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)
E-mail: a.ghertner@rutgers.edu

This course satisfies both a Contemporary Challenges (CC) 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:

Sam Bowden
Office hours: Wednesday 1-2pm or by appt
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Office location: B-243 Lucy Stone Hall

Thomas Crowley
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Office location: B-245 Lucy Stone Hall

Andrew Op’t Hof
Office hours: Tuesday 3-4pm or by appt
E-mail: ado16@scarletmail.rutgers.edu
Office location: B-119 Lucy Stone Hall

Recitation Sections

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section # and Time</th>
<th>Section Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01, W 10:05-11AM</td>
<td>FH-A3, CAC</td>
<td>Sam Bowden</td>
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<tr>
<td>02, W 11:45AM-12:40PM</td>
<td>FH-A1, CAC</td>
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<td>03, W 12:25-2:20PM</td>
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<td>Andrew Op’t Hof</td>
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<td>05, Tu 11:45AM-12:40PM</td>
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<td>06, Tu 4:45-5:40PM</td>
<td>FH-A3, CAC</td>
<td>Andrew Op’t Hof</td>
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**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:

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<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tr>
<td>In-class exercises and participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recitation attendance &amp; participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-Term Exam 1</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Mid-Term Exam 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Project</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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<td>Extra Credit (2%)</td>
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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 or other assignments. Requests for reconsideration of a 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 up to 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 and contact your TA to arrange a make-up.

**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 Teaching Assistants (Sam Bowden, Thomas Crowley, and Andrew Op’t Hof), 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 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 28th. The second exam is scheduled for April 11th. 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 before the exam.

**Course Project (10%)**:  
**Due on April 1st in class and on Sakai.** Late submissions will lose one letter grade (A→B→C) for each week they are submitted after the deadline and will not be accepted after the last day of class. There are two course project options for the semester:

*Project option 1:* Curate a collection of at least eight images that relate to and provide real-life representations of concepts, processes, theories, experiences, or things described in the course. These images can be posted on an Instagram feed or posted on Sakai if you do not have an Instagram account or are not comfortable using Instagram. Each image should have a unique descriptive caption, and these captions should connect to at least two weeks of course material. The full instructions for this photo project will be provided after the second week of the semester, but each image must include at least three sentences of accompanying text, and the 10 images must directly speak to at least three different weekly themes of the course.

*Project option 2:* Prepare a 2-page critical review of a current event. Detailed instructions for this brief will be distributed in class after the first mid-term exam.

**Final Exam (30%)**:  
The final exam will take place during the official final exam period, on May 9th from 8AM-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 approved extra-curricular, campus event. Professor Ghertner will announce these in class or via Sakai. You can obtain up to 2% for the first approved event you attend and up to 1% more (up to 3% total) for attending a second event. 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 can be uploaded to Sakai at any time, but must by received by the last day of class to be counted.

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. Research in social psychology shows 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 & SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES
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 Rutgers student group, Students with Children: Facebook.com/studentswithchildren. All efforts will be made to accommodate students with special legal or familial circumstances.

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.

FREE & RESPECTFUL SPEECH AT RUTGERS
As the state university, Rutgers is governed by the US Constitution’s First Amendment prohibition on the impairment of protected speech rights. We also recognize the importance of free speech for democratic societies and the centrality of the free exchange of ideas in the academic mission.

The Department of Geography further recognizes that this is a time when there is discussion regarding bigotry, racism, anti-Semitism, and white supremacy in our society. Rutgers stands for dialogue and inclusion. We can and do live with disagreement and divergent ideologies, and
these are welcome in the classroom. However, the department asks for and expects respectful participation in class discussions. While the full details of university policy can be found below, the department affirms the position that disruptive behavior has no place here. http://policies.rutgers.edu/sites/policies/files/00011251.PDF

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1. Course Introduction
(January 24)
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:

Week 2. Three views of the urban
(January 28, 31)
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:

Week 3. Suburbanization
(February 4, 7)
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:

Week 4. Gentrification and Displacement
(February 11, 14)
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:

Week 5. Urban segregation and racial discrimination
(February 18, 21)
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


Optional additional reading:

Week 6. Subprime mortgage meltdown and Mid-term exam I
(February 25, 28)
- - - - - - - - - - Mid-term exam I will take place in class on February 28th - - - - - - - - - - -
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:

Week 7. Urban Margins I: Race and Class on the Peripheries
(March 4, 7)
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:

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

Week 8. Urban Margins II: The Global Slum
(March 11, 14)
More than a billion people live in 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:

Optional additional readings:
Week 10. Hybrid and Enclave Urbanism: Boundaries Old & New
(March 25, 28)

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 Paolo, Brazil that cut up public space and relegate the urban public to a savage state of reduced services and bare survival.

Readings:

Optional Additional Reading:

Week 11. Environmental Justice vs. Eco-Apartheid
(April 1, 4)

In the wake of the 1960s Civil Rights victories, including the passing of the Fair Housing Act (discussed in Week 5), we examine how communities of color continued to experience the discriminatory effects of industrial citing and pollution permitting in the 1970s through the present, and how a dynamic movement for environmental justice emerged to try to halt these effects. We begin with Camden, NJ and a community battle over air pollution exposure, before asking how the Environmental Justice framework, developed out of the US legal system, has been picked up and modified as it has been applied internationally. With cities both celebrated as the centers of innovation capable of driving a sustainability revolution and the seats of extreme inequality most prone to what some call climate apartheid, where does the future of green urbanism lie?

- - - - - - - - - - - - Course Project Due in Class on April 1st (no joking) - - - - - - - - - - - -

Readings:

In-class film: Here’s to Flint

Week 12. Mid-Term Exam II
(April 8, 11)
- - - - - - - - - - - - Mid-term exam II will take place on April 11th - - - - - - - - - - - -
Week 13. The Sidewalk
(April 15, 18)
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:

Week 14. The Right to the City
(April 22, 25)
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:

Optional Additional Readings:

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

Week 15. The New Military Urbanism: Cities as Battlespace
(April 29, May 2)
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:
In-class film: *Do Not Resist* (2016)

**Optional Additional Readings:**

**Week 16 – Wrap up and Final Exam Review**
  (May 6)

--- FINAL EXAM on MAY 9th from 8AM–11AM ---