Faculty of Social Sciences
Department of Economics

Urban Land Economics
ECON 312 A01 (1.5 credits)
CRN 11091
September 4, 2019 – December 4, 2019

Instructor: Alan Chaffe
Office: Business and Economics Building (BEC) 316
E-mail: achaffe@uvic.ca
Office hours: Tuesday & Wednesday: 2:30–4:30pm; Thursday: 10:00-11:30am & 1:30-3:30pm; or by appointment. Additional hours will be announced prior to midterms and final exam.
Classroom: Clearihue Building (CLE) A212
Class times: Tuesday, Wednesday, & Friday: 1:30-2:20pm

Calendar description:
Applications of economic principles to the economic role of cities and the spatial structure of urban areas. Topics include land use and the built environment, urban external effects and land use, land use planning and the urban land market, and the role of cities as centres of consumption and production.

Note: Credit will be granted for only one of ECON 312, ECON 412, and ADMN 445.

Prerequisites: One of ECON 103, ECON 103C, or ECON 180.

Course objective:
This course has been designed to provide students with an introduction to urban land economics and urban life. The course deals with the economic analysis of cities with a focus on current issues and public policy. We will use economic analysis to explain why cities exist and where they develop, how cities grow, and explore the location choices of households and firms. We will also explore the causes and consequences of urban problems such as pollution, crime, poverty, high housing costs, segregation, gentrification, and congestion. These topics will be examined from a public policy perspective. Special attention will be given to recent developments and current issues: Public transportation and ride sharing, housing affordability and policy, gentrification, concentrated poverty, amalgamation (e.g., Greater Victoria), and the economic role of festivals and events in shaping cities.

Learning outcomes:
Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to understand:
- What a city is, why they exist, and how and why they grow
- The location decisions of firms and why they cluster
- The costs and benefits of amalgamation and the impact on local growth
• How housing prices are determined and why the determination of housing values differs from other types of goods
• The forces that shape, and the effects of, gentrification, urban sprawl, segregation, and housing unaffordability
• The role of the local government in fostering cultural and social capital for economic gain
• The patterns of crime and poverty within cities
• The externalities of urban transportation systems and how policies can alleviate negative externalities
• The role of governments in setting public policy to address urban challenges

Textbook and course materials:
There are a variety of textbooks that can provide students with an overview of urban land economics. The textbook that I have chosen for this course is listed below. I have chosen this textbook because I believe that it provides a well-rounded survey of the major developments in urban land economics. I will make use of additional books, journal articles, and research papers to supplement the textbooks. These additional resources will be posted to our Course Spaces site.


Assessment summary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Term tests x2</td>
<td>20% each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision/briefing note</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final examination</td>
<td>40%</td>
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Note: The term tests, decision/briefing note or opinion piece, and the final exam are essential course requirements, meaning that they must be attempted in order to pass the course.

Please see the evaluation schedule for the dates of the term tests and the decision/briefing note or opinion piece. These dates are subject to change.

Undergraduate grading scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passing Grades</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>Exceptional, outstanding and excellent performance. Normally achieved by a minimum of students. These grades indicate a student who is self-initiating, exceeds expectation and has an insightful grasp of the subject matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>Very good, good and solid performance. Normally achieved by the largest number of students. These grades indicate a good grasp of the subject matter or excellent grasp in one area balanced with satisfactory grasp in the other area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>Satisfactory, or minimally satisfactory. These grades indicate a satisfactory performance and knowledge of the subject matter.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Marginal Performance. A student receiving this grade demonstrated a superficial grasp of the subject matter.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Failing Grades</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory performance. Wrote final examination and completed course requirements; no supplemental.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Did not write examination or complete course requirements by the end of term or session; no supplemental.</td>
</tr>
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Numerical score (%) and grade point value equivalencies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>A+</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>A-</th>
<th>B+</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>B-</th>
<th>C+</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>0-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Point</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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Students should review the University’s more detailed summary of grading at https://web.uvic.ca/calendar2019-05/undergrad/info/regulations/grading.html.

**Term tests:**

There will be two term tests for this course. The first test will be held on October 4th and will cover all material up until and including September 27th (see course structure below). The second test on November 5th will focus primarily on material between October 1st and November 1st inclusive. However, you will need to understand and recall some of the material from the first few weeks of the course, as there is some overlap. Both term tests will be held during class time. The tests will consist of a series of multiple-choice and short-answer questions. The main criteria for assessment will be correct answers with partial credit based on evidence of thinking and learning.

**Briefing/decision note or opinion piece:**

In teams of two, you will write a short briefing/decision note or opinion piece on a current urban economic challenge facing cities. There are a number of current challenges facing cities that policy makers must address such as gentrification and concentrated poverty, urban transportation, amalgamation decisions (e.g., Greater Victoria), housing and affordability, urban sprawl, etc. It is recommended that you address one of these topics or another topic we covered in class. If you would like to choose a topic not covered, you must clear it with me first. The essay must be between 1,500-1,800 words in length (not including tables, figures, appendices, footnotes, or references) and be written using the APA style. Your note or opinion piece must be submitted in hard copy. NO electronic copies will be accepted. The paper may take one of two forms. The first option is to write a briefing/decision note, which is a short paper that quickly and effectively informs a decision-maker about an issue and offers a solution or recommendation. The second option is to write an opinion piece, similar to an argumentative style essay or opinion piece in a newspaper. During Week 6, I will review both options and provide you with a detailed marking rubric that will also be posted on Course Spaces. The essay is due in class any time during the last week of November (i.e., on November 26, 27, or 29).

**Final examination:**

The final examination will be cumulative. Similar to the term tests, the final examination will consist of a series of multiple-choice and short-answer questions. The main criteria for assessment will be correct answers with partial credit based on evidence of thinking and learning. The date of the final examination will be set by the registrar’s office and held between December 7th-21st. The exam timetable will be posted at the Office of the Registrar website (www.uvic.ca/exams) by the end of October.
Evaluation schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Term test #1</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>October 4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term test #2</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>November 5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briefing/decision note or opinion piece</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Week of November 25&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final examination</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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Technology requirements:

You will have to register to have access to our Course Spaces (http://coursespaces.uvic.ca/) site, as I will be posting all course materials to this site. Course Spaces is an e-learning platform that will allow us to interact and collaborate over the course of the semester. If you need help setting up your Course Spaces account you can find detailed instructions on how to do so at http://coursespaces.uvic.ca/help/students/index.php. Please also feel free to ask me if you need further help. The earlier you register for Course Spaces the better, as I will regularly post relevant resources and course material to this site.

Course experience survey (CES):

The university uses an online survey format for course evaluations. I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of the term, as in all other courses, you will have the opportunity to complete an anonymous survey regarding your learning experience. The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the Department of Economics improve the overall program for students in the future. The survey is accessed via MyPage and can be done on your laptop, tablet, or mobile device. If you do not receive an email invitation, you can go directly to http://ces.uvic.ca to complete the survey. I will remind you and provide you with more detailed information closer to the time that it is to be completed, but please be thinking about this important activity during the course.

Course policies:

This course adheres to the Undergraduate Course Policies of the Department of Economics (https://www.uvic.ca/socialsciences/economics/undergraduate/home/course%20policies/index.php) that deal with the following issues:

- Academic concessions
- Academic integrity (plagiarism and cheating)
- Attendance
- Grading
- Inclusivity and diversity
- Late adds
- Late assignments
- Review of an assigned grade
- Students with a disability
- Term assignments and debarment from examinations
- Travel plans
- Waitlists
The following policies are explicitly included because of their importance:

**Term tests and final examination**
- Attendance at all scheduled examinations is mandatory. Consideration for missed examinations will be given only on the basis of documented illness (i.e., a doctor’s note), accident or family affliction, and for no other reasons. In the event of a missed final examination, students are advised to follow the procedures outlined in the University Calendar (https://web.uvic.ca/calendar2019-09/undergrad/info/regulations/exams.html#).
- Only non-programmable calculators are permitted during exams. All other electronic devices including cell phones must be turned off and stored out of view.
- Students are advised not to make work or travel plans until after the examination timetable has been finalized. Students who wish to finalize their travel plans at an earlier date should book flights that depart after the end of the examination period. There will be no special accommodation if travel plans conflict with the examination.

**Waitlist policies**
- Instructors have no discretion to admit waitlisted students or to increase the number of students allowed in a course. Students on the waitlist should discuss with the instructor how to ensure they are not behind with coursework in the event that they are admitted. Waitlist offers cease after the last date for adding courses irrespective of published waitlists.
- Registered students who do not show up in the first seven calendar days from the start of the course may be deregistered. Registered students who decide not to take the course are responsible for dropping the course, and are urged to do so promptly out of courtesy to waitlisted students.

**Academic integrity**
- I take cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct very seriously. You are permitted and encouraged to have discussions with other teams about your paper, but you are required to submit original work. Original work is one not received from others, copied, nor based on the work of others. Note: Submitted work may be checked using plagiarism detection software.
- Academic integrity requires commitment to the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Students are expected to observe the same standards of scholarly integrity as their academic and professional counterparts. A student who is found to have engaged in unethical academic behaviour, including the practices described in the Policy on Academic Integrity (https://web.uvic.ca/calendar2019-05/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html) in the University Calendar, is subject to consequence by the University.
- Sharing course materials including lecture notes and term tests on note-sharing sites or through other means without permission from the instructor violates the Policy on Academic Integrity.
- For further information on the University’s plagiarism policy and to understand what plagiarism is, please visit https://www.uvic.ca/library/research/citation/plagiarism/index.php?whatis).

**University policy on human rights, equity, and fairness**
- The University is committed to promoting, providing, and protecting a positive, supportive, and safe learning and working environment for all its members. I expect you to embrace an inclusive learning community that respects and recognizes that we are enriched and strengthened by diversity including, but not limited to, ethnicity and national origins, language, gender and gender identity, sexuality, ability, age, socioeconomic status, and spirituality. We are all here to learn and should have equal opportunities to do so. Please visit and review the UVic equity policy at https://www.uvic.ca/equity/index.php.
Discrimination and harassment

- Discrimination and harassment are prohibited at the University of Victoria. Members of the University Community have the right to work, study, and participate in activities at the university in an environment free of discrimination and harassment. Please visit and review the discrimination and harassment policy at [https://www.uvic.ca/universitysecretary/assets/docs/policies/GV0205_1150_.pdf](https://www.uvic.ca/universitysecretary/assets/docs/policies/GV0205_1150_.pdf).

Accessibility and health resources

- The University is an equal opportunity university. Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you encounter barriers to academic goals that may require academic accommodations, please feel free to approach me and register with the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) as soon as possible. The CAL staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals, and arrange appropriate accommodations. For further information on the services provided by the Centre please visit: [https://www.uvic.ca/services/cal/](https://www.uvic.ca/services/cal/). The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.
- University Health Services (UHS) provides a full-service primary health clinic for students, and coordinate student health and campus initiatives ([https://www.uvic.ca/services/health/](https://www.uvic.ca/services/health/)).
- As do I, the University has a strong commitment to student learning, as well as social, personal, and ethical development. As such, the University offers a wide range of personal, learning, career counseling services (e.g., depression, self-esteem, loss and grief support, stress, anxiety, speaking publicly, thinking critically, making and using notes, and career advice), and other resources for students. Please visit [https://www.uvic.ca/services/counselling/](https://www.uvic.ca/services/counselling/) for further information.
- Indigenous UVic students have access to many sources of support on campus. To learn more about the programs and services available to you, such as Indigenous counselling services and the Elders in Residence, and non-academic programs that may be of interest to you, please visit [https://www.uvic.ca/services/indigenous/students/index.php](https://www.uvic.ca/services/indigenous/students/index.php).

Sexualized violence prevention and response at UVic

- UVic takes sexualized violence seriously and has raised the bar for what is considered acceptable behaviour. To learn more about how the university defines sexualized violence and its overall approach visit [www.uvic.ca/svp](http://www.uvic.ca/svp). If you or someone you know has been impacted by sexualized violence and needs information, advice, and/or support please contact the sexualized violence resource office in Equity and Human Rights (EQHR). Whether or not you have been directly impacted, if you want to take part in the important prevention work taking place on campus, you can also reach out to the Sexualized violence resource office in EQHR, Sedgewick C119 (Phone: 250.721.8021; Email: svpcoordinator@uvic.ca).

E-mail correspondence

- Emails should be limited to critical matters, such as inability to attend class, an exam, or prolonged illness, and should include the course name and number in the subject line. I teach many courses, so I ask that you include your full name and student number in the e-mail. It is best if questions on course material are asked during office hours or in class.

General policies

- The best way for you to learn the material and succeed in this course is to (i) attend each class having read the material for that lecture, (ii) actively participate in the class by taking part in classroom discussion and activities, (iii) study and review the material in the textbook, (iv) complete all assessments, and (v) ask questions in class, after class during office hours, by e-mail, through
Course Spaces, or by arranging a meeting with me outside of office hours.

- I will post additional required readings on the Course Spaces site. You should thus visit this site regularly to stay up to date.
- To fully benefit from the course, I encourage you to actively participate in lectures. Active participation in the class involves participating in classroom discussions and activities, asking questions, and taking notes on pertinent material. Doing so will help you achieve greater success in the course.
- In fairness to your fellow classmates who submit their work on time, I will deduct 15% per day for late papers. After three days, I will not accept the assignment unless you provide a formal doctor’s note. Note that weekends count when assessing late penalties.
- There is no such thing as a stupid question! All questions are welcomed in and out of the class. You should make use of my office hours and are free to set up appointments with me for individual or group sessions in order to ask questions, review course material, or to speak about paper topics. If you find that you are struggling with the course material, please see me as early as possible so that we can work to resolve this. I am here to work with you and to help you succeed.

**Important university dates**

- September 4th: First term classes begin for all faculties
- September 17th: Last day for 100% reduction of tuition fees for standard first term and full year courses
- September 20th: Last day for adding courses that begin in the first term
- September 30th: Last day for paying first term fees without penalty
- October 14th: Thanksgiving Day (University closed)
- October 31st: Last day for paying first term fees without penalty
- November 11th-13th: Reading Break – No classes
- December 4th: National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. Classes and exams cancelled from 11:30 am - 12:30 pm
- December 4th: Last day of classes in first term
- December 7th: Examinations begin for all faculties except for the Faculty of Law
- December 21st: First term examinations end for all faculties except Faculty of Law

**Ready, set…let’s go:**

As is the case with many topics, urban economics lends itself to debate and interpretation. As a result, this class requires extensive participation from students. Together, we will discover the topics through open discussions.

If you do not learn a lot about urban economics, or do not find this course interesting or enjoyable, then I am not doing my job. I love teaching economics, and I consider it my responsibility to help you succeed. As we move together as an organic learning community, we must work together. If you have questions in lecture, ask them. If you discover publications or videos related to the course material, please send them to me so that they can be shared. If you have suggestions for improving the course, please let me know. As in any university course, what you get out of this course will depend on what you put into it. Together, let’s create a community-learning environment where we all succeed!
**Tentative course structure:**

There is quite a bit of reading required for this course. You are advised to read ahead in order to prepare for the lectures. Note that the schedule may be adjusted slightly depending on timing and the length of class discussions.

**Week 1:**

**September 4** – Course overview
- Overview of course syllabus
- Chapter 1 pp. 3-6 (UE)

**September 6** – Key concepts and principles

**Week 2:**

**September 10** – Key concepts and principles (cont.) & geographical definitions and maps
- Chapter 2 (UE)

**September 11 & 13** – Why do cities exist? Trading and factory towns
- Chapter 3 (UE)

**Week 3:**

**September 17, 18, & 20** – Agglomeration economies and city size
- Chapter 4 (UE)

**Week 4:**

**September 24, 25, & 27** – Consumer cities; Central places; and Urban success: The role of cultural and social capital as economic engines
- Chapter 5 & 6 (UE)


**Week 5:**
**October 1 & 2 – Urban growth**
- Chapter 7 & 8 (UE)

**October 4 – TERM TEST #1**

**Week 6:**
**October 8, 9, & 11 – Land rent, manufacturing land, and office space and tall buildings**
- Overview of briefing/decision note and opinion piece assignment
- Chapter 10 (UE)
- Chapter 11 (UE)

**Week 7:**
**October 15, 16, & 18 – The price of housing and rent and residential land use**
- Chapter 12 (UE)


**Week 8:**
**October 22 & 23 – Spatial distribution, suburbanization, urban sprawl, and the monocentric city**
- Chapter 13 & 14 (UE)


**October 25 – Writing Day – No Class**
- Use this day to conduct research on your paper and/or to meet with research librarians or staff at the Centre for Academic Communication who can provide help with your research and writing.
Week 9:
October 29 - Spatial distribution, suburbanization, urban sprawl, and the monocentric city *(continued)*

October 30 & November 1 – Neighbourhoods: Segregation, gentrification, & urban poverty
- Chapter 15 (UE)

Week 10:
November 5 – TERM TEST #2
November 6 & 8 – Neighbourhoods: Segregation, gentrification, & poverty *(continued)*

Week 11:
November 12 & 13 – No Class: Reading Break
November 15 – Land use and urban housing policy
- Chapter 16 (UE)

Week 12:
November 19 & 20 – Land use and urban housing policy *(continued)*
- Chapter 17 (UE)
- November 22 – Crime and public policy
- Chapter 23 (UE)

Week 13:
Briefing/decision note or opinion piece DUE this week IN CLASS
November 26 – Crime and public policy (continued)
November 27 & 29 – Urban transportation and public policy
- Chapter 18 & 19 (UE)

**Week 14:**

**December 3** – Urban transportation and public policy (*continued*)


**December 4** – Class conclusion & exam review

“A great city is not to be confounded with a populous one” (Aristotle)

“Our overwhelming focus on quantitative methods has left us poorly suited to treat historical narratives in a scientific fashion. While I believe that no one can make sense of cities without the tools of economics, I also believe that no economist can make sense of cities without borrowing heavily from other disciplines [and by considering qualitative data]” (Edward Glaser, 2007)

“Ottawa is comprised of over 80 neighbourhoods in search of a city” (Alan Chaffe, adopted from Dorthey Parker’s quote on Los Angeles)

“Data, I think, is one of the most powerful mechanisms for telling stories. I take a huge pile of data and I try to get it to tell stories” (Steven Levitt).

“Educate yourself as much as you can with life. Just go out there” (Julian Morris)