

UBNS 8000

Seminar in Urban Studies

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Wednesdays. 5:30pm–8:10pm.

Office Hours: By appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course, team-taught by the Urban Studies faculty, is considered the core seminar in the graduate program in Urban Studies, and introduces students to the interdisciplinary and scholarly examination of the factors and issues that affect the dynamics of the urban environment. It focuses on the study of cities from three broad perspectives - geographical, sociological and environmental. These perspectives will be examined through three independent modules led by Urban Studies faculty.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The goal of this course is to:

1. Introduce students to some of the major theoretical constructs, literature and scholars in urban studies
2. Explore the interdisciplinary nature of urban studies
3. Acquaint students with contemporary urban issues and problems such as transportation, crime, housing, political, social and economic forces, energy conservation, green infrastructure and green space.

At the end of the course students should:

- Have an understanding of the multi-disciplinary nature of urban studies as a discipline
- Be able to identify the major challenges facing the urban environment
- Be knowledgeable of historical and contemporary scholars and research on the urban environment

READINGS

Macionis, John J. and Parillo, Vincent N. *Cities and Urban Life*, sixth edition. Boston, MA: Pearson, 2013.

Portney, Kent E. *Taking Sustainable Cities Seriously: Economic Development, the Environment, and Quality of Life in American Cities* (2nd edition), 2013. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: The MIT Press. 382 + xvi. ISBN: 9780262518277, \$29.00.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

The following reminders are from the UNO Graduate Catalog: “All students are expected to conduct their academic affairs in an honest and responsible manner. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in academic work shall be subject to disciplinary actions,” including: plagiarism, cheating, assisting others in cheating, falsely obtaining or using test materials, submitting materials of others for assignments, and altering academic records. Also, since graduate work requires the active interaction with others in academic dialogue, students must remember that this added responsibility includes “respecting a diversity of opinion and defending one’s colleagues as well as one’s own academic freedom, and providing a full and complete representation of any scholarly find, be it experimental data or information retrieved from archives.”

“Each member of the scholarly community should be treated with respect and dignity. Each has the right to learn. This right imposes a duty not to infringe upon the rights of others. The academic community should assure its members those opportunities, protections, and privileges that provide the best climate for learning.”

COURSE MODULES

MODULE 1: August 24, 31, September 7, 14, 21–Built Systems: Drs. Blair and Goodman

Topics covered include:

- Origin and history of cities: The evolution of urban environments.
- Urbanization: the growth of cities globally
- Urban geography: Space, urbanization and growth.
- Urban politics and economics: The politics of allocation and urban needs.
- Urban planning and design: Views, methods, and reality.

MODULE 2: September 28, October 5, 12, 19, 26–Human Systems: Dr. Williams

Topics covered include:

- The Theoretical Context for Human Systems
- The Social Phenomena of Cities: Class and Other Distinctions
- Urban Culture: Diversity and Urbanism
- Urban Problems: Poverty, Education, Housing and Crime

MODULE 3: Natural Systems: November 2, 9, 16, 30, December 7: Dr. Reed

Topics covered include:

- The Multiple Dimensions of Sustainability
- Urban Air and Water Quality, Climate Action and Energy Conservation
- Landscape Architecture and Green Infrastructure
- Economic Development and Smart Growth
- Smart Growth and Environmental Justice