

Soc. 136, Urban Sociology

U.C. Berkeley, Spring 2021

Tuesday/Thursday, 12:30-2:00pm, on Zoom

Instructor: Joanna Reed, Ph.D.

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 10:00-11:00am (drop-in) and Wednesdays 9:30-11:30am (appointments). Sign up for appointments here: <https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/pexxj>

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to urban sociology that frames cities as physical spaces that magnify social inequalities and shape how we experience them in our daily lives.

Although people may live in the same city, their daily experiences of place and private and public spaces are often radically different within short distances. In this class, we will explore why this is—how our experiences of the city vary so widely depending on where and who we are—and how where we live and conduct our lives shapes other aspects of them. We begin the course by considering the historical forces that shaped U.S. cities, and how that history continues to shape and inform current urban experiences and controversies as we explore the contemporary urban landscape. The later part of the course focuses on social interactions in urban spaces, and topics typically considered as urban problems—homelessness and neighborhood violence. Throughout the course we will consider the relationships between spatial organization, social inequalities and social interaction.

The central questions we will address in this course are:

- How did our present urban social and spatial dynamics come to be?
- What are current trends in urban areas?
- What were/are important influences on these processes, and how are current trends related to the history of urban areas and places?
- How does the spatial organization of urban areas influence social interaction, both in general and in specific urban places?

By taking this course, you will:

- Learn how economic forces and social structures such as race, class, government policies and citizen activism influence how cities are socially and spatially organized, and how that has changed over time.
- Learn about how urban living shapes social interaction, past and present by focusing on specific examples in urban places.
- Gain experience with using and applying census data in sociological analysis.
- Consider how policies contribute to creating and solving urban problems.

Required Readings:

All readings this semester can be found on bCourses. For your convenience and ease in studying, you may purchase or rent a hard or electronic copy of the compilation of readings for our course (called “the Reader”) from the Copy Central store on Telegraph. More information is here: <https://copycentral.redshelf.com/book/1709945/soc-136-urban-sociology-1709945-none-joanna-reed>

The course page for each week will link to the PDFs on the course site. You can also find the course readings in the “readings” folder under “files” in bCourses.

Films: We watch several films (or excerpts) over the course of the semester to provide examples of concepts from lecture and readings, and to explore some topics in more detail. Normally we would watch these together during class—we will need to be a little more creative about how we will accomplish that this semester. You should think of the films as “required” course materials; if you miss one, you should watch it. Details about films will be on the weekly pages.

Exams and Assignments:

Take-Home Midterm and Final Exams: (each exam is 20% of grade) These are essay exams that will test your comprehension of course material and ability to apply theories and concepts as well as synthesize and make connections between readings. Questions and instructions will be posted one week before each exam is due.

Neighborhood Profile Paper: (25% of grade) The first paper will consist of a profile of a neighborhood of your choosing based on your own ethnographic observations, U.S. Census data, and other sources, along with an analysis of salient issues currently facing the neighborhood and city in which it is located.

Urban Problems and Policy Paper: (25% of grade) This paper will be an in-depth investigation of one of the neighborhood problems we cover in this course from a policy perspective: gentrification and displacement, health, neighborhood violence and homelessness. This paper will require students to engage in independent research about their topic as well as engage with class materials.

Participation (10% of grade): This portion of your grade will be assessed based on four short assignments that are designed to prepare you for the larger assignments as well as provide an opportunity for personal reflection. These assignments will *not* be graded on a regular scale.

Due Dates:

Take-home Exam: due Feb. 16, 10:00pm

Neighborhood Profile Paper: due Mar. 18, 10:00pm

Urban Problems and Policy Paper: due Apr. 27, 10:00pm

Take Home Final Exam: due May 13, 10:00pm

Participation Assignments: due Feb. 4, Mar. 4, Apr. 1 and Apr. 15

Grading: Most of the grading will be done by the graduate student reader assigned to our course, in close collaboration with me. We will try to return exams and papers to you within two weeks. We will be available to discuss your assignments with you after they are returned, either during office hours or by appointment. If you believe a mistake was made in grading your assignment, you may request a re-grade. *If you ask for a re-evaluation of your work, be prepared to make a specific argument in writing as to why you think you deserve more points*, making sure to reference the rubric or answer key for the assignment in question. Please consider these requests carefully, as a re-grade will subject your work to closer scrutiny and your grade could possibly go down as a result. Re-grade requests for a particular assignment must be made within one week of when the assignment was returned. Please note that per university policy, re-grades are not possible on final exams.

Course Policies:

Format: This semester will be fully remote. We will have “live” synchronous classes during our assigned class time, Tu./Th. From 12:30-2:00pm. There may be a few times over the semester when we will not have synchronous class. There will be a page on bCourses for each week of the semester, which will detail everything you need to know for class for that week, so make sure you check these pages regularly. I will record and post our class sessions, but you should not plan on taking this class if you are unable to regularly attend synchronously. I will post PDFs of the lecture slides after class.

Academic or other accommodations: If you have accommodations for a disability or have a conflict due to the observance of religious holidays or athletics, please speak with me early in the semester to discuss appropriate arrangements. Please also reach out if you have a life circumstance (such as being a parent, or caring for a family member, working full-time in addition to school) that may affect your academics. More information on UCB’s Disabled Students Programs can be found here: <https://dsp.berkeley.edu>

Grace Period on Assignments and Late Policy. During this (hopefully final!) semester of remote learning, there will be a grace period of 24 hours on the midterm, final and two paper assignments. In other words, the grace period covers all assignments except the participation assignments. After the grace period ends, a late penalty of one third of a letter grade deduction per day will be assessed.

Make sure to check that the file you have submitted to bCourses is the correct one for the assignment in question and in a format we can read. Documents must be submitted as MS word or PDF documents. Failure to do this may result in points lost and delays in grading.

Email: Email is generally a good way to get in touch with me, but I cannot always respond right away. Do not expect a response after hours or on weekends. Please email me directly, rather than through bCourses at joannareed@berkeley.edu.

Office Hours: This semester, all office hours will be held on zoom. I urge students to talk with me sometime during the semester, just to say “hi” and especially if you are having trouble with the course. I can’t help you if you don’t communicate with me! I have both appointment and drop-in times. Keep in mind for the drop-in office hours that I am teaching three classes this semester. You are welcome to drop-in anytime, but I encourage Soc. 136 students to come during the first half of the hour. If you cannot make the scheduled office hour times, you can email me and we can try to make an appointment at a mutually convenient time. I will hold extra drop-in office hours ahead of assignment due dates. Sign up for office hour appointments here: <https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/pexxj>

Academic honesty is expected of all students. While I encourage students to discuss the readings and study together, everyone must do their own work. Suspected violations relating to this course will be reported to the appropriate administrative department and dealt with according to university policies. Be aware of plagiarism. Word for word use of even a single sentence from another author, publication or website without citation is plagiarism and is considered unethical. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade on the paper or exam with no opportunity to rewrite. If you have questions about how to properly cite materials, or how to paraphrase appropriately, ask during office hours, and consult the writing guide “Writing for Sociology”, available on the Soc. department website. The work you produce for this course must be original—you may not “recycle” material produced for another class.

Turnitin: All of your assignments will be checked for plagiarism by Turnitin. Please be aware that this program keeps a database of work previously turned in for this class by other students, as well as any of your own work that you turned in for credit in a previous class.

Incomplete Grades: Incompletes are an option of last resort for students experiencing true medical or other emergencies that make it impossible for them to complete their coursework on time. To be considered for an incomplete grade, students need to speak with me about it during the semester, have completed at least half of the coursework, and provide documentation of the reason for the request.

Your Health and Well-Being: Being a college student can be full of excitement and possibilities, but at times may feel overwhelming or be difficult in other ways. Some degree of this is to be expected, but if you are experiencing a lot of distress, anxiety or have a pre-existing mental health issue, there are resources on campus to help. You are not alone; many others share your difficulties. Even if you don’t think you need them, I encourage you to look at these websites now, so you know what is available. Counseling

and Psychological Services (CAPS): (510) 642-9494, <https://uhs.berkeley.edu/counseling>. More general resources on mental health, services are at <https://uhs.berkeley.edu/health-topics/mental-health>.

Circulation of Course Materials: All materials produced for this course are protected and may not be shared, uploaded or distributed. This includes the syllabus, lecture slides, handouts, rubrics, exams, papers, recorded lectures, etc. While you may share your notes with other students, it is against university policy to share your notes broadly, or attempt to use them for commercial purposes. Please see <http://campuspol.chance.berkeley.edu/policies/coursenotes.pdf> for a detailed version of the policy.

Course Schedule*:

Week 1, Jan. 19 & 21. The contemporary urban landscape: why does understanding it matter?

Readings: Turner, M. (2011) “Neighborhoods and Life Chances”, *Urban Wire* (blog), The Urban Institute (April 20, 2011), <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/neighborhoods-and-life-chances>

Richardson, J. et al (2020) *The Lasting Impact of ‘Historic Redlining’ on Neighborhood Health: Higher Prevalence of COVID-19 Risk Factors*. National Community Reinvestment Coalition.

Please read sections: “Executive Summary”, “Segregation, Public Health and COVID-19”, and look at some of the maps in the appendix

Week 2, Jan. 26 & 28. Creating unequal spaces: post-World War 2 urban growth and development

Readings: Wollenberg, C. (2008). *Berkeley: A City in History*. UC Press. Ch. 7, “World War II Watershed” pp. 105-119

Massey, D. & Denton, N. (1993). *American Apartheid*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Ch. 2

Recommended: Bagwell, B. (1982 (2012)). *Oakland: The Story of A City*. Oakland Heritage Alliance. Pp. 25-32, 50-90

Week 3, Feb. 2 & 4. Creating unequal spaces: suburbanization, urban renewal and public housing

Readings: Austin Turner, M., Popkin, S. & Rawlings, L. (2009). *Public Housing and the Legacy of Segregation*. Ch. 1, “Transforming Distressed Public Housing” pp. 1-

11. Washington DC: The Urban Institute Press

Nicolaides, B. & Wiese, A. (2006) *The Suburb Reader*, Ch. 9 “ Postwar America: Suburban Apotheosis” pp. 257-72 (Introduction and Documents) New York: Routledge and Ch. 11 “Postwar Suburbs and the Construction of Race” pp. 322-40.

Self, R. (2003). American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland, excerpted in Nicolaides, B. & Wiese, A. (2006) *The Suburb Reader*, pp. 368-375. New York: Routledge

Participation #1 (personal reflection) due on Feb. 4

Week 4, Feb. 9 & 11. Creating unequal spaces: economic influences

Readings: Wilson, W.J. (1997). *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor*. Ch. 2. New York: Vintage

Sassen, S. (2012) *Cities in A World Economy*. Ch. 6 “The New Inequality Within Cities”, pp. 241-272

Week 5, Feb. 16 & 18. Place entrepreneurship: creating markets

Readings: Logan, J. & Molotch, H. (1990). *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place*. Berkeley: UC Press. Ch. 2, “Places as Commodities” pp. 17-49, and Ch. 5, “How Government Matters”

Zukin, S. (1995). *The Cultures of Cities*. Blackwell. Ch. 1, “Whose Culture, Whose City?” pp. 1-47

Take-home exam due on Feb. 16 (no “live” class that day)

Week 6, Feb. 23 & 25. Changing urban landscapes: the housing crisis,

Readings: Shaw, R. (2018). *Generation Priced Out: Who Gets to Live in the New Urban America*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press. Ch. 6, 7, 8.

Week 7: Mar. 2 & 4. Changing urban landscapes: gentrification and displacement and the suburbanization of poverty

Readings: Urban Displacement Project, UC Berkeley,
<http://www.urbandisplacement.org>

American Suburb Podcast from KQED about Antioch, CA. Please download and listen to episode 1 and at least one other of your choice.

<https://ww2.kqed.org/news/series/american-suburb-podcast/>

Choose one of these two readings:

Patillo, M. (2007). *Black on the Block*. University of Chicago Press. Ch. 2
“The Black Bourgeoisie Meets the Truly Disadvantaged” (about Chicago)

Freeman, L. (2006). *There Goes the ‘Hood*. Temple University Press, Ch. 3, “There Goes the ‘Hood” pp. 59-94 (reader) (About NYC)

Participation #2 due Mar. 4 (Census Data Worksheet)

Week 8, Mar. 9 & 11. Neighborhoods and health

Readings: Johnson, S. (2006). *The Ghost Map: The Story of London’s Most Terrifying Epidemic—And How It Changed Science, Cities, and the Modern World*. New York: Riverhead Books. Ch.1, 2 & 3

Nguyen, Q. et al (2020). “Using 164 Million Google Street View Images to Derive Built Environment Predictors of COVID-19 Cases”. *Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. Vol. 17, 6359

Week 9, Mar. 16 & 18. Public spaces and social interaction:

Readings: Lofland, L. (1973). *A World of Strangers: Order and Action in Public Space*. Ch. 5 “Urban Learning”

Simmel, G. (1903). “The Metropolis and Mental Life” (1903) in Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson, eds. *The Blackwell City Reader*. Oxford and Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002

Neighborhood Profile Paper due Mar. 18

SPRING BREAK, Mar. 22-26

Week 10, Mar. 30 & Apr. 1: Public spaces and social interaction:

Readings: Anderson, E. (2010). *The Cosmopolitan Canopy*. Read Ch. 1, 2, 4
Skim Ch. 3

Participation #3 due Apr. 1 (personal reflection)

Week 11, Apr. 6 & 8: Neighborhood violence

Readings: Anderson, E. (1999). *Code of the Street: Decency, Violence and the Moral Life of the Inner City*. New York: Norton. Ch. 2

Harding, D. (2010). *Living the Drama: Community, Conflict, and Culture Among Inner-City Boys*. University of Chicago Press. Ch. 2, “The Social Organization of Violence in Poor Neighborhoods” pp. 27- 67

Week 12, Apr. 13 & 15: Neighborhood violence and crime

Readings: Martinez, C. (2016). *The Neighborhood Has Its Own Rules: Latinos and African Americans in South Los Angeles*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Introduction, Ch. 4, 5

Recommended: Miller, J. (2008). *Getting Played: African American Girls, Urban Inequality and Gendered Violence*. New York: NYU Press. Ch. 2, “Gender ‘n the ‘Hood: Neighborhood Violence Against Women and Girls”

Participation #4 (Urban Problems and Policy Paper worksheet)

Week 13, Apr. 20 & 22: Housing, social policy and homelessness

Readings: Galvez, M., Brennan, M., Meixell, B., Pendall, R. (2017). “Housing as a Safety Net”. *Research Reports*, The Urban Institute. Pp. 1-15. (the rest is recommended)

Desmond, Matthew. (2016). “Forced Out”, *The New Yorker*, Feb. 8 & 15

HUD Point in Time Count Reports (2019, most recent)

Find the one for the area where you live (or choose a major U.S. city). Search “Point in Time Count 2019 (city or county name)”

Report for Alameda County, CA: <https://everyonehome.org/main/continuum-of-care/everyone-counts/>

Week 14, Apr. 27 & 29: Homelessness

Readings: Gowan, T. (2010). *Hobos, Hustlers and Backsliders: Homeless in San Francisco*. University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, MN. Introduction, Ch. 3 and 7 (reader)

Herring, C. (2019). “Complaint-Oriented Policing: Regulating Homelessness in Public Space”. *American Sociological Review*, 1-32

Urban Problems and Policy Paper due Apr. 27

Week 15, May 3-7: RRR week

Final Exam: **Due on May 13th at 10 pm.** Instructions for completing and turning in the exam will be included on the prompt, which will be released to you one week in advance.

* Course Schedule remains subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.