

Soc. 136, Urban Sociology

U.C. Berkeley, Spring 2022

Tuesday/Thursday, 9:30-11:00am

60 Social Sciences Building

Instructor: Joanna Reed, Ph.D.

joannareed@berkeley.edu

Office Hours:

Appointments: Tuesdays and Thursdays 12-1pm, in-person or remote appointments. Sign up: <https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/vqixo>

Drop-in: Thursdays, 1-2pm.

You can also contact me by email for an appointment if you are unable to make these times.

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 research on how and why residential environments matter, and then turn to understanding the historical forces that shaped U.S. cities and led to such unequal spaces. We then explore how that history continues to shape and inform current urban experiences and controversies as we focus on the contemporary urban landscape and on topics typically considered as urban problems—homelessness and neighborhood violence. Our final topic will be to consider how the unfolding climate crisis is likely to deepen existing spatial inequalities in urban places. 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 and why do they matter?
- 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?
- Can sociological research help us better understand the seemingly intractable problems of urban violence and homelessness?

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.
- Consider how policies contribute to creating and solving urban problems.
- Gain experience with using and applying census data in sociological analysis.
- Gain experience with ethnographic observation.

What to expect this semester

Last semester, I was very glad to be back teaching in-person, and I hope the transition back to campus went well for you. That said, here we are starting the semester with two weeks of remote classes and office hours. While I expect that we will be back in person after that, the ongoing pandemic is requiring that we—yet again—try to be flexible and ready to adapt to changing circumstances. I ask for your flexibility and understanding as we move forward, and I will extend the same to you.

- **Public health guidelines:** We will be following all campus guidelines regarding public health and masking. Masks are required in indoor spaces for everyone. *If you are feeling sick, or experiencing symptoms*, please err on the side of caution and don't come to class.
- **Check your email before class!** Just in case there is a last-minute change of plans. I will be using the bCourses announcement feature to communicate with you.
- **Course capture.** The first two weeks of class on zoom will be recorded and posted in the “media gallery” of our class bCourses site. Once we are back in person, classes will be recorded via course capture. Recordings will be available after class, also in “media gallery”.
- **Office hours:** We will start the semester with remote office hours, but after Jan. 31, office hours will be in-person, with the option to have appointments remotely. Please bear in mind that I may shift these around depending on how things go.
- **Please reach out to me if you have problems or concerns!**

Navigating the course and finding the information you need

- **Syllabus:** This is the full plan and overview for the course. Information about course policies is also included here. If you would like the course schedule in a more digestible weekly format, check the “Pages” for each week in bCourses (click the button at the top of “Pages” that says “view all pages”). *Please read through the full syllabus.*
- **bCourses:** This is the name of UCB’s online course management platform. There is a bCourses site for our class. If you are enrolled, you should automatically have access to it. You can find all assignment prompts, schedule information, and course readings here. You will also use bCourses to turn in your work and view your grades and comments. *Be sure to check the weekly pages regularly, which will have the most up to date information for each week!* Go to the “Pages” tab, and click on the button at the top that says “View all Pages” to see a list of all course pages.
- **Readings and class materials:** All readings will be available to you through bCourses. Readings are assigned for the week, rather than the day and will generally be discussed in the order listed. Aim to complete at minimum the first reading listed before class on Tuesday, and all readings for that week by class on Thursday.

The easiest way to access the readings will be to 1) *buy the Course Reader at the Copy Central store on Telegraph Ave. This will give you easy, offline access to the course readings (there are a few small exceptions).* I hope you will seriously consider this option as it will make it easier for you to concentrate on the readings and minimize digital distractions (not to mention save your eyes).

2) Go to the bCourses “page” for the week and access the readings there. Go to the “Pages” tab and click the button at the top that says “view all pages”. (For example: go to “Pages”> “Week 1”.) You can find the complete collection in “Files”> “Readings”.

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. 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 in Oakland or San Francisco that was a site of a past urban renewal effort 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, affordable housing shortages, homelessness, urban violence or the climate crisis. This paper will require students to engage in fieldwork and independent research about their topic as well as engage with class materials.

Response and Reflection Papers: There will be four short reflection papers due during the semester. The purpose of these papers is to create a space for students to reflect on their personal reactions and responses to the course material. These papers will be contract based, in terms of evaluation (i.e., you will get full credit if you follow instructions and make a good effort). If you miss one of these assignments during the semester, you can make it up during RRR week.

Due Dates:

Take-home Exam: due Feb. 24, 10:00pm

Urban Renewal Revisited Paper: due Mar. 17, 10:00pm

Urban Problems and Policy Paper: due Apr. 21, 10:00pm

Take Home Final Exam: due May 11, 2:30pm (*note the unusual time!*)

Response and Reflection Papers (4): due Feb. 1, Mar. 8, Apr. 6 and Apr. 26

Grading Policies

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. Grades are not curved in this class and I use the typical letter grade scale when calculating grades, where an A is 93% and above, and A- is 90-92%, a B+ is 87-89%, a B is 86-83%, a B- is 82-80%, etc. If you are taking this course for P/NP credit, you need to earn a minimum of 70% to pass.

Due dates and Grace Period: All assignments will have a due date, as usual. However, in the spirit of offering more flexibility to everyone, there will be a grace period that will extend for 24 hours after the deadline. *An assignment turned in after the due date, but before the end of the grace period will not be considered late. The grace period extends to all students and all assignments—you do not need to ask for permission or notify me if you plan to turn in work during the grace period.*

Late Assignments Policy: If you have a personal situation or are sick, contact me at the *earliest opportunity* to discuss an extension, and certainly prior to the end of the grace period. Unexcused assignments will be penalized one third of a letter grade for each day they are late after the grace period. At times, I may request documentation of an illness, emergency, or other situation.

Re-grade policy: If you believe I made a mistake in grading your assignment, write a short statement explaining why you think your assignment deserves a different grade, making sure to reference the assignment rubric/or comments you were given. This statement should be about the substance of your work, rather than effort. I will then take another look at your assignment paper and determine the final grade. All re-grade requests must be made within a week of when an assignment is handed back. Please note that per university policy, re-grades are not possible on final exams.

Incomplete Grades: Incompletes are an option of last resort for students experiencing 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 BEFORE THE END of the semester, have completed about half of the coursework, be earning a grade of C or better, and provide documentation of the reason for the request.

Academic Accommodations: Ask for accommodations if you are a DSP student (according to your LOA). You can assume that the DSP office will send me a copy of your letter. If you have an accommodation for take-home assignments though (the only assignments we have in this class, really), it is your responsibility to contact me to make arrangements if you need additional time. You are always welcome to reach out to me to discuss accommodations. If something is not working well, we will try to make adjustments. Accommodations are also available for the observance of religious holidays, or due to conflicts related to student athletics. Please also reach out to me if you have another issue not “officially” covered and we can talk about it. Here is a link to more information from UCB about academic accommodations and resources: <https://evcp.berkeley.edu/programs-resources/academic-accommodations-hub>

Academic honesty is expected of all students. It is extremely important that everyone submits their own original work, produced specifically for this course, in order to receive credit. Suspected violations relating to this course will be reported to the office of student conduct and dealt with according to university policies. *Be aware of plagiarism.* Word for word use of even a single sentence from any author, publication or website without proper citation is plagiarism and is unethical and unacceptable. So is very closely following the structure and wording of another author's work. In addition, please be aware that you may not turn in any portion of *your own* previous work submitted for credit in another course without substantial revision. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade on the paper or exam in question with no opportunity to rewrite, as will any other kind of academic dishonesty. If you have questions about how to properly cite materials, or how to paraphrase appropriately, please ask! The student writing center is a good resource for questions about this. 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 UCB class.

Office Hours and communicating with me:

Office Hours: There are many different reasons to come to office hours. If you are having trouble with the class, or are experiencing personal problems that are hindering your ability to do well in it, please come! I can't help you if I don't know what is going on! Please also come to drop by to say "hi" and introduce yourself, or ask questions about the class, share a personal experience, or ask me about anything you think that I could help you with. I am glad you are my student this semester, and I want you to do well. I will be glad to talk with you. Remember also that if I know you, I will be able to write you a much better letter of recommendation if you find yourself in need of one in the future.

Email: This is generally a good way to get in touch with me, but I may not be able to respond right away. Do not expect a response on weekends or outside of regular working hours. Email is best for short, logistical questions or issues. If you need to discuss something complicated and/or important, a real conversation will be a lot better.

Names and Pronouns: You have the right to be referred to by the name you prefer and with the correct gender pronouns. Because the name listed in university records may not correspond to your preferred name, please inform me of your name (and pronunciation) and your pronouns so that I can ensure you are properly recognized and respected. You can refer to me as Prof. Reed, Dr. Reed, or Joanna. My pronouns are she/her.

University Resources for Students

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 and is part of discovering your own identity and the person that you are and want to be. That said, if you are experiencing distress, anxiety or another problem to the point that it is affecting your academics, 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. There is much more than counseling appointments: there are web tutorials and videos, support groups and mindfulness classes, for example. Counseling center staff have told me these groups and classes can be a great preventative resource, and are a great way to get the semester off to a good start. 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>.

Student Learning Center: "The primary academic support service for students at Berkeley, the SLC helps students transition to Cal; navigate the academic terrain; create networks of resources; and achieve academic, personal and professional goals."

Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Services: To learn more about these issues, how to support survivors, or how to file a report and receive support services, start here: <http://survivorsupport.berkeley.edu>. Please note that I am not a confidential advocate; I am a mandated reporter. You can speak to a Confidential Care Advocate.

Undocumented Students can find university resources and support at: <https://undocu.berkeley.edu/>

Economic, Food, and Housing Support: If you are in need of economic, food, or housing support, you can find help at the Basic Needs Center (<https://basicneeds.berkeley.edu/home>).

Technology resources and support for students: Please see this page for the latest information on university-provided support: <https://studenttech.berkeley.edu/home>

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*:

Jan. 18 & 20, Week 1. Introduction to the course

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>

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

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

Jan. 25 & 27, Week 2. Neighborhood inequality: why does it matter?

Readings: *The Opportunity Atlas*—explore the map and read two or more of the "stories". Go to opportunityatlas.org. An introductory window will tell you how to get to the "stories" (also noted on the map with book icons). The Opportunity Atlas is a project from Opportunity Insights at Harvard University.

Sharkey, P. (2013). *Stuck in Place: Urban Neighborhoods and the End of Progress toward Racial Equality*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Ch. 1

Sampson, R.J., & Loeffler, C. (2010) "Punishment's Place: The Local Concentration of Mass Incarceration. *Daedalus*, 139(3) 20-31

Feb. 1 & 3, Week 3. Creating unequal spaces: post-World War 2 urban and suburban growth and development

R/R paper #1 due Feb. 1

Readings: Sharkey, P. (2013). *Stuck in Place: Urban Neighborhoods and the End of Progress toward Racial Equality*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Ch. 3

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

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.

Feb. 8 & 10, Week 4. Creating unequal spaces in the Bay Area

Readings: Self, R. (2003). *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Ch. 3 & 4. (Ch.6 about the Black Panther party and Black resistance is recommended)

Feb. 15 & 17, Week 5. Creating unequal spaces: economic change and “urban decline”

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

Self, R. (2003). *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. From Ch. 8, pp. 316-327

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

Feb. 22 & 24, Week 6: Changing urban landscapes: gentrification and the reshuffling of affluence

Take-home Exam due Feb. 24. No lecture.

Readings: Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco’s page on gentrification and displacement. Watch the videos “Gentrification Explained” and “Pushed Out”. <https://www.frbsf.org/community-development/initiatives/gentrification-and-displacement/>

Rugh, J. & Massey, D. (2010). “Racial Segregation and The American Foreclosure Crisis”. *American Sociological Review*, 75:5

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

Mar. 1 & 3, Week 7. Place entrepreneurship: property markets and urban development

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

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

Mar. 8 & 10, Week 8. The housing crisis

R/R Paper #2 due Mar. 8

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.

Mar. 15 & 17, Week 9. Housing, social policy and homelessness

Urban Renewal Revisited Paper due Mar. 17.

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)

Reid, C. (2021) *On the Edge of Homelessness: The Vulnerability of Extremely Low-Income Households in the Bay Area*. Turner Center for Housing Innovation, UC Berkeley. Read the introduction, and skim through the rest, focusing on the graphs.

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

Recommended: HUD Point in Time Count Reports (2019, most recent) for Alameda County. Report for Alameda County, CA:
<https://everyonehome.org/main/continuum-of-care/everyone-counts/>

Mar. 21-25 Spring Break, no class.

Mar. 29 & 31, Week 10. 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

Apr. 6 & 8, Week 11: Neighborhood violence
R/R Paper #3 due Apr. 6

Readings: Healy, J. (2022) "Why More American Children are Dying by Gunfire", *The New York Times*, Jan. 5, 2022, and Bosman, J. et.al. (2021) "Four Lives Lost: Inside America's Homicide Surge". *The New York Times*, Nov. 15, 2021

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

Apr. 12 & 14, Week 12. Neighborhood violence

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

Apr. 19 & 21, Week 13. The climate crisis and urban disasters

Urban Problems and Policy Paper due Apr. 21

Klinenberg, E. (2002) *Heat Wave: A Social Autopsy of Disaster in Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Ch. 2 "Race, Place and Vulnerability" (reader)

Robertson, C. & Fausset, R. (2015) "Ten Years After Katrina". *The New York Times*. Aug. 26, 2015.

Briggs, X. (2006). "After Katrina: Rebuilding Places and Lives". *City and Community*, 5(2) 119-128

Sharkey, P. (2007). "Survival and Death in New Orleans: An Empirical Look at the Human Impact of Katrina." *Journal of Black Studies*, 37(4) 482-501

Apr. 26 & 28, Week 14. The climate crisis and urban futures

R/R Paper #4 due Apr. 26

Readings: Explore the Toxic Tides Study (UCB) website. Read the Richmond Case Study. <https://sites.google.com/berkeley.edu/toxictides/home>

Stillman, S. (2021) "Storm Chasers". The New Yorker,

May 2-6, Week 15. RRR week

No class and no new material. Use this week to review and catch up.

Final Exam: Due on May 11th. 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.