

Week 9 (March 18 & 20) Neighborhoods in Transition, part 2
Mele, chs. 4-6

Week 10 (March 25 & 27) Neighborhoods in Transition, part 3
Mele, chs. 7-9

Annotated Bibliography Due March 27

Week 11 (April 1 & 3) Flex Week

Week 12 (April 8 & 10) Student Presentations

Third Reflective Essay Due April 8

Week 13 (April 15 & 17) Student Presentations

Final Documentary Due April 17

Week 14 (April 22 & 24) Course Conclusion

Short, ch. 15

Duneier, Part Five

Final Portfolio Due April 24

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Grading Sheet

Weekly Response Questions: $\frac{\quad}{1} \frac{\quad}{1} \frac{\quad}{1} \frac{\quad}{1} \frac{\quad}{1} \frac{\quad}{1} \frac{\quad}{1} \frac{\quad}{1} \frac{\quad}{1} \frac{\quad}{1} = \frac{\quad}{10}$

Journal Entries: $\frac{\quad}{1} \frac{\quad}{1} \frac{\quad}{1} \frac{\quad}{1} \frac{\quad}{1} \frac{\quad}{1} \frac{\quad}{1} \frac{\quad}{1} \frac{\quad}{1} \frac{\quad}{1} = \frac{\quad}{10}$

Seminar Participation

Points at Midterm: $\frac{\quad}{5}$

Points at End-term: $\frac{\quad}{5}$

Documenting Urban Life

Preliminary Documentation: $\frac{\quad}{5}$

Final Documentation: $\frac{\quad}{10}$

Reflective Essays

Walking in the City: $\frac{\quad}{10}$

Thinking in the City: $\frac{\quad}{10}$

Narrating the City: $\frac{\quad}{10}$

Annotated Bibliography

$\frac{\quad}{10}$

Final Portfolio:

$\frac{\quad}{10}$

Engagement with Colleagues:

$\frac{\quad}{5}$

Total:

Possible points = 100

Final Grades

	87.1-90 = B+	77.1-80 = C+	67.1-70 = D+
>94.1 = A	83.1-87 = B	73.1-77 = C	63.1-67 = D
90.1-94 = A-	80.1-83 = B-	70.1-73 = C-	60.1-63 = D-
60 points or below = F			