URBAN GEOGRAPHY

Course Description: The objective of this course is to provide you with the broad background of theories, concepts, and methods of research necessary for understanding how and why our cities have reached their current status. The focus is on examining the internal structure of the North American city. This includes analysis of the commercial, industrial, and residential sectors of the urban environment. Particular emphasis is placed on the range of urban theories developed to explain both urban structure and contemporary urban ills.

Course Requirements:

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<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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<td>Panel Discussion</td>
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<td>Response Paper</td>
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Panel Discussion: In groups of 5, you will examine a contemporary problematic issue facing the U.S. city. Each person will speak from a prepared outline for 5 to 7 minutes. Details will be provided in a handout.

Response Paper: All students will write a 4 to 5 page essay that examines a selected current ill or vexing issue in American cities today (e.g., crime, gentrification, underfunded public schools) and explains them by reference to a dominant conceptual perspective (chosen by the student). This paper will be due the sixth week of class.

Readings:

Geography 483 Reader (found at Illini Union Bookstore) that consists of:

- Hamnett, Chris, 2000. “Gentrification, Post-Industrialism and Industrial and Occupational Restructuring in
Global Cities.” In G. Bridge and S. Watson (eds.) A Companion to the City.


TOPICS

I. Approaches to Understanding the Metropolitan Area
   Urban Ecology
   Neo-Classical Analysis
   Behavioral Analysis
   Urban Managerialism
   Marxism
   Structurationism


II. Models of Metropolitan Growth and Change
   Circuits of Capital-Uneven-Development Model
   Industrial Relocation Model
   Political Economy of Place Model


   Harvey, D., 2000. Spaces of Hope (California: University of California


III. **Redeveloping the City**

Urban Renewal  
Supply Based Approaches  
Demand Based Approaches  
Urban Enterprise Zones and Recent Concepts


IV. **Contemporary Problem 1 - Inner City Slum Persistence**

Congregation Thesis  
Subculture of Poverty Thesis  
Daily-Life Environment Thesis  
Institutionalist Thesis  
Class Monopoly Rent Thesis


Mele, Christopher, 1999. Selling the Lower East Side (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota).


V. Contemporary Problem 2 - Gentrification Dynamics

- Scale of Phenomena
- Characteristics of Process
- Demand Side Explanations
- Supply Side Explanations


VI. Contemporary Problem 3 - Preservation of Prime Agriculture Land

- Master Plan
- Direct Land Purchase by Government
- Granting of Tax abatements
- Planned Unit Developments
- Transfer of Development Rights


**VII. Contemporary Problem 4 - Space Versus Spatiality in Urban Analysis**

- Space As Passive Container
- Space As Constructed Causal Influence


Cresswell, Tim, 1996. *In Space/Out Space* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota).


**VIII. Panel Discussions on Contemporary Urban Issues**

- Gentrification Dynamics
- Ghetto Dynamics
- Urban Decline Dynamics
- Public Housing Dynamics
- Sports Dynamics