

John Jay College of Criminal Justice
City University of New York
ECONOMICS 370 – URBAN ECONOMICS
Spring 2022 (Online-Asynchronous)

Instructor: Ilgin ERDEM

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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, public health and epidemics, 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 with respect to our current reality of the coronavirus pandemic.

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** which will consist of 2 or 3 questions.

3) Final Exam (30% of Grade): The final exam will assess your understanding of the course materials & discussions in overall. You will be given 2 or 3 questions a week ahead of the due date. You will answer them in short essay formats. The average length of each answer will be about two or three pages (double spaced, 12 pt. font, Times New Roman with 1-inch margins).

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) FINAL (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 please contact me as soon as possible. For your information, the phone number for Student Accessibility Services is (212) 237-8031, if you want to call and register.

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 31 – Feb 6): Introductions and Course Overview

Welcoming Remarks & Personal Introductions

Week 2 (Feb 7 – Feb 13) Introduction to Urban Economics

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

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

3) Porter, E. 2020. [“Coronavirus Threatens the Luster of Superstar Cities”](#) New York Times, July 21.

Week 3 (Feb 14 – Feb 20): History of Urbanization

- 1) Pirenne, H. 2002. “City Origins” and “Cities and European Civilization” in *Medieval Cities: The Origins and the Revival of Trade*.
- 2) Engels, Frederick. 2002. “The Great Town,” in *The City Reader*. 58-66.
- 3) Mumford, L. 1961. “Paleotechnic Paradise: Coketown,” in *The City in History*.

Week 4 (Feb. 22 – Feb 27): History of Urbanization in the US and New York

- 1) Gottdiener, Mark and Hutchison, Ray. 2011. “Urbanization in the United States”
- 2) Glaeser, Edward L., “Urban Colossus: Why is New York America’s Largest City?” NBER Working Paper 11398.

Week 5 (Feb. 28 – March 6): Urban Theories

- 1) *Textbook Chapter 2*: “The Urban Challenge” in *Reconstructing Urban Economics: Towards a Political Economy of the Built Environment*.
- 2) Burgess, Ernest. 2005. “The Growth of the City: An Introduction to a Research Project,” in *The Urban Reader*. 73-81.
- 3) Park, Robert. 2005. “Human Ecology,” in *The Urban Reader*. 65-72.

Week 6 (March 7 – March 13): Urban Political Economy

- 1) Harvey, D. 2002. “The Urban Process under Capitalism: A Framework for Analysis,” in *Blackwell City Reader*. 116-124.
- 2) Logan, John and Harvey Molotch. 2005. “The City as a Growth Machine,” in *The Urban Reader*. 97-105.

Week 7 (March 14 – March 20): World Cities and Global Cities

- 1) Braudel, F. 2006. “Divisions of Space and Time in Europe,” in *Global Cities Reader*. 25-31.^[L]_[SEP]
- 2) Friedman, John. 2005. “The World City Hypothesis,” in *The Urban Reader*. 223-229.^[L]_[SEP]
- 3) Sassen, Saskia. 2000. “The Global City: Strategic Site/New Frontier,” *American Studies*, 41:2/3 (Summer/Fall). 79-95.

Week 8 (March 21 – March 27): Preparation and submission Final Exam

Week 9 (March 28– April 3): Informality and Uncontrolled Urbanization

- 1) *Textbook Chapter 5*: “Informal Economies” in *Reconstructing Urban Economics: Towards a Political Economy of the Built Environment*.
- 2) Davis, Mike. 2006. “The Prevalence of Slums” in *Planet of Slums*.

Week 10 (April 4 – April 10): Economics of Housing Markets and Suburbanization

- 1) Textbook Chapter 7: “Housing” in *Reconstructing Urban Economics: Towards a Political Economy of the Built Environment*.
- 2) To Fix Housing, We Need to Talk About Land Use: Nora Libertun and Cynthia Goytia: <https://thecityfix.com/blog/to-fix-housing-we-need-to-talk-about-land-use-nora-libertun-and-cynthia-goytia-hillary-smith/>
- 3) [Why Is Sustainable Urban Transport a Great Investment?](#)

Week 11 (April 11 – April 15): Urban Poverty

- 1) *Textbook Chapter 6*: “Urban Poverty; Socio-Spatial Inequality” in *Reconstructing Urban Economics: Towards a Political Economy of the Built Environment*.
- 2) Mingione, E., 1996. Urban poverty in the advanced industrial world: concepts, analysis and debates. *Urban poverty and the underclass: a reader*, pp.3-40.

***** Spring Recess: April 15 – April 24 *****

Week 12 (April 25– May 1): Gentrification in New York

- 1) Stein, S. 2019. “2: Planning Gentrification” and “3: New York’s Bipartisan Consensus” in *Capital City: Gentrification and Real Estate State*, Verso: New York.
- 2) Eisenberg, A. 2017. “‘A Shelter Can Tip the Scales Sometimes’: Disinvestment, Gentrification, and the Neighborhood Politics of Homelessness in 1980s New York City” *Journal of Urban History*.

Week 13 (May 2 - May 8): Racial Inequality in Urban Spaces

- 1) Wilson, W. 1995. The Political Economy and Urban Racial Tensions. *The American Economist*, 39(1), 3-14.
- 2) Gottdiener, M. and Hurchison, R. 2011. “Minority Settlement Patterns, Neighborhoods and Communities in the Multicentered Metro Region” in *The New Urban Sociology*. 185-207.
- 3) 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>

Week 14 (May 9 – May 15): Urban Movements and Sustainable Urban Development

- 1) **Textbook Chapter 9:** “Sustainable Urban Development” in *Reconstructing Urban Economics: Towards a Political Economy of the Built Environment*.
- 2) Kohler, B. and Wissen, M. 2005. “Glocalizing Protest: Urban Conflicts and Global Social Movements,” in *The Urban Reader*. 346-353.

Week 15 (May 16- May 23): Preparation and submission Final Exam