**Soc. 136—Urban Sociology**  U.C. Berkeley, Spring 2014
MWF 12-1, 2040 Valley Life Sciences Building
Joanna Reed, Ph.D.
Office Hours:  Wednesdays, 9:15-11:55, and by appointment, 479 Barrows  joannareed@berkeley.edu

**Course Description:**
This course is an introduction to urban sociology. We will explore several topics related to urbanization and urbanism in this course, with a general focus on U.S. cities, and a spotlight on local neighborhoods and issues. Topics include the history of urbanization; ethnography and other methods for studying urban social phenomena; theories about how cities are socially and spatially organized and how social and spatial organization are related; how urban living affects social interaction; race and class stratification; urban disasters; urban labor markets and urban problems such as crime, violence and gangs. This is a writing intensive course, and students will be required to write two course papers and conduct their own ethnographic observations as part of their coursework.

By taking this course, you will:

- Learn how economic forces and social structures such as race, class and government policies 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.

- Learn about and participate in ethnographic field research.

- Practice your writing skills.

**Required Readings:**
There are two required books for the course and a reader. Books will be available at the usual bookstores, or can be ordered online. The reader will be available for purchase from Copy Central on Bancroft. Copies of the books and the reader will be put on reserve at Moffitt Library-- typically it takes a few weeks to get these on the shelf. Most of the readings marked “online” in the syllabus will be posted on Bspace, a few you may need to look up on the internet yourself.

Books:

Films: We watch several films (or excerpts) in class 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 view the films as “required” course materials; if you miss one, you should watch it at the media center in Moffitt Library. A list of films for the semester is posted on Bspace under “resources”, and may be updated during the semester in the event of substitutions or other changes.

Evaluation: Your grade will be based on an in-class midterm, quizzes, two paper assignments, and a take-home final. Details on the paper assignments are in a document called “Soc. 136 Paper Assignments” posted on Bspace in the assignments folder. Please read this now, so you understand what is required to complete these assignments.

Midterm: 20% March 17. An in-class exam consisting of short answer questions.

Participation quizzes: 5%. Over the semester, six quizzes will be announced during lecture, and will focus on material from that day’s lecture. You will take the quiz after class on Bspace, and we will count your top four scores. There will be no opportunity to make up these quizzes.

Bay Area Neighborhood Profile Paper: 20%. Due Feb. 28th in class.

Exploring the East Bay Cosmopolitan Canopy Paper: 30%. Due on April 18th in class. The paper itself is worth 25% of your grade, with an additional 5% of the grade devoted to your field notes and their timely posting on Bspace by Apr. 4th.

Take-Home Final Exam: 25%. Due on 5/14. This will be an essay exam. Questions will focus on the material since the midterm, but may ask you to incorporate material from throughout the course. The questions will be posted on Bspace on Friday May 9th by 12 pm. Turn in your exam to a cardboard box marked for this purpose in the main office of the Sociology department, 410 Barrows Hall, by 3 pm on May 14th.

Grading: There will be two or more (depending on enrollment) graduate student readers for this course who will be responsible for most of the grading. The process for grading is as follows: I develop a rubric for the exams and papers and discuss it with the readers. We then grade several papers/exams together to make sure the grading is consistent. We will try to return exams and papers to you within two weeks. Readers will be available to discuss your assignments with you after they are returned, either during office hours or by appointment. I am always happy to discuss the reasons for a grade with a student. If you have a problem with a grade, however, you should first discuss it with the reader who assigned the grade. If that does not resolve the problem, then I will discuss it with the reader and meet with you. Please know that if we agree to re-evaluate your work, it will be under closer scrutiny and your grade could possibly go down as a result. If you ask us to consider raising your score, be prepared to make a specific argument as to why you think you deserve more points, making sure to reference the rubric for the assignment in question. We will use the gradebook function on Bspace to post grades. Be sure to make sure the grade on the hard copy of your paper or exam matches the one online.
Paper Assignments:

*Detailed prompts and information about the two paper assignments are on a document called “Soc. 136 paper assignments” that is posted on Bspace. Please read it right away so you know what is required. Both papers should be between 7-10 pages long, in 12 point font and double spaced.*

The first paper, the Bay Area Neighborhood Profile, will consist of a description of a bay area neighborhood based on Census data and your own ethnographic observations, along with some additional analysis that requires you to apply concepts from course readings to your observation.

The second paper, The East Bay Cosmopolitan Canopy Paper, will explore Anderson’s concept of the “cosmopolitan canopy”—contemporary urban places where people from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds interact. Students will analyze their own and other students’ ethnographic field notes in order to study cosmopolitan canopies in the Bay Area. This paper will be written in research paper format.

Course Policies:

*Students are responsible for all material covered in lecture, including announcements.* You will be expected to integrate materials from lecture and readings on exams and papers. Please do not enroll in this class if you will not be able to attend the lectures regularly.

I will gladly make accommodations for students with disabilities and for the observance of religious holidays. Please email or speak with me to discuss appropriate arrangements as soon as possible.

Exams and assignments must be taken and turned in on time in order to receive full credit. If you have a personal emergency you need to contact me at the earliest opportunity to discuss alternative arrangements. Late assignments will be penalized one third of a grade for each day they are late (including weekends).

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 zero on the paper with no opportunity to rewrite. If you have questions about how to properly cite materials, or how to paraphrase appropriately, I am happy to address this during office hours.
Email: I tend to check email at least once a day, during normal working hours, and may not be able to respond right away. I will tend to not answer emails that ask administrative questions answered on the syllabus or that were announced, or about to be announced in class.

Office Hours: My office hours this semester will be on Tuesdays from 3:45 - 5:45, except during the second week of classes (when they will be on Wed., 1/30, from 9:30-11:30). Sign up for office hours on the sign up sheet outside my door at 434 Barrows. I encourage students to talk with me sometime during the semester, just to say “hi” and especially if you are having trouble with the course. I want you to do well. Either come to my office hours, or schedule a meeting. I can’t help you if you don’t communicate with me!

Classroom courtesy: Please put away electronic distractions during class, and recognize that class is not the time for catching up with your friend. This is distracting to me, and to other students who are trying to pay attention. You may not realize it, but even in a large lecture I can see what you are doing—you are not invisible in the audience.

Course Schedule*:

Week 1, Jan. 22, 24: Introduction. What is urban Sociology anyway? How do we study it? Links to classic theories, the founding of Sociology and methods.


Week 2, Jan. 29, 31: Methods and History: Ethnography and writing field notes; Bay Area Urbanization


Week 4, Feb. 10, 12, 14: How do cities and neighborhoods take shape? Political and Economic Forces


Week 5, Feb. 19, 21: How do cities and neighborhoods take shape? Political and Economic Forces


Week 6, Feb. 24, 26, 28: How do cities shape social interaction? Interaction in Public Spaces
Due Feb. 28th in class: Bay Area Neighborhood Profile Paper


Week 7, Mar. 3, 5, 7: How do cities shape social interaction? Subcultures and Gendered Spaces


Week 8, Mar. 10, 12, 14: How do cities shape social interaction?


Week 9, Mar. 17, 19, 21: Stratification and Inequality in the City

MIDTERM EXAM Mar. 17th in class

Readings: Anderson, E. 2010. The Cosmopolitan Canopy. Ch. 6-9

SPRING BREAK (Mar. 24-28)

Week 10, Mar. 31, Apr. 2, 4: Stratification and Inequality in the City

Field notes must be posted by April 4th on Bspace for credit


Week 11, Apr. 7,9,11: Stratification and Inequality in the City: Disasters


**Week 12, Apr. 14, 16, 18: Urban Labor Markets**

*Cosmopolitan Canopy* paper due in class Apr. 18th


Kilborn, P. (2005). “The Five Bedroom, Six-Figure Rootless Life”. *The New York Times*, June 1, 2005 (Online, NYT Class Matters Series) [Recommended, not required]

**Week 13, Apr. 21, 23, 25: Urban “problems”**


**Week 14, Apr. 28, 30, May 2: Urban “problems”**

Readings: Venkatesh, S. (2008) *Gang Leader for a Day*. Ch. 6-8

**Week 15: RRR week—extra office hours TBA**

Take home final exam: Posted on 5/9 on Bspace by 12 pm, due to marked cardboard box in 410 Barrows Hall by 3 pm on Wednesday May 14.

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