Urban Sociology

Sociology 443
University of Nevada Las Vegas

Instructor:
Class Meetings:
Classroom:
Office Hours:
Office:
Phone:
Email:

<u>Course Description:</u>

In this course, we will examine processes, policies, and programs that have shaped and affected cities and metropolitan areas in the United over the last hundred years or so. Specifically, we will explore a series of government policies pertaining to housing policies, real estate, neighborhood developments, residential segregation, community organizing; tourism and urban cultural production; and urban sustainability and economic development. The course will focus on policies that have impacted the built environment and address relationships between cities, communities, and broader socio-political and economic processes.

Activities are designed for advanced undergraduate students or for graduate students interested in applying the course subject matter to an applied research project on an urban problem/community in Las Vegas.

<u>Course Objectives</u>:

- Overview of urban policies in the historical context of their development and the adaptation of policy as cities adapt to changing population dynamics.
- Illustrate the links between theory and research, and foster a critical understanding of how cities are built, designed, and shaped.
- Examine the role that neighborhoods play in social life of cities. Critically examining how the physical and social spaces of neighborhoods create and perpetuate inequality.
- Investigate and identify the positive impacts and negative consequences of the built environment on social aspects of living, such as housing, health, neighboring, access to resources, crime, and more.
- Explore how the urban history of Las Vegas shaped the city as we know it today.

Course Materials:

Book: *Urban People and Places: The Sociology of Cities, Suburbs, and Towns*. 2015. Daniel Joseph Monti, Michael Ian Borer, and Lyn C. McGregor. Sage Publications.

Other relevant course materials are located on **WebCampus.** Weekly readings will be posted and available at least two weeks before class. All homework assignments and handouts will be placed on WebCampus.

Course Requirements:

1. **Reading Summaries and Class Discussion.** Attendance at all class sessions is essential and expected. Reading summaries and your participation in the class discussion are worth 20% of your final grade.

Reading Summaries: The reading summary is designed to make you synthesize and assimilate the daily readings. Each reading summary should be between 1-3 pages. I will not accept a reading summary over 3 pages. The goal of the summary is to be able to recognize and discuss the connection among the articles, provide a brief critique of the overlying themes, compare and contrast different theoretical arguments, and understand the sociological relevance of the overarching themes. Reading summaries are to be submitted to WebCampus <u>every Monday by midnight</u> - on the Monday night before class.

*The reading summaries submitted on Monday will be based on the following Tuesday and Thursday readings. Essentially, you are reading a week ahead.

Class Discussion: Each day, two students will lead a class discussion on the readings for that day. Students will sign-up for their discussion day.

A simple discussion strategy is to take 5 minutes and provide a short summary of the topics and then raise specific questions to the class. You can relate the material to previous readings and previous class discussions. Your summary should not take more than 5 minutes. Longer summaries are boring for everyone. Your job is not to lecture, but to facilitate discussion about the material. The discussion should lead to a clearer understanding of the readings, or at least a clearer understanding of the complexity of the readings. Discussion leaders must take a strong role to ensure that the discussion covers the material and that there is equity and continuity in the discussion. One of the major concerns in leading any discussion is how to create an environment that is secure enough for people to ask questions and become involved. Leaders should devise strategies that facilitate everyone's participation. Here are some ideas about how to start and sustain discussion and to involve all class members:
- Ask students to describe the primary value or the central thesis of the reading.
- Ask each student to state one concrete image or moment from the texts that stands out, i.e. passages that particularly captured his or her imagination.
- Ask if any themes emerge from these images.

- Ask students to read aloud a quotation from the reading that they like or dislike, or one that illustrates the central thesis of the reading, or one that was difficult to understand.
- Ask each student to raise one or two questions that s/he has about the readings.

Please review the evaluation criteria for discussion leadership below before you begin to plan your discussion session.

Evaluation Criteria for Discussion Leadership

Discussion Evaluation	Poor	Adequate	Good	Excellent
	1	2	3	4
How well organized is the class session?				
Appears well-prepared with a plan for facilitating discussion				
Integrates readings into discussion				
Provides internal summaries and transitions				
Summarizes & distills main points at end of discussion				
Paces class session appropriately				
How credible is the discussion leader in his/her role?				
Understands the material				
Ensures many points from the reading are discussed				
Helps clarify material, correct misunderstandings				
Is able to admit insufficient knowledge when appropriate				
Speaks audibly and clearly				
Communicates enthusiasm				
How good is the discussion leader's rapport with other class members?				
Achieves equitable participation				
Requires class members' thoughtful participation				
Responds constructively to class members				
Recognizes when others are confused				
Shows respect for others' viewpoints, criticisms				

2. **Urban Las Vegas Scavenger Hunt.** This is a neighborhood-based urban scavenger hunt designed to familiarize yourself with the wide diversity of urban landscapes, neighborhoods, populations, and housing in Las Vegas. For the duration of this course, we will be referring to locations in/around Las Vegas. A solid understanding of those places is necessary. You will produce a journal-type folder with photograph evidence of each location you visit. This assignment is worth 10% of your final grade.

Scavenger Hunt materials will be distributed in class**.**

3. **Las Vegas Neighborhood Profile Paper.** Five types of neighborhoods will be examined in the class – you will pick one of the neighborhood types below for your

profile paper. After selecting your type, you will develop a profile paper of the characteristics of that type of community generally, and then locate a neighborhood in Las Vegas that closely fits the profile.

- Immigrant/ethnic enclave neighborhood
- Master Planned community neighborhood (suburban sprawl)
- Historic neighborhood
- Gentrifying neighborhood
- High-crime neighborhood

This is worth 15% of your final grade.

4. **Las Vegas Urban Research Project and Film**. As a class, we will work together in teams to explore the lived, embodied, and represented experiences of urban Las Vegas. Students will write field notes, reflexive interpretations, examine data—some by themselves, some with others—about (XX TOPIC). Students will present their work in the form of a short documentary film at the end of the semester. This is worth 25% of your final grade.

5. **Midterm and Final Exam.** The midterm and final exam will consist of answering 4 essay questions from a choice of 10. The questions will draw on class lectures, course reading materials, and homework assignments. The exam will expect you to assimilate materials learned throughout the course and apply your knowledge to larger urban sociology questions. Each exam is worth 15% of your final grade.

Grading Scheme:

Reading Summaries	20%
Scavenger Hunt	10%
Neighborhood Profile Paper	15%
Research Project/Film	25%
Midterm and Final Exam	30%
Total	100%

Course Policies:

All course assignments will be completed and handed in on the assigned date. There will be no make-up exams and no exceptions to this policy. All course assignments are due on the assigned due date. The following deductions will be taken if your assignment is late:

1 day late (including the same day but after class)	10 point deduction
2 days late	20 point deduction
3 days late	30 point deduction
4th day and beyond	WILL NOT ACCEPT RECEIVE "0" points

Final Grades:

Final grades will be based on the total points that you earn on all the course assignments and exams. The following table shows the course grading system and final letter grade.

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

My Grading Philosophy:

I do not grade on a "curve." This is helpful for those who may be anxious about a particular course (especially a course required for one's major). This way, you will always be able to keep track of how your current performance translates into a certain grade (and what it will take to achieve a certain grade). Thus, your grade is not determined by how well others do in the course. Your performance in this class determines your final grade.

COURSE OUTLINE			
DATE	TOPIC	Discussion Leaders	IN-CLASS
	Introduction – Summary Sign-Up		
	What is Urban Sociology?		**Scavenger Hunt**
	The emergence of cities: theories of urban sociology		
	Observing "urban" through data and fieldwork		**Neighborhood Profile Selection due**
	The Chicago School (classical)		**Scavenger Hunt Due**
	The LA School (contemporary)		
	Urban Las Vegas: Part 1		
	Urban Las Vegas: Part 2		**Part 1 of Neighborhood Profile Paper Due**

How do cities and neighborhoods take shape? Migration & Planning		
How do cities and neighborhoods take shape? Residential Segregation		
Urban Enclaves and Ghettos		
Public Housing in the United States		**Neighborhood Profile Paper Due**
Midterm Exam in class		**Midterm**
Gentrification		**Research Project Team and Topic Selection**
**TBA CLASS (Presidential Debate) Gentrification	Field Trip/Alternative class	Alternative Class
Suburban sprawl and Master Planned Communities		
Experiencing cities: Interaction in public spaces		

	Experiencing cities: The Downtown		
	Stratification & Inequality in Cities: Poverty		
	Stratification & Inequality in Cities: Disasters		
	Crime and Quality of Life in Cities		
	Crime and Quality of Life in Cities		
	Civic culture and "Community"		
	Urban Las Vegas: Part 3		
	Field Work Day		**Fieldwork/NO CLASS**
	NO CLASS – Thanksgiving		**NO CLASS**
	Cities, Subcultures, and Gender		
	Cities and Sports		
	Research Project Film Festival in class		**Research Film Due**
	No class – study!		
	Final Exam in class		**Final Exam**

Additional Information:

University Excused Absences. As a general rule, a student missing a class or laboratory assignment because of observance of a religious holiday shall have the opportunity to make up missed work. Students must notify me of anticipated absences by the last day of late registration, to be assured of this opportunity. Students who represent UNLV at any official extracurricular activity have the opportunity to make up assignments, but the student must provide official written notification to me no less than one week prior to missing the class(es).

Academic Misconduct—Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and are encouraged when faced with choices to always take the ethical path. Students enrolling in UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV's function as an educational institution.

An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another, from the Internet or any source, without proper citation of the sources. See the *Student Academic Misconduct Policy* (approved December 9, 2005) located at: https://www.unlv.edu/studentconduct/student-conduct.

Copyright—The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves **with** and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. **You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The university will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for employee or student violations of fair use laws.** Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies. Additional information can be found at: http://www.unlv.edu/provost/copyright.

Disability Resource Center (DRC)—The UNLV Disability Resource Center (SSC-A 143, http://drc.unlv.edu/, 702-895-0866) provides resources for students with disabilities. If you feel that you have a disability, please make an appointment with a Disabilities Specialist at the DRC to discuss what options may be available to you. If you are registered with the UNLV Disability Resource Center, bring your Academic Accommodation Plan from the DRC to the instructor during office hours so that you may work together to develop strategies for implementing the accommodations to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. Any information you provide is private and will be treated as such. To maintain the confidentiality of your request, please do not approach the instructor in front of others to discuss your accommodation needs.

Religious Holidays Policy—Any student missing class quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester to make up missed work. The make-up will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor **within the first 14 calendar days of the course for fall and spring courses (excepting modular courses), or within the first 7 calendar days of the course for summer and modular courses,** of his or her intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess.   For additional information, please visit:

http://catalog.unlv.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=531.

Transparency in Learning and Teaching—The University encourages application of the transparency method of constructing assignments for student success. Please see these two links for further information:

https://www.unlv.edu/provost/teachingandlearning

https://www.unlv.edu/provost/transparency

Incomplete Grades—The grade of I—Incomplete—can be granted when a student has satisfactorily completed three-fourths of course work for that semester/session but for reason(s) beyond the student's control, and acceptable to the instructor, cannot complete the last part of the course, and the instructor believes that the student can finish the course without repeating it. The incomplete work must be made up before the end of the following regular semester for undergraduate courses. Graduate students receiving "I" grades in 500-, 600-, or 700-level courses have up to one calendar year to complete the work, at the discretion of the instructor. If course requirements are not completed within the time indicated, a grade of F will be recorded and the GPA will be adjusted accordingly. Students who are fulfilling an Incomplete do not register for the course but make individual arrangements with the instructor who assigned the I grade.

Tutoring and Coaching—The Academic Success Center (ASC) provides tutoring, academic success coaching and other academic assistance for all UNLV undergraduate students. For information regarding tutoring subjects, tutoring times, and other ASC programs and services, visit http://www.unlv.edu/asc or call 702-895-3177. The ASC building is located across from the Student Services Complex (SSC). Academic success coaching is located on the second floor of the SSC (ASC Coaching Spot). Drop-in tutoring is located on the second floor of the Lied Library and College of Engineering TEB second floor.

UNLV Writing Center—One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to UNLV students at the Writing Center, located in CDC-3-301. Although walk-in consultations are sometimes available, students with appointments will receive priority assistance. Appointments may be made in person or by calling 702-895-3908. The student's Rebel ID Card, a copy of the assignment (if possible), and two copies of any writing to be reviewed are requested for the consultation. More information can be found at: http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/.

Rebelmail—By policy, faculty and staff should e-mail students' Rebelmail accounts only. Rebelmail is UNLV's official e-mail system for students. It is one of the primary ways students receive official university communication such as information about deadlines, major campus events, and announcements. All UNLV students receive a Rebelmail account after they have been admitted to the university. Students' e-mail prefixes are listed on class rosters. The suffix is always @unlv.nevada.edu. **Emailing within WebCampus is acceptable.**

Final Examinations—The University requires that final exams given at the end of a course occur at the time and on the day specified in the final exam schedule. See the schedule at: http://www.unlv.edu/registrar/calendars.

Library statement:

Students may consult with a librarian on research needs. For this class,
the Subject Librarian is
(https://www.library.unlv.edu/contact/librarians_by_subject). UNLV Libraries provides
resources to support students' access to information. Discovery, access, and use of
information are vital skills for academic work and for successful post-college life.
Access library resources and ask questions at https://www.library.unlv.edu/.