

**Urban Sociology Spring I Syllabus**

Professor Arianna Martinez

Tuesday: 10:30am-11:30am

Thursday: 10:30am-12:45pm

**Section #1874**

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 9:30am-10:30am

Office: C-413

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This class is designed to introduce students to urban sociology and urban society more broadly. We will examine historical, theoretical, and practical issues regarding cities. Since this is a sociology class, we will focus on the social and structural characteristics of metropolitan areas. As we are mostly urban dwellers, special attention will be paid to what we can learn from our experiences in New York City.

This course will begin briefly with the history of urbanization. Then continue more extensively with theories of urban sociology. Next, we will examine the present state of urban areas, focusing on the increasingly important issue of global urbanization. Important themes in this course will include: race, gender, class and migration.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Students are required to attend classes on a regular basis, complete assigned readings in a timely manner, submit writing assignments, participate in class, and take all formal examinations. This class is a writing intensive course. As such, students are required to submit two weekly writing assignments; one in-class writing and the other at home.

**Reading Response Essays -**

There will be twenty-minute in class academic writing assignment once a week. These will not be graded like a quiz, but I will read them. They will count as attendance for that day and they will alert me to who is doing the reading and who is not (part of your grade). The question/s to write about will be on the board. The written responses will also be the basis for our class discussions. You will be encouraged to share your thoughts.

**Urban Observation Journal -**

There will also be at home writing assignments each week. These assignments will be creative and hopefully fun. We will discuss and share them. These will be graded with a letter grade.

The Urban Observation Journal will, like its title implies, be a collection of urban observations focusing on **one New York City neighborhood** that you are intimately acquainted with (where you live now, where you grew up, where you work, where you spend all your free-time). You will hand them in weekly, but I will also ask that they be turned in **May 6** as a revised portfolio.

Urban Observation Journal Writing Assignments

1. Use a disposable camera OR digital camera to take a minimum of 10 photographs. They should all be of ONE neighborhood you intend to focus on for the duration of the semester. Burn them onto a CD and bring them to class. **Write about ONE of the photographs**, what it represents to you, why it is important to you, where it is, & what your connection to this location is. You will read it out loud in class and share photos.
2. Write about a public space. Sit in a public space (park, plaza, transit, etc) that is in the neighborhood you are exploring. Write about how and why it is a public space. Who is using this

- space? What are they doing – talking on cell phones, eating lunch, jogging, playing with their kids in the park? Then write about what you like or what you hate about it. Are there recommendations you have thought of on how to make it a better public space?
3. Find your neighborhood on **Google Earth**. Find your neighborhood on **Google Map**. Write about how these digital maps of your neighborhood are similar and different. What were you able to see on these maps (restaurants, roads, parks, etc)? Did either map make you think about your place in a new way? If so how? Is there something about your neighborhood that you love that isn't represented? If so what? Could you see your house, your favorite park, shoe store, etc? What kinds of informational layers exist for your area and what if anything did you learn from them?
  4. Find an article about your neighborhood in a local newspaper that relates to an important issue in your community, EITHER gentrification, immigration, food security, unemployment, transportation, flooding, or some new urban development project. It should be a topic that you could explore for your final research paper. Explain how you believe this issue is impacting the neighborhood.
  5. Interview someone who has been living in or working in this neighborhood for many years (an immigrant, African American and/or women). Come up with your questions in advance! Ask them questions like: when and why they ended up in the neighborhood? What they like about it? How has the neighborhood changed? Did they like it better before or now and why? Write a written summary of your interview with them, but also attach the raw interview.
  6. Find census data from last 10 years and analyze it, write a journalism type piece about the neighborhood changes. What was the population of your neighborhood in 1980 and compare that to 2000. What was the ethnic and racial make-up of this community in 1980 and how has it changed? Find other dramatic changes in the data and discuss them. (**use website mycity.org**)
  7. Find an interesting venue within your neighborhood either public art piece, unique store, museum, library, farmers market, etc that is important to the neighborhood. Review it like a travel guide.

NOTE: Be sure to save and store all out-of-class writing assignments electronically.

### **MIDTERM EXAM:**

There will be a take-home midterm. More information to come.

### **FINAL RESEARCH PAPER:**

Submit an 8-page research project on one neighborhood in New York City and an issue that is impacting the neighborhood.

The 8-page research project should adhere to the following guidelines: 1) include a cover page; 2) format with double spacing and one inch margins; 3) footnotes and citations should follow an acceptable style format; 4) include a bibliography with a minimum of 8 entries (books and articles) and four LEXIS/NEXIS sources - for a total of 12 entries.

**Each Urban Observation Journal entry will be useful for the final paper, but assignment #4 will be the origins of your research paper. Whichever issue you choose to write about in an exploratory manner, will then be researched fully and developed into a policy paper. The criteria for approaching and organizing the research paper will be fully discussed in class and a handout will be given later in the semester with guidelines.**

NOTE: Students are highly encouraged to discuss their research project with the instructor during regularly scheduled office hours and students experiencing problems in their writing should make an appointment with the LaGuardia Writing Center.

**FIELD TRIPS:**

There will be two field trips. Stay tuned for more information about these. One will be a walking tour through the Lower East Side Tenement Museum’s Immigrant Heritage Project and the other will be to a nearby museum called PS1 - MoMA. If a given student cannot attend because of employment responsibilities, religious reasons, or family obligations please speak with the instructor.

**GRADING:**

The final grade will be based on: In-class Participation, which includes class discussion, doing the reading and the Reading Response Journal (25%); Mid-term Exam (25%); Urban Observation Journal (25%); and the Final Research Paper (25%).

**REQUIRED TEXT AND COURSE READINGS:**

The textbook will serve as the general frame of reference for the course. The required text is:

- *Nancy Kleniewski. (2006). **Cities, Change & Conflict**, Belmont, CA: Thomson Higher Education. Third Edition. {Text will be on reserve in the library}*
- Additionally, there will also be readings **posted to ERES** – look for these regularly! These will be short excerpts from great urban thinkers and/or newspaper articles addressing contemporary urban issues. Below on the “Course Schedule” you will notice some readings with an \* next to them, this means they are available on ERES.

**CLASS SCHEDULE:**

**Week One**

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Tuesday March 4 | Introduction to class & mapping                              |
| Thurs. March 6  | TimeOutNY article & <i>Social Life of Small Urban Spaces</i> |
| HOMEWORK        | Buy TEXTBOOK   |
|                 | Urban Observation Assignment #1                              |

**Week Two**

|                  |                                 |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| Tues. March 11   | Share UO#1                      |
| Thurs. March. 13 | Readings & In-class writing     |
| HOMEWORK         | Examining Urban Issues          |
|                  | Theoretical Perspectives        |
|                  | Cities in World History         |
|                  | Urban Observation Assignment #2 |

**Week Three**

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Tues. March. 18 | Share UO#1                             |
| Thurs. March 20 | Readings & In-class writing            |
| HOMEWORK        | Urban Development in the United States |
|                 | Cities, Suburbs and Metropolitan Areas |
|                 | Mike Davis*                            |
|                 | Urban Observation Assignment #3        |

**Week Four**

Tues. March 25  
Thurs. March 27  
HOMEWORK

Readings  
***When the Levees Broke Act I & II***  
Cities in Europe  
Cities in the Third World  
Urban Observation Assignment #4

**Week Five**

Tues. April 1  
Thurs. April 3  
HOMEWORK

Readings  
FIELD TRIP - details to come  
Immigrants in the City  
Urban Observation Assignment #5

**Week Six**

Tues. April 8  
Thurs. April 10  
HOMEWORK

Discuss UO#4 and final research paper  
Readings & In-class writing  
African Americans in Cities  
Urban Observation Assignment #6

**Week Seven**

Tues. April 15  
Thurs. April 17  
HOMEWORK

***Brooklyn Matters***  
Readings and in-class writing  
Urban Observation Assignment #7

**SPRING BREAK!**

Revise Urban Observations Journals to prepare Portfolio!

**Week Eight**

Tues. April 29  
Thurs. May 1  
HOMEWORK

Midterm (**assignment posted to ERES!**)  
Midterm  
Women in Cities

**Week Nine**

Tues. May 6  
Thurs. May 8  
HOMEWORK

Midterm DUE & Urban Observation Portfolios DUE!  
FIELD TRIP - P.S.1 WACK exhibition  
Social Class and Neighborhoods

**Week Ten**

Tues. May 13  
Thurs. May 15  
HOMEWORK

Research paper thesis statement, sources & outline!  
Readings & URBAN IDENTITIES MATRIX game  
Planning for the Future of Cities  
PAPER FIRST DRAFT

**Week Eleven**

Tues. May 20  
Thurs. May 22

Readings & in-class writing assignment  
BRING FIRST DRAFT FOR PEER REVIEW!!!!

**Week Twelve**

Tues. May 27  
Thurs. May 29

Closing Cities Discussion  
**Film**

**Week Thirteen**

Tues. June 3  
Thurs. June 6

**NO CLASS**  
**FINAL PAPER DUE**