

USP 300 Intro to Urban Studies Spring 2024 | Remote

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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course introduces the interdisciplinary field of urban studies drawing on urban planning, economics, geography, sociology, politics, and the humanities to provide basic concepts for understanding the urbanized world of the twenty-first century. We examine cities as economic, social, and political systems and the myriad ways in which people have thought about cities. We also work to understand the mechanisms and structures that make cities and urban areas possible. While we will look at global cities in some aspects of the course, a majority of the course focuses on cities in the US.

Broadly, learning objectives are to:

- Broaden the ways students think about cities and the dynamic social, political, and economic forces that shape them
- Develop an inter- and multi-disciplinary approach to the city as an object of study
- Understand the historical and systematic processes through which cities derived specific cultural, spatial, and political forms
- Develop a critical familiarity with the issues relevant to modern cities
- Develop an understanding of the structural forms of power and oppression that haunt cities, particularly the urban history and reproduction of racism and white supremacy
- Develop a creative, historically informed, socially just imagination regarding better urban futures
- Enhance critical thinking skills; students will need to learn to “look behind the curtain” and ask “for whom” questions to be successful
- Develop research, communication, and planning strategies and convey knowledge and ideas clearly in assignments and in discussions

COURSE CONSIDERATIONS

1. A note on my pedagogy: In this course, I will present you with challenging, sometimes controversial material. My hope is that you will approach the course’s materials earnestly and engage on the grounds laid out by the course materials. A significant goal for me, as an educator, is to provide space for students to struggle with and develop a comprehension of the largely unjust processes and systems that have led us to where we are. But I also hope to make space for students to develop their imagination for better futures – what they look like and what it will take to get there.
2. This is an asynchronous/remote course, so being organized and disciplined is of utmost importance. The course is 4 credits, which means you should expect to spend roughly 8-10 hours per week reading/watching course materials and working on assignments. As for any of the above, I am reasonable: if life happens and you need help or accommodation, please don’t be afraid to contact me and I will do my best to provide appropriate assistance.
3. A note on readings: There is no requirement to buy anything for this course. However, I have increasingly been running into issues with paywalls; if you encounter a paywall, please contact me and I’ll find a way around it. Lastly, everything is listed in the order you should read/watch/listen.

ASSIGNMENTS

❖ Discussion Posts (2.5 points/week; 25 points total)

Each week you will post to the discussion forum on Canvas; you should plan to write 3-5 sentences that serve as a general reaction to the week's material (i.e., answer the question "what stood out to you in this week's material and why?"). You will also need to respond to two classmates' posts each week – make sure to be respectful, constructive, and mindful of your own positionality (for example, avoiding the "royal we") in your responses. Initial posts are worth 1.5 points; responses are .5 points apiece.

Posts are due Friday of each week before midnight; **responses** are due Sunday, also before midnight. This is a "show up" assignment, so plan accordingly – no make ups or extensions!

❖ Assignment 1 (25 points)

For this assignment, you will read Ursula Le Guin's *The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas* (PDF in "Syllabus" module on Canvas) and write an analytical essay. Use the questions below as guidance, and make sure to ground your writing in concepts and examples from the course:

- Provide a brief overview of Le Guin's allegory
 - What is Le Guin getting at, i.e., what's the "take home" from this allegory?
 - Do you see this as a warning, a lesson, or just a story about "the way things are"?
- How can we use Le Guin's allegory about Omelas (which is Salem O backwards, btw) to think about cities?
 - What does this allegory say about how cities are socially and physically constructed? What does it say about the values that are held by cities and their people?
 - What do you make of those that refuse to be a part of the "utopian" city, i.e., those who walk away?
 - What does the allegory say about the future of cities?

Your submission to Canvas should be in essay form (e.g., PDF/.docx), but a slide deck is OK if that is a better format for you. Whichever format you choose, your essay should be roughly 750-1000 words and should cite at least 2 readings from the first four weeks of the course. Keep in mind the more well-developed essays – which means toward the higher end of the word count, more than 2 sources from the course, a cohesive and original analysis – will score higher grades.

If you need help with essay writing basics, the following website has a concise description of what a typical essay should accomplish (i.e. introduction, make an argument, support that argument using observations from your media, consider a counterargument, conclude): <https://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/pages/essay-structure>. You can also utilize PSU's Writing Center (<https://www.pdx.edu/writing-center/>).

❖ Assignment 2: Media Analysis (25 points)

For this essay, you will analyze a film, a TV show episode(s), a book, an album, or other media in which a city or cities plays a significant role. In your essay, consider these questions:

- How is the city represented, depicted, and/or imagined?
- What forces shaped the city in your media (you might need to generalize using the course's materials)? How does your chosen media address (or ignore) the city's past?

- What does your chosen media say about urban life? Who is the city for? Who has the power to change the city?
- What urban issues does your chosen media emphasize? How effective is the depiction of these issues?
- What does your chosen media exclude or miss? How is the city haunted by what's *not* represented in your chosen media?
- How does your chosen media deal with social, technological, and economic change?

Importantly, your essay should make connections between your chosen media and course material. As such, the paper should include (at least) 2 citations of course materials and (at least) 2 additional citations from outside research. The paper should be roughly 750-1000 words and include a works cited page (citations style is up to you). Essays will be due before the end of week 8 (Sunday before midnight) on Canvas.

As was the case with assignment 1, if you need help with essay writing basics the following website is helpful: <https://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/pages/essay-structure>. You can also utilize PSU's Writing Center (<https://www.pdx.edu/writing-center/>).

❖ **Assignment 3: Imagining Other Cities (25 points)**

What kind of city do you want to live in? In this assignment your task is to think about urban transformation; that is, what better cities might look like. This is an opportunity to foster a creative and critical imagination that is grounded in history but focused on the future. As such, you should imagine yourself decades from now living in your ideal city and reflecting on what it took to make your ideal city possible. I will post a more detailed prompt on Canvas in the Syllabus module, but the idea is that you are being interviewed about how your city was transformed into an ideal city. Don't be afraid to be radical – after all, “radical” simply means to consider problems *at their root*.

Your final project can be a slide deck or a written essay. If using a slide deck, use some visuals/images to bring your slides to life. If writing an essay, make sure to use rich descriptions to help readers visualize your city. In either case, you'll need to cite at least 3 resources from the class and another 3 from outside sources and a work cited page. Because some of the work for this assignment can be done using visuals, there's no length requirement. Keep in mind that the highest scores will require essays/slide decks that are well developed, coherent, imaginative/creative, and grounded in course materials and topics. Final projects should be submitted to Canvas before midnight on Wednesday of finals week (6/12).

Grading Policy

Unless otherwise noted, my general grading policy will follow Prof. Bates's philosophy on evaluating student work:

- An A assignment demonstrates original thought and synthesis of ideas, sophisticated, cogent analysis, and is clearly written or presented. Outstanding work.
- A B assignment presents above average analysis with appropriate evidence to support the ideas and is clearly written or presented. Very good work.
- A C assignment shows a basic level of understanding, with analysis limited to the most obvious arguments. Writing is competent. Adequate work.
- A D assignment misunderstands or misrepresents the material or is so poorly written or presented as to obscure the analysis. Inadequate work.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Part 1: The Forces That Have Shaped Cities	
Week 1	Settler Colonialism: Land and Property <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: The Settler Colonial City Project, Mapping Chicagou • Read: Thrush, The Haunted City (from <i>Native Seattle</i>) • Read: The True Native New Yorkers [...] • Read: What is the Land Back Movement? • Read: Land Back / Cities Back
Week 2	Industrialization: Urbanization & Reform Movements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch: Crash Course Industrialization • Read: Engels, The Great Towns (excerpt) • Read: Bender & Bender, The Industrial City • Read: Hutter, Chapter 5 (107-122, stop at “Implementations...”)
Week 3	Race: Housing Segregation & Institutionalized Racism in Urban America <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: DuBois, The Philadelphia Negro (Excerpt) • Read: Gibson, Bleeding Albina • Watch: Housing Segregation and Redlining in America • Watch: Dodger Stadium’s Violent Origin Story • Read: Space is the Place: The Architecture of Afrofuturism
Week 4	Globalization: Urbanization in the “Global South” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Planet of Slums, Chapters 1 & 6 • Read: Inside Mokoko • Watch: Why Jakarta is Sinking
Week 5	Gender & Sexuality: Feminist and Queer Cities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Feminist Cities, Introduction & Chapter 1 • Watch: How Stonewall Became Famous • Read: Why We Need Queer Urbanism • Read: For the City ‘Not Yet Here’
Part 2: Modern Cities & Urban Issues	
Week 6	“Post-Industrial” Cities: Detroit, A Case Study <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Detroit Arcadia • Read: Detroitism • Read: The Post-Post-Apocalyptic Detroit • Read: The Whitewashing of Detroit’s Culinary Scene • Watch: Why Detroit is Tearing Down a Highway
Week 7	Urban Issues 1: Gentrification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Smith, Class Struggle on Avenue B • Read: Death by Gentrification • Read: What is Artwashing? • Read: Fighting Gentrification & Displacement • [Optional] Watch: Priced Out Portland’s History of Redlining and Segregation
Week 8	Urban Issues 2: Climate, Housing, “Public” Space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Adaptation • Watch: Rising Tide, Priced Out in Miami • Read: Martin vs The City of Boise • Read: Fighting for Anthony: The Struggle to Save Portland, Oregon • Read: Untimely Futures

Week 9	Urban Issues 3: Urban (In)Justice & Social Movements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Cowen, The City and the City (and the City) • Read: How Urban Design Can Make or Break Protests • Read: Kern, City of Protest • Watch: The Origins of Policing in America • Watch: Geographies of Racial Capitalism
Part 3: Urban Futures	
Week 10	Urban Politics: Imagining Other Cities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Future Cities: Reimagining the City Critically • Read: Right to the city: can this growing social movement [...] • Watch: The Future of Cities • Read: Solarpunk Cities, Notes for a Manifesto • Read: A Secretive LA Group (Crosswalk Collective) • Read: Indigenous Development in Vancouver

Learning in unprecedented times (borrowed from Prof. McSherry)

The last few years have been stressful for students and faculty alike. I aim to create space for inquiry and excellence, but also to acknowledge the intense logistical challenges and cognitive load we are experiencing. If health, technology, caregiving etc. complications are influencing your learning, please let me know so that we can adjust accordingly. I aim not to penalize you for the impact of these challenges on your performance. Communication is key, please reach out if you are feeling frustrated, overwhelmed, or otherwise in need of support.

POLICIES & RESOURCES

Co-creating a high-quality learning environment. Creating a high-quality learning environment takes effort on everyone's part. I will: provide a provocative, safe, and inclusive environment for exploring ideas; offer a variety of kinds of learning experiences; respect the knowledge and experiences that you bring with you into our virtual classroom, as all of us are both learners and teachers; and provide clear information about what is expected and encourage improvement.

For your part, *please ...*

- *Read/watch carefully.* Be able to summarize the main points, and note anything that confuses you. Also be sure to note things that you find particularly provocative.
- *Take notes!* Material from readings, lectures, and videos are all an integral part of this learning experience, so be sure to take notes!
- *Show respect for your fellow students and instructor.* We may question and challenge one another's ideas, but we should make sure to always do so in a respectful manner with the goal of mutual learning. Try to understand ideas from various perspectives with an open mind. If you disagree with someone's comment, you are welcome to express a different point of view, but we will always extend courtesy and consideration to each other.
- *Take pride in your work.* Make sure that the work is your own (see Academic Conduct and Integrity below), and make sure that it represents you well. Please re-read and revise your assignments before turning them in.

Technology: We will use technology for any virtual meetings and recordings in this course. Our use of such technology is governed by FERPA, the [Acceptable Use Policy](#) and PSU's [Student Code of Conduct](#). A record of all meetings and recordings is kept and stored by PSU, in accordance with the Acceptable Use Policy and FERPA. Your instructor will not share recordings of your class activities outside of course participants, which include your fellow students, TAs/GAs/Mentors, and any guest faculty or community-based learning partners that

we may engage with. You may not share recordings outside of this course. Doing so may result in disciplinary action.

Policy on Academic Integrity

PSU takes academic integrity very seriously. As a PSU student, you are expected to adhere to the PSU Student Code of Conduct (see: <https://www.pdx.edu/dos/psu-student-code-conduct>). Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. The PSU Student Code of Conduct defines academic misconduct as follows:

(9) Academic Misconduct. Academic Misconduct is defined as, actual or attempted, fraud, deceit, or unauthorized use of materials prohibited or inappropriate in the context of the academic assignment. Unless otherwise specified by the faculty member, all submissions, whether in draft or final form, must either be the Student's own work, or must clearly acknowledge the source(s). Academic Misconduct includes, but is not limited to: (a) cheating, (b) fraud, (c) plagiarism, such as word for word copying, using borrowed words or phrases from original text into new patterns without attribution, or paraphrasing another writer's ideas; (d) the buying or selling of all or any portion of course assignments and research papers; (e) performing academic assignments (including tests and examinations) in another person's stead; (f) unauthorized disclosure or receipt of academic information; (g) falsification of research data (h) unauthorized collaboration; (i) using the same paper or data for several assignments or courses without proper documentation; (j) unauthorized alteration of student records; and (k) academic sabotage, including destroying or obstructing another student's work.

Students are responsible for knowing both in-class behavior and rules governing use of materials in academic work. Plagiarism includes both other students' work and/or anything from the internet (including Wikipedia) that is not properly cited. Any student found plagiarizing work or violating any part of PSU's academic integrity policy will receive no credit for the assignment and will not receive an opportunity to make up the work.

Student Resources

Access and Inclusion for Students with Disabilities. PSU values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to fostering mutual respect and full participation for all students. My goal is to create a learning environment that is equitable, useable, inclusive, and welcoming. If any aspects of instruction or course design result in barriers to your inclusion or learning, please notify me. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides reasonable accommodations for students who encounter barriers in the learning environment. If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and feel you need accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations. Call 503-725-4150 or email drc@pdx.edu. The DRC website is <https://www.pdx.edu/drc>. If you already have accommodations, please contact me to make sure that I have received a faculty notification letter and discuss your accommodations.

Title IX. Portland State is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of prohibited discrimination and sexual harassment (sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and gender or sex-based harassment and stalking). If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or sexual harassment, know that help and support are available. Information about PSU's support services on campus, including confidential services and reporting options, can be found on PSU's Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response website at: <http://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault/get-help> or you may call a confidential IPV Advocate at

503-725-5672 or schedule Online at <https://psuwrc.youcanbook.me> . You may report any incident of discrimination or discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment, to:

- PSU's Title IX Coordinator: Julie Caron by calling 503-725-4410, via email at titleixcoordinator@pdx.edu or in person at Richard and Maureen Neuberger Center (RMNC), 1600 SW 4th Ave, Suite 830
- Deputy Title IX Coordinator: Yesenia Gutierrez by calling 503-725-4413, via email at yesenia.gutierrez.gdi@pdx.edu or in person at RMNC, 1600 SW 4th Ave, Suite 830

Please be aware that all PSU faculty members and instructors are required to report information of an incident that may constitute prohibited discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence. This means that if you tell me about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence that may have violated university policy or student code of conduct, I have to share the information with my supervisor, the University's Title IX Coordinator or the Office of the Dean of Student Life. However, the Title IX Coordinators will keep the information confidential and refer you to a confidential advocate. For more information about Title IX please complete the required student module *Creating a Safe Campus* in your D2L.

Other resources you should know about:

- For information on assistance with food, housing, financial, utility, and childcare, please visit: <https://www.pdx.edu/dos/student-resources>
- The Office of Diversity & Multicultural Student Services (Smith Memorial Union 425) provides structured, academic support service, advising, referrals, and advocacy for first-generation college students, low- income and others facing special challenges. Please visit: <https://www.pdx.edu/diversity-multicultural-student-services/>
- The Learning Center (Millar Library 245) mission is to foster the learning process by empowering PSU students to accomplish their academic and personal goals. In addition to helping with current coursework, academic support services can assist in developing effective learning strategies. <http://www.pdx.edu/tutoring/>
- The Writing Center (Cramer 188) will help you with all varieties of projects, including class assignments, resumes, application essays, presentations, and creative writing. It aims to help writers at any stage of the writing process, from brainstorming to the final draft. You can schedule an appointment online and their website also suggests ideas and strategies for completing writing assignments. <http://www.writingcenter.pdx.edu/>
- It can be challenging to do your best in class if you have trouble meeting basic needs like safe shelter, sleep, and nutrition. Resource centers across campus are here to provide assistance, referrals, and support. Please contact anyone on this list for assistance:
 - Basic Needs Hub: basicneedshub@pdx.edu
 - Portland State Food Pantry: [Psufp.com](http://psufp.com); pantry@pdx.edu
 - C.A.R.E. Team: askdos@pdx.edu; (503) 725-4422
 - Student Health and Counseling: askshac@pdx.edu; (503) 725-2800