The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: It is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape processes of urbanization.

- *The Right To The City, David Harvey*

**Course Description**

This course examines the production of urban space (processes of urbanization), the ways that different groups experience the city, and how both of these are articulated with issues of social justice. Central to this task is developing an understanding of how space and place are dynamically constituted by, and affect, spatial (political-economic and cultural) projects of different coalitions of actors that are comprised of globally ‘stretched out social relations’ (Doreen Massey). In addition to developing theoretical approaches to the city, the course will provide multiple opportunities for application of the material by examining the significance of different places in Nashville for issues of social and environmental justice. In addition, the course focuses on the production of urban space from multiple theoretical perspectives that highlight issues of environment. That is, how are human and non-human features of cities actors in the production of space affecting people’s everyday lives? For example, we will cover work in political ecology that stresses the need to analytically challenge the human false binary of human-environment. In other words, we, as people, are conceived from this perspective, as deeply intertwined in every aspect.

**Course Objectives**

1. Develop an understanding of multiple theoretical perspectives on the city (and some perspectives that are broader but applied to understand the urban);

2. Define, in multiple ways, the processes that constitute the city, its production, and the ways in which social (in)justices are reproduced (i.e., urban (re)development and neighborhood change in all of its complexity, contradictions, and paradoxes);

3. Understand, in detail, the actors (state, market, society sectors) and ideological/theoretical perspectives that are both driving and resisting these processes;

4. Understand the impact that urban public policy has had on cities throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and how these are connected to issues of social (in)justice;
5. Develop an understanding of how environmental conditions in cities are produced, experienced, and, thus, central to our understanding of social (in)justice; and,

6. Consider the role of imagination in thinking through and enacting different urban futures.

**Course Expectations**

**Attendance**
This class will be conducted with a focus on in-class discussions and activities. Because of this format, you are expected to attend all classes for the full scheduled time.

**Reading:** Complete all readings (and other assignments) **prior** to the class meeting for which they are scheduled. You must bring your book or copies of the readings to each class. See the course outline below for details on weekly readings.

**Participation**
Through communication, ideas are formed, revised, borrowed, and developed. It is through argument, description, explanation, and improvisation – within a community – that individual learning flourishes. This course requires full participation (including active listening, facilitating, note-taking, and question-asking) to create an environment of open and shared learning. It goes without saying that laptop computers and other portable technologies should be used in class only as learning-facilitation tools.

**Academic Honesty**
Please review the Honor Code for complete guidelines on academic honesty: [http://studentorgs.vanderbilt.edu/HonorCouncil/](http://studentorgs.vanderbilt.edu/HonorCouncil/).

**Gender-Fair Language**
Language structures thought and action. Biases in language can (and do) naturalize inequalities. Imprecise language also signifies un-interrogated values and sloppy thinking. For all of these reasons, the use of gender-fair language is expected in this course. For example, do not use words like “mankind” or “men” when referring to people in general; alternate between “she” and “he” instead of always using “he,” or construct sentences in the plural instead of the singular so you can use “they” or “them” and avoid the problem altogether.

**ESL/LD Students**
Course requirements can be adjusted to serve the needs and capabilities of ESL and LD students. Please speak with the professor during the first two weeks of class to make arrangements. Students may be advised to attend additional sessions during the professor’s office hours so they can draw comparable value from the course.

**Course Assignments**
This course is designed to engage in active learning through opportunities to apply the theoretical perspectives we read about in class. With that in mind we will be doing research into different areas/sites in Nashville in order to make the readings come alive. This will take
two forms: 1) Creating bi-weekly presentations on selected articles/chapters for which you will find applied examples from the popular/public media; and, 2) Choosing a topic of your own interest (could be related to your thesis, final project or dissertation if that is relevant) you will produce some type of final product which could take any form that makes sense for each individual student (with my permission). This could also take the form of creating entries for the People’s Guide To Nashville if one wants to make that their final product.¹ There are no exams or term papers for the class as I expect that everyone will want to engage the course material.

**Bi-Weekly Presentations & Article Reviews:** For each week of the course we will be assigned a set of readings. Each student will choose one reading that they will take a lead on presenting (beginning the class discussion), and find popular/public media pieces to bring life to the more conceptual articles we will read. I imagine that with the number of students in the course this will be bi-weekly, so it is not something you will have to do every week. Basically you will choose a reading, write a charitable criticism, and then present to the class. These will serve to start the class discussion. Before class begins please read *Charitable Criticism* by Melissa Snarr (see endnote in this document). This will help guide our conversations of the readings. You should choose one article every other week and write about it using this framework. These need to be emailed to me at pavement@vanderbilt.edu the night before class meets (by 6PM).

**Final Product:** As opposed to writing a straight up term paper that might just sit on the shelf, each student will identify a final product they want to create to demonstrate some mastery of material from our class readings. If you are already working on a project, paper, thesis, dissertation proposal, or dissertation, this will be an opportunity to enhance what you are already doing. Of course, if a literature review essay is what you want to write that will be fine. My hope is that we will focus on different communication styles to make this assignment as imaginative as possible.

**Weekly Schedule**

We will choose readings from the articles and books listed below, so the list below is only a placeholder and we will not be reading everything.

Most of the weekly sessions will include a member of the broader community who will come to class in order to share their experience addressing issues we read about for class. This will provide an applied component for us with which to link the readings and bring them to life. In addition, most every week we will have readings that not only cover the U.S. context but also provide international examples to demonstrate how the topics we cover affect people around the world.

Listed below are the readings. For each week we will have about 75 pages of reading, but we may choose to cut some readings to make sure the workload is doable and not overwhelming.
Week 1: What is urban social justice?

Harvey, D. (2012). The Right to the City, pps. 3-26 in, Rebel cities: from the right to the city to the urban revolution. Verso Books.


David Harvey – The Neoliberal City. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rfd5kHb-Hc8

Fraser, J. (2013). Waging War On Ourselves: Cities As Exteriority (presentation)

Week 2: The Urban, Nashville, & The People’s Guide


Nashville worker’s Dignity - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZCNg9FnbYGQ
Fraser, J. (2015). Governance and the Post-Political (presentation)

**Week 3: The Production of Segregated Urban Space During the Twentieth Century**


The Tragedy of Urban Renewal: The Destruction and Renewal of a New York City Neighborhood. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mWGwsA1V2r4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mWGwsA1V2r4)

Fraser, J. (2009). Purity and the City: Postcolonial Considerations (presentation)

**Week 4: Public Space & The City**


Project For Public Spaces - [http://www.pps.org/](http://www.pps.org/)


Tent City U.S.A. - [http://www.oprah.com/own-doc-club/Tent-City-USA-Trailer_1](http://www.oprah.com/own-doc-club/Tent-City-USA-Trailer_1)

Fraser, J. (2011). Urban Pioneers and Other Fictions (presentation)

**Week 5: City Planning and the Production of Space**


Week 6: Community Development and the City


Black Panthers Revisited - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qGZpDt6OYnI

The War On Poverty - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kgsVrIXkix4

Fraser, J. (2010). Governmentality and the City (presentation)

Week 7: Environmental Justice and the City


Week 8: Food Justice and the City I


The Garden - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LmEPigRmTXQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LmEPigRmTXQ)

**Week 9: Food Justice and the City II**


DeLind, L. B. (2011). Are local food and the local food movement taking us where we want to go? Or are we hitching our wagons to the wrong stars?. *Agriculture and Human Values, 28*(2), 273-283.


**Week 10: Housing, Poverty and the City**


Fraser, J. (2015). Public Housing, Modernity and the Culture of Possessive Individualism (presentation in class).


Fraser, J. (2014). Property, Personhood, and Poverty (presentation)

**Week 11: The Promise of Social Integration and Mixed-Income Housing**


Historic art deco building in downtown Nashville sold, Tenants forced to move -
http://wkrn.com/2015/05/03/historic-art-deco-building-in-downtown-nashville-sold-tenants-forced-to-move/

Fraser, J. (2015). Difference and the Western Mind (presentation)

**Week 12: Urban Development and Gentrification I**


Flag Wars - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pWBLFFf0s28](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pWBLFFf0s28)

The Domino Effect - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFrUictYh6s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFrUictYh6s)

The Student’s Guide To Gentrification - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AC4ndYOS8g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AC4ndYOS8g)

Fraser, J. (2014). The Antimonies of Gentrification (presentation)

**Week 13: Urban Development and Gentrification II**


Chocolate City - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P1NkfATQvj4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P1NkfATQvj4)

Nashville Next Community Conversation: Affordable Housing and Gentrification - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IC3CR4VB30M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IC3CR4VB30M)

MART 125 - [https://vimeo.com/16947073](https://vimeo.com/16947073)

Fraser, J. (2014). Place and Displacement: The experience of dispossession (presentation)

**Week 14: City Planning and the Production of Vibrant Cities**


The City - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7sic-Q_weok](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7sic-Q_weok)

Fraser, J. (2015). The Trouble of Subjectivity and Urban Spaces (presentation)

**Week 15: Imagining The Just City**

People’s Guide To Nashville: This guide will serve as an educational tool about Nashville’s cultural, political, economic, and social justice movements, with entries submitted by people who have lived through and led these efforts. Our class will produce entries for the guide in partnership with different community leaders and everyday people. While some entries might be based more on archival work that is then corroborated by people around the city, other entries will be interview-based. In each case we will be working collaboratively with the broader community of people in Nashville to learn about sites of social justice.

Charitable Criticism
A charitable read of a text mirrors the generosity, respect, and rigorous criticism that is, I believe, necessary for social ethics and public discourse. This process treats the text as a colleague in the room with whom we engage with dignity and accountability. I hope intentionally engaging texts will also help us engage one another constructively and generatively.
Here’s one way to think through the process that moves from apprehension to appreciation to internal criticism and finally external criticism.

I. Apprehension

A. What are the author’s goals? Who are her target audiences and how does that impact the form and content of her argument?
B. What is the dominant claim, a thesis that encapsulates the argument? How is it supported by other claims, with what forms of evidence/reasoning?
C. What are the other major claims of her argument and how does she support them? [Focus here on the supporting walls of her house, the dominant melodies of her song, i.e. the essential pieces of her argument.]

II. Appreciation

A. What are the most creative, compelling, and/or effective of the major claims of the author? Why (e.g. use of certain authoritative sources, quality of narrative, social science focus, historical analysis, etc.)?
B. What makes you think more deeply in this text or illumines reality in helpful or provocative ways? Why?

III. Internal Criticism

A. Which of her major claims are least effective?
B. Why are they not effective? E.g. problems in logic, historical or social scientific accuracy, inconsistent method, etc.
C. Does the weakness of one or more of the claims undo the overall argument? [Jenga piece]

IV. External Criticism

A. What’s left out of this argument that needs to be there?
B. Why is it left out? E.g. assumptions in methodology, epistemology, theology, audience, word limit (should it displace another argument?), etc.
C. Who or what would help her see these other dimensions necessary to the argument? E.g. additional theoretical, theological, social-scientific tools, etc.