

**URBAN STUDIES 101
URBAN POVERTY AND AFFLUENCE
Sections 10M2A-F
Fall 2007**

Lectures Presented by

Professor Jeff Maskovsky

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Office Hours: M 3pm-4:30pm; W 12pm-1:30pm

Or by appointment

Discussion Sessions Led by

Instructor Bradley Gardener

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Tel: 718-997-5130

Email: BGardener@qc.cuny.edu

Office Hours: Or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome. This course will introduce you to the field of Urban Studies. We will investigate why cities are places of economic and political opportunity for some and places of deprivation, discrimination, violence and impoverishment for others. We will explore how urban restructuring since WWII has increased the income gap in major metropolitan areas such as New York. We will also discuss different theories of urban poverty and inequality and examine the impact of immigration, racial segregation, suburbanization, public policies, and social movements on U.S. cities and their inhabitants. We will pay special attention to the existence of inequalities based on race, class, gender, and sexuality and will analyze proposals to reduce these inequalities.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The students will:

1. Learn the history of US urban restructuring from the pre-industrial period to the present.
2. Gain familiarity with contemporary approaches to the study of poverty and inequality from a variety of social scientific perspectives and disciplines.

3. Gain familiarity with basic urban research methods such as fieldwork, survey research and historical analysis.

4. Learn to read and critically analyze urban policy proposals.

TIME AND PLACE

Class lectures are scheduled for Mondays from 10:15 to 12:05 in RE 100. Review sessions are scheduled for Wednesdays. Please attend the review session that corresponds with the section for which you are registered.

Section 10M2A, W9:15AM-10:05AM, PH 116

Section 10M2B, W10:15AM-11:05AM, PH 116

Section 10M2C, W11:15AM-12:05PM, PH 116

Section 10M2D, W1:40PM-2:30PM, RE 100

Section 10M2E, W10:15AM-11:05AM, PH202

Section 10M2F, W11:15AM-12:05PM, PH202

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1) Class participation. Please come to lectures and review sessions prepared to discuss the assigned readings, to ask questions, and to listen and respond to others' questions and comments. Regular attendance is the best way for you to ensure your success in this course.

2) Discussion Preparation. In order to encourage advanced preparation for discussion sessions, we ask you to complete eight (out of a total of ten) short assignments over the course of the semester. You will receive credit only for accurate, timely and original work. You are free to choose any eight of the ten assignments (and can therefore also choose which two assignments to miss). Please also keep the following guidelines in mind:

a) Assignments must be handed in anytime before the eleventh minute of class on the date upon which they are due. You must submit a paper copy; we cannot accept assignments by email.

b) Assignments will be handed out during lectures and will be posted to our course Blackboard website. As a matter of course policy, we cannot send assignments to you by email. Sorry about this, but there are simply too many of you for us to be able to provide this level of individualized administrative support.

c) Because we allow you to miss two assignments for any reason, it follows then that no late assignments will be accepted. It also follows that we cannot accept excuses after you have already skipped two assignments. We know that some of you will try anyway, but we really mean this. You read it here first: No exceptions! Note that we might give out an extra, optional eleventh assignment

towards the end of the semester if the class as a whole is respectful of these guidelines.

3) Midterm Exam. This exam covers the first half of the course. The exam is comprised of multiple choice and medium-length questions. We will distribute a study sheet the week before the exam.

4) Final exam. This is a cumulative exam. The exam is comprised of multiple choice, medium-length and essay questions. We will distribute a study sheet the week before the exam.

Grading: Discussion Preparation, 25%
Midterm Exam, 30%
Final Exam, 45%

Please note also the following:

- People come to this class with different kinds of academic expertise, different life experiences, and different customs (both individual and cultural). These differences can, and hopefully will, contribute positively to the substance and quality of class discussion. However, because these differences are often related to social inequalities, they can also be a source of misunderstanding and frustration. It is thus important to keep in mind that active, respectful class participation is as much about listening to and engaging the ideas of others as it is about speaking one's own mind.
- Laptop use is only permitted in the front row of the classroom, so if you use your laptop to take notes, you should plan on arriving early for class to make sure that you will get a seat. If you need to use your cell phone, BlackBerry, I-Pod, Sidekick or any other electronic equipment, please do so outside of the classroom; using these devices during class may be distracting to your fellow classmates. The recording of lectures or class discussions is not permitted.
- Incompletes will not be granted, except in extraordinary circumstances and with proper documentation. After-the-fact requests for extensions and incompletes will not be considered. We really mean this.

BLACKBOARD

Weekly lecture outlines, homework assignments, and grades will be posted to our course web page on the CUNY Blackboard server. Information on how to log on to Blackboard is available through the Office of Converging Technologies.

REQUIRED READING

There is no required textbook for this class, but you will be assigned between 20 and 50 pages of reading each week. Reading material is available from the library e-reserve system. For your convenience, reading packets will also be available for purchase directly from the professor at the beginning of the semester.

OFFICE HOURS

Professor Maskovsky's office is Room 250M in Powdermaker Hall. His office phone number is 718-997-5129. His e-mail address is Jeff.Maskovsky@qc.cuny.edu. If you cannot make it during the office hours listed below, please contact him by email or phone to schedule an appointment.

Mondays 3pm-4:30pm; Wednesdays, 12:00pm to 1:30pm; or by appointment.

Instructor Bradley Gardener's office is Room 250J in Powdermaker Hall. His office phone number is 718-997-5130. His e-mail address is BGardener@gc.cuny.edu. If you cannot make it during the office hours listed below, please contact him by email or phone to schedule an appointment.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND PLAGIARISM

Queens College takes cheating and plagiarism very seriously; if caught you may fail the course and/or be suspended from the college. Don't copy other people's work. This means that you should not take the words or ideas of another person and submit them without acknowledging the original author. Examples of plagiarism include copying from another student's homework assignment or taking phrases, sentences, paragraphs, or statistical findings from a variety of sources and piecing them together without citing them. Taking phrases, paragraphs or papers from course readings, the internet or other students and representing them as your own falls under this category. You must always indicate when you have used an idea from someone else's work; anything else constitutes stealing from others and violates both the ethics of this class and established academic standards. There are now sophisticated search engines that prove beyond a reasonable doubt when students have downloaded web-based material and submitted it as their own.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Required readings and assignment due dates are listed below. This schedule may be adjusted.

Wk Date Readings/discussion topics

1 1/28 **Introduction: What is Urban Studies?**

1/30 **Discussion Session # 1**

Assignments:

- **Please read this entire syllabus before 1/30.**
- **Please log onto our Blackboard course page and read all of the announcements by 1/30.**

You will be QUIZZED on these two assignments during Discussion Session #1.

2 2/04 **Lecture # 1: Rich and Poor in the 21st Century**

- Jared Bernstein, "Updated CBO data reveal unprecedented increase in inequality," Economic Policy Institute
- The Economist, "Meritocracy in America: Ever higher society, ever harder to ascend"
- Devah Pager and Bruce Western, "Race at Work"

Note: Reading materials for lecture # 1 are available from both e-reserve and our course blackboard page; reading materials for subsequent weeks will be available from e-reserve only.

2/06 **Discussion Session # 2**

3 2/11 **Lecture # 2: Theories of Impoverishment**

- Goldsmith and Blakely, Separate Societies, Chapter 1, pp. 1-14
- Laura Maggi, "The Poor Count," American Prospect

2/13 **Discussion Session # 3**

4 2/18 **No class – Happy President's Day!**

2/20 **Discussion Session # 4**

5 2/25 **Lecture # 3: The Historical Development of U.S. Cities**

- John J. Macionis and Vincent N. Parrillo, "The Development of North American Cities"

2/27 **Discussion Session # 5**

6 3/3 **Lecture # 4: Globalization and Underemployment**

- Gregory Pappas, The Magic City, Chapters 2 and 3

3/5 **Discussion Session # 6**

- 14 4/28 **Lecture # 10: Health and Welfare in the City**
- Randy Albelda and Chris Tilly, "It's a Family Affair: Women, Poverty and Welfare"
 - Helen Epstein, "Ghetto Miasma: Enough To Make You Sick?"

4/30 **Discussion Session # 12**

- 15 5/5 **Lecture # 11: Racial Inequalities and the Criminal Justice System**
- David Cole, "No Equal Justice: Race and Class in the American Criminal Justice System"
 - Christian Parenti, "The 'New' Criminal Justice System: State Repression from 1968 to 2001"

5/7 **Discussion Session # 13**

- 16 5/12 **Lecture # 12: Environmental Racism and Sustainable Cities**
- Julie Sze, "The Racial Geography of New York City Garbage: Local and Global Trash Politics"
 - Melissa Checker, "Like Nixon Coming to China: Finding Common Ground in a Multi-Ethnic Coalition for Environmental Justice."

5/14 **Discussion Session # 14**

Final Exam – To be scheduled between 5/16 and 5/24