

# SOC 341 URBAN SOCIOLOGY

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**Instructor** | Dr. Daniel Alvord  
**Email** | dalvord@ku.edu  
**Office** | Fraser 708  
**Hours** | T/R 1:00pm-3:00pm

**Semester** | Spring 2020  
**Time** | T/R 11:00am-12:15pm  
**Place** | Fraser 107  
**Course** | #57451

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Urban sociology focuses on social interaction and social organization within built environments. As the world has rapidly urbanized, structures of social, political, and economic life have also rapidly transformed. In this course we survey various theories associated with understanding the rise of urban society. We will consider what role cities play in structuring social inequalities.

## COURSE INFORMATION

**Required Text:** Required readings will be provided on Blackboard.

## GRADING INFORMATION

**Assignments:** For this course you will be expected to complete the following:

*Final Paper (20%):* For this course you will complete a final research paper. The paper will be 7-10 pages double-spaced in length and will be worth 20% of your final grade. The essay must also be uploaded to Blackboard's SafeAssign function, a plagiarism detecting software. You are encouraged, but not required, to meet with me prior to the essay's due date so that I can address any questions or concerns. You are also encouraged to take advantage of the KU Writing Center ([writing.ku.edu](http://writing.ku.edu)).

*Midterm and Final (30%):* You will have **two** exams that will cover the readings and the lectures. Quizzes will be completed online through Blackboard. You will have the full day to take the quiz at your convenience, but it must be completed before 11:59pm. Quizzes will be a combination of multiple choice and short answer. Each quiz will be worth 15% of your final grade.

*City Comparisons (20%):* For this assignment you will choose similarly sized American cities and compare and contrast them across a range of sociodemographic characteristics. Using a range of online statistical sources, such as the Census and the eviction Lab, you will describe the traits of each city and offer potential explanations for their similarities or differences. The paper will be approximately 5-pages double-spaced. It will be worth 20% of your final grade.

*Discussion Leader (15%):* Throughout the semester, students will present an overview and a range of discussion questions for the class. You will sign up in advance for a week and a reading to present. These presentations will consist of a

synthesis and overview of the week’s readings. You will then act as a discussion leader by posing questions to the class. The presentation and discussion will be worth 15% of your final grade.

*Attendance and Participation (15%):* Attendance and participation are important components of any course. Attendance will be marked each class period. You are granted two “free” absences during the semester. After the second absence, you will begin to lose attendance points. The only exceptions will be for religious holidays, documented illness (after the second absence) or a death in the family (after the second absence).

**Grade Scale:** Your grade will be determined using the CLAS plus/minus grading system:

| <u>Assignment</u> | <u>Percentage</u> | <u>Percentage</u> | <u>Letter Grade</u> |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Attendance        | 15%               | 93-100            | A                   |
| Discussion        | 15%               | 90-92             | A-                  |
| Midterm           | 15%               | 88-89             | B+                  |
| Final             | 15%               | 83-87             | B                   |
| Stat. Abstract    | 20%               | 80-82             | B-                  |
| Final Paper       | 20%               | 78-79             | C+                  |
|                   | <hr/>             | 73-77             | C                   |
|                   | 100%              | 70-72             | C-                  |
|                   |                   | 68-69             | D+                  |
|                   |                   | 63-67             | D                   |
|                   |                   | 60-62             | D-                  |
|                   |                   | 0-59              | F                   |

The following is a breakdown of the marking system and an indication of the quality of work that roughly corresponds to each grade:

A: Displays a thorough understanding of material and expresses original, text-supported opinions; clear, organized and thoughtful writing; consistent and intelligent contributions and insights. Has completed all required assignments and they have been among the best in class.

B: Displays a good factual understanding of material; very good preparation for class; ability to communicate ideas logically and clearly. Has completed all required assignments and they have been of good quality.

C: Displays an understanding of the basic points of all material, although the presentation may be unclear or disorganized; may also denote sporadic participation in class. Has completed all or most required assignments, which might suffer from small issues, but generally have been free of significant problems.

D: Displays incomplete work; slight grasp of basic ideas; disorganized, poorly presented or communicated ideas; little participation in class. Has failed to complete all required assignments and they have often suffered from problems.

F: Displays incomplete work; unclear and/or inaccurate presentation of the main themes of the course; poor written communication of ideas; numerous absences, and/or little or participation in class. Has failed to complete required assignments and they have routinely suffered from serious problems.

Except in the case of a possible calculation error, please do not contact me to change the grade that you earned.

### **COURSE POLICIES**

***Classroom Conduct:*** Students are expected to behave in a respectful manner during class. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated in this class. Students who behave in any manner that interferes or has the potential to interfere with other students' opportunity to benefit from this course will be subject to the relevant University policies and procedures. Per the Electronic Devices policy, do not explore the Internet or play games on your portable computing device during class. It draws others' attention and is rude.

***Email Conduct:*** Email is a very convenient and useful means of communication. Indeed, it is the best way to get in touch with me. However, its convenience often translates into a lack of formality. There are a few email guidelines that should be adhered to during this course. First, I do not discuss grades over email. Any discussion of grades should be done during office hours. Second, unless otherwise noted, I do not read early drafts of papers or answer substantive questions by email. I am more than happy to read drafts, provide comments, and give clarification for concepts covered in class during office hours, but not by email. Finally, I am not "on call" with my email. Do not email me late at night or the night before a paper or quiz is due and expect an immediate reply. I respect that all of you will have many things going on at one time this semester, and that your time is incredibly valuable to you. I ask that you please respect that my own time is valuable as well and that I also have plenty going on in my own schedule.

***Office Hours:*** Office hours are a time to come meet with me to discuss the material in class or to discuss other interests you may have. You may ask for extra help or for clarification. You may also come and just talk about aspects of the class you find really interesting or compelling. Office hours are not lesson plans and student should come to office hours prepared to drive the conversation.

***Academic Misconduct & Plagiarism:*** Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to give unfair advantage to the student (such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor, providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment), or the attempt to

commit such an act. “Plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another’s work and the submission of it as one’s own academic work offered for credit. Any form of cheating or academic dishonesty will be actively investigated and punished. The University defines academic misconduct in Section 6 of the University Senate Rules and Regulations: “Academic misconduct by a student shall include, but not be limited to, disruption of classes; threatening an instructor or fellow student in an academic setting; giving or receiving of unauthorized aid on examinations or in the preparation of notebooks, themes, reports or other assignments; knowingly misrepresenting the source of any academic work. . .” Cheating will possibly result in an F in the course and the filing of academic misconduct charges. As ignorance of the rules is not an acceptable excuse for academic misconduct, please consult the KU Student Handbook for further information: [http://www.writing.ku.edu/~writing/instructors/guides/academic\\_misconduct.shtml](http://www.writing.ku.edu/~writing/instructors/guides/academic_misconduct.shtml) For more information on what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it, please consult the following KU website: <http://www.writing.ku.edu/~writing/guides/>.

***Make-up Work:*** Make-up work will only be given to students with excused absences. In accord with university policies, students will be allowed to take a make-up exam if they can document that they were ill or if they had a death in the family. Absences which result from participation on a university athletic team and which are documented by the university athletic office will also be excused. Transportation problems do not qualify as a valid excuse. Students without a valid and documented excuse will receive a 0 on any missed exam. Students wishing to schedule a make-up exam must contact me by e-mail within 24 hours of the time at which the original exam was scheduled. Students must be prepared to present me with documentation explaining their absence prior to scheduling a make-up exam. Exams must be taken within a week of the original exam date. It is up to students who have missed an exam to contact me, to provide documentation and to set up a time to make up the exam.

***Late Assignments:*** Unless otherwise noted, all assignments must be submitted by the beginning of class on the assigned due date. Late submissions will be penalized at the rate of 10%, or one letter grade, per day (including weekends).

***Extra Credit:*** There will be no extra credit opportunities in this course.

***Electronic Devices:*** The use of any handheld electronic devices will not be tolerated. Cell phones and other mobile devices are to be silenced and stowed away during all 75 minutes of class. The use of laptop computers will be allowed only in situations where the student can provide documentation from the Academic Achievement and Access Center (<http://www.achievement.ku.edu/>) attesting to their need for the device in class. Research shows that using a laptop during class impedes both your learning and the learning of students around you (see, e.g., Sana et al. 2013, and Dynarski 2017). If you must use one, or insist on using one, students may sit in a “laptop zone” if they feel, for any reason, that you would benefit from using a laptop to take notes. Students using laptops or cellphones for purposes other than note taking will be asked to leave and be counted as absent for the class.

**Recording & Auditing:** As per the Electronic Devices policy, the use of handheld personal recorders will only be allowed in class in situations where the student can provide documentation from the Academic Achievement and Access Center (<http://www.achievement.ku.edu/>) attesting to their need for the device. Any student wishing to record lecture must consult with me before class. Additionally, course attendance is exclusively restricted to members of the class, and you need explicit permission from the instructor to attend any class sessions if you are not formally enrolled in the course.

**Religious Holidays:** Attendance is required for every class session. If class requirements conflict with religious holidays that you observe, this needs to be discussed with me in advance. Notification after the fact is not acceptable and will count as an unexcused absence.

**Diversity and Inclusion:** It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that the students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally, or for other students or student groups.

**Illness:** If you are sick, please do not come to class. If you must miss a deadline because of illness, please contact me by email.

**Disabilities:** Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him/her from fully demonstrating her/his abilities should contact me personally as soon as possible so that we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate educational opportunity. To do this you must first be registered with the Disability Resources office (22 Strong Hall, 785-864-2620), which coordinates accommodations and services for KU courses. *No special needs will be accommodated without proper documentation and recommendations supplied by this office.* For further information and contact information, please consult the Disability Resources website: <http://www.disability.ku.edu/>.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

| <i>Week</i> | <i>Date</i> | <i>Topic</i>                                      | <i>Readings</i>  | <i>Due</i> |
|-------------|-------------|---|--|------------|
| One         | January 21  | Syllabus  | Syllabus   | N/A        |
|             | January 23  | <b>NO CLASS</b>                                   | N/A  | N/A        |
| Two         | January 28  | History of Cities                                 | Lewis Mumford<br>– What is a<br>City?<br><br>Henri Pirenne –<br>City Origins   |            |
|             | January 30  | History of Cities                                 |  |            |
| Three       | February 4  | Chicago School /<br>Ecological<br>Approach        | Robert Park –<br>The City<br><br>Ernest Burgess –<br>The Growth of<br>the City   |            |
|             | February 6  | Chicago School /<br>Ecological<br>Approach        |  |            |
| Four        | February 11 | New Urban<br>Sociology or<br>Political<br>Economy | Harvey Molotch<br>– The City as a<br>Growth Machine<br><br><del>Clarence Stone –<br/>Regime Politics</del><br><br>Shelley<br>Kimelberg –<br>Inside the<br>Growth Machine |            |
|             | February 13 | New Urban<br>Sociology or<br>Political<br>Economy |  |            |
| Five        | February 18 | Cultural<br>Theories                              | Silver and Clark<br>– Scenescapes<br><br>Florida – Rise of<br>the Creative<br>Class<br><br>Clark – The City<br>as an   |            |

|       |             |                                  |  |     |
|-------|-------------|----------------------------------|--|-----|
|       |             |                                  | Entertainment Machine  |     |
|       | February 20 | Cultural Theories                |  |     |
| Six   | February 25 | Urbanism                         | Georg Simmel – The Metropolis and Mental Life<br><br>Louis Wirth – Urbanism as a Way of Life<br><br>Claude Fisher – Toward a Subcultural Theory of Urbanism  |     |
|       | February 27 | Urbanism                         |  |     |
| Seven | March 3     | Cities and Global Capitalism     | Saskia Sassen – The Global City<br><br>Saskia Sassen – Locating Cities on Global Circuits  |     |
|       | March 5     | Cities and Global Capitalism     |  |     |
| Eight | March 10    | <b>NO CLASS</b>                  | N/A  | N/A |
|       | March 12    | <b>NO CLASS</b>                  | N/A  | N/A |
| Nine  | March 17    | The Financialization of the City | Josh Pacewicz - Tax Increment Financing, Economic Development Professionals and the Financialization of Urban Politics<br><br>Josh Pacewicz – the city as a Fiscal Derivative<br><br>L. Owen Kirkpatrick - |     |

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|          |          |                                  | The New Urban Fiscal Crisis: Finance, Democracy and Municipal Debt   |  |
|          | March 19 | The Financialization of the City |  |  |
| Ten      | March 24 | Housing and Homelessness         | Matthew Desmond - Evicted  |  |
|          | March 26 | Housing and Homelessness         |  |  |
| Eleven   | March 31 | Race and the City                | W.E.B. Du Bois – The Philadelphia Negro<br><br>Drake and Clayton – Black Metropolis<br><br>William Julius Wilson – The Truly Disadvantaged |  |
|          | April 2  | Race and the City                |  |  |
| Twelve   | April 7  | Segregation                      | Richard Rothstein – The Color of Law<br><br>Douglas Massey – American Apartheid  |  |
|          | April 9  | Segregation                      |  |  |
| Thirteen | April 14 | Suburbanization                  | Andrew Wiese – Place of Their Own<br><br>David M. P. Freund – Marketing the Free Market  |  |
|          | April 16 | Suburbanization                  |  |  |



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|-----------|------------|---------------------------|--|--|
| Fourteen  | April 21   | Neighborhoods             | Robert J. Sampson – Great American City<br><br>Amin Ghaziani – There Goes the Gayborhood?                    |  |
|           | April 23   | Neighborhoods             |  |  |
| Fifteen   | April 28   | Gender and the City       | Saskia Sassen – Global Cities and Survival Circuits<br><br>Lynn Appleton – Gender Regimes of American Cities |  |
|           | April 30   | Gender and the City       |  |  |
| Sixteen   | May 5      | Cities and Climate Change | Eric Klinenberg – Heat Wave<br><br>Rosenzweig et al – Cities Lead the Way in Climate Change Action           |  |
|           | May 7      | Cities and Climate Change |  |  |
| Seventeen | May 11- 15 |                           |  |  |

*\*I reserve the right to alter or amend the course syllabus during the semester within reason.*