

Moravian College

SOC 260 – Urban Sociology

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Office Hours: T, W, & Th 12n – 1p/F 3p – 4p or By Appointment

Opening Montage to Woody Allen's *Manhattan*:

[music: the opening of Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue. Voiceover]

Isaac Davis: Chapter One. He adored New York City. He idolized it all out of proportion. Eh uh, no, make that he, he romanticized it all out of proportion. Better. To him, no matter what the season was, this was still a town that existed in black and white and pulsated to the great tunes of George Gershwin. Uh, no, let me start this over.

Isaac Davis: Chapter One: He was too romantic about Manhattan, as he was about everything else. He thrived on the hustle bustle of the crowds and the traffic. To him, New York meant beautiful women and street smart guys who seemed to know all the angles. Ah, corny, too corny for, you know, my taste. Let me, let me try and make it more profound.

Isaac Davis: Chapter One: He adored New York City. To him it was a metaphor for the decay of contemporary culture. The same lack of individual integrity that caused so many people to take the easy way out was rapidly turning the town of his dreams in - no, it's gonna be too preachy, I mean, you know, let's face it, I wanna sell some books here.

Isaac Davis: Chapter One: He adored New York City. Although to him it was a metaphor for the decay of contemporary culture. How hard it was to exist in a society desensitized by drugs, loud music, television, crime, garbage - too angry. I don't want to be angry.

Isaac Davis: Chapter One. He was as tough and romantic as the city he loved. Behind his black-rimmed glasses was the coiled sexual power of a jungle cat. Oh, I love this. New York was his town, and it always would be.

This is a class about the urban environments where people live and work, and the consequences of these environments. Throughout, we will examine the emergence and expansion of city and suburbs that make up the bulk of the greater Lehigh Valley. We will look at the implications that this environment has for jobs, public services, public spaces, neighborhoods, and the larger physical environment. We will explore at the ways residents of areas within this

particular area and its surrounding suburbs define shared and individual space, and the ways its residents deal with growth and conflict as well as the methods by which they celebrate success.

The class also has a second theme: evaluating evidence. You will read and hear many arguments about the reasons urban areas develop and about particular consequences. For each argument, please consider the following:

1. What evidence does the author provide to back this argument?
2. Is this evidence convincing and why?
3. What *further* evidence could strengthen the argument?
4. What kind of evidence could refute this argument?

Classes and Other Requirements:

Class sessions will involve substantial discussion; thus, attendance is necessary and required, and I will include *participation* in your final grade. In these discussions (and at all other times), I expect each of you to challenge one another but to do so with civility and respect.

The course will consist of both quantitative evaluation (any quizzes, papers, exams, the final project) and a qualitative one (your performance in class, your oral presentation, etc.). All deadlines, to be strictly followed, will be announced and reaffirmed well in advance of any due dates.

Course Text:

Urban Sociology by William G. Flanagan (available in .pdf in our Google Drive folder) [Note: We will follow the book's table of contents pretty spot on in terms of our classroom discussions, but as so much of the course will involve field research, these discussions will be peppered and/or supplemented with outside reading and such announced throughout.]

Course Objectives:

1. Learn the basic concepts important to understanding urban processes from a sociological perspective.
2. Learn the core theories that have been used, historically and currently, to explain urban patterns.
3. Increase your critical thinking skills by learning to recognize concepts and processes “in action” in new examples and situations.
4. Increase your research skills by learning to access and collect historical information and census data, as well as make observations and conduct interviews.
5. Further your analytical thinking abilities making sense of the information you collect using concepts and theories learned in the course

Course Requirements:

Students will be required to take a midterm exam, negotiate an extended project (see below), prepare a formal presentation, and perform other tasks including writing article reviews, taking unannounced quizzes, etc., as befitting this level of study. Fair warning will precede any exam or due date.

The breakdown of final grades is as follows:

- Misc. Work, Short Papers, Quizzes, Participation, etc. 25%
- Midterm Exam Grade 25%
- Oral Presentation 25%
- Final Project Grade 25%

As I typically employ letter grades on written assignments, I offer the below list of how each letter translates numerically:

- A+=100/A= 96/A-=92
- B+=89/B=86/B-=82
- C+=79/C=76/C-=72
- D+=69/D=66/D-=62

- F=59-50 [actual score depends on the severity of the error(s)/student will be notified]
- Failure to turn in work translates into a *ZERO*

Grade Scale:

- A=100-95/A-=94-90
- B+=89-88/B=87-84/B-=83-80
- C+=79-78/C=77-74/C-=73-70
- D+=69-68/D=67-64/D-=63-60
- F=59...

Grade Advisory – While I respect that students have to be grade conscious, it is imperative that students understand that:

I treat evaluations as professional—not personal!

Do not ask from me anything that steps outside the boundaries, and do not wait until *Zero Hour* to inquire as to your status. Moreover, it is your responsibility to keep abreast of your own grade calculations, and unless the circumstances are unique, I'll leave you to your own devices on that matter. Also, to save us all needless heartache, and in the interest of propriety and mental health, I also have to insist on a twenty-four hour grace period before I will speak to you about any returned work. You may find that this cooling off period is exactly what we both need to come together rationally and in the spirit of liberal learning.

Classroom Decorum and Expectations:

Attendance – Class attendance is mandatory and vitally important to your success. Failure to attend on a regular basis not only puts your grade in jeopardy but may also be met with a lowered mark for participation.

- There are no excused absences. If you have a legitimate emergency, it is your responsibility to bring it to the attention of your instructor at your earliest convenience.

- I'm not a fan of notes, either, so please bring yourself and your explanation (preferably before you return to class) to me before things go too far.
- Your best bet for any long term issues is to contact Student Services first.

Tardiness – Tardiness to class is not only detrimental to the learning process but quite disruptive and unfair to those who make it to class on time regularly. Recurring tardiness shows a lack of respect for the classroom, the instructor, and one's fellow students and will not be tolerated. Therefore, once the door has been shut, you will not be permitted to enter.

Deadlines – Assignment deadlines are exactly that. Students are expected to comply with deadlines in accordance with all rules, guidelines, and expectations of each assignment proffered. Failure to do so will result in a tendering of no-grade for work not done to expectation or submitted on time. The policy for late papers is as follows:

- On minor assignments only, you will be allowed to turn in one late assignment within twenty-four hours for a one letter deduction. After your one exception, you will no longer enjoy this luxury
- Major/Long Term assignments are due at the specified time...no exceptions.

Participation – Classroom discussions are a big part of the learning process. Your participation is not requested—it is required. Failure to do so is both in bad taste and could conceivably be detrimental to your ability to learn effectively.

Disruptions – Disruptive behavior, including talking, unengaged behavior, i.e. reading a book, magazine, or newspaper, sleeping, chronic tardiness alongside loud entrances, and any other unfortunate breach will not be tolerated. Learning is an active process, and failure to actively engage not only threatens the individual's ability to learn but also affects others.

Academic Honesty – You are all responsible for knowing and adhering to the code of academic honesty here at Moravian College. For those of you unfamiliar with this code, it can be found on pages fifty-two through fifty-seven in your student handbook.

Please Note: It is your responsibility to see to it that these expectations and guidelines are met

satisfactorily and consistently. I take the classroom quite seriously, and I expect all of you to do the same as well.

Out of Class Submission Expectations:

- a title page with a suitable title, your name, the course, section, and my name all spelled correctly
- size 12 font Times New Roman in black with default margins and spacing set at 1.5 to double
- page numbers
- a *References* section (if necessary) at the end of the work done in the most recent citation form of your choice (depends on your major and other factors)¹
- for every unedited internet site there must be at least *two* published sources
- with few exceptions, single & two-digit numbers (zero *through* ninety-nine) are to be spelled out; three digits or more are to be written numerically
- be wary of overuse of abbreviations and/or contractions
- this instructor is a fan of the *Oxford Comma* (see Vampire Weekend)
- a staple in the upper left hand corner (no frilly covers)

****Please Note that all in-class work must be done in blue or black ink****

On Writing and Research:

As this instructor is particularly driven by written expression, you should expect that there will be an emphasis placed on written expression in this course. I should also like you to know from the start that I spend a great deal of time pouring over your writing and expect that you will read and explore my commentary on all things ranging from content to grammar, punctuation, and syntax. Please try to check your ego at the doors and realize that this is a learning experience while convincing yourself that blips and missteps are all part of the process.

You should also note that where applicable, this instructor expects his students to deal

¹ Work not properly cited will not be graded and could be brought to the Academic Standards Committee under a charge of plagiarism. If you have questions, please seek me out. Also, *Wikipedia* and other types of non-academic encyclopedias will under no circumstances be considered legitimate sources.

directly with all matters relating to the citation process. Failure to do so will be dealt with harshly with penalties ranging from a zero on work not properly documented to a formal report to the proper academic disciplinary committee.

A Note on Individual Accommodations:

Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Ms. Elaine Mara, Assistant Director of Academic & Disability Support, located on the first floor of Monocacy Hall (extension 1401). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic & Disability Support office.

Also, as the college's Writing Center is located in a building that is not accessible to persons with mobility impairments, those in need of further assistance or accommodation are encouraged to contact the center at 610/861-1392.

NOTES ON THE SEMESTER-LONG PROJECT

Your project will consist of research in which you combine curiosity about an issue with information you have gleaned about a particular area of the local or regional economy. In brief, it will likely breakdown in this fashion:

During the semester you will select and learn about one *relatively* small part of the local economy by physically observing it on a fairly regular basis. This will mean spending some time first watching and then talking with some involved people, searching for any relevant written information you can find but knowing that your observations will make up the bulk of your research. For now, however, think of sectors of the greater economy that (a) you find interesting and (b) you can gain access to relatively easily.

Spend a little time in one or more sectors, and think about what drew you to that particular activity in the first place. Then consider the sorts of issues that will likely come up in that place. Of course, you can also reverse the process. If you want to learn more about a particular issue, think about ‘places’ where the issue appears and gravitate toward it. Thus your place in the larger tapestry of local or regional life will be part of a larger picture that the class in its entirety will paint of urban life in this slice of Eastern Pennsylvania.

Learning about the issue will require finding research by social scientists that deals with that issue. We will discuss these sorts of projects (see the reading list below, for example) and techniques used in class, and I will continue to provide you with information—general and specific to your particular case—that will help you put together your project in the most direct fashion possible.

Throughout the semester, I will ask for progress reports. These are intended not to pry or suggest that you’re not making progress. But, rather, the aim is to head off any obstacles or to aid in any redesigning/reconsiderations you may need during the term. Expect to meet with me as individuals every three weeks or so (earlier upon your request).

Midterm Report—Due 5 March

I will expect a more formal summary of your progress by the start of class on 5 March (see above). This 2-3 page paper will serve as a stop-check in the process. Please include material relative to your progress, surprises (good and bad), and any other information helpful in making me understand where you are at the halfway mark. We will then go over your progress individually as we have during the three week intervals (see above).

Format (see below for submission requirements):

Expected Length. Before you ask—the paper will be about 10-12 pages long (the original text, that is), , excluding references, appendices, transcripts, etc. This length assumes double spacing, default 1” margins, and a font size of 12 in black [this number pages may seem very long now, but when it comes to typing the paper, some of you are going to ask how you possibly can fit

everything into so few pages.]. Much shorter, and you are very likely to have a superficial paper. Much longer...well, let's not go there! Please Note: editing to cut a few pages almost always improves the structure of your argument and the quality of your writing.

I will evaluate these papers based on the quality of your research, the clarity of your argument, the extent to which you develop, justify, and support your argument, the links you make between research on your subject matter, pertinent information about it, and the quality of your writing.

There is no one way to organize this kind of paper, as each of you is doing something a bit different from the others. All papers must include, however:

(a) a description of the issue at hand, preferably one that has been narrowed sufficiently. Also, explain why this issue is important, and perhaps why it is important to you.

(b) a description of your place, and an explanation of why this is a suitable place to select, given the parameters of the assignment.

(c) a summary of current social science research on your issue [may overlap with (d)]

(d) a discussion of how the subject of your research affects /appears in your place, and a discussion of ways the social science research helps you understand (a) the issue generally, and (b) the issue as it appears in your place.

(e) at the end (or as an appendix), a discussion of how you did the research for the paper. This also is the place to tell me (complain about) problems that you encountered.

Some ways to find the best organization for your paper:

(1) Outlines really do help. Start with the broadest categories, add subcategories, and then add subcategories of subcategories.

(2) I often write an abstract (about 250 words) very early in the process. To do this, I have to work out what is REALLY important.

(3) List the main points that you want to make, and then think about how you can support each point.

Useful Case Studies (many available online as Google Books):

- Anderson, Elijah, 1990, *StreetWise: Race, Class and Change in an Urban Community*, U. of Chicago Press.
- Baumgartner, M.P., 1988, *The Moral Order of a Suburb*, Oxford U. Press.
- Cummings, Scott, 1998, *Left Behind in Rosedale*, Westview Press.
- Drake, St. Clair and Horace R. Cayton, 1945, *Black Metropolis (Philadelphia)*, Harper and Row.
- Gregory, Steven, 1998, *Black Corona (neighborhood in Queens)*, Princeton U. Press.
- Kwong, Peter, 1996, *The New Chinatown*, revised edition, Hill and Wang.
- Lin, Jan, 1998, *Reconstructing Chinatown: Ethnic Enclave, Global Change*, U. of Minn. Press
- Medoff, Peter and Holly Sklar, 1994, *Streets of Hope*, Boston: South End Press.
- Nelson, Margaret and Joan Smith, 1999, *Working Hard and Making Do: Surviving in Small Town America*, U. of California Press.
- Pattillo-McCoy, Mary, 1999, *Black Picket Fences: Privilege and peril among the black middle class*, U. of Chicago.
- Rabrenovic, Gordana, 1996, *Community Builders: A tale of neighborhood mobilization in 2 cities*, Temple U. Press.
- Rooney, Jim, 1995, *Organizing the South Bronx*, SUNY Press.
- Sharff, Jagna W., 1999, *King Kong on 4th Street: Families and the violence of poverty on the Lower East Side*, Westview.
- Warner, Lloyd W., and Associates, 1949, *Democracy in Jonesville*, Harper & Brothers.
- Whyte, William Foote, 1993, *Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum*, U. of Chicago Press.

Research on your issue, in the social science journals (many of these are available through the college library web portals)

Journals to inspect:

A. *Journal of Urban Affairs, Urban Affairs Review, Urban Studies, Urban Anthropology, Journal of Black Political Economy, International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, Journal of Economic Development.*

B. Among the general sociology journals, try *American Journal of Sociology, Social Problems, Social Science Quarterly, Sociological Forum* and *Social Forces*. In listing these, don't mean that you should ignore other social science journals -- but you will find it useful to look at the tables of contents of these four journals. You can do this using *SocioFile* or *Current Contents*.

*“Hot town, summer in the city
Back of my neck getting dirty and gritty”
-J. Sebastian, S. Boone, & M. Sebastian*

Course Sketch Outline:

****All Readings to be Announced throughout the Semester****

Unit I: The Urban Landscape and Its Unique Vocabulary

Topics to Be Covered:

- Perspectives & Theories
- The Urban Tradition in Sociology
- The Emergence of the Urban Form
- 1491 - 1493
- The Changing Scale and the Social Order
- Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution
- The Urbanization of The West
- Third World Megacities
- Patterns and Consequences of Urbanization in Poor Countries
- Homo- and Heterogeneity and City Life
- Urban Ethnic Enclaves
- Social Networks

Midterm Exam (approx. 5 March)

Unit II: Urbanization in the United States

Topics to Be Covered:

- Ethnic-Dominant Relations and the Urban Experience (aka The Ethnic Myth)
- Demography/Immigration
- Americanization
- The Great Migration
- The Case of Mound Bayou, Mississippi
- The 20th Century through Urban Eyes
- The Continuation of Urban Trends Since World War II
- Technological Advance
- Gentrification & 21st Century City Life
- Political Economy and Urban Sociology
- Poverty, Power, and Crime
- Urban Sociology: An Evolving Perspective on the World

**Oral Presentations (last two weeks of the term)
Final Projects Due: Friday, 8 May by 8:35 a.m.**