

Cities

01:450:250

**Mon/Thur 11:30am-12:50pm, AB-2160, College Ave Campus
4 credits**

Professor D. Asher Ghertner

Office hours: Mondays, 2-3:30PM or by appointment

Office location: B-238 Lucy Stone Hall (Livingston Campus)

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This course satisfies both a 21st Century Challenges (**21C**) and a Social Analysis (**SCL**) requirement in the SAS Core Curriculum. Upon successful completion of this course, students will **understand the bases and development of human and societal endeavors across time and place.**

Students will also be able to **analyze a contemporary global issue from a multidisciplinary perspective and understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization.**

Course TAs:

Erin Royals

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Jonah Walters

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Office location: B-253 Lucy Stone Hall

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Recitation Sections

Section # and Time	Section Location	TA
01, W 10:05-11AM	FH-A3, CAC	Jonah Walters
02, W 11:45AM-12:40PM	FH-A1, CAC	Jonah Walters
03, W 1:25-2:20PM	FH-A1, CAC	Jonah Walters
04, Tu 10:05-11AM	FH-A3, CAC	Erin Royals
05, Tu 11:45AM-12:40PM	FH-A3, CAC	Erin Royals
06, Tu 4:45-5:40PM	FH-A3, CAC	Erin Royals

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, and with what effects for social justice and inequality, by drawing from

diverse theoretical perspectives—ranging from community planning to Marxism to the new urban economics—in order to engage a series of critical questions related to the future “urban planet.”

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 Paulo, 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 (see grading below). 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:

In-class exercises and participation	10%
Recitation attendance & participation	10%
Mid-Term Exam 1	20%
Mid-Term Exam 2	20%
Paper	10%
Final Exam	30%
Extra Credit	(2%)

This course uses the standard Rutgers grading scale: A = 90≤, B = 85–89.9, B = 80–84.9, C+ = 75–79.9, C = 70–74.9, etc.

Grades will be tabulated and maintained by the Teaching Assistant who runs the recitation section to which you are assigned, with oversight and final approval by Professor Ghertner.

Grade Review Policy: Students are welcome to request clarification on grades, or point out simple errors in tabulation, for exams, papers or other assignments. Requests for reconsideration of a course grade will be addressed through a full re-evaluation of the assessed work in question, with the possibility that the assigned grade will be revised up *or* down.

In-Class Exercises and Participation (10%):

In-class exercises, of which there will be approximately 10 over the course of the semester, will take different forms, including reading quizzes, written responses to readings or lecture material, small-group worksheets, or short take-home worksheets to be completed and brought to class. In-class exercises, with the exception of reading quizzes, will not be announced before class and do not require preparation beyond completing the reading. They serve as a substitute

for taking regular class attendance. No make-up exercises can be taken if you miss class on the day exercises are administered, except in cases where you use the University absence reporting website (<https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/>) *prior* to class to indicate that you will be absent for a University-approved reason.

Recitation Section Attendance and Participation (10%):

Recitation attendance is a mandatory part of the course. The large size of lectures on Mondays and Thursdays provides limited opportunity for individualized engagement and questions. Recitations, led by the two Teaching Assistants (Erin Royals and Jonah Walters), aim to provide students with an opportunity to clarify content introduced in lecture or readings by allowing for more interaction. The TAs are responsible for evaluating students' attendance of and participation in recitations, and they may assign periodic or regular homework assignments or exercise sheets for you to complete before or during recitation.

Mid-Term Exams (2 x 20%):

There are two mid-term exams for this course, each worth 20% of your overall course grade. The first exam is scheduled for February 23rd. The second exam is scheduled for April 3rd. Announcements will be made in class or on Sakai in case of a schedule change for these exams. Exam review sessions will be run by the TAs the week of or before the exam.

Course Paper (10%):

Due on March 27th in class. For your paper, you must prepare a 2-page policy 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 Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Ben Carson) 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 (30%):

The final exam is scheduled for May 4th 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 2% of your grade) by attending an approved extra-curricular, campus event. Professor Ghertner will announce these in class or via Sakai. To obtain extra credit, you must attend the event and prepare: (1) a 1-page summary of the arguments the presenter(s) made, and (2) a list of 3-5 critical questions prompted by the event that somehow relate to the course. These write-ups should be submitted to your TA by the last day of classes.

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 front half of the classroom if you plan on doing so.** Computer users also must refrain from engaging in distracting activities, including checking Facebook or viewing videos. Research in social psychology has shown convincingly that information retention is greater among students who take hand-written versus typed 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 in-class participation grade.

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>

STUDENTS WITH DEPENDENTS

Student parents and those with other legal dependents should feel comfortable approaching Professor Ghertner in confidence to explain class attendance limitations or schedule restrictions, or to seek advice otherwise. Students may also be interested in following the following Rutgers student group, Students with Children: [Facebook.com/studentswithchildren](https://www.facebook.com/studentswithchildren).

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 19)

In this introductory lecture, we consider the three thematic perspectives that will organize our approach to cities throughout the semester: cities as publics, cities as built form, and cities as economies. Taking up the contemporary urban problem of families leaving otherwise highly rated cities (such as San Francisco, CA, Portland, OR, and Washington, DC), we examine how each of these perspectives might diagnose this problem, and how each type of diagnosis relates to a major approach of urban scholarship. The aim of this semester, as a course in urban geography, is to develop a perspective that places each of these perspectives in relation to each other.

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-friendl.html

Week 2. Three views of the urban

(January 23, 26)

This week we engage three now-classic and highly influential perspectives on defining "the urban." Jane Jacobs, writing in Greenwich Village, NY in the 1960s, vociferously argued against the detrimental effects of housing projects ("the projects") on city life, insisting that planners over-emphasized a narrow "cities as built form" perspective to the neglect of the functioning of "cities as publics." The real life of a city could be found on its sidewalks, she claimed. Richard Florida, like Jane Jacobs, celebrates diverse and safe sidewalks and happening city

streets, but not as an inherent public good, as Jacobs does, but instead for the purposes of economic growth. He thus stands for “cities as economies.” David Harvey, while theorizing the urban process under capitalism, also emphasizes the economic dimensions of cities, but views “the urban” as the spatialized expression of capital accumulation in the built environment: “cities as built form.” These perspectives will shape our reading in subsequent weeks, and we will constantly return to ask how new authors and policy makers side more or less with each of them.

Readings:

Jacobs, Jane (1961). “The uses of sidewalks: contact,” from *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Modern Library, pp. 72-96.

Florida, Richard (2002). “The rise of the creative class,” *Washington Monthly*, May.

Harvey, David (1978). “The Urban Process Under Capitalism,” excerpted from *The Urban Geography Reader*. London: Routledge, pp. 109-120.

Week 3. Suburbanization

(January 30, February 2)

Readings this week focus on the dominant drivers and patterns of North American suburbanization. Did families leave cities first, or did industry and jobs? Did people leave in pursuit of new lifestyles, or because of economic opportunity and incentive? We consider two dominant explanations for suburbanization and mid-20th century “white flight.” The first is a *consumption-side* perspective, which says that (especially white, middle-class) people left cities in the 1950s and 60s because they wanted access to things that were no longer available in the crisis-prone cities of post-World War II America: safe neighborhoods, access to “nature,” and easy automobility. The second, *production-side*, perspective, argues that suburbanization took place according to new profit-making opportunities created by federal policy, the real estate industry, and local government. In addition to explaining the conditions that led to the 20th century suburban boom in America, we examine new dynamics of suburbia in the 21st century, such as the suburbanization of poverty and ‘Hipsturbia,’ in New Jersey and beyond.

Readings:

Walker, Richard and Robert Lewis (2001). “Beyond the crabgrass frontier: Industry and the spread of North American cities, 1850-1950,” in *The Urban Geography Reader*. London: Routledge, pp. 121-127.

Dewan, Sheila (2013). “Is suburban sprawl on its way back?” *New York Times*, September 14.

Williams, Alex (2013). “Creating Hipsturbia in the Suburbs of New York,” *New York Times*, February 15.

Week 4. Gentrification and Displacement

(February 6, 9)

What is gentrification, when did it begin, and what made it into a keyword for understanding the city? Building on the historical treatment of suburbanization in Week 3, this week considers production- and consumption-side explanations of gentrification and forms of working-class and minority displacement it often (but not always) precipitates. At the end of this week, students should be able to compare and contrast these two explanations of gentrification, identify in each perspective which agents of class transformation are emphasized (e.g., the state versus individual homeowners), and explain differences in the patterns of gentrification across different cities in the US, Latin America, and South Asia.

Readings:

Smith, Neil (2005). “Gentrification, the frontier, and the restructuring of urban space,” from *The Urban Geography Reader*. London: Routledge, pp. 128-138.

Berger, Joseph (2012). “As Brooklyn Gentrifies, Some Neighborhoods Are Left Behind,” *New York Times*, July 8.

Kaysen, Ronda (2016). “In Newark, A New Chapter Unfolding,” *New York Times*, August 19.

Week 5. Urban segregation and racial discrimination

(February 13, 16)

How segregated are American cities? Are our cities more or less segregated than cities elsewhere in the world? Why are cities in the American North more segregated than those in the South? Is urban segregation something hard-wired into our cities? To what extent is segregation simply inherited from the past versus actively produced in the present? This week examines the history of racial segregation in the US city and the role of federally backed “redlining” and other processes of discriminatory lending that drove white, middle-class urbanites to the suburbs, leaving behind African-American populations. In addition to discussing the Fair Housing Act of 1968, we ask how ongoing housing practices affect racial minorities and how the 2008 foreclosure crisis must be understood through this longer history of urban segregation.

Readings & ‘Listenings’:

Listen to the following podcast on housing discrimination from *This American Life*:

<http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/512/house-rules>

Whitehouse, Mark (2007). “Subprime aftermath: Losing the family home,” *The Wall Street Journal*, May 30.

Wyly, Elvin, Moos, M., Foxcroft, H., & E. Kabahizi (2008). “Subprime mortgage segmentation in the American urban system,” *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie* 99(1), 3-23.

Navarro, Mireyo. 2016. “Segregation Complicates de Blasio’s Housing Push,” *The New York Times*, <http://nyti.ms/1SCgwOF>.

Week 6. Subprime mortgage meltdown and Mid-term exam I

(February 20, 23)

----- **Mid-term exam I will take place in class on February 23rd** -----

Before reviewing course material to date, this class explains the conditions that led to the 2008 meltdown in the subprime mortgage market and the subsequent foreclosure crisis that helped trigger the Great Recession. At the end of this week, students should be able to explain what a subprime mortgage is, how mortgage-backed securities work and with what effects as far as the distribution of credit risk, and why mortgage securitization contributed to a housing bubble that placed disproportionate risks on minority communities and created economic damages that reverberated through the global economy.

Readings:

Feuer, Alan (2009), “Poof, How Home Loans Transform,” *New York Times*, September 18.

Week 7. Urban Margins I: Race and Class on the Peripheries

(February 27, March 2)

This is the first of two weeks exploring the concept of “urban margins” from a global perspective. This week focuses on the “marginal space” of the housing project. It asks how racial and class-based exclusions are experienced differentially in the US and Europe. Through readings and a film, we try to make the US urban experience *strange* by showing the depth of racial exclusion and isolation in US housing projects compared to in France. How does the high-level of racial segregation in US housing projects affect youth alienation and the experience of what this week’s key author, Wacquant, calls “territorialized stigma”? Why are low-income, Paris youth protesting, rioting, and shutting down their neighborhoods so often? At the end of this week, students should be able to explain how urban exclusion is differentially experienced between the US and Europe, as manifest through such things as drug use, violence, policing tactics, and riots/protests.

Readings:

Wacquant, Loïc (2010). “Stigma and Division: From the Core of Chicago to the Margins of Paris,” in *Urban Outcasts: A Comparative Sociology of Advanced Marginality*. London: Polity, pp. 162-198.

Auyero, Javier (1999). “This is a lot like the Bronx, isn’t it?” Lived Experiences of Marginality in an Argentine Slum,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 23(1): 45-69.

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

Week 8. Urban Margins II: The Global Slum

(March 6, 9)

More than a billion people live in informal squatter settlements, or slums, today. The UN predicts that as many as three billion people could live in slums by 2050. What has led to the rapid growth of slums in cities of the developing world? What characterizes a slum space? Are all slums the same? Are slums a problem of poverty or a solution to it? What role does the state play in promoting or restricting the growth of slums, and how do international development agencies, such as the World Bank, seek to solve the “slum problem”?

Readings:

Davis, Mike (2006). “The prevalence of slums,” in *Planet of Slums*, New York: Verso: 20-49.

De Soto, Hernando. (2000). “The Mystery of Missing Information” and “The Mystery of Capital” in *The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Elsewhere*, 15-67.

Davis, Mike. (2006). “The Illusions of Self-Help,” from *Planet of Slums*. Verso, p. 70-94.

----- **Week 9. SPRING BREAK WEEK** -----

Week 10. Eviction

(March 20, 23)

Whereas in weeks 6 and 8 we discussed a spectacular form of eviction in the form of home foreclosures and slum demolition, this week we turn to more mundane processes that have created a scenario in the US whereby fewer and fewer people can afford a roof over their head and must therefore live from temporary home to temporary home in a cycle of eviction. We also detail transformations in eviction court and legal procedure that have made the issuance of eviction notices more and more a matter of routine, in the US and beyond. We finally examine the transnational itinerary of a key instrument of eviction, nuisance law, showing how it has taken on new forms in the US, UK and India in ways that increasingly use notions of safety and civility to punish the poorest.

Readings:

Desmond, Matthew (2016). Chapter 6, “Rat Hole” and Epilogue from *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*. New York: Crown, pp. 64-79, 293-314.

Optional Additional Reading:

Ghertner, D. Asher (2015). “Nuisance Talk: From Sensory Disgust to Urban Abjection,” from *Rule by Aesthetics: World-Class City Making in Delhi*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 78-98.

Week 11. Hybrid and Enclave Urbanism: Boundaries Old & New

(March 27, 30)

----- **Course Paper Due in Class on March 27th** -----

Are borders becoming more or less relevant in the 21st century city? Has economic and cultural globalization led to a melding of past differences as people, goods, ideas, technology, and capital more freely circulate? This week’s two key readings present opposing perspectives on these question, one (Michael Dear) celebrating the power of “cities as publics” to overcome physical obstacles (such as the US-Mexico border) and the other (Teresa Caldeira) noting the enduring power of “cities as built form” to destroy the public life of cities. Whereas Dear uses the example of Tijuana, Mexico and San Diego, CA to suggest that new hybrid forms of urbanism are creating post-border cities where walls no longer matter, Caldeira examines the rise of what she calls “fortified enclaves” – gated communities and buildings – in Sao Paulo, Brazil that cut up public space and relegate the urban public to a savage state of reduced services and bare survival.

Readings:

Dear, Michael (2010). "Postborder Cities, Postborder World: The Rise of Baja California" from *The Blackwell City Reader*, pp. 133-137.

Medina, Jennifer (2013). "San Diego Mayor Building Economic Bridges to Tijuana," *New York Times*, May 12.

Caldeira, Teresa (1996). "Fortified Enclaves: The New Urban Segregation," *Public Culture* 8: 303-328.

Week 12. Mid-Term Exam II

- - - April 3rd – Mid-term exam II; No recitations April 4th or 5th and no class on April 6 - -

Week 13. The Sidewalk

(April 10, 13)

Returning to Jane Jacobs's (Week 2) discussion of "the uses of sidewalks," we ask how sidewalks are used and function differently today than in Jacobs's 1960s Greenwich Village. Based on case studies of informal street vendors in New York City and Cairo, Egypt, we consider how people must often violate or stretch the law to leverage claims to social justice. We will compare a dominant criminological theory called "Broken Windows" and how it shaped policing in New York with the approach adopted by the city of Cairo to street hawkers. At the end of this week, students should be able to describe at least two different theories of civil society and explain how they enable different forms of public life in cities.

Readings:

Duneier, Mitchell (1999). "Magazine Vendors" and "Competing Legalities" in *Sidewalk*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, pp. 43-80 & 231-252.

Bayat, Asef (2000). From 'dangerous classes' to 'quiet rebels': Politics of the urban subaltern in the global south. *International Sociology*, 15(3).

In-class film: *Sidewalk* (2010)

Week 14. The Right to the City

(April 17, 20)

Is there a special kind of urban right? Can one demand a special right to the city? Why did citizens around the world increasingly, in the 1960s and again at the turn of the 21st century, start using the language of rights to demand access to urban services, housing, education, and even urban democracy? This week, we explore urban social movements from a global, comparative perspective, using the theory of "the right to the city," which we contrast with squatter-led land rights-based movements in Brazil, Egypt, the Philippines, and South Africa.

Readings:

Mitchell, Don & Joaquin Villanueva (2010). "The Right to the City," In *Encyclopedia of Urban Studies*. London: SAGE, pp. 668-672.

Harvey, David (2008). "The Right to the City," *New Left Review* 53.

Optional Additional Readings:

Mitchell, Don (2003). "To Go Again to Hyde Park: Public Space, Rights and Social Justice," in *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space*. New York: Guilford Press, pp. 13-41.

In-class film: clips from *The Square* (2013)

Week 15. The New Military Urbanism: Cities as Battlespace

(April 24, April 27)

How have cities been reconfigured in the wake of the "war on terror"? What does the fact that most terrorist attacks now take place in cities mean for security and the notion of the public in the 21st century? Are cities inherently less secure or more violent spaces than the countryside? Are poor neighborhoods breeding grounds for crime and terror, as is often suggested? Examining what Graham calls "the new military urbanism" in global

security discourse, which casts “Third World Cities” in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa as inherently wild/feral spaces, we consider how current military discourse borrows from colonial-era urban policy. Are cities becoming increasingly open spaces of exchange and creativity, or, as Naomi Klein suggests, are they being carved into “Red Zones” and “Green Zones,” making Baghdad the urban model of the securitized urban future?

Readings:

Graham, Stephen (2009). “Cities as Battlespace: The New Military Urbanism,” *City* 13: 383-402.

Balko, Radley (2013). “Why did you shoot me? I was reading a book,” Excerpt from *Rise of the Warrior Cop: The Militarization of America’s Police Forces*,
http://www.salon.com/2013/07/07/why_did_you_shoot_me_i_was_reading_a_book_the_new_warrior_cop_is_out_of_control/

Klein, Naomi. 2008. “Disaster Apartheid: A World of Green Zones and Red Zones,” *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, Picador, pp. 513-534.

Optional Additional Readings:

Apuzzo, Matt (2014). After Ferguson Unrest, Senate Reviews Use of Military-Style Gear by Police,” September 9, *The New York Times*,
http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/10/us/ferguson-unrest-senate-police-weapons-hearing.html?_r=0

ACLU (2014). *War Comes Home: The Militarization of American Policing*.

<https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/assets/jus14-warcomeshome-report-web-rel1.pdf>

Weizman, Eyal (2006). “Urban Warfare: Walking through Walls,” in *Hollow Land: Israel’s Architecture of Occupation*. London: Verso, pp.185-220.

Week 16 – Wrap up and Final Exam Review

(May 1)

----- The Final Exam is on May 4th from 8AM to 11AM -----