

Urban Geography
GEOG 241
Macalester College

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Location	104 Carnegie	104 Carnegie

Course Description

This course introduces you to the geographical study of cities with an emphasis on learning about cities through a cultural landscape approach. The central point of the course is to examine how society and space shape each other through the construction, management, and everyday life experience of cities. This course focuses on U.S. cities and Minneapolis-St. Paul in particular. This course takes advantage of Macalester's location by immersing you in the urban environment of the Twin Cities through case studies, field study exercises, and visits from experts working in organizations and institutions in the local communities. This course requires an extensive amount of fieldwork, which you will complete independently. Urban Geography will demand a lot from you, but it should be a lot of fun and offer a formative learning experience, not only about cities, but about the discipline of geography, the liberal arts, and even yourself.

Learning goals

Satisfactory work in this course will help you develop abilities and skills that will serve you in college and afterward. This course focuses on the following skills and knowledge sets:

- Critical thinking – Routine activities, including discussion, assignments, and the field research project will help you to enhance your analytical reasoning skills.
- Landscape analysis – The assignments in this class will help you develop competencies and abilities that support the analysis of cultural landscapes.
- Foundational knowledge of U.S. urban issues – You will enhance your awareness and understanding of several key relationships and issues that are fundamental to the urban experience in the United States, both past and present. You will also develop fundamental knowledge about the internal morphology and urbanization processes of US cities, as well as the problems related to these structures.
- Interest in the Twin Cities – The experiential learning activities in this course will immerse you in the landscape and life of the Twin Cities and you will develop your own questions about how this place works and use this interest to engage the wider world.

Class format and expectations

Our meetings will include a mix of discussions, group and individual learning activities, and lectures. Your regular attendance, preparation, and full participation are necessary to sustain an optimal environment for learning. I therefore expect you to have completed all readings and assignments before coming to class and be prepared to talk about them in detail.

Readings

There is one required text for this course. It is available to purchase or rent through the campus bookstore and the library has copies on reserve.

Kaplan, D., Holloway, S., and Wheeler, J. (2014). *Urban Geography*, 3rd edition. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons. (Hereinafter referred to as “Text.”)

Additional Readings

In addition to the required text, we will be reading a number of articles from peer-reviewed journals as well as the popular press. This format allows us to explore a variety of writing styles, perspectives, and empirical cases. These readings are referenced in the schedule by last name of the author. These are available 24 hours a day through our course Moodle page. Let me know if you have any problems accessing this material in a timely manner.

Policies

Cell phones and Laptops: Cell phone use is not allowed in the classroom. Please silence your phones at the start of class. Should you need to answer a phone call, quietly step out of the classroom. Texting is not allowed either as it is both disruptive and disrespectful to other students and the instructor. Laptop use is allowed for course-related activity only.

Academic honesty is expected at all times. All work for this course must be your own. You must properly cite any work on which you draw in your written assignments. Plagiarism or cheating will not be tolerated and will result in a failing grade for the course. Furthermore, such behavior will be reported to the Dean of Students and may result in suspension or even dismissal from the college. Please see me if you have questions about what counts as plagiarism.

Changes. As the semester unfolds, there may be reason to make changes to the course. I will announce any changes to readings, topics, or the schedule in class and via Moodle. It is your responsibility to keep up with any changes.

Deadlines. Deadlines for assignments are firm. Penalties for missed deadlines are noted in the assignment descriptions below. Note: in a couple of cases, assignments will not be accepted past their deadlines. If you have obligations that conflict with this class' scheduled assignments, you must see me no later than Friday, September 14th so that we can discuss appropriate accommodations.

Disabilities. If you have a documented disability or any other problem that you think may affect your ability to perform well in this course, please see me as soon as possible so that we can discuss appropriate accommodations.

Moodle. A fair amount of course information will be disseminated via Moodle. I will post pertinent documents, notices, and announcements on the class Moodle page. If you are looking for a handout, for instance, you will likely find it there.

No extra credit. The number of assignments on which grades in this course are based is non-negotiable.

Respect for learning. Respect for your peers and professor is absolutely essential to create and sustain a supportive learning environment free of disruptions. As we engage in critical discussion and debate, keep your critiques focused on ideas (and not the person voicing the idea). Our goal is to create a positive classroom environment in which you and your classmates feel comfortable having bold conversations and taking risks in the learning process. Examples of behaviors that can be disruptive include chatting and whispering during class, reading a newspaper during class, interrupting others, preparing to leave before class is over, and consistently arriving late to class. Please keep these disruptions to a minimum. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom may result in a request to leave the class and/or a referral to the Office of Student Affairs.

Assignments (1000 points total)

Field assignment (200 points total). In addition to assigned readings, this course asks you to go out into the urban landscape of the Twin Cities to see examples first-hand, reflect on what you see vis-à-vis the text and assigned readings, and ask original questions. In effect, the field assignment reflects the notion that the urban landscape represents another kind of “text” that you will need to study. The itinerary for the field assignment also coincides with the “project” assignments described below. This assignment includes additional reflective work:

- Post 12 original photos to the course blog: <https://urbanscots.wordpress.com/blog/>
 - The photos will reflect your observations during fieldwork. Each photo must have a brief caption and tag.
 - You are required to post at least 4 photographs in connection with each of the three parts of the field study. This averages out to one photo per week.
 - Following these directions will enable you to earn 100 points. Partial credit is possible if you depart from the instructions.
- *Fieldwork reflections.* This assignment allows you to reflect on your observations and experiences and share questions by composing two brief digital stories. We will use a browser-based program, *WeVideo*, to create these reflective stories. You will receive instruction for using this software program. You will submit your entries to a course webpage. Due dates for the entries are as follows:
 - Digital story 1 – October 8th (50 points)
 - Digital story 2 – November 12th (50 points)

Projects (300 points total) There are two projects that engage critical thinking skills and ask you to work on your creative problem-solving skills. Each project is worth 150 points and follows along with your field assignment itinerary. Project work must be submitted via Moodle. Due dates are as follows:

- Project 1 (150 points) is due October 3rd
- Project 2 (150 points) is due November 19th.
 - Late assignments will be penalized 15 points per calendar day.

Culminating research project (250 points) This assignment asks you to delve deeper into a topic that interests you. The topic could come from the text, a reading, an experience you've had in our class, or an observation you've made during the fieldwork, among other sources of inspiration. You will conduct research on your chosen topic and compose a four-minute digital story. In your story, you should pose a question, explain why it is interesting to you, make a case for why it is something of significance for urban geography, and share the research you've done to address the question. The research must involve further reading and may encompass other forms of research too. The story is due on December 8th, and we will screen it in class during the final two days (Dec 10th & 12th). It is worth 200 points and will be submitted to the course webpage. Late assignments will be penalized 20 points/day.

There are three supporting assignments to help you make progress on your project:

- Proposal (20 points) – due October 24th
- Annotated bibliography (10 points) – due November 26th
- Storyboard/draft outline + script (15 points) – due November 30th

Exams (250 points total) There will be two in-class exams. The exams will pose multiple-choice, short answer and essay questions. Each exam is worth 125 points.

- Exams will be given on October 19th and December 15th.
There are no opportunities for make-up exams. Students who do not submit an exam on the scheduled day will receive no credit.

Notes about our class

Leaving campus

The assignments in this course require you to leave campus and explore the city. Be sure to factor travel time into your work on these assignments. All locations are accessible by public transportation and walking. You may also reach most locations by bicycle. If you do not own one, you can check out a bicycle from the library. However you decide to travel, you will need to plan ahead to complete the field assignments in a timely fashion.

Working with others

You are encouraged to work with others on the field study and projects, however, the work you submit must be your own.

Out-of-class events

We will visit the Mill City Museum in Minneapolis on Saturday, September 15th, from 9:30am – 12pm. Travel and tickets for this fieldtrip will be arranged for you.

You may also participate in a guided tour of Allianz Field, St. Paul's newest stadium, on Saturday, October 6th, from 9 – 10:30 am. Allianz Field is very close to the college and it will be up to you to manage travel to and from the stadium. Attendance for this optional.

Grading

Your final grade will be based on performance in all parts of the course. Letter grades will be assigned according to the following distribution:

<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Satisfactory</u>	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>	<u>Failing</u>
A (1000-930)	B+ (899-880)	C+ (799-780)	D+ (699-680)	NC (< 600)
A- (929-900)	B (879-830)	C (779-730)	D (679-630)	
	B- (829-800)	C- (729-700)	D- (629-600)	

List of assigned readings

- Bishop, B. (2008). *The Big Sort*. Houghton Mifflin Company: Boston.
- Center for Culture, History, and the Environment Place-Based Workshop (No Date). *Reading an Urban Landscape*. Available online: <http://nelson.wisc.edu/che/events/place-based-workshops/2009/project/index.php>
- Chaskin, R. and Joseph, M. (2011). Social interaction in mixed-income developments: relational expectations and emerging reality. *Journal of Urban Affairs* 33(2), pp. 209-237.
- Cosgrove, D. (1989). Geography is everywhere: culture and symbolism in human landscapes. In *Horizons in Human Geography*, eds. D. Gregory and Walford, 118-135. Totowa, NJ: Barnes and Noble Books.
- Goetz, E. (2012). "HOPE VI" in A. Carswell (ed.) *The Encyclopedia of Housing*, second edition. Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Knox, P., McCarthy, L. (2012). *Urbanization: an introduction to urban geography*, 3rd Edition. Pearson Prentice Hall and Pearson Education, Inc.: New Jersey.
- Lewis, P. (2003). "The monument and the bungalow" in Wilson, C., Groth, P. (eds.) *Everyday America*, pp. 85 – 108. The University of California Press: Berkeley.
- McAlester, V., McAlester, L. (2005) *A field guide to American houses*. Alfred A. Knopf: New York.
- Meinig, D. (1979). "The beholding eye: ten versions of the same scene. In Meinig, D., ed., *The interpretation of ordinary landscapes*, pp. 33-48, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Nickrand, J. (2015). "Minneapolis's white lie." *The Atlantic*, February 21. Available online: <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/02/minneapolis-white-lie/385702/>
- Rothstein, R. (2014). *The making of Ferguson: public policies at the root of its troubles*. Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute.
- Samuels, A. (2016). "Segregation in paradise" *The Atlantic*, July 12. Available online: <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/07/twin-cities-segregation/490970/>
- Thompson, (2015). The miracle of Minneapolis. *The Atlantic*, March. Available online: <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/03/the-miracle-of-minneapolis/384975/>
- Smith, L., and Trudeau, D., editors. (2011). St. Paul's University Ave Atlas: Before the Central Corridor. Chapter 6: Gentrification. Available online: http://www.maclester.edu/academics/geography/civicengagement/6_gentrification_conclusion.pdf
- Varna, G. and S. Tiesdell (2010). Assessing the publicness of public space. *Journal of Urban Design* 15(4): 575-598.

SCHEDULE

Wk	Day	Topic	Readings	Assignment
1	Sept 5 (W)	Introduction		
	Sept 7 (F)	The landscape approach to Urban Geography	1) Cosgrove 2) Meinig	
<u>Building American Urban Landscapes</u>				
2	Sept 10 (M)	Transportation and urban form	Knox and McCarthy	
	Sept 12 (W)	Reading landscapes – phases of development	1) Text Ch 1 2) Lewis	
	Sept 14 (F)	Architecture walking tour	McAlester	
	Sept 15 (S)	Tour of Mill City Museum	Adams and Van Drasek	
3	Sept 17 (M)	<i>No Class – work on the field study</i>		
	Sept 19 (W)	Urban Origins & Urbanization	Text Ch 2: 22-45	
	Sept 21 (F)	Introduction to Digital Storytelling and <i>WeVideo</i>		
4	Sept 24 (M)	Urbanization of the Twin Cities	Text Ch 2: 45-58	
	Sept 26 (W)	Twin Cities in the American Urban Hierarchy	Text Ch 3: 61-71	
	Sept 28 (F)	<i>No Class – work on the field study</i>		
5	Oct 1 (M)	Urbanization and Centralization	1) Text Ch 3: 72-85 2) Text Ch 4: 103-113	
	Oct 3 (W)	Legacy landscapes and beyond	Center for Culture, History, and Environment essay	Project 1
		<u>The Economic Landscape</u>		
	Oct 5 (F)	Cities as a growth machine Cities and circuits of capital	Text Ch 6	

Wk	Day	Topic	Readings	Assignment
6	Oct 8 (M)	Debriefing the Digital Story Reflection		Digital Story #1
	Oct 10 (W)	Urban fortunes: the rise, fall, and rise of University Ave.	Text Ch 5	
	Oct 12 (F)	No class – attend an International Roundtable session or plenary		
7	Oct 15 (M)	The city makers	Sze/Burns/ Propheter/or Ahlfeldt	
	Oct 17 (W)	Catalyzing investment on the green line – Stadium as solution?		
	Oct 19 (F)	Exam 1		
8	Oct 22 (M)	Reflections on the circuits of capital in re-making University		
	Oct 24 (W) Oct 26 (F)	Culminating Research Project <i>Fall break</i>		Project proposal
	Oct 29 (M)	<u>The Social Landscape</u> The ‘Minneapolis Miracle’: towards an urban renaissance	1) Thompson 2) Nickrand	Project 2 assigned
	Oct 31 (W)	The Decline of central cities	Text Ch 8	
	Nov 2 (F)	Gentrification and revitalization	University Atlas ch 5	
10	Nov 5 (M)	Housing opportunities and the legacy of past racial disparities	Rothstein	
	Nov 7 (W)	The Census and data about city life – Guest Speaker Andrew Virden		
	Nov 9 (F)	The significance of Ferguson	Text Ch 9	

Wk	Day	Topic	Readings	Assignment
11	Nov 12 (M)	How Neighborhoods change Debriefing digital story reflection		Digital Story #2
11	Nov 14 (W)	Revitalization and regeneration strategies – Mixed income housing	1) Goetz 2) Chaskin and Joseph	
	Nov 16 (F)	Racial and ethnic segregation	1) Text Ch 10 2) Semuels 3) Atlantic Cities	Bring a personal computer to class
12	Nov 19 (M)	Regenerating Central cities		Project 2 due
	Nov 21 (W)	<i>Thanksgiving break</i>		
	Nov 23 (F)	<i>Thanksgiving break</i>		
		<u>The political landscape</u>		
13	Nov 26 (M)	Building more inclusive cities	1) Varna and Tiesdell 2) The social life of small urban spaces	Annotated bibliography
	Nov 28 (W)	Metropolitan fragmentation	Bishop	
	Nov 30 (F)	Regional Government	Text Ch 11	Storyboard/project outline
14	Dec 3 (M)	Making the case for planning	Text Ch 12	
	Dec 5 (W)	Making the case for planning – <i>Guest speaker: Baris Gumes-Dawes</i>		
	Dec 7 (F)	Planning and the future of cities – toward a new urbanism?		Culminating Project due
15	Dec 10 (M)	Screening of Culminating Projects		
	Dec 12 (W)	Screening of Culminating Projects		
	Dec 15 (S)	Final exam 10:30am – 12:30 pm		