

Syllabus for SOCI 425A 001: Urban Sociology

Department/Program: Sociology
Year: 2017-2018
Course Title: Urban Sociology
Course Schedule: Tu, Th 12.30-14.00
Location(s):

Instructor: Nathanael Lauster
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Course Description: (*Calendar Version*) *Demographic, behavioural, and organizational aspects of urban structures and of urbanization in different societies and periods.* This iteration of the course will provide a quick and broad sketch of urban sociology as a field. Then it will focus on developing a nuanced understanding of the city as a heavily regulated and varied space. Though cities elsewhere will be explored, discussion of urban regulatory experiences will be rooted in a North America, with special attention provided to the case studies of New York, Toronto, and Vancouver. Through coursework, students will be expected to develop close familiarity with an urban dataset of their choosing. They will curate the data for the class and analyze data for a short paper.

Course Goals: 1) provide a sketch of the field of urban sociology, 2) provide a detailed examination of how urban regulation works and matters, and 3) provide hands-on experience working with one or more urban datasets and building an archive for urban research.

Required Reading:

Mitchell Duneier (1999) *Sidewalk*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Mariana Valverde (2012) *Everyday Law on the Street: City Governance in an Age of Diversity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Selected Other Readings (See Schedule & on-line)

Course Organization: The first half of the course will be organized mostly around intensive discussion of readings, partially in readings groups, and partially in full class discussion format. After the first two weeks, students will be organized into reading & discussion groups of approximately 6-8 people each. These will meet during the first half (@ 20-40 min) of most classes. Within discussion groups, two students will be assigned roles leading the discussion for each class. They will each come independently prepared with a brief summary and set of questions to guide discussion (to be distributed to group members during class). During the course of discussion, they will be assigned by their groups into writing a majority report and

minority report on the readings discussed during the day (see below for details). I may sit in on group discussions. During the second portion of most classes, the discussion of readings will move from groups to the full room. Through the course, students will be asked to find and familiarize themselves with a dataset dealing with urban issues. They will build on their familiarity in order to write up and present a description of the data, curating it for the class. By the end of the course, students will be asked to use an urban dataset to answer (or provide some insight) into a research question of interest to them.

Means of Evaluation:

Quick Quiz Tally (15%)

A series of very short quizzes on readings will be employed to motivate everyone to keep up with the course material, and come to class prepared to discuss the readings. Performance on these quizzes will be tallied at the end of the year, accounting for 15% of student grades.

Majority/Minority Reports (25%)

Reports on readings and the discussions they generate will provide an important basis for evaluation. Reports will be compiled and provided to me no more than one week after the discussion. Reports will follow a format, divided into the majority report and the minority report. The majority report will provide a) a short, one paragraph summary of the readings, b) a short (one page) description of the group discussion, and c) a short (one page) developed analysis of the reading and group discussion. The minority report will provide a critical review of the majority report as written, highlighting dissent in sections a, b, and c (max. two pages). Students will be expected to write a total of **three** majority and/or minority reports (as assigned by the group), with each assigned @ 8% of the student's total grade. The majority report writer needs to send their report to the minority report writer within three days of the class discussion, so the minority report writer has time to respond by the next class, when the assignment is due. Grades will be assigned independently for majority and minority reports.

Dataset Curation (25%) (5/20 presentation/write-up for website)

Students will be asked to curate a dataset dealing with urban issues and/or data. Curation will include preparing a brief presentation and a web-ready write-up description of the data. In addition, students should be ready to answer questions about the data posed by classmates or their instructors. Write-up descriptions should include both a brief abstract (paragraph length), and a detailed description. Descriptions should detail what's in the data, how the data were compiled, and how to use the data. Along the way, they should discuss the promise in the data (e.g., what kind of research questions could this help answer?) and problems associated with it. Dataset examples might include: a set of municipal by-laws; google traffic data; city engineering traffic data; police report data; social networking data; historical photographic data; ethnographic data; survey data; etc. Students may work on this project jointly or separately, and those working on curating the same dataset are encouraged to work together. Detailed descriptions should run approximately 2,000-2,500 words per student.

Final Paper (25%) (5/20 presentation/write-up for website)

Students will be asked to use a dataset dealing with urban issues and/or data to address a research question of interest to them. Research questions should relate in some way to the topics discussed during the course. Addressing the research question should take the form of a brief presentation and a written report, ready to be appended to a website description of data. Written reports should include the research question of interest, a methods statement linking the research question to the dataset at hand, an analysis that draws some information from the dataset that addresses or partially answers the research question, a statement of limitations, and a discussion of implications. Students may work on this project jointly or separately. Written reports should run approximately 2,500-3,000 words per student.

Participation (10%)

Students will be evaluated by their peers and by their instructor. Evaluations will come in the form of brief reflections by students of their own and others' contributions to group discussions. These evaluations will be joined to my own evaluations of their contribution to class discussions. Because of the importance of student contributions to discussion, missing classes will be counted against participation marks. Note: good participation in class means showing up prepared and on time, having read the readings under discussion for the day, staying engaged, asking questions, providing insight, and actively avoiding introducing any distractions to the classroom. It also means being respectful of peers and guest speakers, and fostering an inclusive discourse.

Note: all written work should consist of your own thoughts, interpretations, and words. Do not copy or cut & paste the prose of another. Plagiarism is often relatively easy to detect, and I will send cases on to the university administration if I encounter them. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, see the University calendar: <http://students.ubc.ca/calendar/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,959>

A Note on General Grading Policies: Please note that my grading reflects an evaluation of how you have met course expectations outlined above. It does not reflect an assessment of what I think of you as a person. In general, the grading policies will follow those outlined in the UBC Calendar. Students should note that I consider grades in the "B" range to be good grades, representing solid performance. Grades in the "A" range tend to be exceptional in my courses.

Percentage (%)	Grade	Percentage (%)	Grade
90-100	A+	68-71.9	B-
85-89.9	A	64-67.9	C+
80-84.9	A-	60-63.9	C
76-79.9	B+	55-59.9	C-
72-75.9	B	50-54.9	D

A score lower than 50% is considered failing.

COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to change!)

Week	Day	Topic	Reading	Notes
1	Th S7	Intro		
2	Tu S12	Foundations	Burgess; Loughran	
	Th S14	Urban Ancients	Khaldun; Cooper	
3	Tu S19	Political Economic	Molotch; Ley & Dobson	Group Assign
	Th S21	<i>*Field Trip Flex*</i>	MacDonald	
4	Tu S26	Community	Jacobs; Wellman	
	Th S28	Subculture	Florida; Zukin	
5	Tu O3	Justice	Young; Ross	
	Th O5	Informal Life	Sidewalk: Intro & Part I	Research Gs
6	Tu O10	Sidewalk Habitat	Sidewalk: Part II; Chambers (Dependent)	
	Th O12	Social Control	Sidewalk: Part III	
7	Tu O17	Regulation & Decency	Sidewalk: Parts IV & V	
	Th O19	<i>*Sidewalk Movie Break*</i>		
8	Tu O24	Workshops		
	Th O26	Data Curation Day		
9	Tu O31	Data Curation Day	<i>Data Quiz!</i>	Data Sum Due
	Th N2	Regulation & Taste	Everyday Law: Ch 1, 2, & 3	
10	Tu N7	Bureaucracy & Zoning	Everyday Law: Ch 4, 5 & 6	
	Th N9	Food Carts	Everyday Law: Ch 7, 8 & 9	
11	Tu N14	The Trouble with Houses	Lauster House: Intro & 1; Talen	
	Th N16	Building Vancouver	Lauster House: Ch 2 & 3; Smart Growth BC	
12	Tu N21	Workshops		Draft Due
	Th N23	Class Presents		
13	Tu N28	Class Presents		
	Th N30	Class Presents	<i>Presents Quiz!</i>	Final Reports Due