

## **Introduction to Urban Studies**

**50.975.102.E2**

Mondays and Wednesdays: 11:10 am - 12:30 pm

Business and Science Building (BSB) 108

Instructor: Marlo Rossi, M.S (she/her)

Email: [mgr121@scarletmail.rutgers.edu](mailto:mgr121@scarletmail.rutgers.edu)

Office Location: Zoom

Office Hours Link (See Announcement)

**Course Description:** This course is designed to introduce students to the multidisciplinary field of Urban Studies. Throughout the semester we will explore various sub-subjects within Urban Studies that deal with big topics in our society such as economic, political, cultural, and environmental aspects of cities and urban areas.

## **Learning Objectives**

1. **Understand and Apply Foundational Urban Concepts**
  - Define key concepts and theories in Urban Studies, including urbanization, gentrification, segregation, and sustainability, and apply them to real-world urban environments.
2. **Analyze Social, Economic, and Political Forces Shaping Cities**
  - Critically examine how race, class, gender, and policy influence urban development and contribute to social and economic inequality.
3. **Engage in Creative Problem-Solving for Urban Issues**
  - Propose innovative, equity-centered solutions to contemporary urban challenges through collaborative projects, debates, and visual storytelling.

## **Required Course Texts**

There is only one required course text: *The City Reader* by LeGates, Richard T; Frederic, 2011 (I will provide chapter readings throughout the semester) - Other required materials such as articles, videos, etc will be provided weekly.

## **My Philosophy Toward Teaching and College**

My teaching philosophy is rooted in the belief that every student learns differently. As an instructor, my role is to provide a variety of learning opportunities that support this diversity. Students should have the freedom to demonstrate their knowledge in ways that align with their strengths and interests. In other words, the course should adapt to the student—not the student to the course.

## Course Format

Reflecting this philosophy, this course will feature a blend of short in-person lectures, assigned readings, dynamic classroom discussions, and creative project options. Students will have the opportunity to showcase their understanding through traditional papers or innovative formats such as podcasts, videos, presentations, or photo essays. We will decide as a class whether the Visual Storytelling Project will follow a traditional or innovative format. Clear guidelines will be provided for each assignment to ensure that every student feels supported and empowered in their learning.

## Late Work Policy

Late assignments will be accepted under the following conditions:

- Assignments submitted up to 3 days late will be accepted without penalty if you provide at least 24 hours' notice via email or Canvas message before the due date.
- Assignments submitted more than 3 days late will incur a 10% deduction per day late.
- No late work will be accepted past the 3-day extension deadline.

## Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is expected and essential for success in this course.

- **More than two unexcused absences** may negatively impact your participation grade.
- If you must miss class, please notify me in advance and make arrangements to catch up on missed work.
- Participation in in-class activities, discussions, and group work contributes to your participation grade.
- Students uncomfortable speaking in large discussions can participate through written reflections or small group discussions.

## Technology Policy

Technology is welcomed in the classroom to support learning.

- You are expected to use laptops, tablets, and phones respectfully and in ways that support class engagement.
- Avoid using devices for non-class-related activities during discussions or group work.

## Assignment Submission Guidelines

- All assignments must be submitted through **Canvas** by **11:59 PM** on the due date unless otherwise stated.

- Accepted file formats: **PDF**, **DOCX**, or **PPTX** (for presentations).
- If you experience technical issues, email me before the deadline with your assignment attached.

## **Course Requirements and Grading**

Grades will be based on my evaluation of short written assignments, participation, papers, and projects. We will follow university-wide definitions of letter grades.

### **Grading Scale (Total: 185 Points)**

- A: 90–100% → 167–185 points
- B+: 84–89% → 156–166 points
- B: 80–83% → 148–155 points
- C+: 74–79% → 137–147 points
- C: 70–73% → 130–136 points
- D: 60–69% → 111–129 points
- F: Below 60% → 0–110 points

**A (Excellent):** Outstanding work that exceeds expectations in creativity, analysis, and engagement.

**B+ (Very Good):** Strong work with a clear understanding and application of concepts.

**B (Good):** Solid performance with minor errors or areas for deeper analysis.

**C+ (Above Average):** Adequate work that meets basic expectations but lacks depth.

**C (Fair):** Acceptable work that shows effort but lacks full understanding.

**D (Poor):** Minimal effort with significant misunderstandings or missing work.

**F (Failing):** Work that does not meet course requirements or was not submitted.

## **Assignment Descriptions**

### **1. Mini Reflections (4 Total) – 40 Points**

Four 200-word reflections responding to course readings, videos, or lectures.

These reflections promote critical thinking, personal reflection, and application of course concepts. Proper APA citations are required.

**2. Urban Policy Debate – 50 Points**

A collaborative in-class debate where students are divided into groups to research and present arguments for or against specific urban policy issues. This assignment focuses on critical analysis, persuasive communication, and teamwork. Grading will be based on research depth, teamwork, and presentation skills

**3. Visual Storytelling Project – 65 Points**

A major multimedia project where students creatively explore an urban issue through a short video, podcast, infographic, or presentation. The project must integrate course concepts and external research, including a final presentation.

**4. Proposal (10 Points):** Submit a project topic proposal

**5. Final Submission (55 Points):** Present the final project.

**6. Participation – 30 Points**

Active engagement in class discussions, group activities, and simulations.

Participation includes being prepared for class, contributing thoughtfully to discussions, and collaborating respectfully with peers.

**7. Extra Credit Opportunity – 10 Points** Students can earn up to 10 extra credit points by visiting a public space, neighborhood, or urban development project in your city or a nearby area and submitting a 200-word reflection connecting the experience to course concepts.

*As a student myself who struggled to speak in front of a class, I will NOT reduce participation points for those who do not want to participate in discussions. I ask that you try your hardest during our projects, and if you struggle with social anxiety, please come talk to me early in the semester and we will come to a solution.*

## Course Schedule

### Class 1 - Week 1: January 22nd

**Topic:** Course Introduction & Syllabus Overview

- Overview of course structure, assignments, and expectations.
  - Introduction to Urban Studies as a multidisciplinary field.
  - **In Class Ice Breaker**
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### Class 2 - Week 2: January 27

**Topic:** Foundations of Urbanization: Growth, Challenges, and Global Perspectives

- **Reading:** The City Reader - Kingsley Davis, “Urbanization of the Human Population”
  - **Video:** TED Talk – How Place Shapes Identity (Viktoria Walldin).
  - **Activity:** Lecture on global urbanization trends and discussion of readings.
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### Class 3 - Week 2: January 29th

- **Reading:** Reading: Urbanization and Cities – Trends of a New Global Force.
  - **Mini Reflection 1:** Reflect on this week's readings drawing from class discussion and your readings.
  - Class discussion on urban growth and challenges.
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### Class 4 - Week 3: February 3rd

**Topic:** Industrialization and Urban Growth

- **Reading:** Friedrich Engels, "The Great Towns" (*The City Reader*)
  - **Video:** Friedrich Engels: The Conditions of The Working Class
  - Lecture on the rise of industrial cities and their impacts.
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### **Class 5 - Week 3: February 5th**

- **Reading:** Camden, A City for Others by Dr. Stephen Danley
  - **Activity:** Group discussion on how industrialization shaped modern cities.
  - **Mini Reflection 2:** Reflect on this week's readings drawing from class discussion and your readings.
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### **Class 6 - Week 4: February 10th**

**Topic:** Urban Public Spaces and Community

- **Reading:** Jane Jacobs, "The Use of Sidewalks: Safety" (*The City Reader*)
  - **Video:** *Introduction to Jane Jacobs Video*
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### **Class 7 - Week 4: February 12**

- **Reading:** "Placemaking in Our Communities" – Project for Public Spaces
- **Reading:** Trash Incinerator in Camden City
- **Reading:** The Burning Issue

- **Activity:** Small group analysis of public spaces in students' communities - In person.
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## **Class 8 - Week 5: February 17th**

**Topic:** Segregation and Social Inequality

- **Reading:** William Julius Wilson, "From Institutional to Jobless Ghettos" (*The City Reader*)
  - **Video:** Redlining Video
  - Lecture on historical and modern segregation patterns
  - **Mini Reflection Two – Due**
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## **Class 9 - Week 5: February 19th**

- **Reading:** Dr. Paul Jargowsky, "Architecture of Segregation"
  - **Video:** Why are US cities so segregated? (TED TALK)
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## **Class 10 - Week 6: February 24th**

**Topic:** Urban Policy Debate Expectations and Guidelines

- **Video:** What is a Debate?
  - **Video:** Train to Win an Argument
  - **Topic:** In-class workshop in preparation for Urban Policy Debate
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## **Class 11 - Week 6: February 26th**

**Topic:** In-class workshop in preparation for Urban Policy Debate

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**Class 12 - Week 7: March 3rd**

**Topic:** Gentrification \*ADD MORE MATERIALS

- **Reading:** Loretta Lees, "Gentrification and Social Mixing" (*The City Reader*)
  - **Article:** Lance Freeman & Frank Braconid, "Gentrification and Displacement"
  - **Mini Reflection 4:** Reflect on this week's readings in a way that will contribute to class discussion (please cite)
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**Class 13 - Week 7: March 5th**

**Topic:** Affordable Housing and Public Policy \*ADD MORE MATERIALS

- **Reading:** Miriam Zuk, "A Brief History of Public Housing" (*The City Reader*)
  - **Article:** "Affordable Housing Policy in U.S. Cities"
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**Class 14 - Week 8: March 10th**

- Urban Policy Debate – Gentrification Group
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**Class 15 - Week 8: March 12th**

- Urban Policy Debate – Affordable Housing Group
  - Mini Reflection Three Due
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**No Class - Week: March 17th**



- Spring Break
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**No Class - Week: March 19th**

- Spring Break
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**Class 16 - Week 9: March 24th**

- OPEN
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**Class 17 - Week 9: March 26th**

- OPEN
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**Class 18 - Week 10: March 31st**

**Topic:** Urban Environmental Challenges and Sustainability

- **Reading:** Mike Davis, “Planet of Slums”
  - **Video:** TED Talk - How Cities Can Combat Climate Change (Amanda Burden)
  - **Activity:** Lecture on urban sustainability and climate resilience, followed by a small group activity where you will brainstorm solutions to environmental challenges in urban settings
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**Class 19 - Week 10: April 2nd**

- **Topic:** Transportation and Urban Mobility
  - **Reading:** Donald Shoup, *"The High Cost of Free Parking"*
  - **Activity:** Class discussion on urban transportation systems, their role in shaping cities, and their impact on social equity. Students evaluate their local transportation system.
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## **Class 20 - Week 11: April 7th**

**Topic:** Rights to the City and Social Movements

- **Reading:** David Harvey, "Right to the City" (*The City Reader*)
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## **Class 21 - Week 11: April 9th**

- **Article:** "Feminist Spaces in Urban Planning"
  - Visual Storytelling Proposal Due
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## **Class 22 - Week 12: April 14th**

**Topic:** Urban Governance and Civic Engagement

**Reading:** Clarence Stone, "*Regime Politics and Urban Governance*"

**Activity:** Case study analysis of a city's governance structure. Small groups discuss strategies to enhance civic engagement and representation in urban planning.

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## **Class 23 - Week 12: April 16th**

- **Topic:** Urban Technology and Smart Cities
  - **Reading:** Anthony Townsend, "*Smart Cities: Big Data, Civic Hackers, and the Quest for a New Utopia*"
  - **Video:** Documentary excerpt – "The Human Face of Big Data"
  - **Activity:** Group discussion on the benefits and challenges of integrating technology in urban environments. Students develop a brief concept for a "smart city" initiative to address a pressing urban issue.
  - Mini Reflection Four Due
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## **Class 24 - Week 13: April 21st**

### **Topic:** Workshop

- Work on Visual Storytelling Project
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## **Class 25 - Week 13: April 23rd**

### **Topic:** Visual Storytelling Project

- In-Class Work Session on the Visual Storytelling Project
  - (Bring your project materials to class to finalize your project ahead of the presentation.)
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## **Class 26 - Week 14: April 28th**

### **Topic:** Presentations - Visual Storytelling Project

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## **Class 27 - Week 14: April 30th**

- **Topic:** Presentations - - Visual Storytelling Project
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## **May 8th - May 14th - Rutgers Exam Period**

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## **Other Policies**

### **Basic Needs Security**

If you have difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, lack a safe and stable place to live, and/or do not have regular access to technology, and believe this may affect your performance in the course, you are urged to contact the Dean of Students for support and/or can utilize the Rutgers University-Camden Food Pantry.

- Dean of Students Office- You can learn more about the free services by calling 856-225-6050, emailing [deanofstudents@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@camden.rutgers.edu), or visiting the website at <http://deanofstudents.camden.rutgers.edu/>
- Rutgers-Camden Food Pantry- You can learn more about this free service by calling 856-225-6005, emailing [scarlet-raptor-foodpantry@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:scarlet-raptor-foodpantry@camden.rutgers.edu) or visiting the website at <https://wellnesscenter.camden.rutgers.edu/ru-camden-raptor-pantry/>

### **Canvas Rutgers Shout Out**

Within Canvas, use Rutgers Shout-Out to type the phonetic spelling of your name, list your preferred pronouns, and pronounce your name in a video recording.

### **Chosen Name (Preferred Name)**

If you have a chosen name or preferred name other than what is listed on the roster, kindly let me know. If you would like to have your name changed officially on the Rutgers University-Camden rosters, please visit: <https://deanofstudents.camden.rutgers.edu/chosen-name-application>

### **Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity**

Rutgers University-Camden seeks a community that is free from violence, threats, and intimidation; is respectful of the rights, opportunities, and welfare of students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University; and does not threaten the physical or mental health or safety of members of the University community, including in classroom space, and a community in which students respect academic integrity and the integrity of your own and others' work.

As a student at the University, you are expected adhere to the Student Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity Policy. To review the academic integrity policy, go to

<https://deanofstudents.camden.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity> To review the code, go to: <https://deanofstudents.camden.rutgers.edu/student-conduct>

**Please Note:** The conduct code specifically addresses disruptive classroom conduct, which means “engaging in behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor’s ability to teach or student learning. The classroom extends to any setting where a student is engaged in work toward academic credit or satisfaction of program-based requirements or related activities.” Please be aware of classroom and out-of-classroom expectations by making yourself familiar with and by following the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Complaints**

Rutgers University—Camden is committed to providing quality services, a great education, and

an engaged and caring experience for our students. Sometimes problems arise, and students may find that they would like to file a complaint about their experience or a particular situation. To file a complaint, students can complete the form at this link, and someone will connect with you to discuss your complaint, explain options and to address the issue that was raised. Students do have the option of filing a complaint anonymously, but then there will be no way for the office handling the complaint to be able to let the student know how it was addressed. Filling out a form will allow students to understand all options and the different ways an issue can be addressed. The form is located here: <https://deanofstudents.camden.rutgers.edu/reporting>

### **Dean of Student Office- CARES Team**

College is a time when you may be testing your independence and/or striving to find yourself. It's not uncommon for these journeys to have rough points. The Dean of Students Office is here to assist you by strategically and effectively handling and referring student concerns/needs across all areas of the campus and University as needed. For some students, personal, emotional, psychological, academic, or other challenges may hinder their ability to succeed both in and outside of the classroom. The Dean of Students Office serves as your initial contact if you need assistance with these challenges. You can learn more about the free services by calling 856-225-6050, emailing [deanofstudents@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@camden.rutgers.edu), or visiting the website at <http://deanofstudents.camden.rutgers.edu/>

### **Learning Center- Learning Specialists and Tutoring**

I am committed to making course content accessible to all students. The Learning Center provides Learning Specialists who can help you build a learning plan based on your strengths and needs. Tutors, study groups and more services are available to you for free. Many services are available in virtual formats and after normal business hours. In addition, if English is not your first language and this causes you concern about the course, the Learning Center can help. You can learn more about these services by calling 856-225-6442, emailing [rclc@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:rclc@camden.rutgers.edu) or [learningcenter@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:learningcenter@camden.rutgers.edu), or visiting the website <https://learn.camden.rutgers.edu/> You can schedule an appointment with Learning Specialist to create a plan of action using the website.

### **Office of Disability Services (ODS)- Students with Disabilities**

If you need academic support for this course, accommodations can be provided once you share your accommodations indicated in a Letter of Accommodation issued by the Office of Disability Services (ODS). If you have already registered with ODS and have your letter of accommodations, please share this with me early in the course. If you have not registered with ODS and you have or think you have a disability (learning, sensory, physical, chronic health, mental health or attentional), please contact ODS by first visiting their website <https://success.camden.rutgers.edu/disability-services>. The website will further direct you who to contact and how to contact them depending on the free, confidential services you are in need of.

**Please Note:** Accommodations will be provided only for students with a Letter of Accommodation from ODS. Accommodation letters only provide information about the accommodation, not about the disability or diagnosis.

Office of International Students and Programs- International (F-1) Students.

If you are an international student at Rutgers University-Camden and you need assistance with documentation, travel, campus assistance and/or advising, the Office of International Students and Programs provide support services. You can find more information by calling 856-225-6832, emailing [ois@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:ois@camden.rutgers.edu) or by visiting the website at <https://international.camden.rutgers.edu/>

Office of Military and Veteran Affairs- Veteran, Active Duty and National Guard Member Services

The Office of Military and Veterans Affairs and Rutgers University-Camden supports our students who have served and their family members, including explanation of benefits, referrals to resources on and off campus, supporting students who are deployed for active duty and answering questions. If you need assistance and are an active duty, National Guard, or veteran (or are a family member), the Office of Military and Veteran Affairs can assist. You can find more information by calling 856-225-2791 or visiting the website at <http://veterans.camden.rutgers.edu/>

Pronouns

This course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If you have a preferred gender pronoun, feel free to correct me. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Title IX and the Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance Office

If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. The Rutgers University-Camden community is committed to helping to create a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. Rutgers University-Camden has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The University strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the University. If you wish to speak to a free, confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can speak to staff in the Office of Violence Prevention & Victims Assistance. You can learn more about these resources by calling 856-225-2326 or by visiting the website <http://respect.camden.rutgers.edu>. You can schedule an appointment to connect with a member of the office by using this website.

Please Note: All Rutgers employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as advocates, counselors, clergy, and healthcare providers as listed in Appendix A to Policy

60.1.33) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the University. This means that if you tell me or any faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence, or other related misconduct, we must share that information with the University's Title IX Coordinator

Undocumented and DACAmented Student Services.

Undocumented students enrich our university community. Rutgers University-Camden is steadfast in its effort to protect and support all members of our community, regardless of immigration status or personal circumstance. If you need resources (legal, career and support) you can find more information and schedule appointments on the website

<https://undocumented.camden.rutgers.edu/>

Wellness Center- Health and Wellbeing Resources

Health and well-being impact learning and academic success. Throughout your time in college, you may experience a range of concerns that can cause barriers to your academic success. These might include illnesses, strained relationships, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol, or drug problems, feeling down, or loss of motivation. The Wellness Center Medical and Counseling staff can help with these or other issues you may experience. You can learn about the free, confidential medical and mental health services available on campus by calling 856-225-6005, visiting the website at <https://wellnesscenter.camden.rutgers.edu/> or visiting the Wellness Center on the 2nd Floor of the Campus Center.

Writing and Design Lab-Writing Support and Services.

If you need assistance with writing, audio recordings, web creation or other creating software used in class, the Writing and Design Lab can help. They provide personal tutoring, workshops, and online assistance. You can learn more by emailing [rutgers.wdl@rutgers.edu](mailto:rutgers.wdl@rutgers.edu) or visiting the website <https://wdl.camden.rutgers.edu/about-2/>. On the website you can schedule an Appointment.

National and State Resources for Wellbeing (Alphabetical Order)

Crisis Text Line: text HOME to 741741

Crisis Text Line for Students of Color: text STEVE to 741741

National Domestic Violence Helpline: 1-800-799-7233 or text LOVEIS to 22522

the National Substance Abuse helpline, SAMHSA's National Helpline, [1-800-662-HELP \(4357\)](tel:1-800-662-HELP)

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255

NJ HOPE line- <https://njhopeline.com/>

The Sexual Assault helpline at [1-800-656-HOPE](tel:1-800-656-HOPE) (4673)

Trevor Lifeline (LGBTQ+): 1-866-488-7386

and the National Substance Abuse helpline, SAMHSA's National Helpline, [1-800-662-HELP \(4357\)](tel:1-800-662-HELP)

