

Spring term 2023
USP 617 – Sociology and Politics of Urban Life hybrid (3 credits)
Portland State University – School of Urban Studies and Planning

Instructor: Moriah McSharry McGrath, PhD, MPH, MSUP
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FINAL EXAM: final project due Wednesday, June 14th at 12.05pm on Canvas

Questions that can't wait until classtime? Post to Q & A forum discussion boards in Canvas!

Key course URLs - *if clicking on link doesn't work, cut and paste it into browser address bar, be sure to delete spaces*

<i>For all of Dr. McGrath's classes</i>	
Book an office hours appointment (times rotate)	http://www.meetwithmoriah.youcanbook.me
Let me know if you're going to miss class/be late/leave early	https://forms.gle/jKZec9JeVutCzTgMA
Join your office hours meeting	https://pdx.zoom.us/my/drmcgrath or call (971) 247-1195 and enter meeting ID 782 559 6646, *6 to switch between mute/unmuted → send a Google Chat, or e-mail or call, if I'm not there when you expect me
<i>For all PSU activities</i>	
Get help with Zoom, Google Workspace etc. (until midnight)	https://www.pdx.edu/technology/support
Get help to find a reading based on the citation, get research assistance (24/7)	https://library.pdx.edu/services/ask-a-librarian/

Course format

We will have in-person classes for the first seven weeks of the class and then shift to asynchronous/self-directed activities for weeks 8-10.

What we're studying

From the PSU catalog:

“A survey of important theories and empirical research about the social structure and political dynamics of urban areas. The impacts of globalization on urban social and political life, the changing nature of community and social relations within cities and suburbs, and evolving patterns of intergovernmental cooperation and conflict within metropolitan regions will be analyzed.”

Learning outcomes

- 1) Discuss contemporary debates in urban sociology and politics, including the role of formal and informal processes structuring daily life
- 2) Analyze the way that urban social and political produce and reinforce systems of identity and power
- 3) Articulate the theoretical framing of empirical research and apply the framework to other topics/settings
- 4) Identify and synthesize themes from urban sociology and politics the apply to an area of personal research interest

Course materials

Core texts

Davidson, M., & Martin, D. (Eds.). (2014). *Urban politics: Critical approaches*. Los Angeles: SAGE. (listed as “D & M” in the course calendar) – e-book accessible via PSU library
Garrido, M. Z. (2019). *The patchwork city: Class, space, and politics in Metro Manila*. University of Chicago Press.

Hinton, E. K. (2016). *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The making of mass incarceration in America*. Harvard University Press. – e-book accessible via PSU library

Other readings will be available through the PSU library or online.

Supplemental text

Lin, J., & Mele, C. (2013). *The urban sociology reader* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge. For acquainting or re-acquainting yourself with the “canon.”

Recommended technology tools for student success

Desktop version of Google Drive (access and edit stored MS Office files without internet access!)	https://support.google.com/a/users/answer/13022292
Desktop version of Google Chat	https://support.google.com/chat/answer/9455386
Firefox browser with Container Tabs to manage multiple Google accounts	https://www.zdnet.com/article/what-are-firefox-container-tabs-and-how-do-you-use-them/
Microsoft Office (free!) or open-source alternative	https://www.pdx.edu/oit/microsoft-office or https://www.libreoffice.org/
Zotero to keep track of your research sources and automate your citations and reference lists	https://www.zotero.org/ → some more explanation at: https://libguides.unm.edu/Zotero
reading/writing tools that you might find helpful	https://www.pdx.edu/disability-resource-center/adaptive-technology-reading-writing

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

PSU’s grading system for graduate courses:

points	0	60	64	67	70	74	77	80	84	87	90	94
grade	F	D-	D	D+	C-	C	C+	B-	B	B+	A-	A
GPA value	0	0.67	1.0	1.33	1.67	2.0	2.33	2.67	3.0	3.33	3.67	4.0
quality	<i>failure</i>			<i>below standard</i>			<i>satisfactory</i>			<i>excellent</i>		

Ways to earn points

<i>Engagement with texts</i> Reading responses (4 points x five – skip a week or do all to get extra points): 20 points Movie response: 3	23
Book review	10
Scrapbook	5
<i>Final paper</i> Proposal: 5 points Draft version: 5 points Final version: 15 points Research-in-progress presentation (ungraded) Peer review of other people’s papers: 5 points	30
<i>Participation</i> In-person attendance (six sessions x 3 points – one “freebie” or come to all for 3 extra points): 18 points Canvas discussions in weeks 8-10 (three x 2 points): 6 points Overall professionalism (quality of engagement w/colleagues): 6 points	32

Office hours appointment (discuss your final paper progress): 2 points	
<i>TOTAL:</i>	100

Expectations for assignments

I subscribe to the Dr. Bates categorization of student work, with a compressed scale for graduate classes:

- A** assignments demonstrate original thought and synthesis of ideas, sophisticated, cogent analysis, and are clearly written or presented. Outstanding work.
- A-/B+** assignments present above average analysis with appropriate evidence to support the ideas and are clearly written or presented. Very good work.
- B/B-** assignments show a basic level of understanding, with analysis limited to the most obvious arguments. Writing is competent. Adequate work.
- C+/C** assignments misunderstand or misrepresent the material, or are so poorly written or presented as to obscure the analysis. Inadequate work.

Summary of assignments

More detailed assignment instructions will be provided for larger assignments.

Reading responses

Summarize the key themes (i.e., the arguments more so than that topics/details) of each reading for the week and then synthesize themes and arguments running through the ensemble of readings. How do they complement or build on one another? How do they differ? What questions do they leave unanswered or what additional questions do they raise? You should demonstrate your understanding of each of the readings, but it's understandable that you might end up spending most of your space on a given reading or two depending on your interests. ~500-1000 words. Conclude with discussion questions for the class session; these questions should be grounded in the readings as opposed to being highly abstract/philosophical. Don't forget your APA-style reference list (make sure to use the "book section" format for chapters from edited readers).

Final paper

You'll choose a topic (probably related to your research interests) and find urban studies journal articles that address the sociology and politics of the topic, and write a paper synthesizing this literature. You'll work on this in several stages:

- 1) Proposal: an initial annotated bibliography
- 2) Research-in-progress oral presentation in class
- 3) Draft and peer review
- 4) Final paper

Book review

You'll choose a book from among a list of options and write an academic review.

"Scrapbook"

You'll identify mass media artifacts that reflect themes from the course and present them digitally (on Canvas)

Due dates, grace periods, extensions, accommodations

Reading responses are due on Monday at 5pm so that I can (try to) look at them before class. You have a **grace period** until Friday at 5pm for those Monday deadlines; the Canvas board will still be open and there is no penalty for submission during the grace period. For Friday deadlines, you have until Monday at 5pm as a **grace period**. Deadlines are meant to keep you moving through the course material without getting bogged down. **There is no grace period on the final paper**, however. If you find yourself falling behind,

please contact me immediately so that we can discuss accommodations; I usually restructure assignments rather than simply extending the deadline, since I find that extensions often prolong students' burden rather than alleviate it.

SUSTAINING A LEARNING COMMUNITY

We all play a part in creating and maintaining a positive shared learning environment. Below are some of the major expectations for this course.

Learning in unprecedented times

From the Covid-19 pandemic, uprisings for racial justice, floods, fires, and violence . . . we are all going through a lot. I aim to create space for inquiry and excellence, but also to acknowledge the intense logistical challenges and cognitive load we are experiencing. If health, technology, caregiving etc. complications are influencing your learning, please let me know so that we can make adjustments accordingly. I aim not to penalize you for the impact of these challenges on your performance. Communication is key, please reach out if you are feeling frustrated, overwhelmed, etc.

Meaningful conversations (adapted from Beth Duckles)

In this class we will deal with perspectives that are controversial, thought-provoking and which may challenge your worldview. In order to address these issues in a scholarly manner, we will operate with a foundation of respect for all persons, acknowledging that there are a variety of viewpoints to be considered. You are always free to express your own opinions, however you must be ready to consider those opinions using a social science lens. You are always free to disagree with the conclusions of your professor, your peers, or the authors you read. Disagreeing with the material does not excuse you from engaging with it, however.

Participation and professionalism

Professionalism takes many forms. Being a good academic citizen requires that you:

- Prepare as fully as possible for class (review readings, write down questions you'd like to discuss)
- Foster a supportive learning environment by engaging in respectful dialog—this includes active listening and awareness of classroom power dynamics!
- Connect your comments to classroom materials; when bringing in life experience or other courses, make the links explicit
- Seek out and try to understand different vantage points
- Minimize disruptions and use technology responsibly
- Address problems in a proactive and productive manner

My teaching philosophy

It is my intent that students from diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity of the PSU community be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit for our class. I aim to present materials and activities that are inclusive of diversity in gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. I also strive to help students put their work in local context, which includes the history and present of expropriation of land from communities including Indigenous peoples and successive denizens. The PSU Conflict Resolution program has prepared an excellent short summary of the land around PSU to support this endeavor: <https://www.pdx.edu/conflict-resolution/land-conflict-acknowledgement>.

Further, some specific aspects of my teaching bear particular mention.

People first

All the information one might want is available without enrolling in college, yet we all choose to be here: to be together, learning in community. I try to get to know my students so that I can help them best achieve

their goals. I encourage you to get to know your classmates so that you may benefit from their insights and support. A person's ideas stem from who they are, so having meaningful dialog requires understanding ideas and the context from which they came. Before critiquing, seek to understand.

Trauma-awareness

Whether it's recent world events or things that have happened in our life stories, many of us have experienced trauma that affects our capacity to feel safe, build relationships, and learn. Women, people of color, people with disabilities, people who have experienced housing or financial instability, LGBTQ+ people are at elevated risk of experiencing trauma—so paying attention to it is another way of fostering equity. When it comes to teaching, this is a humble journey of trying to lead with empathy, providing structure for students, and empowering them to chart their own course.

Countering oppression

Core to the practice of community development is honoring people's dignity and creating spaces that encourage equitable participation and power-sharing. This requires active effort because it is a radically different paradigm from the larger society. I am particularly inspired by the Movement for Black Lives' calls to imagine a more just future. Some ways this manifests in my teaching are efforts to . . .

- Center the margins: seeking out materials authored by and/or depicting the stories of people who have historically been marginalized
- Interrupt oppressive speech: “calling in” people whose actions may be doing (unconscious or otherwise) harm to others
- Recognize the effect of trauma as well as its differential impacts (see above)
- Apply an equity lens to decision-making
- Use a critical race lens to identify and name racism and other structural oppression

I appreciate your support and feedback on this process. For your part, I expect you to be thoughtful about your own identity and attentive to power dynamics in the classroom, contributing to an environment where everyone can grow. If you would like to learn more about anti-racism in academia, the Academics for Black Survival and Wellness collaborative maintains this resource [list](#).

UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Academic integrity

The PSU Student Code of Conduct and Responsibility can be found at: <https://www.pdx.edu/dos/psu-student-code-conduct>. We are all responsible for upholding it!

It states, in part:

“Academic Misconduct is defined as, actual or attempted, fraud, deceit, or unauthorized use of materials prohibited or inappropriate in the context of the academic assignment. Unless otherwise specified by the faculty member, all submissions, whether in draft or final form, must either be the Student's own work, or must clearly acknowledge the source(s). Academic Misconduct includes, but is not limited to: (a) cheating, (b) fraud, (c) plagiarism, such as word for word copying, using borrowed words or phrases from original text into new patterns without attribution, or paraphrasing another writer's ideas; (d) the buying or selling of all or any portion of course assignments and research papers; (e) performing academic assignments (including tests and examinations) in another person's stead; (f) unauthorized disclosure or receipt of academic information; (g) falsification of research data (h) unauthorized collaboration; (i) using the same paper or data for several assignments or courses without proper documentation; (j) unauthorized alteration of student records; and (k) academic sabotage, including destroying or obstructing another student's work.”

Please be mindful of this, particularly when it comes to writing. Do not try to pass off other people's work (including uncited photos from the internet!) as your own. Not only is it unethical, it could result in failing an assignment or course, or getting suspended or expelled from the university. The Writing Center and your

instructor are available to support you as you learn appropriate practices of scholarship and attribution. Instead of being freaked out that you are going to plagiarize by accident, ask for help! **I reserve the right to give a failing grade for the course to any student with multiple academic integrity issues in the class.**

Access and inclusion for students with disabilities

PSU values diversity and inclusion; My goal is to create a learning environment that is accessible, equitable, inclusive, and welcoming. I am committed to fostering mutual respect and full participation for all students. If any aspects of instruction or course design result in barriers to your inclusion or learning, please notify me. Additionally, the Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides reasonable accommodations for students who encounter barriers in the learning environment. The DRC works with students who have physical, learning, cognitive, mental health, sensory, chronic illness, and other disabilities.

If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and feel you need accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations. If you already have accommodations, please contact me to make sure that I have received your DRC Faculty Notification Email so we can discuss your accommodations. The DRC is located in 116 Smith Memorial Student Union, Suite 116. You can also contact the DRC at 503-725-4150 or, drc@pdx.edu. Visit the DRC online at <https://www.pdx.edu/disability-resource-center>.

Title IX¹ and mandatory reporting

Portland State is committed to fostering a safe, productive learning environment. Title IX and PSU policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex/gender, including sexual harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. We expect a culture of professionalism and mutual respect in our department and class. Please be aware that as a faculty member, I have the responsibility to report any instances of sexual harassment, sexual violence and/ or other forms of prohibited discrimination to PSU's Title IX Coordinator, the Office of Equity and Compliance or the Dean of Student Life and cannot keep information confidential. You may report any incident of discrimination or discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment, to either the Title IX Coordinator, Office of Equity and Compliance, or the Office of the Dean of Student Life. If you would rather share information about sexual harassment or sexual violence to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact a confidential advocate at 503-894-7982 or by scheduling on-line (psuwrc.youcanbook.me). You may also contact other confidential employees found on the sexual misconduct resource webpage at <https://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault/get-help>. For more information about PSU's expectations of our campus community standards and resources for sex/gender discrimination and sexual violence, please complete the required student module Understanding Sexual Misconduct and Resources at <https://www.pdx.edu/diversity/understanding-sexual-misconduct-and-resources-student-module>.

Cultural Resource Centers

Find social, professional, and academic opportunities: <https://www.pdx.edu/cultural-resource-centers/>

- Multicultural Student Center
- La Casa Latina Student Center
- Pan African Commons
- Pacific Islander, Asian, Asian American Student Center
- Middle Eastern, along with North African, South Asian Student Center Initiative and
- Native American Student & Community Center

Other affinity centers

- Women's Resource Center: <https://www.pdx.edu/womens-resource-center/>

¹ of the federal Education Amendments of 1972
v. June 30th, 2023

- Queer Resource Center: <https://www.pdx.edu/queer-resource-center/>
- Veterans Resource Center: <https://www.pdx.edu/veterans-resource-center/>
- Resource Center for Students with Children: <https://www.pdx.edu/students-with-children/>

Other resources

- Helpdesk for problems with e-mail, passwords, Canvas, and other computer/tech things (open until midnight!): <https://www.pdx.edu/technology/support>
- Writing Center: <https://www.pdx.edu/writing-center/>
- Legal advice, financial counseling, and more: <https://www.pdx.edu/dean-student-life/student-resources>
- Basic Needs Hub offers help with food, housing, etc.: <https://www.pdx.edu/dean-student-life/basic-needs-hub>

Problems, concerns, complaints

If something is not going well with a classmate, instructor, staff member, your first step is to approach that person for a constructive dialogue. If that does not resolve the matter or seems impossible due to power dynamics or the level of harm you have experienced, there are many avenues for getting support. The USP Belonging, Dignity, and Justice (BDJ) committee offers a helpful rundown on their website at: <https://www.pdx.edu/urban-studies-planning/resources-and-reporting>

TENTATIVE COURSE CALENDAR

(Subject to change – pay attention to class announcements on Canvas, trust syllabus dates over Canvas!)

<i>date/ topic</i>	<i>Readings for the week</i> ** is for readings available on Canvas instead of at library
1 – Apr. 5th Introductions	Discussion of “the canon” in class
2 – Apr. 12th Settler colonialism and indigeneity	Hugill, D. (2017). What is a settler-colonial city? <i>Geography Compass</i> , 11(5), e12315. Barraclough, L. (2017). Wrangling settler colonialism in the Urban U.S. West: Indigenous and Mexican American struggles for social justice. <i>Annals of the American Association of Geographers</i> , 108(2), 513-523. Tomiak, J. (2017). Contesting the settler city: Indigenous self-determination, new urban reserves, and the neoliberalization of colonialism. <i>Antipode</i> , 49(4), 928-945. Coulthard, G. S. (2014). <i>Red skin, white masks: Rejecting the colonial politics of recognition</i> . University of Minnesota Press. Intro only (or read more if you like!) – I recommend reading this last since it’s the most complex DUE MON 5pm: REQUIRED reading response Sign up for week 4 articles
3 – Apr. 19th Class	Garrido DUE MON 5pm: reading response DUE FRI 5pm: final paper proposal
4 – Apr. 26th Social movements	Rabrenovic, G. (2008). Urban social movements. In J. S. Davies & D. L. Imbroscio (Eds.), <i>Theories of urban politics</i> (2nd ed., pp. 239-254). SAGE.** <p style="text-align: center;">AND two of the below (we’ll sign up in class to make sure that we have coverage)</p> Nicholls (2016) Politicizing undocumented immigrants one corner at a time: How day laborers became a politically contentious group. <i>International Journal of Urban and Regional Research</i> 40 (2):299–320. Maharawal (2017) Black Lives Matter, gentrification and the security state in the San Francisco Bay Area. <i>Anthropological Theory</i> 17(3):338–364. Hartal, G., & Misgav, C. (2020). Queer urban trauma and its spatial politics: A lesson from social movements in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. <i>Urban Studies</i> . Fredericks, R. (2014). “The old man is dead”: Hip hop and the arts of citizenship of Senegalese Youth. <i>Antipode</i> , 46(1), 130-148. DUE MON 5pm: reading response In-class: selected research-in-progress presentations
5 – May 3rd Urban governance	Cochrane, A. (2018). Here, there and everywhere: Rethinking the urban of urban politics. In K. Ward, A. E. G. Jonas & B. A. Miller (Eds.), <i>The Routledge handbook on spaces of urban politics</i> (pp. 14-25). London: Routledge. D & M intro to Section I, Ch. 3 (Ward – splintered governance) Whittemore, A. H. (2015). One strike, you're out: the residue of state deregulatory experiments and neoliberal era criminals in a faded Texas boomtown. <i>Planning Perspectives</i> , 31(1), 83-101. Optional: Theodore, N., Peck, J., & Brenner, N. (2011). Neoliberal urbanism: Cities and the rule of markets. In G. Bridge & S. Watson (Eds.), <i>The new Blackwell companion to the city</i> (pp. 15-25). Wiley-Blackwell. DUE MON 5pm: reading response FRI 5pm: Book review sign-up deadline In-class: selected research-in-progress presentations
6 – May 10th Racialization	Loughran, K. (2015). The Philadelphia Negro and the canon of classical urban theory. <i>Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race</i> , 12(2), 249-267.

	<p>Hamraie, A. (2018). <i>Building access: Universal design and the politics of disability</i>. University of Minnesota Press. Chapter 3 only (or read more if you like!)</p> <p>Montgomery, A. (2016). Reappearance of the public: Placemaking, minoritization and resistance in Detroit. <i>International Journal of Urban and Regional Research</i>, 40(4), 776-799.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>1) Lipsitz, G. (2007). The racialization of space and the spatialization of race: Theorizing the hidden architecture of landscape. <i>Landscape Journal</i>, 26(1), 10-23.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>or</i></p> <p>2) Pulido, L. (2000). Rethinking environmental racism: White privilege and urban development in Southern California. <i>Annals of the Association of American Geographers</i>, 90(1), 21-40.</p> <p>DUE MON 5pm: reading response In-class: selected research-in-progress presentations</p>
<p>7 – May 17th “Urban crisis”</p>	<p>As much of Hinton as you can read – finish at least chapter 2</p> <p>DUE MON 5pm: reading response on Hinton (reminder: this is an opportunity to get more points, not a new assignment) In-class: selected research-in-progress presentations</p>
SWITCH TO REMOTE/ASYNCHRONOUS ACTIVITIES	
<p>8 – week of May 22nd</p> <p>Applying theory</p>	<p>Finish Hinton</p> <p>Asynchronous activity for the week: watch film and discuss on Canvas Vásquez Irizarry, V., & Hildebran, G. (2019). <i>Decade of fire [Film]</i>. Red Nut Films. [access through PSU library] (1.25 hours of viewing, ~1 hour of commenting over the course of the week)</p> <p>DUE MON 5pm: final paper draft, last chance to turn in reading response on Hinton (grace period until Fri. 5pm) DUE WED 5pm: Canvas post (in lieu of class), discussion continues through the end of the week</p>
<p>9 – week of May 29th</p> <p>“book fair”</p> <p>N.B. PSU closed Mon. for Memorial Day</p>	<p>DUE TUE 5pm: book review (grace period until Wed. since people need time to comment)</p> <p>Asynchronous activity for the week: discuss book reviews on Canvas (~1 hours over the course of the week)</p> <p>Synchronous activity for the week: peer review of papers – default meeting place and time are Wed. 10am in the classroom, but your assigned group can choose a different time (groups and prompts to be assigned, ~1 hour of prep, ~1 hour of meeting)</p>
<p>10 – week of June 5th</p> <p>synthesis</p>	<p>DUE Mon. 5pm: scrapbook (time varies to prepare) – grace period only lasts until Tuesday 5pm!</p> <p>Asynchronous activity: Canvas discussion of scrapbooks and course themes over the course of the week (~1-2 hours over the course of the week)</p>
FINALS WEEK: final project due Wed., June 14th at 12.05pm on Canvas	