Urbanization and the Environment
Spring 2017/AMER 8000
Tuesdays 9:10-12:00

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Course Description
This course examines the production of urban environments and the ways in which human and non-human components affect each other. Taking U.S. cities as the vehicle for our inquiry, the course will cover material on how cities became the way they appear now, how different groups of people experience the city, and what we would like our cities to become.

A good portion of the course will cover material on urban planning and geography, the built environment, and the political, economic, and cultural forces that shape these. The substantive topics we will cover include but are not limited to housing, neighborhood environment, transportation, city infrastructure, water and soil, natural resources and green spaces, food systems and security, and social justice.

The course will also have an applied component where students will choose issues that are relevant to cities today and explore potential lines of action and policies to address them.

Course Expectations, Assignments & Grading
Attendance: You can miss one class throughout the semester without penalty, but you must turn in assignments ahead of time and arrange to get notes from another student. Your final grade will be deducted by 5 points for each additional class missed.

Academic Honesty: In order to avoid plagiarism, your assignments must provide full citations for all references: direct quotes, summaries, or ideas. While you are encouraged to develop your thinking with your peers, you cannot use their material without citing it. Work from other courses will not be accepted in this course.

Allowing your writing to be copied by another student is also considered cheating. Please review the Honor Code for complete guidelines on academic honesty: http://studentorgs.vanderbilt.edu/HonorCouncil/.

Grading:
Written Artifacts 50%
Participation 15%
Final Paper 30%

[Grading Scale: A = 94-100, A- = 90-93.9, B+ = 87-89.9, B = 84-86.9, B- = 80-83.9, C+ = 77-79.9, C = 74-76.9, C- = 70-73.9, D+ = 67-69.9, D = 64-66.9, D- = 60-63.9, F = below 60]

Written Artifacts: In class, we discussed having a few written artifacts from each student including a policy brief and a one-page handout on a topic of your choice. We will continue to develop these ideas into final products.

Participation: For each class, prepare at least three discussion points/topics on the readings. In addition, seek out other public media coverage, or grey material like reports, plans, and texts, to add to our conversations topically.

Final Paper: The final paper project will be a collaborative project based on a topic of your choosing that cities are facing today related to environmental issues, writ large. We will discuss paper topics and format in class, and there will be a handout.

Week 1 (January 10): Course Introduction


Week 2 (January 17): Urbanization of the United States
Selected chapters from:


**Week 3 (January 24): Urbanization and the Environment**

**Week 4 (January 31): Urban Planning for Equity and Sustainability I**

**Week 5 (February 7): Urban Planning for Equity and Sustainability II**
Selected chapters from:

**Week 6 (February 14): Introduction to Political Ecology**
Selected chapters from:


**Week 7 (February 21): Political Ecology Case Studies I**
Selected chapters from:


**Week 8 (February 28): Political Ecology Case Studies II**
Selected chapters from:


**Week 9 (March 14): Greening the City**
Selected chapters from:

**Week 10 (March 21): Nashville and Beyond – Exploring City Plans**
1. We will review plans for the City of Nashville in relation to the built environment and environmental issues, and then compare these to other cities around the United States.

**Week 11 (March 28): Cities and The Governance of Environmental Behavior**


**Week 12 (April 4): Housing and Urban Design**


**Week 13 (April 11): Transportation Systems and the Environment**

Selected chapters from:


5. Thaden, Emily, and Mark Perlman. "Creating & Preserving Reasonably-Priced Housing near Public Transportation."

**Week 14 (April 18): Cities and Food Systems**

Selected chapters from:


**Week 15 (April 25): Cities, the Environment and Modernity (wrap-up)**

Selected chapters from:

Possible concluding piece: