

GEOGRAPHY 4640

Urban Geography

Syllabus

Instructor: Sig Langegger, PhD

Day/Location: Monday/room 2-105 and Wednesday/room 1-317

Time: 14:00 – 15:50 pm

Office Hours: Monday 10:00 – 12:00; Thursday 10:00 – 12:00

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

In many ways a city is its past. As cities evolve, each generation builds within the architectural, social, and infrastructural confines of what previous generations have created. In this course we will focus on the invention of the city and its impact on human development patterns during the span of the last three millennia. Taking a global approach to urban development, we will consider three types of cities: Asian, Islamic, and Western. We will construct a framework, with which to grasp the complexities of urbanization, by concentrating on urban morphology, the effects of urban policy, urban governance, and market forces on cities, and on urban planning, which attempts to focus these forces into a concrete urban ideal. Using this framework, we will delve deeply into the historical development of two “sprawling” cities: Los Angeles, and Beijing.

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course students will:

1. learn to think spatially about urban processes.
2. be able to identify where urban geography intersects with other fields, such as sociology, urban economics, communication, public health, and city planning.
3. be comfortable using geographical terminology in written and oral communication
4. have gained insight into how public space is regulated and populated in different urban contexts and how this teaches us a great deal about cities.
5. be able to think, write, and argue critically about cities. That is, using appropriate evidence, you will be able support or challenge models and theories presented in this course.

STRUCTURE OF COURSE

On May 23, 2007, the majority of humans resided in cities for the first time in history. We live in a rapidly urbanizing world, with shantytowns adding, in some cases, tens of thousands of people a day to their populations. This dramatic demographic shift amplifies social and environmental problems and also focuses humankind’s potential to solve these problems. Urban geography, like all aspects of geographical scholarship, attempts to make sense of the city by studying how urban societies, create, organize, and manage spatial relations. By better understanding urban space, policy makers, planners, and activists can work toward creating just cities.

In many ways urban geography is as sprawling as its research context, the contemporary city. This course will not cover every aspect of urban geography, no single course could. I firmly believe that

in order to understand the present and plan for the future, we must to understand the past. Therefore throughout the course of the semester, I will foreground how certain types of cities and specific public spaces developed through history. Since my area of expertise is urban public space, I will use streets, parks, alleys, and plazas as lenses to focus the many concepts of urban geography. Throughout this course we will focus on many world cities including Venice, San Diego, and Denver. We will pay particular attention to two archetypical “sprawling metropolises – Beijing and Los Angeles. Since geography is both a spatial and a temporal field, much of the course will revolve around coming to understand historical patterns of urbanization.

READING

You will find each day’s required reading posted on Blackboard under the “documents” tab.

Participation in class discussion, a significant component of all final grades, requires that each student read and be comfortable talking intelligently about topics, terms, and concepts raised in the textbook and additional readings. I expect each student to meaningfully contribute to class discussion of the assigned readings. The success of this seminar rests upon our collective engagement with the readings. Therefore, carefully reading each day’s assignment and contributing to the seminar discussion not only affects your grade, but also the grades of your classmates.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Participation	25%
Midterm Exam	35%
Research Paper	40%

GRADING POLICY

I do not grade on a curve. Furthermore, I insist that grades are *earned* by students; they are not *given* by instructors. Your final grade will directly reflect your performance on exams, your test scores, and your participation in discussions. Each student’s exam/quiz grades and her/his final grade will reflect individual performance. This course is basically an undergraduate seminar, in which we grapple with the problems of urbanization, with urban theory, and with urban research. Engaged participation in seminars is key to their success. We all stand to learn a great deal if we work to make this seminar a success.

All material covered in assigned readings and during lectures is likely to show up on the mid-term exam and I expect you to be able to effectively articulate the theories we grapple with during the semester in your term papers.

I use grading rubrics for two reasons: first, to hold myself accountable to my grading standards and ensure that I am grading fairly; second, to communicate detailed information to students regarding their performance. So that students can become as familiar as possible with what I expect and with how I grade, I will distribute oral and written grading rubrics by the end of the first week of class.

All grades are final, unless students can prove a gross grading error that I have made. No extra credit will be offered.

GENERAL POLICIES

Academic Honesty.

Plagiarism is the use of another person's words or ideas without crediting that person. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated and may lead to failure on an assignment, in the class, and dismissal from the University.

Students are responsible for being attentive to or observant of University of Colorado Denver and International College Beijing policies about academic honesty as stated in the University's Student Code of Conduct.

Attendance.

This course is structured around class discussion. Therefore attendance and participation of each student is vital for all students' learning outcomes. Not only is attendance required, it contributes toward your final grade. For exceptions to this policy, please refer to the University's policies on excused absences, emergency absences, and religious observances.

Students with Disabilities.

If you require accommodations, please alert me of your needs on the first day of class so that I, working within University of Denver and International College Beijing policies, may adequately provide them.

Civility and Classroom Decorum.

Silence all cell phones, beepers, etc. during class.

Unless being used as a part of a class exercise or to take notes, please close laptop computers during class.

This course is based in large measure on critical thinking and class discussion. Disagreement is part and parcel of these processes. Colleagues can disagree *and* maintain respect for each other and one another's views. I insist that we strive to learn from the differences that manifest while debating the merit of theoretical and empirical evidence by maintaining an atmosphere of civility during discussions.

ASSIGNMENTS

I will use the Blackboard platform to distribute assignments and handouts, to communicate with students, to receive assignments and to post grades. Therefore, aside from exams and quizzes, I require that all assignments be submitted via Blackboard.

It is the student's responsibility to gain access to and familiarize herself/himself with Blackboard. More details will be provided in the first class.

Term Paper.

Throughout this course we consider the past that is present in a wide variety of cities. We will gain insight into these cities by using their public spaces and as lenses to focus the forces and outcomes of urbanization. What is more, I have divided the focal points of this course into three categories: kin (family, religion, and community), money (economic development), and health (physical health and social order). I therefore ask that you frame your approach within one of the following concepts: history, public space, kin, markets, or health.

Format

Length: approximately 5000 words (8-10 pages)

Formatting: font size (12 point), double spaced text

Citation Format: APA

Timeline

Week 2 (September 19): Submit a research topic to me for approval

Week 8 (October 29): Literature review due. This should be submitted in readable yet draft form.

This section of your final paper identifies five to ten scholarly works upon which you are building your research paper. They must be highly relevant to the subject and context of your research paper. Furthermore, at least one citation needs to be research-methods oriented. In other words, you must align or oppose your work to published theory and empirical research.

Week 16 (finals week): Submission of term paper and presentation of paper to class.

SCHEDULE (tentative)

Week 1: Introduction to urban geography

Sept. 10: Introduction to the course and to urban geography

Sept. 14: Key concepts in urban geography

Lecture: Lynchian space and Lefebvrian space

Week 2: Space and Place

Sept. 17: A concrete perspective:

Reading: Tuan (1977) *Body, personal relations, and spatial values* in *Space and Place* p. 34-51

Sept. 19: An abstract perspective

Reading: Lefebvre (1996) *The Right to the City* in *Writings on Cities*: Henri Lefebvre p. 147-159

Due: Research topic

Week 3: Informal Geographies

Sept. 24: Segregation

Reading: Carl Nightingale *Seventy Centuries of City-Splitting* in *Segregation: A Global History of Divided Cities* p. 19-43

Sept. 26: Reading: Li Zhang: *The floating population as subjects* (in *Strangers in the City*:

Reconfigurations of space, power and the social networks within China's floating population) p. 23-47

Week 4: National Holiday – No Classes!

KIN

Week 5: Informal urbanization: Beijing

Oct 8: Reading: Robert Neuwirth *Istanbul: the promise of squatter self-government* (in *Shadow Cities - a billion squatters, a new urban world*) p. 143-176

Friday!

Oct. 12: Field Trip: Time and place to be announced

Reading: Zheng et al. *Urban Villages in China: a 2008 survey of migrant settlements in Beijing*, *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 2009, 50, No. 4, pp. 425–446.

MARKET

Week 6: Legal Geographies

Oct. 15: Land use law and urban policy

Reading: Rutherford H. Platt *Historic roots of modern land use institutions* (in *Land Use and Society: geography, law, and public policy*) p. 65-95

Oct. 17: The invention of the Ghetto

Reading: Richard Sennett *Fear of Touching* in *Flesh and Stone: the body and the city in Western Civilization* p. 212-249

Week 7: Capitalism and the City

Oct. 22: Urban Redevelopment and Homelessness

Reading: Lyn Stachel and Don Mitchel *Publicly Private: Property Redevelopment, Public Space, and Homelessness in San Diego* in *The People's Property: Power, Politics, and the Public* p. 47-72

Oct. 24: Urban Renewal

Reading: Spiro Kostof *Hausmannization* (in *The City Assembled: The elements of urban form through history*) p. 266-279

Week 8: Utopia: the “no places” that drive urban development

Oct. 29: Planning theory

Reading: Robert Fishman *Urban Utopias: Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright, and le Corbusier* (in *Readings in Planning Theory*) p. 21-61

Due: Literature Review

Oct. 31: Sprawl

Reading: Robert Bruegeman *The causes of sprawl* (in *Sprawl: a compact history*) p. 96-115

Week 9: Los Angeles

Nov. 5: From Pueblo to Town

Reading: Robert Fogelson *Forward and Chapter One: from pueblo to town* (in *The Fragmented Metropolis*) p. 1-23

Nov. 7: Commerce and Industry

Reading: Robert Fogelson *Chapter Six: commercial and industrial progress* (in *The Fragmented Metropolis*) p. 108-136

Week 10: Los Angeles

Nov. 12: The Polycentric City and the Polyethnic City
Reading: Robert Fogelson *Chapter Nine: the quest for community* (in *The Fragmented Metropolis*) p. 186-204

Nov. 14: **Midterm exam**

HEALTH

Week 11: Ancient Beijing

Nov. 19: Cities of Aristocrats and Bureaucrats
Reading: Victor Sit *The Nature of the Chinese City* (in *Beijing: the nature and planning of a Chinese capital city*) p. 1-28

Nov. 21: The Capital City
Reading: Victor Sit *The emergence of Beijing* (in *Beijing: the nature and planning of a Chinese capital city*) p. 29-54

Week 12: Modernizing Beijing

Nov. 26: Colonized Beijing
Reading: Victor Sit *Beijing of the Ming and Qing periods (pre-1949)*(in *Beijing: the nature and planning of a Chinese capital city*) p. 54-81

Nov. 28: Communist Beijing
Reading: Victor Sit *Beijing under socialism: planning history and its role* (in *Beijing: the nature and planning of a Chinese capital city*) p. 82-114

Week 13: Contemporary Beijing

Dec. 3: Beijing in Contemporary Film
Movie: *I Love Beijing* – written and directed by Ning Ying

Dec. 5: Neighborhood organizations and social health
Reading: Benjamin Read *Power relations at the alley level* (*Roots of the State: Neighborhood Organizations and Social Networks in Beijing and Taipei*) p. 93-132

Week 14: Contemporary Beijing

Dec. 10: Reading: Farquhar and Zhang *Ten Thousand Things: Nurturing life in contemporary Beijing* (Introduction: a life well nurtured & Chapter One: City Life) p. 11-48

Dec. 12: Reading: Farquhar and Zhang *Ten Thousand Things: Nurturing life in contemporary Beijing* (Chapter One: City Life) p. 49-125

Term Paper Presentations Date and Time TBA: