Cities
01:450:240
Mon/Thur 12-1:20pm, TIL-264, Livingston Campus

Professor Asher Ghertner

Office hours: Thursday, 2-3:30PM or by appointment
Office location: B-238 Lucy Stone Hall (Livingston Campus)
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This course satisfies both a Social (SCL) and Historical (HST) Analysis requirement in the SAS Core Curriculum. Upon completion of the course, students will understand the bases and development of human and societal endeavors across time and place.

Students will also be able to explain the development of some aspect of a society or culture over time, including the history of ideas or history of science, and understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization.

COURSE OUTLINE

The 21st century is an urban century. More than half of the world’s population now lives in cities. The UN estimates that net global population growth henceforth will take place entirely in cities, meaning the rural population has reached its historical maximum. Cities also now dominate the economic output of most nations and have become the most dynamic sources of ideas, opportunities, and dreams. Yet, cities are also where inequality is most visible, making them contested territories where different classes and interest groups jostle for space and influence. This course examines what makes cities contradictory spaces of work, residence and play that at once enable the release of creative energies, aspirations, and economies yet simultaneously restrict, control and confine. We will focus in particular on how urban space is constructed and used from different theoretical perspectives, ranging from community planning to Marxism to the new urban economics.

If the 21st century is an urban century, then it is a century that will be defined increasingly not by New York, London, or Los Angeles, but rather by “Third World” cities such as Mumbai, São Paolo, and Shanghai. In developing concepts capable of grasping the complexity of the 21st century urban condition, this course thus aims to pull equally from both the global North and South, asking not only First World questions of the Third World, but also Third World questions of the First World. For example, in addition to asking how patterns of gentrification first identified in New York and London are being repeated in Delhi and Manila, we’ll ask how informal uses of the sidewalk in Cairo offer lessons for studying livelihoods in New York.
READINGS:
This is a reading-intensive course. You are expected to keep up with weekly readings and be prepared to ask questions and comment on readings in class. There will be occasional in-class and take-home reading quizzes, as well as in-class exercises to help you keep up with the readings. Over the semester, we will read a mix of academic, popular, and theoretical texts. The theoretical readings are dense, take time, and may require that you read them multiple times. Although these are demanding materials, you will find that spending the necessary time to understand them will pay off since we return to these same theories throughout the semester.

All course readings are available on the course website at https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal

GRADING & ASSIGNMENTS:
Grades for this course will be weighted as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading quizzes and in-class exercises</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-Term Exam 1</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-Term Exam 2</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extra Credit</td>
<td>(3%)</td>
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Attendance & Participation:
Attendance and participation are compulsory and constitute 10% of your final grade. Participation is assessed through your in-class questions and comments, completion of in-class exercises, small group work, posts on the Sakai course forum, and office hour visits.

If you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/ to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email will automatically be sent to me. If you do not do this, your absence will be considered unapproved and lead to a lowered Attendance & Participation grade.

Reading Quizzes:
To help you to identify key concepts, arguments and theories in course readings, and to encourage you to think critically about reading assignments, occasional in-class or take-home reading quizzes will be delivered. These will usually be announced one class beforehand.

Mid-Term Exams:
There are two mid-term exams for this course, each worth 25% of your overall course grade. The first exam is scheduled for February 26th. The second exam is scheduled for April 9th. Announcements will be made in class or on Sakai in case of a schedule change for these exams. Optional exam review sessions will be run by the TA the week of the exam.

Course Paper:
Due on March 23rd in class. For your paper, you must prepare a 2-3 page brief. While you are expected to use academic references, a brief differs from normal academic papers in that your goal is to convince a hypothetical decision-maker (e.g. the mayor of New York) about something: a problem, a policy solution, or an opportunity s/he should consider. Detailed instructions for this brief will be distributed in class after the first mid-term exam. Late
submissions will lose one letter grade (A→B→C) for each week they are submitted after the deadline. Papers will not be accepted after the last day of class.

**Final Exam:**
The final exam (25% of your grade) is scheduled for May 7th from 8-11AM. Make-up exams cannot be arranged except in cases of a University-approved emergency.

**Extra Credit:**
You may receive extra credit (up to 3% of your grade) by attending at least two sessions/panels at a conference on urban displacement and land commodification being organized by Rutgers Geography on May 1-2. To obtain extra credit, you must attend at least two sessions (3 hours of total attendance) and prepare: (1) a 1-page summary of the arguments the presenters made, and (2) a list of 3-5 critical questions prompted by the event that somehow relate to the course.

**TECHNOLOGY POLICY**
Cell phones and all other non-note-taking technological devices ARE STRICTLY PROHIBITED at all times during class. You are welcome to take notes on a computer or tablet, but you must sit in the first 10 rows of the classroom if you plan on doing so. Computer users also must refrain from engaging in distracting activities, including checking Facebook or email, or showing videos. Research in social psychology has convincingly shown that information retention is greater among students who take hand-written notes, and that non-course related computer use reduces learning significantly among those seated near computer-using students. Therefore, cell phone use of any sort, or the distracting use of a computer, will negatively affect your attendance and participation grade: you will be marked absent for class meetings in which such use is observed.

**STUDY GROUPS, TUTORING & REVIEW SESSIONS**
Because this course has no recitation sections and is a large, lecture-based course, there are limited opportunities for students to discuss course material and ask questions in a smaller setting. Office hours with the Professor Ghertner and Ben Gerlofs (your TA) are always a great way to ask questions. In addition, Group Tutoring Sessions will be offered on a weekly basis throughout the semester in the Livingston Learning Center, Tillett Hall, Livingston Campus. These are on Fridays 1-3pm and Mondays 3-5pm. These are open sessions, where you can drop in and out anytime, ask questions, and discuss course material in an informal, student-led setting. The complete schedule for these Group Sessions will be posted on Sakai in Week 3 of the semester.

In addition, the week before each exam, Ben Gerlofs will be running review sessions. These will typically be held in room B-120 Lucy Stone Hall on Livingston and provide an opportunity for you to ask questions and identify key concepts and information from the course.

**PLAGIARISM**
Rutgers University views plagiarism as a very serious offense. Plagiarism is the use of another person’s words, ideas, or results without giving that person appropriate credit. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or appropriate indentation. Direct quotation and paraphrasing must always be cited properly. Some common examples of plagiarism include copying something word for word (from an oral, printed, or electronic source) without proper attribution, paraphrasing without proper attribution, or submitting a purchased, downloaded, or one’s own already-submitted paper. If you are unsure
how to cite or acknowledge someone else’s words or ideas, please ask. Cases of plagiarism will be pursued following university regulations, shown here: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu

**DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES**

Students who may be requesting accommodations due to disabilities are encouraged to familiarize themselves with procedures and policies regarding disability support services at the following website: http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/. It is recommended that students seeking accommodations begin filing paperwork as soon as possible as the documentation review process may take up to 30 business days. Students are encouraged to speak with me about these issues at the beginning of the term. All such conversations will be kept strictly confidential.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**Week 1. Course Introduction**  
(January 22)

**Background Reading:**
Benfield, Kaid (2014). “Are we creating family-friendly cities? If not, should we be?”  
http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/kbenfield/are_we_creating_family-friendly.html

**Week 2. Three views of the urban**  
(January 26, 29)

**Readings:**

**Week 3. Gentrification and Displacement**  
(February 2, 5)

**Readings:**
**Week 4. Suburbanization**  
(February 9, 12)

**Readings:**


**Week 5. Urban segregation and racial discrimination**  
(February 16, 19)

Listen to the following podcast on housing discrimination from *This American Life*:
http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/512/house-rules


**Week 6. Subprime mortgage meltdown and Mid-term exam I**  
(February 23, 26)

- - - - - - Mid-term exam I will take place in class on February 26th - - - - -

**Week 7. Urban Margins I: Race and Class on the Peripheries**  
(March 2, 5)

**Readings:**


In-class film: *La Haine* (Hate) (1995)

**Week 8. Hybrid and Enclave Urbanism: Boundaries Old & New**  
(March 9, 12)

**Readings:**
from *The Blackwell City Reader*, pp. 133-137.


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**Week 9. SPRING BREAK WEEK**

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**Week 10. Urban Margins II: The Global Slum**
(March 23, 26)

--- Course Paper Due in Class on March 23rd ---

**Readings:**


**Week 11. The Sidewalk**
(March 30, April 2)

**Readings:**


In-class film: *Sidewalk* (2010)

**Week 12. Mid-Term Exam II**
--- April 6 – Mid-term review session, April 9 – Mid-term exam II ---

**Week 13. Environmental Justice**
(April 13, 16)

**Readings:**


Optional Additional Reading:


Week 14. The Right to the City
(April 20, 23)

Readings:


Week 15. The New Military Urbanism: Cities as Battlespace
(April 27, April 30)

Readings:


Optional Additional Readings:


Week 16 – Wrap up and Final Exam Review
(May 4)

- - - - - The Final Exam is on May 7th from 8AM to 11AM - - - - -