

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Cities and Suburbia

SOC : 445-B1 / 585-B1 (Winter Term 2016-17)

www.ualberta.ca/~rshields

Instructor: Dr. Rob Shields, Endowed Research Chair and Professor

Class Time: Thurs 9-11:50am

Location : Tory B105 (Subject to confirmation)

Office in Sociology: Tory 4-13/4-14 (Space and Culture Editorial Office)

Downtown: City-Region Studies Centre, 2-185 Faculty of Extension, Enterprise Square,
10230 Jasper Ave. 780 492 9957 (Bay-Enterprise LRT Stop).

Telephone: 780-492-0488 -

Office Hours: 1-2 Thurs. in Sociology, Tory 4-13, *or by appointment*

E-mail: rshields@ualberta.ca

Course Website: www.ualberta.ca/~rshields

Course Prerequisite: SOC100 or consent of the instructor.

Course-based Ethics Approval *not* in place regarding all research projects that involve human testing, questionnaires (Not needed)

Course Description and Objectives:

Calendar Entry: "The significance of social spaces as constituted by architecture, design and artifacts of material culture."

Note: The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this course outline after consultation with the class.

Can societies continue to thrive in sprawling cities given climate and environmental challenges, their energy consumption and concentration of social pathologies? Will cities and urban cultures continue to inspire future generations or will the costs in terms of living conditions and resources extract such a toll that people flee to even more or to less dense settlements? This course is organized to present an introduction to urban sociology, sociology of community and their relationship to environmental sociology through case studies and local sites that illustrate the history of cities and suburbs as social environments. I will present sociological models, historical comparison and ethnographic methods. These will allow us to see how the analytical models developed to understand historical urban developments can be used to understand how cities and suburbs as well as other spatial systems are developing today. The course covers:

- fundamental understanding of society and social practices as spatial and spatialisation as social, the treatment of space, place and region in sociology, issues of urban and suburban forms and environmental interaction
- everyday life as a space-time experience, alienation and the right to the city

- environmental aspects of social life (housing and shelter, transportation and mobility, poverty and exclusion, social networks (diversity, voluntarism, community), sustainable cities, mobilities and transport.
- mobile media, literature and film as new social spaces or added dimensions to space.
- city as a classroom and lab for research: reimagining derelict or declining suburban strip-malls as opportunities to create walkable, convivial and more sustainable communities.

Key concepts such as social spatialisation, material and virtual social spaces, cultural topology, and liminal zones will be explored through mythic and physical, imagined, lived and imposed environments.

Learning Outcomes

This course offers a capstone that integrates the threads of many other courses, plus a synthesis of theory and cases relevant to social science. It explores the intersection of tangible materials and intangible processes in the context of material places in cities and suburbs. It draws on lived experiences in local communities and links this to academic content, treating the city itself as the classroom for learning and fieldwork experiences. The course includes groupwork, critical/creative responses, field visits, meetings with the community. Students are able to participate in City Region Studies Centre and Centre for Public Involvement events.

Possible Topics

Cities and Suburbs as environments and social contexts of problems and solutions

History: Polis to the Right to the City

Social spatialisations: Place identity

Capitalism and Abstract Space-time

Reimagining Suburbia at the Mall

Urban Ecologies: Non-humans, nature and companion species

Inequality: Race, Stigma and Marginality

Caribbean Cities

Urban Crises and Disasters

Urbanisation – The Arctic

Global Cities - China

Designing Public Spaces and Emancipation

Format

The course involves lectures, discussion of required readings, group and individual projects, field trips and student presentations.

Texts:

Required:

Articles to be downloaded from library databases, assigned in class. See eClass.

Recommended: (fun and inspiring)

Knox, Paul 2014. *Atlas of the City* Princeton University Press (\$45 on Amazon and bookstore)

Optional Reference texts relevant to projects

Patchett, Merle and Shields, Rob (Eds.) 2011. *Strip-Appeal*. Edmonton: CRSC / Space and Culture. (\$35 and up on Amazon and on order in bookstore re. suburban retail). Relevant to case studies of suburban retail and reimagining the mall.

Shields, Rob, 2013. *Spatial Questions* London: Sage Publications (\$55 and up). Background to theories re place, space, cities and suburbs.

Useful references ordered in the bookstore and available in the library

Bridge, Gary and Sophie Watson (Eds.). 2013. *The New Blackwell Companion to the City* London: Wiley Blackwell (\$45 and up) re. classic texts on cities.

Jones, Kevin, Lord, Alex and Shields, Rob (eds). 2015. *City Regions in Prospect* Montreal: McGill Queen. re. Governance of metropolitan regions.

Darroch, M. and Marchessault, J. (Eds.) 2014. *Cartographies of Place, Navigating the Urban* Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press. re. media and the city.

Keil, Roger (Ed.). 2013. *Suburban Constellations*. Berlin: Jovis. Introduction re. contemporary suburbias globally.

Grade Distribution (see “Explanatory Notes”):

%	<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Hand-in</i>
30%	Reading Notes / Urban Observation Journal / Sketchbook (notes from Course Readings and readings for your paper). 1 Topic assigned weekly from the Readings. It is a good idea to discuss this topic in class each week.	2 Feb 2 Mar 6 Apr
15%	2016 or 2017 Book: Review related to your project on cities or suburbs	16 Feb
30%	Paper on contemporary cities and/or suburbs, focus to be agreed with instructor	6 Apr
15%	Seminar Presentation with handout for 1 assigned seminar related to a reading. As assigned. Group work. Written materials due 1 week before assigned seminar in weeks 6-12.	Assigned
10%	Group response to someone else's presentation (Date worked out in class)	Assigned
--	Required meeting with instructor	By appt
100% Total		

Explanatory Notes on Assignments:

Previous experience in urban sociology courses: Some graduate students with extensive experience in urban sociology will participate in the class and may have a combined hand-in of an extended project as assigned by the instructor. Don't let this worry you.

Attendance: required to benefit from this course.

Review of a 2016 Book related to your Report on cities or suburbs: Synthesizing current theory and understanding current knowledge and approaches. This could take the form of a blog post. Books published since Jan 2016.

Reading Notes: A key way to bring together diverse materials with experience and everyday life as well as taking advantage of cities as 'classrooms' for learning and fieldwork experiences. About 20 pages point form (aim for 2 pages a week).

A question will be assigned weekly based on the course readings and class room discussions. You should also add notes from readings for your Paper and examples you encounter from urban observations. These may include sketches if you are so inclined.

Paper: Report on urban or suburban topic, ideally related to a key theme such as suburban retail, the spatialisation and identity of places or regions, identity of residents, media and sense of place, rhythms and routines in place. Topic to be agreed with instructor: A capstone project that may also draw on skills and understandings developed in other courses.

Required meeting with instructor to approve topic of Paper.

Group Seminar Activity with handout for 1 assigned seminar related to a reading. Students will be required to work in groups to present one seminar, including providing written and online materials. Written materials. This allows you the opportunity to work with each other in relation to readings and cases. Your group should create a 1 hour fieldwork activity, easily accessible by all students. This may take the form of being part of organizing a public conference or workshop put on for planners and policy makers. Assigned.

Group Response to someone else's presentation (to be assigned by instructor): Creatively and critically respond to other discourses. Date Assigned

Required Notes:

“Policy about course outlines can be found in the Course Requirements, Evaluation Procedures and Grading section of the University Calendar.”

Academic Integrity

“The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize

themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at <http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/en/CodesofConductandResidenceCommunityStandards/CodeofStudentBehaviour.aspx>) and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.”

Learning and working environment

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring that all students, faculty and staff are able to work and study in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The department urges anyone who feels that this policy is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the student ombudservice: (<http://www.ombudservice.ualberta.ca/>). Information about the University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures is described in UAPPOL at <https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/PoliciesProcedures/Pages/DispPol.aspx?PID=110> .

Academic Honesty:

All students should consult the information provided by the Office of Judicial Affairs regarding avoiding cheating and plagiarism in particular and academic dishonesty in general (see the Academic Integrity Undergraduate Handbook and Information for Students). If in doubt about what is permitted in this class, ask the instructor.

Students involved in language courses and **translation** courses should be aware that on-line “translation engines” produce very dubious and unreliable “translations.” **Students in language courses** should be aware that, while seeking the advice of native or expert speakers is often helpful, **excessive editorial and creative help** in assignments is considered a form of “cheating” that violates the code of student conduct with dire consequences.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the Academic Discipline Process.

Recording of Lectures:

Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed. Please share these but identities should be anonymized. You must discuss with me and with other members of the class how we can best use these for the benefit of the entire class.

Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections 23.3(1) and 23.5.6 of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

Policy for Late Assignments:

If a draft is handed in, written assignments may be resubmitted up to 1 week late. This will result in delays in returning papers. After this point -10% per week. Further delays in returning papers will result and feedback may be limited by the instructor's other commitments.

Specialized Support & Disability Services:

If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you are not already registered with Specialized Support & Disability Services, contact their office immediately (2-800 SUB; Email ssdsrec@ualberta.ca; Email; phone 780-492-3381; WEB www.ssds.ualberta.ca).

Withdrawal: The 2016-17 deadline for withdrawal is April 5 for Winter term.

Grading:

Marks for assignments, tests, and exams are given in percentages. The percentage mark resulting from the entire term work then produces the final letter grade for the course (see <http://www.registraroffice.ualberta.ca/en/Assessment-and-Grading/Students.aspx>)

Undergraduate (or Graduate) Grading Scale

Excellent	A+	4.0	Over 90%
	A	4.0	85-89%
	A-	3.7	80-84
Good	B+	3.3	76-79
	B	3.0	73-75
	B-	2.7	70-72
Satisfactory	C+	2.3	67-69
	C	2.0	64-66
	C-	1.7	60-63
Poor	D+	1.3	55-59
Minimal Pass	D	1.0	50-54
Failure	F	0.0	under 50

