

Sociology 442/542
Greg McLauchlan
Spring 2006

Office Hrs: We 2:15-4:15

630 PLC/ 346-5028

URBANIZATION AND THE CITY

This course will examine the origins, social impacts and problems, and sustainability of cities. We will look at class, race, environmental, geographic, and gender conflicts as these relate to cities. We will also pay attention to the significance of and struggles over the built environment, economic development and growth, residential patterns and housing (i.e. how we live), transportation, and environmental sustainability. Students will undertake an original research project in our own city "laboratory"--Eugene.

Course Requirements and Format

There are four requirements for the course: **1)** attendance and discussion participation in weekly class meetings; **2)** for weeks 2-7, a 1 to 1 1/2 page typed (single-spaced) response paper to the readings for that week (I will explain what should be in these short papers in class the first week). Papers will be turned in at the beginning of class, and will be graded in pairs, i.e. the first two papers are on the Davis book, second two on Kunstler, third two on Kay (3 pairs, 15 points each pair). **3)** participation in a student Research Interest Group (RIG) that will give a group presentation in week 9 or 10; **4)** writing a 12-15 page term research paper on a topic you develop that is related to the theme of your RIG. Term papers are due in my box at 3pm on Tuesday of finals week. Sections below describe in detail how the RIGs will work and provide suggestions for research topics. Another handout gives guidelines on how to develop and write your term research paper.

There will be six Student Research Interest Groups, in the following areas: 1) environmental quality; 2) transportation systems and alternatives; 3) the built environment, housing and sprawl; 4) downtown and the UO campus environments; 5) social movements and city government; 6) urban inequalities: race, class, gender, and physical abilities. RIGs will meet during the second half of class during weeks 1,2,4,6,8, and I expect they will probably have several additional meetings outside class time.

Grading: 15 points each paper pair, for 45 points total short response papers; 15 points group RIG presentation; 40 points term paper. 100 points total. I do not grade on a curve, so all students can do equally well in the course, and the incentive is for collaboration not competition. If a grade is on the borderline, the term paper will weigh slightly more.

Readings

Mike Davis, CITY OF QUARTZ
William Howard Kunstler, THE GEOGRAPHY OF NOWHERE
Jane Holtz Kay, ASPHALT NATION
Eben Fodor, BETTER NOT BIGGER

All readings are available at Black Sun Books, 2455 Hilyard, 484-3777. M-Sa 10-6pm

Calendar of Topics and Readings

Week 1. Course introduction and overview.

What are cities for? The rise of cities; cities and modern society. Social movements, social problems and cities. The significance of place and the built environment in urban sociology. Cities and our future.

Discussion of course format and requirements; organization of student Research Interest Groups.

Week 2. Power, Politics and the City. Cities, suburbs, and social movements. Los Angeles: our paradigm?

Reading: Davis, CITY OF QUARTZ, Prologue, Chapters 2 and 3
RIGs meet second half of class

Week 3. Class and racial conflict; drugs and crime; the policing of cities and the control of space. Political repression in the city.

Reading: Davis, CITY OF QUARTZ, Chapters 4 and 5

Week 4. The social and political consequences of the built environment. How we live.

Reading: Kunstler, THE GEOGRAPHY OF NOWHERE, Chapters 1,2,3,5,7,

Week 5. Politics of the built environment, cont'd. Redesigning our cities for livability.

Reading: Kunstler, Chapters 8,10,13; Friends of Eugene, AGENDA FOR A LIVABLE EUGENE [Field Trip to downtown Eugene]

Week 6. Technology and urban form: the automobile society and its consequences.

Reading: Kay, ASPHALT NATION, Introduction, Chapters 1-6

Week 7. Transportation and society: alternatives to the automobile and creating sustainable cities; death of the auto age?

Reading: Kay, ASPHALT NATION, Chapters 11-18; Friends of Eugene, "A Congestion and Pollution Reduction (CPR) Alternative for TransPlan"

Week 8. The Growth Debate. Causes and consequences of urban growth; growth vs. sustainability? The politics of growth and slow growth movements.

Reading: Fodor, BETTER, NOT BIGGER, Chs. 1-4, 6-7

Week 9. Eugene's urban present and future: Class presentations by student Research Interest Groups

No assigned readings; read materials for your group and/or individual projects. Presentations by RIGs on Environmental Quality; Transportation; Downtown and The UO campus environments.

Week 10. Eugene's present and future continued: Class presentations by RIGs

No assigned readings; read materials for your group and/or individual projects. Presentations by RIGs on Housing, Built Environment and Sprawl; Social Movements and City Government; Urban Inequalities: Race, Class, Gender, Physical Abilities