

## ***Sociology 98AB: Junior Tutorial Urban Politics and the Global City***

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Office hours by appointment

Time: Tuesday, 12:45-2:45pm  
Location: William James Hall 450  
Website:

### **Description**

Across the world, cities are becoming increasingly connected, as international flows of people and goods turn local places into sites of global exchange. Yet the problems of the city remain fundamentally local: housing, economic growth, and public policy are determined by local leaders and contested by urban residents. This course examines urban politics in globalized cities. Using sociological theories of urbanism and politics, we will examine debates over urban issues including housing, job creation, and sustainability and how they are shaping cities both in North America and across the Global South.

The tutorial will guide students in the preparation of an empirical research paper on an urban issue of their choosing. Topics may include housing and gentrification, economic development and inequality, globalization, urban technology and smart cities, politics and governance, and urban sustainability. Through in-class workshops, we will develop research questions and formulate practical research designs. We will explore qualitative research methods, including interviews and ethnography, as well as new methods for observing urban space such as systematic social observation with Google Street View. These projects will provide an opportunity to explore the potential for qualitative research to enrich or contest existing explanations. Throughout, we will refine our understanding of the urban environment and what local policymakers, citizens, and activists are doing to shape the future of cities.

### **Requirements**

The course will be run as a discussion seminar and a research practicum. Students are expected to attend each meeting, do the readings thoroughly and in advance, and participate actively in class. Other requirements for the course are as follows:

*Participation (20%):* The format of this course is a seminar discussion and research workshop. Therefore, active participation in each class meeting is a requirement. Constructive engagement involves sharing insights and questions that demonstrate familiarity with and reflection on the course material. Serious consideration of the ideas presented by others in the classroom is expected. Because participation is a central component of this course, I will provide formal feedback on

participation midway through the semester. *To increase participation, laptops are not permitted in this course except for research workshops.*

*Reading responses* (10%): To enrich seminar discussions, each student is expected to write a memo on the readings in preparation for Weeks 2 through 5 of the semester. Reading responses should be **no less than 2 pages and no more than 4 pages** (12-point font, double spaced, one-inch margins) and are **due via email to the instructor by 5pm on Sunday** before we discuss the readings. **Reading responses should address all the required course material for that week.** You are encouraged to connect these readings to personal experience, current events, or past course discussions.

*Research assignments* (20%): We will begin developing research projects early in the semester, with short assignments intended to act as building blocks to strengthen research questions and research design. All assignments are detailed in the syllabus with due dates. **Research assignments should be posted to the course website by 5pm on Sunday.**

*Paper presentation* (10%): In the last two weeks of the semester, students will each give a formal in-class presentation about their research. Each presentation will take approximately 10 minutes followed by questions and discussion.

*Final research paper* (40%): The final research paper is 15 to 20 pages in length and includes sections on literature, methods, and findings. **The final paper is due at 5pm on May 9th and should be posted to the course website.** Late submissions will be penalized by one-third of grade for each extra day.

The final grades will be determined as follows:

- Participation: 20%
- Reading responses (4): 10%
- Research assignments (4): 20%
- Paper presentation: 10%
- Final research paper: 40%

**\*All assignments should be in 12-point font, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins.\***

**\*All assignments should be submitted as Microsoft Word/Open Word documents.\***

**\*All assignments (except the final paper) are due on Sundays at 5pm.\***

## Policies

*Readings:* All required readings and other media are available through the course website. Additional readings may be assigned based on selected research topics later in the semester.

*Attendance.* Attendance is mandatory. Absences will be excused for religious or medical reasons. If you expect to be absent, email the instructor in advance or, in cases of emergency, as soon as possible. Attendance will be taken and included in the participation grade.

*Grading.* I am committed to fair and consistent grading, using a rubric for each assignment. The final course grade follows the standard system for Harvard College, found in the online *Handbook for Students*: <https://handbook.fas.harvard.edu/book/grades-and-honors>.

*Late assignments.* Assignment due dates are firm. Late submissions will result in a penalty of one partial letter grade (one-third of a letter grade) per day (e.g., an A- will become a B+ during the first day after the deadline).

*Use of computers and electronics.* Computers, phones, tablets, and other personal electronic devices are not permitted in class, unless authorized in advance.

*Collaboration and academic honesty.* Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to academic work. For assignments in this course, you are encouraged to consult with your classmates on the choice of paper topics and to share sources. However, you should ensure that any written work or research products that you submit for evaluation are the result of your own research and writing and that it reflects your own approach to the topic. You must also adhere to standard citation practices in this discipline and properly cite any books, articles, websites, or other resources that have helped you with your work. Consistent with FAS guidelines, this course has a zero tolerance policy for any form of plagiarism. All *ideas* (not just specific sentences) produced by anyone else must be properly cited. For more information, see: <https://college.harvard.edu/academics/academic-integrity>.

*Civil discussion.* It is essential that students are respectful of one another's views and experiences during class discussions. Disagreement is encouraged, but we will not allow for personal attacks or the use of language that in any way degrades or disrespects your colleagues. In discussing sensitive issues, we encourage everyone to assume the best intent of their classmates.

*Resources.* The Sociology Department has a Writing Fellow who is available to discuss writing at any stage of development. In addition, the Harvard College Writing Center offers resources to assist you throughout the writing process. You can book appointments or learn more about these resources: <http://sociology.fas.harvard.edu/pages/writing-papers-sociology>.

*Ethics in research.* Research on human populations requires an understanding of the ethics of gathering information from people. Throughout the course we will discuss the ethical considerations and potential dilemmas you may face while interviewing and conducting observations.

*Accommodations.* Students needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability must present their Faculty Letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO) and speak with the instructor by the end of the second week of the term.

*When in doubt...* get in touch. I want to make sure that the semester is productive and that all students stay on track to complete the course requirements. If you have questions about a reading, an assignment, or other academic topics, I'm here to help.

## Assignments

Students will complete four research assignments that will help to build cumulatively towards the final research paper.

### **Assignment 1: Site Visit and Research Questions** **Due 5pm, Sunday, February 24**

For the first assignment, students will identify a potential fieldsite and spend 1 to 2 hours at this location, observing their surroundings and considering what is interesting about this site from a sociological perspective. Potential fieldsites can be discussed with the instructor in advance but may include public meetings, community centers, business districts, or community organizations. After exploring the fieldsite, submit a document answering the following questions:

1. What is the potential fieldsite?
2. What do you find interesting about this fieldsite from a sociological perspective?
3. What are five potential research questions that you could ask using data (ethnographic observation, interviews, or digital observation) collected at or around this fieldsite?

**Note:** Each research question should be *one sentence* that concludes in a *question mark*. No research question should involve two separate questions.

**Note:** Should you end up interacting with anyone at your fieldsite, you should disclose that you are a student who is interested in conducting research for a class project.

### **Assignment 2: Research Proposal** **Due 5pm, Sunday, March 10**

Each student will develop a 4-6 page research proposal that (1) identifies a single research question, (2) describes the proposed method of data collection, (3) outlines an initial argument or hypotheses, and (4) describes what you would need to know to answer your research question. If you plan to do interviews, the proposal should include a draft interview guide.

### **Assignment 3: Pilot Interview/Observation** **Due 5pm, Sunday, March 30**

Based on the research proposal, students will conduct 1 interview of no less than thirty minutes *or* conduct observation at a fieldsite for at least two hours. Students will transcribe their interview or type up their fieldnotes. Transcripts and fieldnotes should be no less than 1,000 words.

### **Assignment 4: Literature Review** **Due 5pm, Sunday, April 14**

Prepare a 4-6 page literature review that grounds your research question theoretically in an existing debate and describes the unique contribution of your proposed analysis.

### **Final Research Paper** **Due 5pm, Thursday, May 9**

Submit a 15-20 page final paper that introduces your research question, situates it in the literature, describes your research methods, and answers the research question using your original data.

## Course Schedule and Readings

### PART 1. URBAN POLITICS: TOPICS AND THEORIES

Readings designated \* are mandatory.

#### Week 1. January 29. The City as Social Space

**Introduction: All students will meet with instructor between Jan. 29 and Feb. 5.**

1. \*Park, Robert E. 1916. "The City: Suggestions for the Investigations of Human Behavior in the Urban Environment." *American Journal of Sociology* 20:577-612.
2. Whyte, William F. 1943. *Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum*. Conclusion: 3. The Problem of Cornerville. Pages 272-276.
3. \*Jacobs, Jane. 1961. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York, NY: Random House. Pages 1-13, 29-41.
4. Wellman, Barry. 1979. "The Community Question: The Intimate Networks of East Yorkers." *American Journal of Sociology* 84: 1201-1231.
5. Sassen, Saskia. 2005. "The Global City: Introducing a Concept." *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 11(2):27-43.
6. \*Roy, Ananya. 2011. "Slumdog Cities: Rethinking Subaltern Urbanism." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35(2):223-238.

Questions: What is the city? What is the slum? What makes a city "global"? What is the relationship between urban form and social life? What are some methods for doing research about the city?

#### Week 2. February 5. Housing, Segregation, and Gentrification

1. \*Massey, Douglas S. and Nancy A. Denton. 1993. *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 1-59).
2. Caldeira, Teresa. 1996. "Fortified Enclaves: The New Urban Segregation." *Public Culture* 8:303-328.
3. \*Zukin, Sharon, Valerie Trujillo, Peter Fraser, Danielle Jackson, Tim Recuber, and Abraham Walker. 2009. "New Retail Capital and Neighborhood Change: Boutiques and Gentrification in New York City." *City & Community* 8(1):47-64.
4. Desmond, Matthew. 2012. "Disposable Ties and the Urban Poor." *American Journal of Sociology* 117(5):1295-1335.
5. Brown-Saracino, Japonica. 2017. "Explicating Divided Approaches to Gentrification and Growing Income Inequality." *Annual Review of Sociology* 43:515-539.
6. \*Rosen, Eva. 2017. "Horizontal Immobility: How Narratives of Neighborhood Violence Shape Housing Decisions." *American Sociological Review* 82(2):270-96.

\*Listen to The Giant Pool of Money: [www.thisamericanlife.org/355/the-giant-pool-of-money](http://www.thisamericanlife.org/355/the-giant-pool-of-money)

\*Read articles on Defend Boyle Heights movement. Some links to start:

<http://www.artnews.com/2017/11/14/laura-owens-responds-activists-opposition-356-s-mission-rd/>

<http://www.artnews.com/2018/06/08/good-bye-boyle-heights-hotbed-gentrification-protests-sees-galleries-depart/>

Week 3. February 12. Economic Development, Jobs, and Globalization

**Fieldsite check-in: All students will meet with instructor between Feb. 12 and Feb. 19.**

1. \*Molotch, Harvey. 1976. "The City as a Growth Machine: Toward a Political Economy of Place." *American Journal of Sociology* 82: 309-332.
2. Harvey, David. 1989. "From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism." *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 71(1):3-17.
3. \*Saxenian, AnnaLee. 1996. "Inside-Out: Regional Networks and Industrial Adaptation in Silicon Valley and Route 128." *Cityscape* 2(2): 41-60.
4. Wilson, William Julius. 1996. *When Work Disappears*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf. Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 3-50).
5. \*Ong, Aihwa. 2004. "The Chinese Axis: Zoning Technologies and Variegated Sovereignty on zoning in East Asia." *Journal of East Asian Studies* 4(1):69-96.
6. Young, Cristobal, Charles Varner, Ithai Z. Lurie, and Richard Prisinzano. "Millionaire Migration and Taxation of the Elite." *American Sociological Review* 81(3):421-446.

\*Case studies: Links to start:

- a. Racine: *Reply All* <https://www.gimletmedia.com/reply-all/132-negative-mount-pleasant>
- b. Amazon HQ2: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/12/arts/design/amazon-hq2-long-island-city-costs-benefits.html>
- c. Khorgos: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/01/29/magazine/china-globalization-kazakhstan.html>

Week 4. February 19. The Urban Environment and Sustainability

1. Cronon, William. 1992. *Nature's Metropolis*. New York, NY: Norton. Chapter 5: "Annihilating Space: Meat" (pp. 207-261).
2. \*Sharkey, Patrick. 2007. "Survival and Death in New Orleans: An Empirical Look at the Human Impact of Katrina." *Journal of Black Studies*, 37(4) 482-501 (bC)
3. Auyero, Javier and Debora Swistun. 2007. "Amidst Garbage and Poison: An Essay on Polluted Peoples and Places." *Contexts* 6(2):46-51.
4. \*McFarlane, Colin. 2008. "Governing the contaminated city: infrastructure and sanitation in colonial and postcolonial Bombay." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 32:415-435.
5. \*Muller, Christopher, Robert J. Sampson, Alix S. Winter. "Environmental Inequality: The Social Causes and Consequences of Lead Exposure." *Annual Review of Sociology* 44:263-82.

\*\*\*Assignment 1: Fieldsite Visit and Research Questions\*\*\*

Due Sunday February 24 at 5pm, posted to course website

Week 5. February 26. Power, Politics, and Participation

**Proposal check-in: All students will meet with instructor between Feb. 26 and Mar. 5.**

1. Gaventa, John. 1980. *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence & Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press. Chapter 1: "Power and Participation" (pp. 3-20).
2. \*Scott, James. 1998. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. Chapter 2: "Cities, People, and Language" (pp. 53-83).
3. \*Appadurai, Arjun. 2002. "Deep Democracy: Urban Governmentality and the Horizon of Politics." *Public Culture* 14(1): 21-47
4. Harvey, David. 2008. "The Right to the City." *New Left Review* 53:23-40.
5. \*Levine, Jeremy R. 2016. "The Privatization of Political Representation: Community-Based Organizations as Nonelected Neighborhood Representatives." *American Sociological Review* 81(6): 1251-1275.
6. Desmond, Matthew and Adam Travis. 2018. "Political Consequences of Survival Strategies among the Urban Poor." *American Sociological Review* 83(5):869-896.
7. \*Green, Ben. 2019. *The Smart Enough City*. Cambridge: The MIT Press. Chapter 3: The Democratic City (pp. 39-62).

In class: Guest lecture, Ben Green, Harvard Applied Math

**PART 2. METHODOLOGY: STUDYING URBAN POLITICS**

Week 6. March 5. Research Design

1. \*Booth, Wayne, Gregory Colomb, and Joseph Williams. *The Craft of Research*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press. Chapters 3 and 4 (pp. 31-33, 35-67).
2. \*Small, Mario. 2009. "How Many Cases Do I Need?" *Ethnography* 10(1):5-38.
3. Freedman, David A. 1991. "Statistical Models and Shoe Leather." *Sociological Methodology* 21:291-313.
4. **\*Read Assignment 1 posted by your classmates.**

\*\*\*Assignment 2: Research Proposal\*\*\*

Due Sunday March 10 at 5pm, posted to course website

Week 7. March 12. Ethics and Qualitative Research

1. Fine, Gary Alan. 1993. "Ten Lies of Ethnography: Moral Dilemmas of Field Research." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 22(3):267-94
2. \*Weiss, Robert S. 1994. *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: Free Press. Chapter 5.
3. \*Small, Mario L. 2015. "De-Exoticizing Ghetto Poverty: On the Ethics of Representation in Urban Ethnography." *City and Community* 14(4):352-8.
4. Lewis-Kraus, Gideon. 2016. "The Trials of Alice Gofman." *The New York Times Magazine*.
5. **\*Read research proposals posted by your classmates.**

In class: Research proposal/interview guide workshop

SPRING BREAK (NO CLASS MARCH 19)

Week 8: March 26. Field Methods: Interviews and Ethnography

1. \*Weiss, Robert S. 1994. *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: Free Press. Chapters 1-4, 6 (pp. 1-120, 151-182).
2. \*Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 2011. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Second edition. Chapters 1-3.
3. **\*Select one:**
  - Star, Susan L. 1999. "The ethnography of infrastructure." *American Behavioral Scientist* 43(3): 377–391.
  - Brown-Saracino, Japonica. 2009. *A Neighborhood That Never Changes*. University of Chicago Press. Ch. 2 "The Research Sites and Methods", pp. 22-50.
  - Pugh, Allison J. 2013. "What Good Are Interviews for Thinking about Culture? Demystifying Interpretive Analysis." *American Journal of Cultural Sociology* 1 (1): 42–68.

In class: Guest lecture, Allison Daminger, Harvard Sociology

\*\*\*Assignment 3: Pilot Interviews or Fieldnotes\*\*\*

Due Sunday March 30 at 5pm, posted to course website

Week 9. April 2. Digital methods: Spatial Analysis and Systematic Social Observation

1. \*Rundle, Andrew G. et al. 2011. "Using Google Street View to Audit Neighborhood Environments." *American Journal of Preventative Medicine* 40(1):94-100.
2. \*Hwang, Jackelyn and Robert J. Sampson. 2014. "Divergent Pathways of Gentrification." *American Sociological Review* 79(4):726-51.
3. **\*Read interviews/fieldnotes posted by your classmates.**

In class: Analyze transcripts/fieldnotes; practicing SSO.

Week 10. April 9. Literature: What is a lit review and why do we do it?

1. \*Becker, Howard S. 1986. *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*. University of Chicago Press. Chapter 8: Terrorized by the Literature (pp. 135-149).
2. \*Booth, Wayne, Gregory Colomb, and Joseph Williams. 2008. *The Craft of Research*. The University of Chicago Press. "Evaluating Sources for Relevance and Reliability" (pp. 76-80).
3. **\*Reread closely: One selection from each of Weeks 2-5, exemplifying a good lit review.**

Guest lecture: Kathleen Sheehan, Harvard Library

\*\*\*Assignment 4: Literature Review\*\*\*

Due Sunday April 14 at 5pm, posted to course website



Week 11. April 16. Writing Up Your Results

1. \*Becker, Howard S. 1986. *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*. University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1-2.
2. \*Weiss, Robert S. 1994. *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: Free Press. Chapter 7: Writing the Report (pp. 183-206).
3. \*Booth, Wayne, Gregory Colomb, and Joseph Williams. 2008. *The Craft of Research*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press. Chapters 7-10 (pp. 108-151).
4. **\*Read all literature reviews posted by your classmates.**

Week 12. April 23. Presentations 1

Ten-minute presentations.

Week 13. April 30. Presentations 2

Ten-minute presentations.