

CLASS SYLLABUS
Spring 2007 (Revised)

Urban Sociology

HTS 3012 12:05-1:25 p.m. TR

Instructor: Dr. Willie Pearson, Jr.

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Office Hours: By appointment

Required Readings: See Course Calendar

Texts: Mark Abrahamson, Urban Enclaves: Identity and Place in the World. NY: Worth. 2nd Edition, 2006.

J. John Palen, The Urban World. NY: McGraw-Hill. 7th Edition, 2005.

During my regularly scheduled office hours, if you are unable to meet or if I am unavailable (due to meetings or speaking engagements), please leave a voice-mail message or speak with me after class and we can set up an appointment for an alternative time.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

Only during the last century did any nation have the majority of its population living in urban areas. For the first time in history, more than half the people on earth will live in urban areas by the end of this decade. By 2025, two-thirds of the world's population will live in urban places where they will likely exert enormous strains on the environment. The population of the world's largest cities is growing over a million people a week. Today, four in five Americans live in metropolitan places. A number of suburban dwellers, for a variety of social and economic reasons, are returning to the central cities in ever increasing numbers. This pattern of gentrification is transforming inner city neighborhoods across the U.S. and, in the process, setting off an intense debate regarding the displacement of the poor and working classes.

This course has as its primary objectives the examination of: (1) the association between social behavior and spatial characteristics, (2) distributional patterns of social problems, (3) the impact of social structures within urban settings, and (4) the usefulness of theoretical orientations and social science constructs.

OBJECTIVES

After studying the materials discussed in class, students should be able to:

1. Discuss the history and development of urban sociology.

2. Discuss the contributions of Ernest Burgess, Georg Simmel, Louis Wirth, Elijah Anderson, W.E.B. DuBois, Judith A. Graber, Robyne S. Turner, and William J. Wilson to urban sociology.
3. Explain why social problems (e.g., crime, homelessness, substandard housing, environmental justice, affordable housing, sprawl, polarization, etc.) vary within and across urban settings.
4. Explain how cities are spatially and socially organized.
5. Explain the symbolic significance of urban legends, how they spread, and why they persist.
6. Critically assess the relative merits of the major theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches in advancing an understanding of determinants of urbanization.
7. Place U.S. urbanization and suburbanization in a global perspective.
8. Discuss the current status of the sustainable community movement.

FORMAT AND EVALUATIVE REQUIREMENTS

The course will focus primarily on discussions and presentations. The final grade will be determined from the average score derived from class (individual and group) participation, 1-2-page typed chapter critiques* each week—by Sunday 5 pm, and one co-authored (group) research paper (15-20 double-space, typed pages, including references, appendices, etc.*), which will be presented in class. Optional essay exams (mid-term and final) are available upon request NLT January 18. All requirements are weighed equally and will be based on the following scale:

A = 100-93 B = 92-85 C = 84-75 D = 74-65 F = below 65

***Submit electronically in Word format ONLY.**

Over the course of the semester, each student will serve as a co-discussion leader by presenting a 15-20 minute synthesis or overview of the assigned reading(s), after which the discussion will be opened to the entire class.

All assignments are scheduled for each week. Each student is required to be thoroughly prepared for each class. All assignments are given far enough in advance so as not to warrant tardy assignments. Each student is responsible for signing the attendance sheet and managing his/her participation score sheet.

Approved absences typically include: illness, family and personal emergencies, and official representation of GT in extracurricular events. To the extent possible, email and leave a voice message regarding expected absences.

NOTE: The course requirements will be adjusted to serve the needs and capabilities of ESL and LD students. The Georgia Tech Honor Code applies to all student work (SEE: www.deanofstudents.gatech.edu/Honor/).