

John Jay College of Criminal Justice
City University of New York
ECONOMICS 270 – URBAN ECONOMICS
Spring 2019 (Online)

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Office Hours: There are no regular office hours, but I'll be fairly responsive to e-mails and will be checking blackboard regularly. Send me e-mail if you'd like to set up a meeting.

Course Description

In this multidisciplinary course we will study the political economy of cities and a variety of urban economic issues, such as poverty, crime, housing, education, health, employment and migration. We will examine historical, theoretical, and practical issues regarding cities, and focus on the socio-economic characteristics of metropolitan areas. We will pay special attention to what we can learn from our experiences in New York City.

The course will begin briefly with the history of urbanization. We will explore the origins of metropolitan areas and cities, and identify the role of economic processes in this history. Then we will continue with the classical and contemporary urban theories originated in different disciplines –economics, sociology, geography– and we will attempt a criticism of the neoliberal urban economics.

In the second-half of the semester, we will examine the current conditions of urban areas, focusing on the increasingly important issues of global urbanization and migration, social inequality, racial dynamics, informality in housing and labor markets, and urban social movements.

Our task will be to develop a solid framework with which we can comprehend and analyze the socio-economic dynamics behind the formation and expansion of both historical and contemporary cities. In this endeavor, our focus will be on the relationship between capitalism, modernity, industrialization, racialization and urbanization.

Course Requirements

The prerequisite for this class is *Econ 101, Introduction to Economics and Global Capitalism*. This means that students should be familiar with the basic methods and models of economics that will be discussed in class and are available in the required readings.

Format of the Course and Workload

1) Online Discussions (40% of Grade): Given the online format of the course, students are expected to actively participate in the discussion forum. I will post questions or discussion topics each week and you will be expected to engage with them and the responses of your classmates on at least 10 different weeks. Specifically, you will need to write at least two paragraphs in which you develop your answer to the discussion questions. In this response, you are expected to include one last sentence in which you ask a question pertaining to **a)** things you might not have understood when reading or watching/listening to the material (there will be videos) **or b)** about things that interest you which might lend themselves to discussion and are related to the topic. This is important given that, apart from posting a weekly two paragraph answer to the question, you are expected to engage and reply to postings made by other people. In other words, **a necessary but not sufficient** condition for receiving full credit for each weekly discussion (**4 pts each**) is that you submit **a minimum of two posts** (one a reply to the question I ask, the other responding to a fellow student's own reply). At the end I will grade you based on your participation **as a whole** (the more you participate the better the chance of getting the full credit irrespective if you make some mistake in your reply). In total, I will put questions for more than 10 weeks so that **a)** you can decide to post all weeks, in which case I count the top 10 weeks, or **b)** you can post 10 and take the rest of the time off.

You should post your original response to the discussion question by Friday of the relevant week and any response to fellow students by Sunday of that week, unless otherwise noted. You will get partial grade if your post is up to one day late, and a grade of 0 beyond that.

Also, please note that I am expecting good arguments/evidence to back up any opinion or claim you make, as well as evidence that you did read or view the material and other people's comments. This will factor in the grade you get for that week. I will not be grading the quality of English (but please do try to make your texts understandable to me and others) nor the orientation of any point of view. I'll be looking for quality arguments, but you may argue whichever way you want to.

2) Midterm Exam (30% of Grade): One week of the semester will be used for writing a midterm exam, which is worth 30% of your total grade. In that week, you won't have to submit posts for discussions or read new material. You will have approximately one week to prepare this **take-home exam**.

For this midterm exam you will:

- a. answer 2 essay questions that I will provide you (length of the answers to be determined later).
- b. **propose a research question** for your final research paper:
*You pick and write about an issue that you find interesting/concerning in an urban area or neighborhood – unemployment, gentrification, immigration, transportation, some new urban development project, etc. You will explain briefly how this issue might be impacting the urban area that you are going to explore and will present a proposal as to how to research this issue (to later develop it into a research paper for the end of the course).

3) Final Research Paper (30% of Grade): You will submit an 8-page research project on the topic you proposed in your midterm exam.

Before submitting this final paper, you will have to conduct your research in several steps: Once you have submitted your research question with the midterm, you will then (1) review 5-6 scholarly articles about the topic, (2) describe the method to approach your own question, (3) collect data about the topic in the neighborhood you picked and (4) analyze this data with regards to your literature review and understanding of course material.

Your final research paper will be an extensive summary of these four steps. The criteria for how to approach and organize each of these steps will be further discussed during the class.

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). The 8-page minimum is linked to the actual essay and does not include the cover page or the bibliography.

Here is a summary of the course requirements:

- 1) Full Participation in **10** Discussions (10 x 4% each = 40%) (10 *best* grades);
- 2) MIDTERM (30%);
- 3) URBAN PROJECT AND FINAL RESEARCH PAPER (30%):

Finally, you are expected to access Blackboard at least once everyday of every week in case changes are made to the assigned material. You will sometimes also be able to see work for upcoming weeks in case you want to start reading for the next sections (however, you cannot submit work beforehand).

Grading Scale

The grading scale will be the following (grades rounded to the nearest whole number):

A	100-93 %	A-	92-90 %	B+	89-87 %	B	86-83 %
B-	82-80 %	C+	79-77 %	C	76-73 %	C-	72-70 %
D+	69-67 %	D	66-63 %	D-	62-60 %		
F	Less than 60 %						

Academic Honesty

All written work submitted must be composed by you and not copied from another source. Any wording taken from another source must be put in quotation marks with the source cited. Plagiarism -- the use of someone else's writing without citing the source -- will result of a grade of F on that exam or paper.

Disability Policy

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who would like to discuss classroom or exam accommodations should come and see me as soon as possible. You can meet me after class or privately during office hours. For your information, the phone number for Student Accessibility Services is (212) 237-8031, if you want to call and register.

Writing Center

If you need help with written English, you may consider dropping by the writing centre, located in room 2450N. They provide free tutoring to students, helping them become more effective writers, from organising and structuring a paper, to writing and proofreading it. Being able to write well is a useful skill in many situations, a skill definitely worth honing while you have the wherewithal to do it.

Topics and Readings Outline

Required Book: Odeng-Oboom, Franklin. 2016. *Reconstructing Urban Economics: Towards a Political Economy of the Built Environment*. London: Zed Books.

**All of the other readings and videos will be available in Blackboard under Readings and Videos sections.

*** Unless noted, each week comprises the interval Monday to Sunday.

Week 1+ (Jan 25th – Feb 3rd) Introduction to Urban Economics

Zenner, Walter P. 2002. "Beyond Urban and Rural" in *Urban Life: Readings in the Anthropology of the City*. 53-60.

Glaeser, Edward (1998) "Are Cities Dying?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol.12, #2.

Davis, Mike. 2006. "The Urban Climatic" in *Planet of Slums*. 1-19.

Demographia, "Definition of Urban Terms." <http://www.demographia.com/db-define.pdf>

Week 2 (Feb. 4th – Feb. 10th): History of Urbanization

Pirenne, H. 2002. "City Origins" and "Cities and European Civilization" in *Medieval Cities: The Origins and the Revival of Trade*.

Engels, Frederick**. 2002. "The Great Town," in *The City Reader*. 58-66.

Mumford, L. 1961. "Paleotechnic Paradise: Coketown," in *The City in History*.

Week 3 (Feb. 11th – Feb. 17th): History of Urbanization in the US and New York

Gottdiener, Mark and Hutchison, Ray. 2011. "Urbanization in the United States"

Glaeser, Edward L., "Urban Colossus: Why is New York America's Largest City?" NBER Working Paper 11398.

Week 4 (Feb. 18th – Feb. 24th): Urban Theories

Textbook Chapter 2: "The Urban Challenge" in *Reconstructing Urban Economics: Towards a Political Economy of the Built Environment*.

Burgess, Ernest. 2005. "The Growth of the City: An Introduction to a Research Project," in *The Urban Reader*. 73-81.

Park, Robert. 2005. "Human Ecology," in *The Urban Reader*. 65-72.

Week 5 (Feb. 25th – March 3rd): Urban Political Economy

Harvey, D. 2002. "The Urban Process under Capitalism: A Framework for Analysis," in *Blackwell City Reader*. 116-124.

Logan, John and Harvey Molotch. 2005. "The City as a Growth Machine," in *The Urban Reader*. 97-105.

Week 6 (March 4th – March 10th): World Cities and Global Cities

Braudel, F. 2006. "Divisions of Space and Time in Europe," in *Global Cities Reader*. 25-31.

Friedman, John. 2005. "The World City Hypothesis," in *The Urban Reader*. 223-229.

Sassen, Saskia. 2000. "The Global City: Strategic Site/New Frontier," *American Studies*, 41:2/3 (Summer/Fall). 79-95.

Week 7 (March 11th – March 17th): Informality and Uncontrolled Urbanization

Textbook Chapter 5: "Informal Economies" in *Reconstructing Urban Economics: Towards a Political Economy of the Built Environment*.

Davis, Mike. 2006. "The Prevalence of Slums" in *Planet of Slums*.

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Week 8 (March 18th – March 24th): Preparation and Submission Midterm

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Week 9 (March 25th – March 31st): Economics of Housing Markets and Suburbanization (*readings may change*)

Textbook Chapter 7: “Housing” in Reconstructing Urban Economics: Towards a Political Economy of the Built Environment.

Glaeser, Edward L., Matthew E. Kahn, and Jordan Rappaport, “Why Do the Poor Live in Cities? The role of public transportation.” *Journal of Urban Economics* 63(2008): 1–24.

Baum-Snow, Nathaniel, “Did Highways Cause Suburbanization?” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 122(2006): 775–805.

Week 10 (April 1st – April 7th): Urban Poverty

Textbook Chapter 6: “Urban Poverty; Socio-Spatial Inequality” in Reconstructing Urban Economics: Towards a Political Economy of the Built Environment.

Mingione, E., 1996. Urban poverty in the advanced industrial world: concepts, analysis and debates. *Urban poverty and the underclass: a reader*, pp.3-40.

Fainstein, N., 1996. A note on interpreting American poverty. *Urban poverty and the underclass—a reader*, pp.153-159.

Week 11 (April 8th – April 14th): Gentrification in New York

Readings: Hackworth, J. 2002. “Post-recession Gentrification in New York City”. *Urban Affairs Review*, 37(6), 815–843.

Davila, A. 2004. “Empowered Culture? New York City's Empowerment Zone and the Selling of El Barrio,” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 49-64.

Week 12 + (April 15th – April 28th): Racial Inequality in Urban Spaces

Readings: Wilson, W. (1995). The Political Economy and Urban Racial Tensions. *The American Economist*, 39(1), 3-14.

Gottdiener, M. and Hurchison, R.2011. “Minority Settlement Patterns, Neighborhoods and Communities in the Multicentered Metro Region” in *The New Urban Sociology*. 185-207.

Budds, D. 2016. How Urban Design Perpetuates Racial Inequality—And What We Can Do About It <https://www.fastcompany.com/3061873/how-urban-design-perpetuates-racial-inequality-and-what-we-can-do-about-it>

***** Spring Recess: April 19th to 28th *****

Week 13 (April 29th - May 5th): Urban Outcasts and The New Urban Segregation

Readings: Wacquant, L. J. D. 2005. “Urban Outcasts: Stigma and Division in the Black American Ghetto and the French Urban Periphery,” in *The Urban Reader*. 144-151.

Caldeira, Teresa. 2005. (1996). “Fortified Enclaves: The New Urban Segregation,” in *The Urban Sociology Reader*. 327-335.

Week 14 (May 6th – May 12th): Urban Movements and Sustainable Urban Development

Readings: *Textbook Chapter 9*: “Sustainable Urban Development” in *Reconstructing Urban Economics: Towards a Political Economy of the Built Environment*.

Castells, M. 1983. “Introduction,” in *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements*. xv-xxi.

Kohler, B. and Wissen, M. 2005. “Glocalizing Protest: Urban Conflicts and Global Social Movements,” in *The Urban Reader*. 346-353.

Week 15 (May 13th – May 20th): Preparation and submission Final Exam