

**Urban Cultures Summer II 2020**  
**ANT F345C (78545), M-F, 1-2:30pm**  
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**Office Hours (SAC 4.158): by appointment.**

**Overview:** The city is one of humanity's most profound and unwieldy inventions. This course surveys the culture of cities, exploring their historical development and their current dynamism. Our perspective will encompass the great global cities as well as major urban areas in the United States. We will frame the urban experience from a number of perspectives, examining the distinctive forms of expressive culture, ethnic and racial conflict, and political or economic activity that cities generate. Students will gain an understanding of the powerful impact of new technologies, immigration, and gentrification on how cities grow and decline. There is a strong experiential learning component to this course; students will design and conduct mini-ethnographic projects on cultural dynamics here in Austin.

**Dynamics:** Through lectures, readings, and discussions, students will acquire an informed perspective on urbanism and be introduced to the methods and theories that anthropologists rely upon in analyzing urban settings. Lectures will frame the numerous dimensions that inform city life, while presenting students with a means of thinking synthetically about these complex interrelations. The readings feature a range of disciplinary perspectives on the culture of cities, but we will also develop a sustained attention to the work of urban ethnographers. Two exams will test your comprehension of basic dynamics, key concepts, and critical historical developments related to urbanism. Then a final digital ethnographic project will allow you to pull all the strands of the course together in an applied, practice-based approach to a topic of your interest.

**Grading and Course Requirements:**

- 1) Two exams = 25% each.
- 2) One ethnographic project (12 pages) = 40%
- 3) Daily writing (paragraph summaries of topics from the readings) and class participation (engaging in discussions of readings & lectures) = 10%
- 4) Attendance in daily Zoom sessions is required; if you are unable to attend a session, please inform me immediately of the circumstances.

**Required Texts:**

*Rethinking Urban Parks: Public Space and Cultural Diversity*, Setha Low et al.

*Triumph of the City*, Edward Glaeser

*Barrio Dreams: Puerto Ricans, Latinos, and the Neoliberal City*, Arlene Davila.

**Online Resources:**

AnthroSource [UT Library, database] <https://anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/>

*City & Society*: <http://sunta.org/publications/city-society/>

*New Geography*: <http://www.newgeography.com/>

City Lab (Atlantic) <http://www.citylab.com/>

Cities Project (NPR) <http://www.npr.org/series/155914958/npr-cities>

## **Class Schedule:**

**June 4:** Introduction.

**June 5:** Anthropology of the City:

Readings: *Rethinking Urban Parks*, Chp 1; *On the Plaza*, Chps 1 & 2; “Cultura in the Modern City”; *Barrio Dreams*, Introduction; and *Triumph*, Introduction.

## **The Origin and Design of Cities.**

**June 8:** Origins of Cities and Urban Design pt 1

Readings: *Triumph*, Chp 1; “Craving for Public Spaces,” and “Forced Out, *Evicted*

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/02/08/forced-out> ; <https://evictionlab.org/>

Assignment: Identify a potential site of social inquiry, physical or digital. Post to Canvas.

**June 9:** Urban Design pt 2: Grids and plazas.

Readings: *On the Plaza*, chp.4-5

## **The Industrial and Post-Industrial City.**

**June 10:** Industrial City, pt. 1: European origins

Readings: Engles, “Working Class Manchester”; *Triumph*, pgs 135-136 & 152-157.

Assignment: Identify an article focused on urban contexts/dynamics in an anthropology journal. Post a summary to Canvas.

**June 11:** Industrial City, pt. 2 Segregation and the inner city

Readings: *The Triumph*, Chps. 2-3, and Warner, “The Segregated City”; “How Racism Takes Place,” Lipsitz.

**June 12:** The Post Industrial City

Readings: *The Triumph*, Chp. 6-7; Harvey, “Time-Space Compression and the Postmodern Condition”; “LA as Postmodern,” Dear & Flusty.

**June 15:** Urban Ethnography

Readings: Kelley, “Looking for the REAL ‘Nigga’”; Goode, “How Urban Ethnography Counters Myths about the Poor”.

**June 16:** Infrastructure.

Readings: “Designing Urban Democracy: Mapping Scales of Urban Identity,” and “Water Wars in Mumbai,” *Public Culture*.

**June 17: EXAM.**

## **Code and Performance.**

**June 18:** Spatializing Culture: Discussion of ethnographic projects.

Readings: *Rethinking Urban Parks* Chapters 1-3; *Triumph*, Chp 8. “A Place in Town.”

Assignment: Post initial fieldwork ideas to Canvas.

**June 19:** Studying the City: Discussion of methods.

Readings: *Rethinking Urban Parks* Chapters 4-8; Lloyd, “The Celebrity Neighborhood.”

**June 22:** Reading the Urban: Discussion of research questions.

Readings: *Rethinking Urban Parks* Chapter 9; Stevenson, “Meaning and Memory: Reading the Urban Text” and “Imagining the City: Movies, Maps, and Cyberspace.”

Assignment: post field notes to Canvas.

**June 23**: Research on Cities: Discussion of research sources.

Readings: *Rethinking Urban Parks* Chapter 8

**June 24**: Symbolic Economy.

Readings: *Culture of Cities*, Chp.1 & 2

**June 25**: Climate Change and Cities

Readings: TBA

**June 26**: Report on fieldwork.

Assignment: Post field report to Canvas.

### **Consuming Cities.**

**June 29**: Disneyfication of Cities.

Readings: *Triumph of Cities*, Chp 5, and *Culture of Cities*, Chp. 5 & 6

**June 30**: Gentrification:

Readings: *Barrio Dreams*, Introduction and Chps. 2-3.

**July 1**: Contesting Public Culture

Readings: *Barrio Dreams*, Chps 4-6; *On the Plaza*, Chps 8 & 11.

**July 2**: Peer-review session [share drafts and field notes]

**July 3**: Fieldwork Day.

### **The Future of Cities.**

**July 6**: Public Health of Cities: History.

Readings: *The Triumph*, Chp. 4. And TBA

**July 7**: Public Health of Cities: History: Current.

Readings: TBA.

**July 8**: Housing Crisis.

Readings: TBA.

**July 9**: Exam.

**July 10**: Ethnographic Papers due. By 4 p.m.

### **Identifying an Ethnographic Site:**

After reading discussing chapters from June 5<sup>th</sup>, spend some time in a public place (physical or digital). The objective is simply to try out Setha Low’s perspective on the *construction of social space*. By observing how different people occupy a similar locale, Low tries to recognize social relations and social practices in space, as well as to demonstrate how public space becomes meaningful to users. She considers how differences in the use of space define social groups, and she examines the types of boundaries these users construct. This is what Low means by the “social construction of space”: “the actual transformation of space—through peoples’ social exchanges, memories, images, and daily use of the material setting—into scenes and actions that convey meaning.”

**So pick a place and observe it. Consider its design features and pay attention to patterns of usage. Then try to articulate what kinds of meanings are attached to or contested in this place. Can you picture yourself developing an ethnographic perspective on this place?**

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 512-471-6259, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

UT Honor Code: <http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/ch01/index.html>)  
Familiarize yourself with University statements about plagiarism and the consequences of plagiarizing: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/plagiarism/>  
Penalties for violation of this Code can include failure of the course and University disciplinary action.