

Geography 340 – A01
Geographies of the North American City
University of Victoria
Fall 2018

We acknowledge with respect the Lkwungen-speaking peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

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Office hours:	Mondays and Thursdays, 10:00am-11:15am
Course time:	Mondays and Thursdays, 11:30am-12:50pm
Course location:	Clearihue Building, Room A308

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to GEOG 340—Geographies of the North American City! This course offers a broad introduction to the field of urban geography with a primary focus on the historical development and contemporary processes of urbanization in Canada and the United States. The main goal of this class is to examine key themes in urban geography, including the historical geography of urbanization, changing approaches to urban planning and governance; the politics of urban renewal; neoliberal urbanism; housing and homelessness; gentrification; cultural diversity, social segregation, and immigrant communities; and utopian speculations on the urban future. We shall explore these issues and more in relation to various North American cities to illuminate the complexities of the urban experience.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Provide a broad overview of the key concepts and perspectives in urban geography
- Examine the main urban geographical processes of urbanization in North America
- Assess the major political, economic, social, and cultural changes that have transformed contemporary urban landscapes in North America
- Critically analyze the politics of urban development and social inequality within capitalist societies

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Acquire a general understanding of the major concepts and approaches in contemporary urban geography
- Acquire an in-depth knowledge of the historical and contemporary processes of urbanization in the North American context

- Develop the ability to critically assess the contested politics that have shaped urban spatial imaginaries and regimes of urban governance
- Improve competency in critical urban analysis by writing a literature review paper and producing a digitally-edited short urban film

CLASS FORMAT

The format for this course will consist of a combination of lectures, seminar-style discussions of assigned readings, and films. In order for the seminar discussions to work, students need to have read the assigned readings prior to class each day. Aside from the midterm and final exam, the main assignments for the course will be a literature review paper and an urban film project.

READINGS

Required Course Texts

- All reading materials will be available on the CourseSpaces page for this class (<http://coursespaces.uvic.ca>).

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING SCHEME

Your final grade will be based on the following calculation:

Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%
Literature Review Paper	25%
Urban Film Project	25%
Attendance	10%
Total:	100%

Grading Scale

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	D	F
90-100%	85-89%	80-84%	77-79%	73-76%	70-72%	65-69%	60-64%	50-59%	0-49%

COURSE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM: COURSESPACES

We will be using the CourseSpaces management system as a medium for the posting of relevant course materials and related course information (<http://coursespaces.uvic.ca>). Powepoint files for each lecture will be posted on CourseSpaces at the end of each week.

ASSIGNMENTS

Exams (40%)

The course will have one mid-term exam (20%) and a final exam (20%). Each exam will consist of a combination of multiple-choice and essay questions. The final exam, held during the regular final exam period, will be cumulative.

Literature Review Paper (25%)

One of the basic research skills in the field of urban geography is conducting a literature review on an urban-related topic. For this class, each student shall select an urban topic in consultation with the course instructor and write a scholarly literature review following the instructions below.

1. Select an urban topic of interest. The topic should be broad enough that there is an international body of scholarly literature available. In other words, this is not a research paper, so do not pick a case study of a particular city but rather select an urban phenomenon that is experienced by many different cities.
2. Conduct a keyword search using the Web of Science database via UVic's library website to find journal articles related to your topic in peer-reviewed geography and urban studies journals. Here is a step-by-step process to conduct a Web of Science search:
 - a. Go to UVic's library website at: <http://www.uvic.ca/library>
 - b. Click to "Search Options" tab.
 - c. Click the "Databases" tab.
 - d. Under "Frequently used databases," click the "Web of Science."
 - e. Log into your UVic user account, which will take you directly to Web of Science.
 - f. Change search type from "Topic" to "Title," and then type in the keyword for your topic (e.g., "homelessness").
 - g. To limit the number of results, you are now going to "refine" your search to geography and urban studies journals; to do so, click "More options/values" under the Web of Science Categories heading on the left hand side of the screen.
 - h. Then, check the boxes for "Geography" and "Urban Studies" and click "Refine" at the top of the screen.
 - i. Now, you can look through the results of your search in various ways. Next to the "Sort by" heading, change this option to "Times Cited—highest to lowest" and this will sort your results by how often a given article is cited in the academic literature; you can also sort by "Publication Date—newest to oldest" to see the most recent articles on your topic.
 - j. If you think an article is relevant, click on its abstract to see whether you'd like to download it to your computer; most articles in Web of Science can easily be downloaded in pdf format.
 - k. Select at least 15-20 relevant articles that you will read in preparation for writing your Literature Review Paper (I would recommend having a combination of widely cited works as well as recently published works that haven't yet been cited because they are so new).
3. Once you have decided which relevant articles from Web of Science you will be using for your paper, write a short 1-page proposal, consisting of your name, paper title, a 1-paragraph summary of your topic, and a preliminary bibliography (**proposal deadline: Sept. 24, submit via email to redwood@uvic.ca**).
4. Based on feedback from the instructor, proceed with reading the relevant literature in your bibliography and writing the Literature Review Paper (**paper deadline: November 1, submit via email to redwood@uvic.ca**).

The Literature Review Paper should be 8-10 pages, double-spaced, 12-pt Times New Roman font, 2.54 cm margins, with no large spaces between paragraphs. The paper can either be written individually or in groups.

Urban Film Project (25%)

As part of this course, students will work in groups of 3-5 students to make a 5-minute film about a particular aspect of urban geography in the Greater Victoria Region. The film should be digitally edited using desktop software (such as iMovie for Macs or comparable software for PCs). Groups should consult with the instructor about potential topic ideas, but examples might include a focus on:

- a particular neighbourhood in the Greater Victoria Region
- a key urban issue in Victoria (e.g., homelessness, urban redevelopment, transit planning, the sewage debate, the amalgamation debate, the politics of street naming)

Once your group has selected a topic, you should post your group members' names and your topic idea on the CourseSpaces discussion forum entitled "Selecting an Urban Film Project Topic." This will enable your fellow classmates to see what other topics have already been chosen, so as not to have multiple groups picking the same topic.

Ideally, there should be at least one person in each group with prior video-editing experience. However, we will spend a portion of one class session learning some basic techniques to edit video using iMovie software. Video equipment is available for rent at a reasonable cost via UVic's Audio-Visual Media Services if group members do not have their own video equipment (<http://web.uvic.ca/mediaservices/djrentalpricelist.htm>). No late videos will be accepted without prior consultation with the instructor regarding a medical emergency or related university-excused extension, since we will be holding a film screening during the last two class sessions. The urban film project is due in class on **November 26**. (Note: please bring it on a USB stick to transfer onto the instructor's laptop computer.)

Attendance (10%)

Attendance is crucial to the successful completion of this class. A sign-in sheet will be distributed at the beginning of each class session. Each student is responsible for signing the sign-in sheet. If a student has a university-excused absence, this should be discussed with the instructor, preferably before the date of absence. Additionally, each student is required to attend at least one of *The City Talks* public lectures as part of their participation in this course (see below). If a student cannot attend one of these talks due to a scheduling conflict, please consult the instructor at the beginning of the semester to make other arrangements.

The City Talks: Urban Studies Speaker Series

This fall the Committee for Urban Studies at UVic will be hosting its annual public speaker series called *The City Talks*. The series schedule will be posted on CourseSpaces, and while you are only required to attend one of the lectures as part of your class attendance for the course this fall, I encourage you to come to all the lectures if time permits. For more information about *The City Talks* schedule, see <http://thecitytalks.ca>.

OFFICE HOURS

I strongly encourage you to come to my office hours. As the course instructor, my main goal is to help you learn, so if you have any questions about the material, or the class in general, you are more than welcome to come speak with me during office hours. If you are not available during that time, email me to set up an appointment.

EMAIL

Send all email to me using the email address listed on the first page of the syllabus (redwood@uvic.ca). Please include the course number (GEOG 340) in the email subject title. I will do my best to respond promptly to your questions.

PLAGIARISM

All class assignments should be prepared by the student(s) submitting the assignment. Plagiarism, or any other form of academic dishonesty, will not be tolerated in this course. Plagiarism consists of: (a) submitting someone else's work as your own without the use of proper citation or (b) paraphrasing another's ideas without acknowledging the author's work through citation. The use of an editor, whether paid or unpaid, is prohibited unless the instructor grants explicit written authorization. If you have any questions concerning matters of plagiarism, please see the following link: <http://www.uvic.ca/library/research/citation/plagiarism/index.php>

UVIC'S ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or 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 (<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.

UVIC POSITIVITY AND SAFETY STATEMENT

The University of Victoria is committed to promoting, providing, and protecting a positive and safe learning and working environment for all its members.

COURSE POLICY ON RECORDING OF LECTURES AND USE OF COURSE MATERIALS

According to the university's [Intellectual Property Policy](#) (GV0215), professors and instructors are the authors of their original course materials, lecture notes, and lecture presentations. Accordingly, they own copyright in these materials. Occasionally, students enrolled in a course may ask to record lectures because they would like to review the material at a future date. A lecture constitutes an instructor's intellectual property. A student must get permission to record the lecture from their instructor. Any material for the course (e.g., lecture notes, PowerPoints, syllabus, including a recording of a lecture) is made solely for the use of the student registered in the course for research and private study only. These materials must not be posted online or shared with other students without the instructor's permission. In some cases, a student with a perceptual disability will be eligible for an academic accommodation to record a lecture. Please visit the [Centre for Accessible Learning \(CAL\) website](#) for more information. You should be aware that

there are [policies and legislation](#) regarding academic accommodation. Should you have any questions please contact the [Copyright Office](#).

COURSE EXPERIENCE SURVEYS (CES)

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term, as in all other courses at UVic, you will have the opportunity to complete an anonymous survey regarding your learning experience (CES). The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department 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. I will remind you and provide you with more detailed information nearer the time but please be thinking about this important activity during the course.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Below is the course schedule for the entire semester. I will do my best to stick to this schedule, although I do reserve the right to make changes if necessary.

Course Schedule

Week 1

Thursday, September 6: Course overview

No assigned readings

Week 2

Monday, September 10: The North American urban experience in global context

Readings

Brenner, N. and Schmid, C. (2014). "The 'Urban Age' in Question." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 38(3): 731-755.

Thursday, September 13: Urban historical transformations I

Readings

Peterson, J. (2009). "The Birth of Organized City Planning in the United States, 1909-1910." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 75(2): 123-133.

Week 3

Monday, September 17: Urban historical transformations II

Readings

Whittemore, A. (2017). "The Experience of Racial and Ethnic Minorities with Zoning in the United States." *Journal of Planning Literature* 32(1): 16-27.

Thursday, September 20: Film—Remember Africville, & discussion of readings

Readings

Lee, J. (2007). "Gender, Ethnicity, and Hybrid Forms of Community-Based Urban Activism in Vancouver, 1957-1978." *Gender, Place & Culture* 14(4): 381-407.

* **NOTE:** Please be prepared to discuss the assigned readings by Peterson, Whittemore, and Lee during class today (Thur., Sept. 20).

Week 4

Monday, September 24: *Film—Citizen Jane: Battle for the City*

Readings

Wallock, L. (1991). “The Myth of the Master Builder: Robert Moses, New York, and the Dynamics of Metropolitan Development Since World War II.” *Journal of Urban History* 17(4): 339-362.

* **NOTE:** Proposal with bibliography for Literature Review Paper due today, submit via email to redwood@uvic.ca (Thur., Sept. 24).

Thursday, September 27: *Discussion of readings & group project session*

Readings

Jacobs, J. (1961), “The Uses of Sidewalks: Safety,” from *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, R. LeGates and F. Stout (eds.), *The City Reader*, New York: Routledge, pp. 106- 111.

* **NOTE:** Please be prepared to discuss the assigned readings by Wallock and Jacobs during class today (Thur., Sept. 27).

Week 5

Monday, October 1: From modernism to the new urbanism

Readings

“Charter of Athens” (1933)

<http://portal.uur.cz/pdf/charter-of-athens-1933.pdf>

“Charter of the New Urbanism” (1999)

<https://www.cnu.org/who-we-are/charter-new-urbanism>

Thursday, October 4: *Discussion of readings & group project session*

Readings

Grant, J. (2009). “Theory and Practice in Planning the Suburbs: Challenges to Implementing New Urbanism, Smart Growth, and Sustainability Principles.” *Planning Theory & Practice* 10(1): 11-33.

* **NOTE:** Please be prepared to discuss the assigned reading by Grant as well as the Athens and New Urbanism Charters during class today (Thur., October 4).

Week 6

Monday, October 8: *NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING BREAK*

No assigned readings

Thursday, October 11: Changing consumerscapes in the commodity world

Readings

Parlette, V. and Cowen, D. (2011). “Dead Malls: Suburban Activism, Local Spaces, Global Logistics.” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35(4): 794-811. [Note: This reading will not be covered on the midterm exam, but it will be assessed on the final exam.]

Week 7

Monday, October 15: MIDTERM EXAM

No assigned readings

Thursday, October 18: Regimes of urban governance and the politics of scale

Readings

Horak, M. (2013). "State Rescaling in Practice: Urban Governance Reform in Toronto." *Urban Research & Practice* 6(3): 311-328.

Week 8

Monday, October 22: Spatial imaginaries in the age of neoliberal urbanism

Readings

Leslie, D. and M. Hunt. (2013). "Securing the Neoliberal City: Discourses of Creativity and Priority Neighborhoods in Toronto, Canada." *Urban Geography* 34(8): 1171-1192.

Thursday, October 25: Discussion of readings

No assigned readings

* **NOTE:** Please be prepared to discuss the assigned readings by Parlette and Cowen, Horak, and Leslie and Hunt during class today (Thur., October 25).

Week 9

Monday, October 29: Geographies of housing and homelessness

Readings

Speer, J. (2017). "'It's Not Like Your Home': Homeless Encampments, Housing Projects, and the Struggle over Domestic Space." *Antipode* 49(2): 517-535.

Thursday, November 1: Gentrification and the politics of urban revitalization

Readings

Slater, T. (2004). "North American Gentrification? Revanchist and Emancipatory Perspectives Explored." *Environment and Planning A* 36(7): 1191-1213.

* **LITERATURE REVIEW PAPER DUE TODAY**, submit via email to redwood@uvic.ca (**November 1**)

Week 10

Monday, November 5: Film—My Brooklyn

Readings

Lees, L. (2003). "Super-Gentrification: The Case of Brooklyn Heights, New York City." *Urban Studies* 40(12): 2487-2509.

Thursday, November 8: Discussion of film and readings

No assigned readings

* **NOTE:** Please be prepared to discuss the assigned readings by Speer, Slater, and Lees during class today (Thur., November 8).

Week 11

Monday, November 12: NO CLASS—READING BREAK

No assigned readings

Thursday, November 15: Cultural diversity, immigration, and urban social change

Readings

Dwyer, C., J. Tse, and D. Ley (2016). “‘Highway to Heaven’: The Creation of a Multicultural, Religious Landscape in Suburban Richmond, British Columbia.” *Social & Cultural Geography* 17(5): 667-693.

Week 12

Monday, November 19: Utopian and dystopian visions of urban futures

Readings

Pinder, D. (2015). “Reconstituting the Possible: Lefebvre, Utopia and the Urban Question.” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 39(1): 28-45.

Thursday, November 22: Discussion of readings

Readings

Robinson, J. (2016). “Comparative Urbanism: New Geographies and Cultures of Theorizing the Urban.” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 40(1): 187-199.

* **NOTE:** Please be prepared to discuss the assigned readings by Dwyer, Tse, and Ley, Pinder, and Robinson during class today (Thur., November 22).

Week 13

Monday, November 26: Final exam review and submission of urban film project

No assigned readings

* **URBAN FILM PROJECT DUE TODAY IN CLASS (NOVEMBER 26)**

* **REMINDER: COMPLETE CES EVALUATIONS**

Thursday, November 29: Screening of urban film projects

No assigned readings

Week 14

Monday, December 3: Screening of urban film projects

No assigned readings

* **The final exam will be scheduled during finals week: time and location to be announced.**

*Note: September 21, 2018: Last day for adding courses that begin in the first term
October 31, 2018: Last day for withdrawing from first-term courses without penalty of failure*