SPEA V161
Urban Problems and Solutions

BASIC INFORMATION

Course Instructor
Matthew Baggetta        Office Hours: Tuesdays        Location: SPEA 435
Email: baggettm@indiana.edu    10:00am-12:00pm

Graduate Teaching Assistants
Ed Klaunig       Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays                   Location: SPEA Library
Email: jklaunig@indiana.edu       2:30-3:30pm

Ryan Woolsey       Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays                   Location: SPEA Atrium
Email: wwoolsey@indiana.edu       2:30-3:30pm

Undergraduate Teaching Assistant
Bailey McFarland       Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays                   Location: SPEA Library
Email: bhmcfarl@umail.iu.edu       12:35-1:35pm

Course Meeting Time and Place
Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:00-2:15pm, PV 167

Course Description
This course offers an introduction to thinking about problems faced in urban areas and about how we might find solutions to them. We will begin by discussing the rise of cities and the movement of people into urban areas followed by a discussion of how patterns of experience become understood as “problems” that need solving. From there we will consider who the main groups are that try to solve urban problems and look at a variety of ways that they have gone about doing so. We will cover a broad range of substantive examples as the course progresses, including a series of focused case studies where we, as a class, will try to solve some particularly challenging problems. Throughout the semester, we will regularly work to improve a set of skills that are crucial for success of urban problem-solvers—and, really, people in any profession.

Course Goals
This is an introductory course. As such, the goal of the course is not to try to turn you into fully qualified experts in urban problem-solving. No single course could ever hope to do such a thing. This course does have four reasonable goals. Students at the end of the course should be able to:

1. **Think more like scientists—systematically.** Scientists are always on the lookout for patterns. In this course, we will seek out consistent patterns in urban areas that help us understand how urban setting work, how problems arise, and how we might solve them.

2. **Think more like decision-makers—decisively.** Decision-makers from mayors to business executives to nonprofit leaders have to bring in as much information as they can and then—often without all the information they would like to have—must make a choice about what to do next. In this course, we will gather information, think hard about what it means, and then will make choices or evaluate the choices made by others.

3. **Apply those two approaches to new situations.** With a better sense of how scientists and decision-makers work, we will regularly apply those approaches to new sets of facts and circumstances. When you finish the course, you should be able to identify an urban problem, find more systematic
information about it, think critically about what that information means, and develop an informed opinion about what course of action might be best to take next.

4. **Know the basics about cities.** While an introductory course cannot make you an expert, it should give you enough information about a broad enough range of ideas that you know that certain perspectives, ideas, and information sources exist and that you could learn more about them in the future. In this course, we will develop enough knowledge about the basics of urban studies and the techniques of research to be able to intelligently learn more.

**Required Book**

There is one required textbook for the course. It is available at the IU bookstore. All other readings will be made available on our OnCourse site.


**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Class Sessions and Readings**

Class sessions will include a mix of lecture, discussion, video and audio material, possibly some guest speakers, and a variety other activities. Readings form the theoretical core of the class. They will introduce material covered in class, form the basis of in-class exercises and discussions, and extend ideas in ways that we cannot cover in 75 minutes. The readings are, generally speaking, short, but they are “idea rich.” To understand them, you must take your time and read them thoroughly in advance of the class for which they are listed. Failing to do the readings will make class sessions difficult. Do the readings—carefully—before each class.

**Participation**

Attendance is, technically speaking, not mandatory (i.e. you will not lose points for missing class, nor will you gain any by simply attending), but *anything* mentioned during class time is fair game on the final exam and *everything* discussed in class will help you with your labs and case analysis assignments. Lecture slides, notes borrowed from friends, and outside readings will almost certainly not be enough for you to do well on exams or the final project. **Regularly attending class will be absolutely critical for your success in this course.** Please note: Because we are not taking attendance, participation is not the same thing as attendance. Admittedly, you must be present to participate, but merely being in the room hardly constitutes active participation in class. Active participation includes having completed readings (carefully enough to be able to discuss them intelligently) and assignments before class begins, paying attention to lectures and discussions, participating in discussions thoughtfully, asking questions when you need to, and meeting with the instructor or teaching assistants outside of class as needed. We will also regularly do activities in class that will be submitted during that class session. These will not be graded, but completion of them will factor into your participation grade. You must be present in class and complete the activity in a serious and thoughtful manner to receive credit.

**Written Work**

**Research Posters:** One-quarter of your course grade will come from a final project. In pairs, you will select an urban problem of interest to you in a particular city. You will conduct secondary research about the nature of this problem and what attempts have been made to solve it. Near the end of the semester, you will present a case study describing your city’s problem and evaluating the solution attempt as a large format
research poster. Posters will be displayed in class in a research conference format where you will defend your argument publically while being evaluated by your instructors and your classmates. All of the other assignments during the semester will prepare you for elements of the poster project (see below). We will discuss this project assignment in much greater detail as the semester unfolds.

**Labs:** Throughout the first two-thirds of the course, you will regularly complete short lab assignments. Labs are designed to give you practical training in conducting careful research and clearly communicating information. The skills you develop through the lab assignments will directly transfer to the poster project and will help you throughout the remainder of your time in college and in your professional lives after graduation. Lab topics will include things like writing clearly and succinctly, collecting original social science data, making graphs and maps from original and secondary data sources, finding and interpreting relevant images, and citing sources appropriately. Labs will typically be assigned at the end of a class session and will be due at the start of the next session. More details on each lab will be distributed at the time of assignment. Labs will be graded on a scale from 0 to 3. Labs that are not submitted receive a 0. Submitted labs that fail to meet basic levels of quality receive a 1. Labs that substantially satisfy the assignment receive a 2. Labs that show excellent levels of quality, thought, and care receive a 3.

**Case Evaluations:** Your poster projects will require you to critically analyze and evaluate an attempted solution to an urban problem. To practice this skill, we will conduct three case study sessions this semester. Case materials will be distributed prior to a case discussion session. You will read the case in advance of class and think about the choices embedded within it. We will have an extensive discussion about the cases in class. Following those discussions, you will receive an assignment for analyzing and evaluating the case. The first two assignments will involve written case evaluations that you will complete individually. Only one of the first two case evaluations will be included in your final grade calculations. You may write both evaluations and take the higher grade or you may choose to submit only one of the first two evaluations. The third case evaluation assignment will be completed with your poster partner, as practice for working together on an evaluation. You must complete this evaluation; you will be graded collectively (i.e. both partners will receive the same grade).

**Final Exam**
There will be a cumulative final exam for the course during exam week. The exam will test your ability to apply the general knowledge you have developed about urban studies, urban planning and design, and the mechanisms of urban problem-solving to new situations and contexts.

**Grading**
- Participation: 10%
- Labs: 20%
- Case Evaluations: 25%
- Poster Projects: 25%
- Final Exam: 20%

**Late Work & Exam Absences**
Deadlines will be rigidly enforced. Labs submitted late for any reason will receive no more than one-third of full credit. Case evaluations submitted late will be docked one-third of a letter grade per day. Only severe illness, death in the family, or unavoidable conflict caused by an official university obligation are grounds for excused absences from the final exam. Official documentation must be provided to establish these claims. Posters cannot be submitted late. No credit will be awarded if a poster is not presented on the assigned day.
COURSE SCHEDULE AND CONTENT
All readings come from *The City Reader, 5th Edition*, unless otherwise noted. Readings not in the reader are available on (or are linked to from) our OnCourse site or will be distributed in hard copy in class.

Unit 1: An Introduction to Urban Thinking

Monday, Aug 29: Course Overview
Reading: [none]

Wednesday, Aug 31: Urban
Reading: Introduction to Part 2, pp. 87–90
Mumford, “What is a City?” pp. 91–95

Monday, Sept 5: LABOR DAY HOLIDAY
Reading: [none]

Wednesday, Sept 7: Urbanism
Review Introduction to Part 2, pp. 87–90
Wirth, “Urbanism as a Way of Life,” pp. 96–104

Monday, Sept 12: Urbanization
Reading: Introduction to Part 1, pp. 15–19

Wednesday, September 14: Urban “Problems”

Monday, September 19: Empirically Urban

Unit 2: The Rise of Urban Problem Solvers

Wednesday, September 21: Inventing “The State”
Reading: Review Introduction to Part 1, pp. 15–19
Childe, “The Urban Revolution,” pp. 31–39

Monday, September 26: Creating “Civil Society”
Reading: Kitto, “The Polis,” pp. 40–45

Wednesday, September 28: The Rise of “The Market”
Jackson, “The Drive-In Culture of Contemporary America,” pp. 65–74

Monday, October 3: “The Market” Keeps Rising…
Wednesday, October 5: CASE DISCUSSION
Reading: CASE STUDY 1

Unit 3: Strategies for Solving—Urban Planning

Monday, October 10: The Epic Planners, Part I
Reading: Introduction to Part 5, pp. 225–229
   Howard, “Author’s Introduction” and “The Town-Country Magnet,” pp. 328–335

Wednesday, October 12: The Epic Planners, Part II
Reading: Le Corbusier, “A Contemporary City,” pp. 336–344

Monday, October 17: The Epic Fails
Reading: Review Introduction to Part 2, pp. 85–86
   Introduction to Part 6, pp. 369–372
   Hall, “The City of Theory,” pp. 373–385

Wednesday, October 19: New Urbanism
Reading: Review Introduction to Part 5, pp. 225-229
   Perry, “The Neighborhood Unit” pp. 486-498
   Congress for the New Urbanism, “Charter of the New Urbanism” pp. 356-259
   Calthorpe and Fulton, “‘Designing the Region’ and ‘Designing the Region is Designing the Neighborhood’” pp. 360-365

Monday, October 24: New Urbanism
Reading: Introduction to Part 7, pp. 471–473
   Jacobs and Appleyard, “Toward an Urban Design Manifesto,” pp. 518–529

Wednesday, October 26: CASE DISCUSSION
Reading: CASE STUDY 2

Monday, October 31: Planning in Practice
Reading: Review Introduction to Part 6, pp. 369–372
   Forester, “Planning in the Face of Conflict,” pp. 421–434

Unit 4: Seeking Solutions in The State and…

Wednesday, November 2: …The Market
Reading: Introduction to Part 4, pp. 225–229
   Thompson, “The City as Distorted Price System,” pp. 274–281
Monday, November 7: …The Market
Reading: Molotch, “The City as Growth Machine,” pp. 251–262
   Review Introduction to Part 2, pp. 87–90
   Florida, “The Creative Class,” 143–149

Wednesday, November 9: …Civil Society
Reading: Review Introduction to Part 4, pp. 225–229

Monday, November 14: …Civil Society
Reading: Review Introduction to Part 2, pp. 87–90

Wednesday, November 16: CASE DISCUSSION
Reading: CASE STUDY 3

Monday, November 21: To Be Determined
Reading: [none]

Wednesday, November 23: THANKSGIVING BREAK
Reading: [none]

**UNIT 5: Your Urban Problems & Solutions**

Monday, November 28: Catch-Up and Workshop
Reading: To Be Determined

Wednesday, November 30: POSTER SESSION 1

Monday, December 5: POSTER SESSION 2

Wednesday, December 7: FINAL EXAM REVIEW

**Final Exam**
Wednesday, December 14: 2:45-4:45pm
GENERAL POLICIES & NOTES

Indiana University has official policies regarding students with learning disabilities and the observance of religious holidays. This course will operate within these IU policies. To ensure accurate application of these policies and the provision of appropriate accommodations, students should bring these issues to the attention of the instructor as soon as possible and at least 7 days before any accommodation might be necessary.

Academic Misconduct
Academic misconduct is defined as any activity that tends to undermine the academic integrity of the institution. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, interference, violation of course rules, and facilitating academic dishonesty. In accordance with IU policies, all cases of academic misconduct will be reported to the dean of students or other appropriate officials. The university may discipline students for academic misconduct. The seriousness of violations will be taken into account in assessing penalties for acts of academic misconduct.

Syllabus Revisions
This syllabus is subject to modest revisions during the semester to better accommodate a complete and fulfilling learning experience for everyone. Revisions will be clearly communicated in class. Examples of possible revisions include the reordering or replacement of topics in the schedule, expansion or contraction of particular topics or units, or the rescheduling of class sessions.

Additional Material
No one-semester course on urban issues can adequately cover the depth and breadth of thinking and research on this topic. If at any point you would like more information about any topic covered in the course—or even related topics not formally addressed in the class—please speak to the instructor. I will gladly direct you toward additional sources of information on topics of interest to you.

Writing Help
For free help at any phase of the writing process—from brainstorming to polishing the final draft—call Writing Tutorial Services (WTS) at 855-6738 for an appointment. When you visit WTS, you’ll find a tutor who is a sympathetic and helpful reader of your prose. To be assured of an appointment with the tutor who will know most about your class, please call in advance. WTS, in Ballantine 206, is open Monday—Thursday 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and Friday 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. WTS also has three branches for walk-in tutorials: one in the Wells Library, third floor West Tower, with hours Monday—Thursday 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. WTS tutors are also available in the Academic Support Centers in Briscoe, Forest, and Teter residence halls, open Sunday—Thursday 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.

Good Advice
It is crucial that you manage your time wisely in this course. Regular, modest effort in this course will lead to success. Know when things are due. Ask questions. Stay on top of the reading, labs, and writing assignments. Be prepared for class, actively engage with class activities, and take good notes.