

## **URBS 100 - Introduction to Urban Studies**

**University of San Francisco**  
**Spring 2015 – Tues/Thurs 12:45-2:30**  
**Lone Mountain 244**

### **Dr. John Stehlin**

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Office hours: Tues 4-6 PM or by email appointment; please sign up in advance

Office: Lone Mountain Café

### **Course Description**

Through this core class of the urban studies major, students will delve into theories and methods of urban studies. We will blend methods, learning to use history, political-economic analyses, music, politics, and cultural landscape studies to better understand the rise and fall of cities. A section of the class will focus on the San Francisco Bay Area, taking advantage of our location in San Francisco to experience the theories and processes that we'll study in the city around us. We will pay special attention to "our own back yard" through a set of field outings to understand key urban patterns through experiential learning.

More broadly, students will leave this course with an understanding of cities in historical perspective from the foundational late 19<sup>th</sup> century city to post-World War II cities affected by suburbanization and outmigration, through the "urban crisis" of the 1950s, through the "urban renewal" dislocations of the 1960s/70s, and, finally, the "postmodern city" shaped by immigration, economic restructuring, resource scarcity, gentrification and the outmigration of ethnic and working class communities. We will consider how the physical environment and problems inherent in urbanization influence critical issues such as urban poverty, immigration, homelessness, racial identity, and economic opportunity. We will look at the ways that urban development and change structure privilege and accelerate inequality, as well how urban space is used to construct community identities and foster movements for social change. And we will explore the ways our understandings fall short in other contexts, and what we can learn from new urban forms in other parts of the world.

The course will rotate through the four main themes of the Urban Studies major:

1. Urban Sociology and Political Economy
2. Urban Histories, Theories, and Methods
3. Urban Planning and the Built Environment
4. Urban Cultures and Representations

### ***Learning Outcomes:***

Through successful participation in the course, students will:

- Gain an understanding of the key arenas in which urban theory and urban policy are constructed, as evidenced by class discussions and exams;
- Analyze how urban planning emerged historically in US cities and understand the basic arenas in which such planning takes place in contemporary cities, as evidenced by class discussion and term projects;
- Through term project papers and class discussions, identify and critically examine a variety of strategies and initiatives aimed at shaping cities, including initiatives that address urban sustainability and gentrification and others that focus on urban culture and identity;
- Through exams and course discussions, engage in the systematic and logical study of human beings and their interrelationships, with an appreciation of human diversity, particularly race, gender, and class insofar as these axes of difference are evident in urban histories and theories.

### ***Course Requirements and Grading***

- **Participation/Attendance/Quizzes/In-Class Presentations: 30%**
  - Showing up is mandatory – but it’s not enough! Students are expected to arrive on time, having completed the readings, ready to ask and answer questions about the material. Occasionally we’ll hold short quizzes on the readings. Each student will present a news story from their term project at least once over the course of the term – signups will take place in class.
- **Mid-term Exam 30%**
  - Take-home exam. Handed out Thursday, October 15 and due Thursday, October 22
- **Term project: 40%**
  - This is not a conventional term paper to be hastily assembled at the end of November. Instead, students will explore a topic of current concern over the course of the semester through six mini-papers connecting readings to current events in the news. By the end of the second week, students will select a topic. A separate handout will explain the project more fully.

**Make-up Examinations, Late Papers, and Incomplete Work.** No make-up examinations will be permitted except in case of documented emergency. Late paper grades will be diminished by a letter grade per day late without prior approval or appropriate documentation. Incompletes will only be assigned for compelling reasons to those students who have completed at least two-thirds of the required course work at a passing level.

### **Grade Scale**

Final class grades will be based on the following scale:

98 – 100 points:	A+
93 – 97 points:	A
90 – 92 points:	A-
88 – 89 points:	B+
83 – 87 points:	B
80 – 82 points:	B-
78 – 79 points:	C+
73 – 77 points:	C
70 – 72 points:	C-
68 – 69 points:	D+
60 – 67 points:	D

**Class Attendance and Participation.** In short, attendance is mandatory! It is not possible to do well in this course without good attendance. Missed classes – for whatever reason – will have the following impact on your grade:

- 1 absence: no impact
- 2-3 absences: final grade reduced by 1/3 of a letter grade (from A to A-, B+ to B, etc.)
- 4-5 absences: final grade reduced by 2/3 of a letter grade (from A to B+, B+ to B-, etc.)
- 6 or more absences: final grade reduced by full letter grade (from A to B, B to C, etc.)

**Academic Misconduct.** Plagiarism, defined broadly, is the presentation of another's words and/or ideas as one's own without attributing the proper source. It is grounds not only for failure of a given piece of work, which could result in failure for the entire course, it could also result in being reported to the administrative body responsible for student conduct violations and being subject to disciplinary action, which includes expulsion, suspension, and/or probation. The university regards any form of cheating including plagiarism as a serious matter of academic dishonesty which threatens the integrity of the assessment process and award of grades and/or the degree, to the detriment of all other students and graduates of the University. Please see the USF Honor Code at <http://www.usfca.edu/catalog/policies/honor/>. If you find yourself wondering if you are plagiarizing, there's no need to wonder: contact the professor or your FYSA right away for assistance.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accommodations.** This university is committed to providing reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities. Student Disability Services (422-2613) provides university academic support services and specialized assistance to students with disabilities. Individuals with physical, perceptual, or learning disabilities as addressed by the ADA should contact the resource center for information and make a formal request for accommodation through that office.

**Title IX Sex Discrimination & Sexual Assault Mandatory Reporting.** As professor I am a mandatory reporter of sexual abuse, harassment, misconduct, and so forth. This means I am legally obligated to take action if a student reports such an issue, regardless of whether the student asks me to keep confidentiality. The University's Title IX reporting system places the

student at risk in control, but I am neither trained to address such situations myself nor legally permitted to keep confidentiality if one is reported to me.

**Changes to the Syllabus.** The schedule and procedures for this course are subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class and posted on Canvas. If you are absent, be sure to information from a fellow student or from the professor. *Please check & read your email and our Canvas page on a regular basis.*

**Technology.** No texting, tweeting, calling or other electronic communicating in class. No phones in sight. No tech sounds. If you have an emergency that requires a phone call or a text, leave the room. In fact: we'll start the semester with a **no computer rule**. Take notes on paper; the research shows you'll learn more that way and it's less distracting to everyone around you.

**Participation.** Participation involves both asking and answering questions, while allowing your colleagues in the classroom to do the same. If you are feeling shy or otherwise having trouble speaking up in class, come see me during office hours; I can help.

### **Required Reading & Field Trips:**

**All readings will be available through your virtual reader online on Canvas.** Generally, please print the readings from Canvas and bring them to class so you can refer to them during discussion. Since your laptop and phone aren't allowed in class on a regular basis, this will be the best strategy.

#### **Field Trips.**

1. Out of class field trip – Saturday, October 24. The only costs for the trip are Muni/BART fares, but you may want cash for snacks or lunch afterwards.

2. In-class field trip – Tuesday, November 17. See schedule below for details. Trip will be all within walking distance of campus.

#### **Final Presentations.**

**Music.** Cities are often best described and defined through song. Music will be a central element of many classes and students are encouraged to seek out and submit relevant songs & lyrics to share.

## Class Outline & Reading Schedule

### WEEK 1

**1. Tuesday, August 25: The Course & Its Inhabitants**

*Introduction: who and where are we?*

**2. Thursday, August 27: What is a City?**

1. Mumford, Lewis, "What is a City?" (1937)
2. Engels, Friedrich, "The Great Towns," from *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1844)
3. Khaldun, Ibn, *The Muqaddimah* (1377)

### PART I: CONCEPTS

### WEEK 2: SPACE & PLACE

**3. Tuesday, September 1: Cities as Processes**

1. Harvey, David, "Cities or Urbanization?" (1996)

**4. Thursday, September 3: Senses of Place**

1. Massey, Doreen, "A Global Sense of Place" (1994)

**\*\*SUBMIT TERM PROJECT TOPIC BY 5 PM\*\***

### WEEK 3: URBAN SOCIETY

**5. Tuesday, September 8: What Kind of Society is a City?**

1. Simmel, Georg, "The Metropolis and Mental Life" (1903)
2. Wirth, Louis, "Urbanism as a Way of Life" (1938)

**6. Thursday, September 10: The "Sidewalk Ballet"**

1. Jacobs, Jane, "Introduction," "The uses of sidewalks: safety," and "The kind of problem that a city is," from *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961)

**\*\*FIRST TERM PROJECT SUBMISSION DUE BY 5PM\*\***

### WEEK 4: PLACE & DIFFERENCE

**7. Tuesday, September 15: Gendering the City**

1. McDowell, Linda, "In Public," from *Gender, Identity and Place: Understanding Feminist Geographies* (1999)

- *Suggested:* Hayden, Dolores, “What Would a Non-Sexist City Be Like?” (1980)
- *Suggested:* Wright, Melissa, “Femicidio, narcoviolence, and gentrification in Ciudad Juárez: the feminist fight” (2013)

### **8. Thursday, September 17: Urban Difference**

1. Lipsitz, George, “The Racialization of Space and the Spatialization of Race” (2007)
  - *Suggested:* Young, Iris Marion, “City Life and Difference,” from *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (1990)

## **PART II: EXPLORATIONS**

### **WEEK 5: METHODS & HISTORY I**

### **9. Tuesday, September 22: Global Cities**

1. Scott, Allen, *et al.*, “Global City-Regions: An Overview,” from *Global City-Regions: Trends, Theory, Policy* (2001)
  - *Suggested:* Sassen, Saskia, “A New Geography of Centers and Margins” (2000), from *The City Reader*
  - *Suggested:* Scott, Allen, “A brief historical geography of capitalism,” from *A World in Emergence* (2012)

### **10. Thursday, September 24: Ordinary Cities**

1. Robinson, Jennifer, “World Cities, or a World of Ordinary Cities,” from *Ordinary Cities: Between Modernity and Development* (2006)

**\*\*SECOND TERM PROJECT SUBMISSION DUE BY 5PM\*\***

### **WEEK 6: METHODS & HISTORY II**

### **11. Tuesday, September 29: Hidden Maps**

1. Solnit, Rebecca, “Introduction,” from *Infinite City: An Atlas* (2010)

### **12. Thursday, October 1: Hidden Connections**

1. Simone, Abdoumalig, “People as Infrastructure” (2004)

### **WEEK 7: URBAN CULTURE I**

### **13. Tuesday, October 6: Solidity and Flux**

1. Berman, Marshall, “Baudelaire: Modernism in the Streets,” from *All That is Solid Melts Into Air* (1982)

### **14. Thursday, October 8: Migration as a Way of Life**

1. Gregory, Stephen, “The Black Metropolis,” from *The Southern Diaspora* (2005)

**\*\*THIRD TERM PROJECT SUBMISSION DUE BY 5PM\*\***

**WEEK 8: URBAN CULTURE II**

**15. Tuesday, October 13: Urban Subculture**

1. Lyle, Erick, *On the Lower Frequencies* (2012) (selections)
2. Film: *Style Wars* (1983)

**16. Thursday, October 15: Suburban Cultures**

1. Cheng, Wendy, *The Changs Next Door to the Díazes* (2014) (selections)
  - *Suggested*: Rojas, James, “The Enacted Environment,” from *Everyday America* (2003)

**\*\*TAKE-HOME MIDTERM HANDED OUT IN CLASS\*\***

**WEEK 9: URBAN POLITICS I**

**17. Tuesday, October 20: The Growth Machine**

1. Dahl, Robert, *Who Governs?* (1961) (selections)
2. Logan, John & Robert Molotch, “The City as a Growth Machine,” from *Urban Fortunes* (1987)

**18. Thursday, October 22: The Growth Machine in the Bay Area**

1. Domhoff, G. William, “Why San Francisco Is (or Used to Be) Different: Progressive Activists and Neighborhoods Had a Big Impact” (2011), available at: [http://www2.ucsc.edu/whorulesamerica/local/san\\_francisco.html](http://www2.ucsc.edu/whorulesamerica/local/san_francisco.html)
  - *Suggested*: Rhomberg, Chris, “Reconstituting the Urban Regime,” from *No There There* (2004)

**\*\*TAKE-HOME MIDTERM HANDED DUE BY START OF CLASS\*\***

**\*\*FOURTH TERM PROJECT SUBMISSION DUE BY 5PM FRIDAY\*\***

***SATURDAY October 24 Field Trip***

North Oakland walking tour – 10AM-1PM

*This is a mandatory field trip, but if you have work or other obligations that make this impossible, you can complete an additional reading response paper in lieu of attending this walk. Details TBA in class.*

## WEEK 10: URBAN POLITICS II

### 19. Tuesday, October 27: Community Organizations

1. Gregory, James, "A Piece of the Rock," from *Black Corona* (1998)

### 20. Thursday, October 29: The Roots of Ferguson

1. Rothstein, Richard, *The Making of Ferguson* (2014), available at: <http://www.epi.org/publication/making-ferguson/>
  - *Suggested*: Jackson, Kenneth, "Federal Subsidy and the Suburban Dream," from *Crabgrass Frontier* (1985)

## WEEK 11: PLANNING & UNPLANNING I

Tuesday, November 3: NO CLASS

### 21. Thursday, November 5: Planning Urban Space

1. Hall, Peter, *Cities of Tomorrow* (1994) (selections)

**\*\*FIFTH TERM PROJECT SUBMISSION DUE BY 5PM\*\***

## WEEK 12: PLANNING & UNPLANNING II

### 22. Tuesday, November 10: Planning Against Poverty

1. Roy, Ananya, Stuart Schrader and Emma Shaw Crane, "The Anti-Poverty Hoax" (2014)
2. Film: *The Pruitt-Igoe Myth* (2011)

### 23. Thursday, November 12: Planning For Capital

1. Goldman, Michael, "Speculative Urbanism and the Making of the Next World City" (2011)
  - *Suggested*: Doshi, Sapana, "The Politics of the Evicted" (2014)
  - *Suggested*: Ghertner, Asher, "India's Urban Revolution" (2014)

## **PART III: CURRENT ISSUES**

## WEEK 13: CHANGING CITIES

### 24. Tuesday, November 17: Gentrification

1. Mele, Christopher, "Developing the East Village," from *Selling the Lower East Side* (2000)
2. Cutler, Kim-Mai, "How Burrowing Owls Lead to Vomiting Anarchists, or San Francisco's Housing Crisis Explained," *TechCrunch* (2014), available at: <http://techcrunch.com/2014/04/14/sf-housing/>

- *Suggested:* Smith, Neil, “Class Struggle on Avenue B,” from *The New Urban Frontier* (1996)

***Tuesday November 17 In-Class Field Trip***

Western Addition/“NOPA” walking tour – 12PM – 2:30PM

*This is a mandatory field trip, and we will hold class as we walk and observe. Class will meet at the beginning of the lunch hour at Divisadero and Golden Gate and you will be returned to campus. Details TBA in class.*

**25. Thursday, November 19: Eco-cities**

1. Mostafavi, Mohsen and Gareth Doherty, *Ecological Urbanism* (2014) (selections)

**\*\*SIXTH TERM PROJECT SUBMISSION DUE BY 5PM\*\***

**WEEK 14: INNOVATION CITIES**

**26. Tuesday, November 24: Cities and Innovation**

1. Hall, Peter and Manuel Castells, “Technopoles: Mines and Foundries of the Informational Economy” (1994), from *The City Reader*
2. Florida, Richard, “Cities and the Creative Class” (2003)
  - *Suggested:* Peck, Jamie, “Creative Cities,” from *Constructions of Neoliberal Reason* (2010)

**Thursday, November 26: NO CLASS**

**WEEK 15: CONCLUSION**

**27. Tuesday, December 1: Cities in Revolt**

1. Harvey, David, “Henri Lefebvre’s Vision” and “The Right to the City,” from *Rebel Cities* (2012)

**28. Thursday, December 3: Presentations**

**WEEK 16**

**Tuesday, December 8: Review Session**

**\*\*COLLECTED TERM PROJECT SUBMISSIONS DUE BY MONDAY, DECEMBER 7, 5PM\*\***