Sociology 619: Urban Organization

Spring 2000. MWF. 10:00-10:50AM.

12 Newcomb Hall

Professor: Kevin F. Gotham

Sociology: 220 Newcomb Hall
Phone: 862-3004.

Office Hours: 2:00-3:00PM, MWF, all other times by appointment.

Course Description: The aim of this course is to examine and explain the causes and consequences of urban growth and change in the United States and around the world. Specifically, we will examine the rise of modernity and the impact of industrialization on cities, urbanism and suburbanism as ways of life, urban policy and planning, and the transformation of urban space in the post-World War II era. We will explore the major theoretical perspectives in urban sociology and examine the various representations, images, and assumptions urban scholars bring to bear to study the city. In addition, we will learn how social science research methods and theory can play a critical role in evaluating urban policy and planning. In the second half of the semester, we will explore the political economy of tourism and the various tourism strategies (gambling, sports, theme parks, and so forth) currently being used by cities to transform themselves into spaces of consumption and leisure. This course is the capstone course for the Department of Sociology's minor in Urban Studies and its Concentration in Urban Social Problems (CUSP). Students fulfilling the concentration or urban minor must be simultaneously enrolled in Soc. 629.

Prerequisite: nine credits of sociology or approval of instructor.

Required Reading:

Books:


**Articles:**


These articles are on file in the Department of Sociology (220 Newcomb Hall). Refer to the course schedule for dates of reading assignments.

**Course Requirements**

The course will follow a seminar format that combines lecture material and group discussion. It is essential that each student complete the readings before each class session and come prepared to discuss the material. All students are required to attend every class period unless they are ill or prevented from attending by exceptional circumstances. Preparedness, attendance and participation are expected and will have a bearing on final grades. I do not give extra credit, extra assignments, nor other opportunities for improving grades. Requirements for this course include participation in an internship, an individual research project that connects the internship experience with the subject matter of urban sociology, an in-class presentation of the research project, a series of critical essays, and class attendance and participation.

**Internship and Research Paper (40 percent of final grade).**

All students are required to participate in an internship for a minimum of 30 hours. The primary goal of this internship is to link your community work and experience in the New Orleans community to the course material.

There are three components to any internship activity: service, personal insight, and academic knowledge. The service component provides the context and content of the volunteering experience as you enter into the community to donate time and skills. The personal experience of volunteering often forces you to learn about yourself, to question your own beliefs, values, prejudices, ways of viewing the world, and the like. Academic learning occurs as you connect classroom learning with the real world, observing and participating in practitioners' daily activities. The internship work will help reinforce the theoretical concepts and ideas introduced in the textbook and discussed in class through interactions with people in the New Orleans community. You will discover on your own the congruencies and discrepancies between theories and reality, and more important, learn to think sociologically.

Your internship grade will be determined in three ways:
First, you must turn in a form signed by your supervisor confirming that you have volunteered the full 30 hours. This form is due in class on the last day of school (Friday, April 28). Second, you are also required to attend at least four "rap" sessions where you will discuss your internship experience with others. Rap sessions will be in-class sessions held on the following dates: January 26 (Wednesday), March 1 (Wednesday), March 31 (Friday), and April 17 (Monday).

Lastly, you are required to write a 12-15 page paper that links the course material - e.g., concepts, theories, and related academic knowledge about cities and urban life - with your internship experience. This paper is also due in class on the last day of school (Friday, April 28). The final paper must be 12-15 pages excluding the cover page, references, and tables and figures. Papers are to be typed and double-spaced with one inch margins and page numbers in the top right hand corner. You are to address your final paper to an audience composed of people who know nothing of the material you read, the concepts you use, and data you have collected. Grammar, organization, spelling, and clarity all count. No late papers will be accepted. Below are my expectations for this paper.

**Description**
Very briefly describe your internship site, including its official purpose, the clientele it serves, the structure of the program, the training and use of personnel, and your role as a volunteer. When you are writing about your site, keep in mind the significant differences between comments that are descriptive (observations), comments that discuss your feelings about what you are describing (reactions), and comments that detail conclusions about what you saw (interpretations). You should not spend a lot of time describing mundane or ongoing activities of the various small groups or their activities at the site, or what you did each time you visited the site. Keep in mind that your description should provide preliminary information that will give the necessary context for the more important components of the paper: your analysis and reflection.

**Analysis**
Provide a critical analysis of your internship experience. Discuss how the concepts from the readings are illustrated in your activities or in the group's operations or the community's organization. Answer the following questions: What kinds of urban problems are being addressed by the community organization(s) you are involved with? How successful do you think these organizations are at identifying the causes and consequences of these urban problems? What impacts do you see the organization or agencies making on the New Orleans community? Which concepts and theories addressed in the textbook and class help you to understand the community or the group you are involved with?

Finally, and most important, compare and contrast the agency and community (i.e., New Orleans) you are working in with similar types of agencies in another city (your choice).

Answer the following questions: what are the similarities and differences between the types of urban problems addressed by the agency you are working in and other agencies in the city you have chosen to compare? How are the urban problems in that city different from the problems in New Orleans? Explain why they are similar or why they are different. How successful have these agencies been at addressing urban problems in the other city? Address the policy impact of these agencies on the larger urban community and compare and contrast this impact with the agency you are working with in New Orleans. Answering this last set of questions will require you to do your own comparative urban research. You must show that you are familiar with the current sociological research on the urban problems, policy or program that you are exploring through your internship and comparative research. You should include other scholars' empirical findings, concepts, and theories that link your study with existing scholarly research on the same topic.
Reflection

Discuss what you learned from your internship experience. This may include discussions of emotional responses, contemplation of political implications, and reflections on your own personal views of how the internship experience has caused you to think differently about life. What impact is your internship work having on you? How does your internship experience relate to your understanding of class readings, course concepts, and different theories of cities and urban life? How has your internship experience affected your views of cities and New Orleans?

Your paper should build upon your practical experiences at the internship site and reflect your thoughtful engagement with the subject matter of urban sociology. You should deliberately apply the sociological concepts and theories learned in the class to your description, analysis, and reflection. The three parts - description, analysis, and reflection - should not be kept artificially separate, but should instead be interwoven as appropriate throughout your paper.

Finally, you must include a References section that contains between 10-15 references and a Methodological Appendix that contains a description of how your comparative research was done. You should identify the types and sources of data collected. You should draw upon written histories, archives, census materials, newspaper files, planning department documents, and any other sources you can locate. You should include data in tables, graphs, and/or figures if you have large amounts of quantitative data. Put each table, graph, or figure on a separate page with a descriptive title over it. In the text of the research paper, refer to the table or figure by number and then explain it.

A two-page, double-spaced proposal is due Monday, January 31. See chapter 1 (pp.1-25), "Getting Started," in Guide to Writing Sociology Papers for direction on how to write a proposal.

Do not delay in beginning your research. The comparative aspect of your internship project will require you to gather data from the following library and documentary resources: scholarly journals, newspapers, magazines, congressional testimony, archival material, planning department documents, government reports and analyses, census bureau data, books, and other written documents. It is recommended that you read Part One (pp.1-62), chapter 7 (pp. 96-114), and Part Three (pp. 186-87) in A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers for directions on choosing a research topic, using library resources, locating references and material, organizing information, and writing the research paper. You should search for data at all available libraries, archives, internet web sites, and anywhere else you can find material. The following are links to a variety of resources useful for urban research:

City Net (www.city.net)
Cyburbia (www.cyburbia.org)
Planners Web (www.webcom.com/~pcj/welcome.htm)
Urban Institute (www.urban.org)
U.S. Census Bureau (www.census.gov)

See pp. 63-72 in A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers for searching online information. In addition to references in the required reading for the class, you should also explore the following library resources for locating articles in sociology journals for your research project. Some of these library resources include, among others, Social Science Index, Sociological Abstracts, Social Science Citation Index, and Sociofile.
You may not use interviews, surveys and questionnaires, focus groups, participant observation, or any other forms of original data collection that involve human subjects. You may cite and refer to other researchers' studies on human subjects (as secondary sources). You must use the guidelines in chapter 4 of *A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers* for acknowledging sources, and listing bibliographic references and citations. Be sure to make appropriate reference citations to other authors' work when quoting directly from them and when paraphrasing them, otherwise you run the risk of being charged with plagiarism.

All students are required to abide by the Tulane University Honor Code. This means that "the presence of a student's name on any work submitted in completion of an academic assignment is considered to be an assurance that the work and ideas are the result of the student's own intellectual effort, stated in her or his own words, and produced independently, unless clear and explicit acknowledgment of the sources for the work and ideas is included. This principle applies to papers, tests, homework assignments, artistic productions, laboratory reports, computer programs, and other assignments" (Tulane Undergraduate Catalog 1999-2001, p. 15).

2. Oral Presentation of Research Project (20 percent of final grade).

All students are required to present their research during a scheduled class period. The length of the presentation should be no more than 15-20 minutes. Students should prepare and rehearse their presentation to do it smoothly and not exceed the time limit. Make your presentation using an outline or note cards; do not prewrite your whole presentation and then read it. The purpose of the oral presentation is to show that you understand key concepts, definitions, main findings, and can effectively communicate your research to a group of peers. Here are suggestions for oral presentation of the research paper:

**Introduction**
(a) indicate what the purpose of your internship is and why you chose it (why you felt it was interesting and important).
(b) State your main finding(s).

**Methodology**
(a) describe how you did your comparative research (if you relied on books and library references, indicate the most useful ones; if you consulted planning documents and government reports, indicate which ones; etc.).
(b) If you had preconceived expectations, opinions, or hypotheses about what you would find out, state what they were.
(c) Describe special problems or difficulties that hindered or limited your research.

**Findings**
(a) Describe the most important thing(s) you found out or learned about your topic.
(b) Consider the use of charts, tables, illustrations, etc. to make your presentation findings more effective.

**Discussion**
(a) In what ways were you surprised by your findings, or did they confirm what you expected?
(b) Make connections between your research findings and the concepts, theories, and findings we have discussed in class.
(c) Identify any unanswered questions from your research that could be researched in the future.

For an effective presentation, you should prepare a one-page handout to be distributed to the class the day before your presentation. It may contain an outline of your whole presentation or you can use it to communicate key concepts, findings, illustrations, and bibliographic references. Remember that you only
have 15-20 minutes to present your work. Do not ramble; be as succinct as possible. At each presentation four students will be required to ask one question to the presenter. The questions are designed to encourage intellectual exploration, evaluate strengths and weaknesses of the research, and identify the sociological implications of the research. The students who present their research on the first day of scheduled presentations will be required to ask questions to presenters the next class period; students who present on the second day will ask questions to presenters on the third day, and so on. Those students who present on the last day are required to ask one question to the presenters on the first day of scheduled presentations.

3. Ten Critical Essays (30 percent of final grade)
Critical Essays are short papers (2-3 double-spaced pages) that convey your thoughts about and reactions to a particular reading assignment. Students are required to write ten critical essays on the assigned reading during the semester. Critical Essays should accomplish the following two goals:

1. Reflect your thoughtful engagement with and consideration of the reading assignment.
2. Include questions or issues that you would like to have the class discuss.

Here are questions to guide your thinking about the reading and completing the critical essays:
What are the central argument(s) in the reading?
What evidence does the author use to support the argument?
What other lines of reasoning or thinking occur to you as a result of reading this selection?
What are the strengths and weaknesses of this chapter or article? If you were studying this issue, what would you have done similarly or differently?

See pp. 73-77 in A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers for directions on writing a critical essay. The critical essays are due at the beginning of class and will be graded on a scale of A, B, C, and D. Bring two copies of your essay to class. One grade will be deducted for each day the essay is late. That means if you turn in your essay after class on the day it is due you will be deducted one letter grade, two letter grades for essays coming in after 5:00PM the day the paper is due, and three letter grades for essays that are turned in after 5:00PM on the day after the due date. Students will be divided into three alphabetically assigned groups and will turn in critical essays according to the course schedule (see below).

4. Class Attendance and Participation (10 percent of final grade).
Ten percent of your grade will be based on my evaluation of your participation in class. Class participation includes sharing thoughts and ideas, observations, assessments, and questions during class time. Thoughtful participation means regularly attending class and being prepared to discuss the assigned subject matter. To encourage class participation and the sharing of ideas, you should identify one or two questions from the assigned readings that you would like to discuss in class. You should always ask yourself how the assigned reading for the day can help you with your own research project.

Course Grades:
Internship/ Research Project 40% of final grade.
Oral Presentation 20% of final grade.
Critical Essays 30% of final grade.
Class Attendance and Participation 10% of final grade.
TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEKS 1-2: Modernity, Urbanization, and Urbanism.

1/12 (Wednesday). Introduction to the Class.

1/14 (Friday).

1/17 (Monday). MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION. NO SCHOOL

1/19 (Wednesday).
- Research Workshop at the Howard Tilton Library. Meet at the Library.

1/21 (Friday).

- CRITICAL ESSAY #1 FOR GROUP #1 AND GROUP #2 DUE.


1/24 (Monday).

- CRITICAL ESSAY #1 FOR GROUP #3 DUE.

1/26 (Wednesday).
- Rap Session.

1/28 (Friday).

- CRITICAL ESSAY #2 FOR GROUP #1 DUE.

1/31 (Monday).
- RESEARCH PROPOSALS DUE IN CLASS.

WEEK 4-5: City Life and Community
2/2 (Wednesday).
- CRITICAL ESSAY #2 FOR GROUP #2 DUE.

2/4 (Friday).
- CRITICAL ESSAY #2 FOR GROUP #3 DUE.

2/7 (Monday).
- CRITICAL ESSAY #3 FOR GROUP #1 DUE.

2/9 (Wednesday).
- CRITICAL ESSAY #3 FOR GROUP #2 DUE.

WEEKS 5-8: Social Conflict and the Transformation of Urban Space in the Twentieth Century.

2/11 (Friday).
- CRITICAL ESSAY #3 FOR GROUP #3 DUE.

2/14 (Monday).
- CRITICAL ESSAY #4 FOR GROUP #1 DUE.

2/16 (Wednesday).
- Langdon Winner. "Silicon Valley Mystery House." Pp. 31-60 in *Variations on a Theme Park*.
- CRITICAL ESSAY #4 FOR GROUP #2 DUE.

2/18 (Friday).
- CRITICAL ESSAY #4 FOR GROUP #3 DUE.

2/21 (Monday).
- CRITICAL ESSAY #5 FOR GROUP #1 DUE.
2/23 (Wednesday)  
- CRITICAL ESSAY #5 FOR GROUP #2 DUE.

2/25 (Friday)  
- CRITICAL ESSAY #5 FOR GROUP #3 DUE.

2/28 (Monday)  
- CRITICAL ESSAY #6 FOR GROUP #1 DUE.

3/1 (Wednesday)  
- Rap Session.

3/3 (Friday)  
  
WEEK 9: Mardi Gras Break. NO SCHOOL. 3/6 (Monday) - 3/10 (Friday).

WEEKS 10-13. Entertainment, Consumption, and Tourism in the Contemporary City I: The Rise of "Fantasy City."

3/13 (Monday)  
- Chapter 1. "'At Prices All Can Afford': The 'Golden Age' of Popular Urban Entertainment in America." Pp. 15-30 in *Fantasy City.*  
- CRITICAL ESSAY #6 FOR GROUP #2 DUE.

3/15 (Wednesday)  
- CRITICAL ESSAY #6 FOR GROUP #3 DUE.

3/17 (Friday)  
- CRITICAL ESSAY #7 FOR GROUP #1 DUE.

3/20 (Monday)  
- Chapter 3. "'Cities Are Fun': Entertainment Returns to the City Center." Pp. 51-63 in *Fantasy City.*  
- CRITICAL ESSAY #7 FOR GROUP #2 DUE.

3/22 (Wednesday)  
- Chapter 4. "'Sanitized Razzmatazz': Technology, Simulated Experience, and the Culture of Consumption." Pp. 67-78 in *Fantasy City.*  
- CRITICAL ESSAY #7 FOR GROUP #3 DUE.
3/24 (Friday).
- CRITICAL ESSAY #8 FOR GROUP #1 DUE.

3/27 (Monday).
- CRITICAL ESSAY #8 FOR GROUP #2 DUE.

3/29 (Wednesday).
- CRITICAL ESSAY #8 FOR GROUP #3 DUE.

3/31 (Friday).
- Rap Session

4/3 (Monday).
- CRITICAL ESSAY #9 FOR GROUP #1 DUE.

4/5 (Wednesday).
- CRITICAL ESSAY #9 FOR GROUP #2 DUE.

4/7 (Friday).
- CRITICAL ESSAY #9 FOR GROUP #3 DUE.

WEEK 14: Entertainment, Consumption, and Tourism in the Contemporary City II: Regional and Metropolitan Planning for New Orleans.

4/10 (Monday).
- CRITICAL ESSAY #10 FOR GROUP #1 DUE.

4/12 (Wednesday).
- CRITICAL ESSAY #10 FOR GROUP #2 DUE.

4/14 (Friday).
- "Land With a Plan." New Orleans Times-Picayune. 5/24/98. Comparison of Master Planning in Portland, OR and New Orleans, LA.
- CRITICAL ESSAY #10 FOR GROUP #3 DUE.


4/17 (Monday). Rap Session; Oral Presentations.

4/19 (Wednesday). Oral Presentations.

4/21 (Friday). EASTER BREAK. NO SCHOOL.


4/28 (Friday). LAST DAY. Final Papers due.