UP 203 – Cities: Planning & Urban Life  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
Department of Urban and Regional Planning  

Lecture: MW 10:00 AM – 10:50 AM, 120 Architecture Building  
Lab: F 10:00 AM – 10:50 AM, 328 Armory  

Instructor: Professor Sean Kennedy  
Email: seankenn@illinois.edu  
Office: 312 Temple Buell Hall  
Office hours: By appointment  

Teaching Assistant: Vinisha Basnet  
Email: vbasnet2@illinois.edu  
Office hours: By appointment  

Course Overview  

It is futile to plan a city’s appearance, or speculate on how to endow it with a pleasing appearance of order, without knowing what sort of innate, functioning order it has. To seek for the look of things as a primary purpose or the main drama is apt to make nothing but trouble. —Jane Jacobs  

What is a city? From a bird’s-eye view, you might see a collection of buildings, roads, pipes, and wires, and perhaps some green space. But drill in closer, and you start to see people – living, conducting business, and playing. Groups of people gathering together, but also other groups remaining distinctly separate. Planning shapes and is shaped by the social order present in cities. As future professionals working in these places, it is crucial to understand how they are formed, operate and how people living in them are affected by plans and policies.  

Objectives  

This course will stimulate your thinking about complex urban and regional systems and raise awareness about planning for equitable urban environments. The course is designed to:  

- discuss the process, forces, and factors of urbanization  
- introduce social science theories and models of urban and regional structure  
- review issues and topics related to contemporary urban life  
- engage students in social science research on a city or a region  
- develop students’ research design skills  
- provide students with experience in using public data and computer software  

By the end of this class, you should be able to intelligently describe urban processes and possess basic skills in Excel, ArcGIS, qualitative observation, and other research tools.
## Course at a glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>23-Aug</td>
<td>Course introduction; Introduction to cities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25-Aug</td>
<td>Understanding “place” and “space,” part 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>27-Aug</td>
<td>Lab 1: Understanding cities through music</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>30-Aug</td>
<td>Understanding “place” and “space,” part 2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-Sep</td>
<td>Studying cities: Research methods overview</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3-Sep</td>
<td>Lab 2: Mental mapping exercise</td>
<td>Lab 1 write-up</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6-Sep</td>
<td>NO CLASS: Labor Day</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8-Sep</td>
<td>Studying cities: Qualitative approaches</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10-Sep</td>
<td>Lab activity: Observation of urban culture session</td>
<td>Lab 2 write-up</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>13-Sep</td>
<td>Studying cities: Quantitative approaches</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15-Sep</td>
<td>Studying cities: Spatial approaches</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17-Sep</td>
<td>Lab 3: Data scavenger hunt</td>
<td>Urban observation</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>20-Sep</td>
<td>The origins of cities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>22-Sep</td>
<td>NO CLASS: Spurlock Museum tour</td>
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<td></td>
<td>24-Sep</td>
<td>Lab 4: Getting started with data</td>
<td>Lab 3 write-up</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>27-Sep</td>
<td>Urban theory</td>
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<td></td>
<td>29-Sep</td>
<td>Cities in the global economy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1-Oct</td>
<td>Lab 5: Census geography exercise</td>
<td>Spurlock Reflection</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>4-Oct</td>
<td>Urban spatial structures</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6-Oct</td>
<td>Metropolitan and demographic growth</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8-Oct</td>
<td>Lab 6: Location theory exercise</td>
<td>Labs 4 &amp; 5 write-up</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>11-Oct</td>
<td>Suburban development, Part 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>13-Oct</td>
<td>Suburban development, Part 2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>15-Oct</td>
<td>Lab 7: Population mapping</td>
<td>Lab 6 write-up</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>18-Oct</td>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
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<td></td>
<td>20-Oct</td>
<td>Urban inequality: Immigration, diversity, power</td>
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<td></td>
<td>22-Oct</td>
<td>Lab 8: Mapping food deserts</td>
<td>Lab 7 write-up</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>25-Oct</td>
<td>Urban inequality: Housing policy and segregation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>27-Oct</td>
<td>NO CLASS: iSEE Congress</td>
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<td></td>
<td>29-Oct</td>
<td>Lab 9: Mapping income and racial segregation</td>
<td>Lab 8 write-up</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1-Nov</td>
<td>Environmental justice: Siting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3-Nov</td>
<td>Environmental justice: Transportation equity</td>
<td>Conference reflection paper</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5-Nov</td>
<td>Lab 10: Mapping vulnerability</td>
<td>Lab 9 write-up</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>8-Nov</td>
<td>Sustainable urban development, part 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10-Nov</td>
<td>Sustainable urban development, part 2</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>12-Nov</td>
<td>Lab activity: Final project work session</td>
<td>Hometown analysis; Lab 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>15-Nov</td>
<td>Urban politics</td>
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<td></td>
<td>17-Nov</td>
<td>Urban finance and political power</td>
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<td></td>
<td>19-Nov</td>
<td>Lab activity: Final project work session</td>
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<td></td>
<td>22-26 Nov</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>29-Nov</td>
<td>Contemporary planning issues</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>1-Dec</td>
<td>The future of the city</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3-Dec</td>
<td>Lab activity: Assignment 3 work session</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>6-Dec</td>
<td>Final presentations</td>
<td>Assignment 3 (Dec 10)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8-Dec</td>
<td>Final presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15-Dec</td>
<td><strong>Final exam, TBD</strong></td>
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</table>
Course Requirements

Course structure

This class is organized in a lecture/discussion and lab format. Mondays and Wednesdays will involve lectures on the topic of the week, group discussions, and class presentations. We will dedicate Fridays to computer lab exercises and project work time. Occasional short pop quizzes on the reading will be given at the beginning of class that will count toward class participation.

Evaluation

Grades will be weighted as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conference reflection paper</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban observation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hometown analysis</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final project</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current events presentation</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab exercises (10)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation/attendance</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages will be transformed to letter grades using the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94.0 or higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90.0-93.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87.0-89.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84.0-86.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80.0-83.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77.0-79.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74.0-76.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70.0-73.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67.0-69.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>64.0-66.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60.0-63.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Less than 60.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The general grading rubric is as follows:

- An “A” assignment demonstrates original thought and synthesis of ideas and sophisticated, cogent analysis. It is clearly written and presented. Exemplary work.
- A “B” assignment includes above-average analysis with appropriate evidence to support ideas. It is clearly written and presented. Above average, competent work.
- A “C” assignment shows a basic level of understanding, with analysis limited to obvious arguments. Writing is competent. Developing but adequate work.
- A “D” assignment misunderstands or misrepresents the material or is so poorly written that it obscures the analysis. Beginning and inadequate work.
Due dates and times will be provided with each assignment. Anything turned in late will lose 10 points (i.e., one full letter grade) per day. Note that you can’t make up a quiz or the current events presentation—whether you’re absent or just running late.

**Textbook and Readings**

One textbook is required: *Introduction to Cities: How Place and Space Shape Human Experience*, by Xiangming Chen, Anthony M. Orum, and Krista E. Paulsen (2013, Wiley-Blackwell). You can buy it from the Illini Union Bookstore or online retailers. It is also on reserve at the Funk ACES Library. Be aware that there is a second edition of the book. You may choose to purchase it, but chapter numbers in the syllabus refer to the first edition. We will post other required readings on the course Canvas page, and we may add additional readings from time to time. Note that we expect you will have completed the entire week’s readings for Monday’s class session.

**Participation and attendance**

Class participation, and therefore attendance, is mandatory at all sessions. However, we understand that life happens, and you’ll occasionally need to miss a class because of an emergency, illness, religious observances, or another need. There is no need to notify us in advance, but more than three absences will lower your participation grades. But do notify the instructors in advance if you will have a prolonged absence for a legitimate reason. Whatever the reason for your absence, you are responsible for acquiring class materials when you do not attend, and assignments are still due on the date posted.

Aside from sharing thoughts and answering questions in class, or actively participating in group discussions, attending office hours is one way to improve your participation grade. Office hours are a place to come if you need help with the coursework or discuss a problem and a chance for us to get to know each other and learn about our mutual academic and professional interests.

**Extra credit opportunity**

Students may submit short reflection essays for extra credit. Essays should be about 250 words long and offer a critical perspective on the current week’s readings. Successful essays will not be summaries; they will engage with the text by asking reflective questions, connecting them with other readings, or drawing on your personal experience. Each essay will add up to one percentage point on top of your final grade. You may submit up to five essays for credit over the semester (but only one per week).
Course policies

COVID-19 expectations and safety behavior: Following University policy, all students are required to engage in appropriate behavior to protect the health and safety of the community. Students are also required to follow the campus COVID-19 protocols.

Students who feel ill must not come to class. Students who test positive for COVID-19 or have had an exposure that requires testing and/or quarantine must not attend class. The University will provide information to the instructor, in a manner that complies with privacy laws, about students in these latter categories. These students are judged to have excused absences for the class period and should contact the instructor via email about making up the work.

Students who fail to abide by these rules will first be asked to comply; if they refuse, they will be required to leave the classroom immediately. If a student is asked to leave the classroom, the non-compliant student will be judged to have an unexcused absence and reported to the Office for Student Conflict Resolution for disciplinary action. Accumulation of non-compliance complaints against a student may result in dismissal from the University.

Face coverings

All students, faculty, staff, and visitors are required to wear face coverings in classrooms and university spaces. This is in accordance with CDC guidance and University policy and expected in this class. Please refer to the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign’s COVID-19 website for further information on face coverings.

Building access

In order to implement COVID-19-related guidelines and policies affecting university operations, instructional faculty members may ask students in the classroom to show their Building Access Status in the Safer Illinois app or the Boarding Pass. Staff members may ask students in university offices to show their Building Access Status in the Safer Illinois app or the Boarding Pass. If the Building Access Status says “Granted,” that means the individual is compliant with the university’s COVID-19 policies—either with a university-approved COVID-19 vaccine or with the on-campus COVID-19 testing program for unvaccinated students.

Students are required to show only the Building Access Screen, which shows compliance without specifying whether it was through COVID-19 vaccination or regular on-campus testing. To protect personal health information, this screen does not say if a person is vaccinated or not. Students are not required to show anyone the screen that displays their vaccination status. No university official, including faculty members, may ask students why they are not vaccinated or any other questions seeking personal health information.
Respect, civility, and inclusivity

We bring our own life experiences to the university, which means that we may have quite different perspectives about the issues we will discuss in this class. Any thoughtful viewpoints as they relate to the course material are welcome. I ask that you be mindful of our differences as you respectfully engage with your classmates. Skills in empathetic dialogue will serve you well as a professional planner, as well as a human being more generally.

By enrolling in a class offered by the Department of Urban and Regional Planning, students agree to be responsible for maintaining an atmosphere of mutual respect in all DURP activities, including lectures, discussions, labs, projects, and extracurricular programs. See Student Code, Article 1-Student Rights and Responsibilities, Part 1. Student Rights, §1-102.

Academic accommodations

To obtain disability-related adjustments and auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact Professor Barajas and the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) as soon as possible. To contact DRES, you may visit 1207 S. Oak St., Champaign, call 217-333-4603, email disability@illinois.edu, or go to the DRES website.

Please also schedule a private meeting with the instructor or TA to discuss your needs and requirements. We will try to meet all accommodations once you self-identify. Please note accommodations are not retroactive to the beginning of the semester but begin the day you contact your professor with a current letter of accommodation from DRES.

Academic integrity

Don’t cheat, and don’t plagiarize. Any work you turn in with your name is presumed to be your own. If it is not, and you do not attribute the work to its source, it is grounds for sanctions that range from a written warning to course failure to dismissal or suspension. Refer to the University of Illinois Student Code, Part 4, for specific guidelines.

Laptops, tablets, and cell phones

There is documented scientific evidence that (1) people are incapable of effectively multitasking, (2) they get distracted easily, and (3) writing notes longhand is better for memory retention than typing. That means that all else being equal, you are likely to perform better in this class if you stow away your laptop and pull out your paper notebook and pen to take notes. But I recognize that some people have organized their lives digitally and prefer to use a laptop, while others may require one because of a disability. So, feel free to use your laptop or tablet for notetaking purposes or when otherwise instructed. As a matter of respect for the instructors and your classmates, disable your WIFI, install website blocking software, or provide yourself consistent positive reinforcement to avoid using the internet during class. We will ask you to put away your digital devices if we find your technology use distracting. Also, please turn off your phone ringers and keep your phones put away.
University resources

Support resources and supporting fellow students in distress:

As members of the Illinois community, we each have a responsibility to express care and concern for one another. Students sometimes face challenges that can impact academic performance (examples include mental health concerns, food insecurity, homelessness, personal emergencies). Should you find that you or a fellow student are managing such a challenge and that it is interfering with your coursework, you are encouraged to contact the professor or the Student Assistance Center (SAC) in the Office of the Dean of Students for support and referrals to campus and/or community resources. The SAC has a Dean on Duty available to see students who walk in, call, or email the office during business hours. For mental health emergencies, you can call 911 or walk into the Counseling Center. No appointment is needed.

The University Mental Health Resources website can help you decide what kind of assistance you might need and how to get connected to services for mental health, wellness, access, and accommodation. The resources on this website reflect many different approaches, ranging from personal counseling to forming groups to address issues in your school or work environment.

Emergency information

Visit http://police.illinois.edu/safe for guidance on how to cope with emergencies on campus. Take some time to note where the nearest classroom exits are and sign up for emergency notifications at http://emergency.illinois.edu.
Course reading list and schedule

Note: This reading list and schedule is subject to revision

**Week 1, Aug 23–27: Introduction to cities and understanding “place” and “space.”**

Readings:

1. Chapter 1, *Introduction to Cities (ITC)*

Assignments:

1. None

**Week 2, Aug 30–Sep 3: Understanding “place” and “space” / Research methods overview**

Readings:

2. Cresswell, “The Genealogy of Place,” in *Place*.

Assignments:

1. Lab 1 due Sep 3

**Week 3, Sep 8–10: Studying cities I: Qualitative approaches (No class Sep 6)**

Readings:

1. Chapter 4, *ITC*

Assignments:

1. Urban Observation assignment handed out Sep 8
2. Lab 2 due Sep 10

**Week 4, Sep 13–17: Studying cities II: Quantitative and spatial approaches**

Readings/listenings/visualizations:


Optional reading/resources:

2. Professor Geoff Boeing’s website: [https://geoffboeing.com/](https://geoffboeing.com/). Browse the top few posts for examples of spatial analysis visualization.

Assignments:

1. Hometown analysis handed out Sep 15
2. Urban observation assignment due Sep 17

**Week 5, Sep 20–24: The origins of cities**

Reading:


Assignments:

1. Visit Spurlock Museum
2. Lab 3 due Sep 24

**Week 6, Sep 27–Oct 1: Introduction to urban theory / Cities in the global economy**

Readings:

1. Chapter 2, ITC
2. Chapter 3, ITC
3. Chapter 10, ITC (Ch. 11 2nd ed.)

Optional reading:


Assignments:

1. Spurlock reflection due Oct. 1
Week 7, Oct 4–8: Urban spatial structures and growth

Readings:

1. Chapter 5, *ITC*

Assignments:

1. Labs 4 & 5 due Oct 8

Week 8, Oct 11–15: Suburban development

Readings:

1. Chapter 6, *ITC*
2. Chapter 7, *ITC*

Assignments:

1. Lab 6 due Oct 15

Week 9, Oct 18–22: Urban inequality I: Immigration, diversity, and power

Readings:

1. Chapter 9, *ITC*

Assignments:

1. Midterm Exam: Oct 18 (in class)
2. Lab 7 due Oct 22

Week 10, Oct 25–29: Urban inequality II: Housing policy and segregation

Readings:

Optional reading:

1. Chapter 8, *ITC*

Assignments:

1. Lab 8 due Oct 29

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**Week 11, Nov 1–5: Environmental justice**

Readings:


Optional reading:


Assignments:

1. Conference reflection due Nov 3
2. Lab 9 due Nov 5

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**Week 12, Nov 8–12: Sustainable urban development**

Readings:

1. Chapter 12, *ITC* (Ch. 13, 2nd ed.)

Assignments:

1. Assignment 3 handed out Nov 10
2. Hometown analysis due Nov 12
3. Lab 10 due Nov 12
Week 13, Nov 18–23: Urban governance and finance

Readings:

2. Phillips, “Getting Things Done,” in City Lights

Assignments:

1. None

Week of Nov 22: Thanksgiving Break (no class)

Week 14, Nov 29–Dec 3: The now and future of cities

Readings:

1. Chapter 13, ITC

Week 15, Dec 6–8: Final assignment

Student presentations. Papers due Dec 10.

Final exam: December 15