

**Geography 340**  
**Geography of the North American City**  
**University of Victoria**  
**Fall 2016**



**Course Description:**

This course offers a broad introduction to the field of urban geography with a primary focus on the historical development and contemporary processes of urbanization in Canada and the United States. The main objective of this class is to examine key themes in urban geography, including the historical geography of urbanization; changing approaches to urban planning and governance; the politics of urban renewal; neoliberal urbanism; housing and homelessness; gentrification; cultural diversity, social segregation, and immigrant communities; and utopian speculations on the urban future.

Instructor: Jennifer Mateer  
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Office Hours:           Tuesday       11:30-1:30  
                              Friday        11:30-1:30

Course Time:           Wednesday  2:30-3:50  
                              Thursday   2:30-3:50

Course Location:       Elliott Building 162

**Class Format:** The format for this course consists of a combination of lectures, in-class activities, and films. Most class sessions will be lecture-based, but we will also occasionally use class time to discuss the assigned readings, which students are expected to have completed prior to class each day. In addition to the standard lecture format, there will also be several in-class activities and films throughout the semester. Aside from the midterm and final exam, the main assignments for the course will be an essay and an urban film project.

**Guiding Thoughts:**

“In the end, everything in politics turns on the distribution of spaces. What are these places? How do they function? Why are they there? Who can occupy them? For me, political action always acts upon the social as the litigious distribution of places and roles. It is always a matter of knowing who is qualified to say what a particular place is and what is done in it.” - Jacques Rancière (2003: 201)

**Course Schedule**

Week 1	September 7&8	Course Overview What is a City?
Week 2	September 14 &15	Urban Morphology – Epochs of Canadian Urban Development Urban Economies and the Evolving Urban Form
Week 3	September 21 & 22	Globalization and Urbanization The Global City
Week 4	September 28 & 29	Governing, Planning, and Developing Cities Neoliberalism and Place
Week 5	October 5 & 6	Central Cities, Urban Neighbourhoods and Gentrification
Week 6	October 12 & 13	<b>Midterm</b> Inequality in the City
Week 7	October 19 & 20	Divided Cities Housing and Homelessness
Week 8	October 26 & 27	Indigeneity in the City
Week 9	November 2 & 3	Immigrant Enclaves and Sanctuary Cities
Week 10	November 9 & 10	<b>Reading Break – No Class</b>
Week 11	November 16 & 17	The Future of Cities
Week 12	November 23 & 24	Park Cities Presentations Begin on the 24th
Week 13	November 30 & December 1	Presentations Review

**Learning Objectives Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:**

1. Provide a broad overview of the key concepts and perspectives in urban geography.

2. Examine the main urban geographical processes of urbanization in North America.
3. Assess the major political, economic, social, and cultural changes that have transformed contemporary urban landscapes in North America.
4. Critically analyze the politics of urban development and social inequality within capitalist societies.
5. Acquire a general understanding of the major concepts and approaches in contemporary urban geography.
6. Acquire an in-depth knowledge of the historical and contemporary processes of urbanization in the North American context.
7. Develop the ability to critically assess the contested politics that have shaped urban spatial imaginaries and regimes of urban governance.
8. Improve competency in critical urban analysis by writing an essay and producing a short urban film.

### **Required Materials**

**Readings:** Required readings, such as journal articles, book chapters, and other sources will be posted on the CourseSpaces site (<http://CourseSpaces.uvic.ca/>) should be read thoroughly and brought to class. While readings are peripheral to learning in some courses, they are central to this one.

**Reading effectively** is absolutely essential for success in this course. Be mindful that simply reading without engaging with the material (i.e. marking, highlighting, frequent re-reading, taking notes and critical reflection) will limit the movement of material from short to long term memory.

**Note on CourseSpaces:** Access the CourseSpaces site for required readings, important announcements, assignment submissions, instructor notes, your grades and additional information.

### **Assessments**

Students will be evaluated on the following required elements:

**10% Participation:** based on the quality of your contributions to class discussion, and/or extra-curricular involvement. If you feel uncomfortable participating fully in class you may augment your mark by attending “The City Talks,” Urban Studies Speaker Series.

This fall, the Committee for Urban Studies at UVic will be hosting its annual public speaker series entitled, “The City Talks.” The series schedule will be posted on CourseSpaces, and while you are not required to attend, attendance followed by a short write-up of the talk can augment your participation grade. I encourage you to come to the lectures if time permits. For more information about “The City Talks” schedule, see <http://thecitytalks.ca>.

**20% Midterm Exam:** The exam will consist of a combination of multiple-choice, short answer, and essay questions.

**20% Urban Film Project:** As part of this course, students will work in groups of 3-5 to make a 10-minute film about a particular aspect of urban geography in the Greater Victoria Region.

Groups should consult with the instructor about potential topic ideas, but examples might include a focus on:

- a particular neighbourhood in the Greater Victoria Region
- a key urban issue in Victoria (e.g., homelessness, urban redevelopment, transit planning, the sewage debate, the amalgamation debate, graffiti, etc.)

Once your group has selected a topic, you should post your group members' names and your topic idea on the CourseSpaces discussion forum entitled "Selecting an Urban Film Project Topic." This will enable your fellow classmates to see what other topics have already been chosen, so as not to have multiple groups picking the same topic.

Ideally, there should be at least one person in each group with prior video-editing experience. Video equipment is available for rent at a reasonable cost via UVic's Audio-Visual Media Services if group members do not have their own video equipment

(<http://web.uvic.ca/mediaservices/djrentalpricelist.htm>).

No late videos will be accepted without prior consultation with the instructor regarding a medical emergency or related universityexcused extension.

**20% Exploring Urbanism Essay:** This assignment is a research paper that will critically explore one of the themes or topics relevant to the course. The assignment length is expected in a range of 2500-3500 words (not including graphs, figures, maps etc).

**30% Take Home Exam:** Take Home Exam consisting of short and long answer questions to be submitted online.

#### Course Policies

1. Collegial Respect: Do your part to ensure a classroom environment conducive to learning. Arriving late, talking, texting, surfing the internet etc. all disrupt the flow of the class and may impact your participation grade. Be respectful to the instructor and colleagues. Being at university is a unique privilege. Be sure to make the most of it!
2. Late / Missing Work: If for a legitimate reason (e.g. verifiable serious illness or family emergency) you must miss the midterm/exam/assignment deadline you must notify the instructor before the date to make alternative arrangements. Failure to do so will result in a mark of zero. Your required hand-in assignments will be accepted up to three days after the due date with a 10% penalty applied per day. Extensions will only be granted ahead of the deadline and with a doctor's note or equivalent – travel is not considered a reason to miss a deadline or exam.
3. Accessibility: Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Resource Centre for Students with a Disability (RCSd) as soon as possible. The RCSd staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations <http://rcsd.uvic.ca/>.
4. Email: I often receive a high volume of emails and may not always be able to respond in less than 48 hours, be sure to plan ahead, read the syllabus closely and/or ask peers for clarification.

5. Withdrawal: For information regarding withdrawal from class, please see:  
<http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2016/FACS/UnIn/UARe/With.html> for dates and other information.
6. Academic Integrity: Please review  
<http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2015/FACS/UnIn/UARe/PoAcl.html> for university policy on academic integrity and useful information on avoiding plagiarism, falsifying results, cheating on assignments etc. Any form of academic dishonesty will result in an automatic "F" for that assignment or test and possibly the course for ALL individuals involved. Note: plagiarism detection software will be used in this class.
7. Grade Revisions: If you believe your grade does not reflect the quality of your work, you may resubmit the assignment *with a one or two paragraph justification* for why your mark should be changed.
8. I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term, as in all other courses at UVic, you will have the opportunity to complete an anonymous survey regarding your learning experience (CES). The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future. The survey is accessed via MyPage and can be done on your laptop, tablet, or mobile device. I will remind you and provide you with more detailed information nearer the time but please be thinking about this important activity during the course.

Note on Undergraduate Grading: Grading practices and procedures are guided by University policies specified in the Calendar. The geography department is concerned about the potential problem of grade inflation and wishes to ensure equity in grading standards among colleagues. In cases in which grades for a course are substantially outside normal ranges, the department Chair may ask the instructor to justify or revise those grades. Instructors submit grades online as soon as they have been approved by the Chair. If the grades for a course are not available online, it means that the grades have not yet been approved by the Chair, and any grades posted elsewhere are unofficial and subject to change.

Students should pay particular attention to the qualitative indicators associated with each grade

A+ (90-100%); A (85-89%); A- 80-84% Exceptional, outstanding and excellent performance. Normally achieved by a small group of students. These grades indicate a student who is self-initiating, exceeds expectation and has an insightful grasp of the subject matter.

B+ (77-79%); B (73-76%): Very good / acceptable work fulfilling expectations. These grades indicate a good or satisfactory grasp of the subject matter or excellent grasp in one area with no major weakness.

B- (70-72%); C+ (65-69); C (60-64%); D (50-59): Deficiencies in knowledge, understanding or techniques; Mastery of some relevant techniques or concepts lacking.

F (0-49): Failing grade. Unsatisfactory performance.