**Urban Studies**

**COURSE TURB 101**

**Exploring Cities**

**Tuesday, Thursday 3:05-5:10, CP 260**

**Fall 2015**

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# COURSE DESCRIPTION

This **survey** course offers students an introduction to the multi-disciplinary field of Urban Studies and exposes students to the complexity of life in contemporary metropolitan areas. The course asks how various disciplines study and make sense of cities. What kinds of questions have they asked about cities, how are they built, and what social and ethnic/racial relations exist in them? What theories are used to make sense of urban places and social worlds? The course aims to enhance students’ understanding of how cities evolved to become the places they are and what their future might be. It is structured as an introduction to theories about urban life and the social and power relations experienced in cities. Special attention is given to issues of class, race, and gender that are meant to prepare students for further critical thinking about how people use, plan, and interact with others in urban spaces.

The course examines how forces such as industrialization, emigration, suburbanization, economic restructuring, and social stratification affect the evolution of American cities. Most importantly we use Tacoma and the South Puget Sound metropolitan area as laboratories to examine course themes. Chief among local issues is an examination of Tacoma’s cultural tourism based economic development strategy.

# Course Objectives

Students will:

* become familiar with key methodologies and theories of urban studies;
* learn to compare, contrast and apply urban theories to the world around them;
* learn to think critically about how social, political and economic forces shape the sociospatial experiences of urban residents and co-construct urban societies; and
* develop critical reading comprehension and communication skills.

# REQUIRED TEXTS

* LeGates, R., & Stout, F. (Eds.). (2016). *The City Reader*, (Sixth ed.). Routledge: New York.
* All other required readings will be posted on the course Canvas site.

# Teaching and Assessment Methods

* Course will be based on lectures, group discussions, in-class and community activities, and films.
* Grades will be based on preparation, active participation, writing assignments, quizzes, and presentations.
* During class sessions we will discuss assigned readings and current news and trends as depicted in the local press. These discussions will require you to share information obtained from the readings. If you don't do the required reading each week, you will be lost and we will lose your participation. Regular, active participation is necessary for full credit.

**CLASSROOM PRINCIPLES**

The best way to learn is to be an active, informed learner and to push yourself to think in new ways. Please silence all electronic devices before class begins. Internet surfing and side conversations are huge distractions that are prohibited during class. We will typically take a 5-7-minute break during each class. Please wait until that time to leave and re-enter the classroom. Turn assignments in on time otherwise they will be graded down. Challenge yourself to think critically, speak your mind, but be respectful of those who may not agree with you. Initial the daily attendance log and as a courtesy please notify me in advance if you plan to miss class. Your absence impacts class activities, your learning, and possibly your grade.

# CANVAS AND UWT EMAIL REQUIRED

Canvas will be used extensively. Lecture notes, reading questions, assignments, and announcements will be posted on Canvas. All written assignments will be submitted electronically via Canvas. I will also use Canvas and your UW email account to communicate with you. Develop a habit of checking your UW email and Canvas course announcements once a day.

# GRADING/EVALUATION CRITERIA

**Participation = 100 points**

1. Come to class prepared, having completed all assigned reading and writing;

2. contribute to class discussions, speak your mind and be respectful of those expressing opinions that differ from yours;

3. thoughtfully tie your comments to and course readings and other course content;

4. scan local/regional media at least twice weekly and Exit 133 and/or Tacoma Weekly every week seeking real-world manifestations of course themes. Media scans are an excellent source of topics and context for the contested cities culminating project; and

5. be an active, informed participant in all class activities.

**Reading Journal = 160 points**

You will maintain an electronic journal containing brief summary and analysis on 8 (of the 26) assigned readings. This exercise is meant to help you develop important analytic skills; and will assist you in being an informed participant in class discussions and activities. Journal entries, roughly 200-250 words (7-10 sentences), will be submitted weekly via Canvas by the start of class (3:05PM) on Thursday of the week it is assigned. Questions to consider:

1. What is the author setting out to do? What assumption(s) has the author made?
2. What are the contributions and limitations of the article? Are the arguments persuasive and is supporting evidence convincing; are they relevant to contemporary cities, why or why not?
3. Connect the reading with other course readings. Explain how and why you think course readings are or are not related.
4. Explain why you liked or disliked the article.
5. Pose a question you would like to discuss in class.

To earn the full 160 points you must submit timely thoughtful reflections on 8 of the 26 readings assigned during the quarter, each reflection is worth up to 20 points. Grading - 20 pts for thoughtful, responsive reflections with balance of description and analysis; 15 pts for demonstrated comprehension but limited effort and minimal or thin analysis; 10 pts for reflections submitted after designated submittal dates.

**Content Briefs = 300**

Formal and informal writing exercises, which may include Catalyst/Canvas surveys, ranging from multiple choice and short answers to brief essays will be assigned during the quarter. The “briefs” will be based on course content and are intended to demonstrate your comprehension, analysis and application of course themes to situations in our metropolitan area.

**The Contested City, Culminating Project = 300** (presentation 100 points, paper 200 points**)**

Working alone or in pairs, students will choose a contemporary urban site or issue for examination of the complexities of urban life. **In lieu of a final examination students will demonstrate their knowledge of and ability to apply course concepts to a real-world situation during a 15 minute class presentation.** You will describe the site/situation you choose and explain how and why it is contested. Who are the parties, what are their positions and their claims to the site? What are the roots of the dispute and how is it being addressed by the parties involved and by local authorities? How do power, race, class, and/or gender factor into the dispute? Explain how the dispute was resolved or if unresolved, what resolution you anticipate or propose. What, if any, alternative resolution would you propose that serves the common good? Tie your arguments to your sources, and course readings and discussions. Cite **five** specific sources, two of which must be from course readings. Each team will make a 15 minute presentation in class on **December 8th and 10th**. Be responsive to the assignment, informative, and creative. Team membership must be determined by **Thursday, October 29th** and topics by **Thursday, November 5th.**

Grading

Participation 100

Content Briefs 300

Final Project 300

Total 700 points

**FORMATTING:**

Essays must be typed, in 12-point font, and double-spaced. All papers must have complete and proper citations, and a reference page. References in the text must include the author’s last name, publication date, and page number when relevant – even if from the textbook. References are to be properly cited following the APA system.

**Campus Resources**

**Teaching and Learning Center**

The Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) offers free academic support for students at all levels. We offer one-on-one consultations and group workshops in writing, math, statistics, science, and Spanish. We also work with students on questions about English grammar & vocabulary, reading, and learning strategies. We are located in Snoqualmie 260 and online. Our schedules for appointments and drop-in visits are posted on our website at [www.tacoma.uw.edu/tlc](http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/tlc). For special needs or subject tutoring requests, please email [uwtteach@uw.edu](mailto:uwtteach@uw.edu) or call (253) 692-4417.

**Inclement Weather**

Call 253-383-INFO or check the UW Tacoma homepage to determine whether campus operations have been suspended or delayed. If not, but driving conditions remain problematic, call the professor's office number. This number should provide information on whether a particular class will be held or not, and/or the status of pending assignments. If the first two numbers have been contacted and the student is still unable to determine whether a class(es) will be held, or the student has a part-time instructor who does not have an office phone or contact number, call the program office number for updated information.

**Disability Support Services (Student Health and Wellness - SHAW)**

The University of Washington Tacoma is committed to making physical facilities and instructional programs accessible to students with disabilities. Disability Support Services (DSS), located in MAT 354, functions as the focal point for coordination of services for students with disabilities. If you have a physical, emotional, or mental disability that "substantially limits one or more major life activities [including walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working]," and will require accommodation in this class, please contact DSS at [(253)692-4522](mailto:%28253%29692-4522), email at [dssuwt@uw.edu](mailto:dssuwt@uw.edu) and/or [uwtshaw@uw.edu](mailto:uwtshaw@uw.edu) or visit [www.tacoma.uw.edu/dss](http://tacoma.uw.edu/dss) for assistance.

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