

Geography 417: Urban Geography

Fall 2017

Prof. Benjamin Forest

Department of Geography

McGill University

Office Hours: Tuesday, 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. and by appointment

Course Calendar Description: Classic and contemporary perspectives in urban geography. Range of topics including effects of capitalism, gender, suburbanism, segregation and inequality, property, urban landscapes, and urban space. Emphasizes theoretical issues but includes empirical and/or case studies.

The course includes classic and contemporary works in urban geography, and both covers topics addressed in undergraduate Urban Studies courses in greater depth and to introduce new subjects and perspectives. The class includes both theoretical and empirical works on urbanism, the effects of capitalism, gender, suburbanism, segregation and inequality, property urban landscapes, and urban space. The class is open to students with prior coursework in urban geography: GEOG 217; and one or more of the following: GEOG 315, GEOG 325, GEOG 331, and GEOG 525.

Note: GEOG 617 and GEOG 417 are taught simultaneously and meet together as a single seminar. Graduate students enrol in GEOG 617 and undergraduates enrol in GEOG 417; each group follows the requirements of their respective syllabus.

Course Requirements: Students must prepare responses to the readings each week (which serve as a basis for discussion), and must present these to the class on a rotating basis. In addition, students must submit either 3 analytic essays based on the assigned readings. Finally, students may be required to periodically attend talks in the department's Geospectives lecture series or other venues.

Reading summaries/responses/reviews	20%	weekly
Class participation	20%	weekly
3 analytic essays (6-8 pages)	15%	October 3
	20%	November 15
	25%	December 21

Information on university and department policies concerning student assessment can be found at the following website: www.mcgill.ca/geography/studentassessment

Reading responses: See the response assignment for my expectations and an example. Typically you will need to prepare a ½ to 1 page response for each article or book chapter assigned. These responses should identify the major claims or findings of each work, summarize the essential

© Instructor generated course materials (e.g., handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions, etc.) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

points, and offer an insightful critique. Your written responses will be collected at the end of each class and will be returned with brief comments.

Due Dates: All papers are due by email as properly formatted Word documents by 11 PM on the dates listed on the first page.

Expectations: This class is a *seminar*. This means that in addition to the usual standards regarding academic integrity (listed below), students have responsibilities and freedoms different from a typical undergraduate class. In particular, all students are expected to take considerable responsibility for understanding, digesting, and synthesizing the material. Taking the class is not a passive activity! You are expected to complete all readings and assignments on time, to actively participate in class discussions, and to generally take the initiative in engaging the material.

Analytic Essays. Your analytic essay should address material that we have read for class, but may also include any of the recommended readings. Please do not use texts that I have not assigned for the class. In your essay, you should offer a *detailed analysis and critique* (typically of two or more readings), rather than broad summaries and general arguments. I am interested more in depth than in breadth; this is your opportunity to explore the nuances and subtle details of the arguments beyond what we can do during class discussions.

There are several models for successful essays, but the most common is to explore a particular idea, concept, or theory that is used in several readings. Do the authors mean two different things but use the same term? Do they use different terms for the same concept? What are the (theoretical) consequences of these differences?

Similarly, you can offer a critique of the assumptions that underlie a set of readings. The focus here may not be on the explicit disagreements between the texts, but on the (unacknowledged) assumptions that they share.

For questions about formatting, advice about writing papers, and for writing tips, please see my [Research Paper Guide](#) on the teaching page of my website:

<http://www.geog.mcgill.ca/faculty/forest/teaching.html>

McGill University policy requires the inclusion and wording of the following sections on Academic Integrity and Language Policy on all syllabi.

Academic Integrity: McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information).

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/integrity).

Language Policy: In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Readings: If you would like to order one or more of the books, I suggest you do so online, or through Paragraphe Bookstore (2220 McGill College Avenue, across from the main gates). Note that many texts are available for purchase as less costly ebooks.

All required readings are available through myCourses (in compliance with copyright regulations). Note, however, that some readings are ebooks accessible via the McGill library, and that only a limited number of people can reach them at the same time.

In many cases, I have set one or more chapters from a book. In all cases, I recommend reading the entire work, time permitting. For your papers, I expect you to address relevant sections of these books even if they are not required for discussion.

Similarly, some weeks I provide a list of recommended readings as a resource if you want to address the topic further, *e.g.*, for a research paper, or comprehensive examinations.

Topics

Week 1: **Introduction**

Week 2: **Modern Cities: The Conventional Wisdom**

Week 3: **The Roots of Modern Urban Studies: Liberalism and Pragmatism**

Week 4: **Capitalism and Urbanism**

Week 5: **Modernity and Urbanism**

Week 6: **Gender, Work, and the City**

Week 7: **Workshop: Searching the Scholarly Literature**

Week 8: **Re-thinking Urban Modernity: Post-colonialism**

Week 9: **Colonialism and the Roots of Urban Segregation**

Week 10: **Segregation and Inequality**

Week 11: **Workshop: Scholarly Writing**

Week 12: **Cities, Rights, and Power**

Week 13: **The Just City?**

Schedule of Classes

Week 1: Introduction

September 8

Week 2:

Modern Cities: The Conventional Wisdom

September 15

*Louis Mumford was a 20th century public intellectual known for as a literary critic and urban historian. Chapters 15-17 summarize the development and consequences of modern (European and North American) cities in the 19th (chapter 15) and 20th (chapters. 16 and 17) centuries. Chapter 13 emphasizes the awful physical and environmental conditions of 19th century industrial cities, blaming the elevation of profit and growth over all other values. Chapters 14 and 15, while acknowledging the improved physical conditions of 20th century cities, decry the culture of consumption and conformity that they embody. Chapter 16 focuses on rise of urban planning and attempts to reform the city, while chapter 17 offers a broad critique of the effect of large, sprawling cities that characterized the US in particular in the mid-20th century. His analysis is very normative, but is a good reflection of the “conventional wisdom” about modern cities. Jane Jacobs is among the most well-known urban critics of the 20th century, particularly for her 1961 book *The death and life of great American cities*, a influential critique of modernist urban planning and urban-renewal common in the mid-20th century. Her views have now become the “common sense” that animate discussions of contemporary urban planning.*

Hall, Pérez, and Levy (2014) is an updated version of Hall’s masterful history of urban planning and helps put Jacob’s critique in a broader context. The distinguished scholar Abu-Lughod’s 1999 book traces the development of three large American cities, focusing on the effects of major economic cycles. Finally, while Taylor (2013) and Southall (1998) approach global urban history from dramatically different perspectives they offer similarly grand histories of cities.

Mumford, L. 1961. *The city in history: Its origins, its transformations, and its prospects*. London: Secker & Warburg. Chapter 17.

Jacobs, J. 2002 [1961]. *The death and life of great American cities*. New York: Random House. Introduction.

Recommended:

Abu-Lughod, J. L. 1999. *New York, Chicago, Los Angeles: America's global cities*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Hall, P., E. Pérez, and S. Levy. 2014. *Cities of tomorrow: An intellectual history of urban planning and design since 1880*. 4th ed. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell.

Southall, A. 1998. *The city in time and space*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Taylor, P. J. 2013. *Extraordinary cities: Millennia of moral syndromes, world-systems and city/state relations*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Week 3: The Roots of Modern Urban Studies: Liberalism and Pragmatism

September 22

These works helped constitute modern urban studies in the 20th century, and tend toward a mechanistic and individualistic approach to the analysis of urban social life. Simmel (1903) is a seminal essay on urban culture, postulating differences between the rapid, rational, modern city and the slow, non-rational/romantic, traditional rural lifestyle. Park (1925) echoes many of the same themes as Simmel, but attempt to tie effects to specific aspects of modern cities (i.e., Chicago in the 1920s). While the language is archaic, please read carefully, as his analysis is more subtle than it first appears. Wirth (1938) offers a synthesis of this approach, postulating the effects of population size, density, and heterogeneity, and the contradictory social and political consequences that these things produce.

Finally, there is Jane Addams. She won a Nobel Peace Prize, is considered the founder of modern social work, made important contributions to pragmatist philosophy, and worked closely with members of the Chicago School of urban studies (such as Park). In modern terms, her approach could be described as “action research” focusing on the grounded concerns of urban inhabitants. Nonetheless, she is rarely mentioned in the conventional canon of urban geography, even by modern scholars who use this approach (see Week 13).

Simmel, G. 2004 [1903]. The Metropolis and Mental Life. In *The city cultures reader*, eds. M. Miles, T. Hall & I. Borden. London; New York: Routledge.

Park, R. E. 1967 [1925]. The city: Suggestions for the study of human nature in the urban environment. In *The city: Suggestions for the study of human nature in the urban environment*, eds. R. E. Park, E. W. Burgess & R. D. McKenzie, 1-46. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [Originally published in 1915 in the *American Journal of Sociology* 20(5): 577-612.]

Addams, J. 1909. *The spirit of youth and the city streets*. New York: Macmillan Co.: Chapters 1 and 2.

Recommended

The so-called “Chicago School” of urban studies adopted the spirit - and (largely) the theoretical perspectives - laid out by Simmel and Wirth. The City (1967) is a collection of classic essays in this tradition. The autobiographical Twenty Years at Hull House is probably Addams’ best known work. If you are interested, I would also recommend several contemporary articles discussing her legacy and influence (e.g., Olund 2010,

Hirschmann 2015). *Finally, Dear and Flusty (1998) offer a critique (and in some ways, and update) of the Chicago School, grounded in the urban patterns of late-20th century Los Angeles.*

Addams, J. 1912. *Twenty years at Hull House*. Champaign, Ill.: Project Gutenberg.

Dear, M., and S. Flusty. 1998. Postmodern Urbanism. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 88 (1):50-72.

Hirschmann, N. J. 2015. Jane Addams as Feminist Heroine: Democracy and Contentious Politics. *Politics & Gender* 11 (3):554-561.

Olund, E. 2010. 'Disreputable life': race, sex, and intimacy. *Environment and Planning D-Society & Space* 28 (1):142-157.

Park, R. E., E. W. Burgess, and R. D. McKenzie. 1967. *The city: Suggestions for the study of human nature in the urban environment*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wirth, L. 1938. Urbanism as a Way of Life. *American Journal of Sociology*, 44, 1-24.

Week 4: Capitalism and Urbanism

September 29

This week's readings address many the same themes that we have seen in the last two meetings – the effects of urbanization and industrialization – but where scholars like Simmel and Park thought about economic forces primarily in terms of the division of labour, Harvey focuses squarely on capitalism and class conflict. He is asking both different questions than someone like Park, as well as offering different answers. More generally, this perspective asserts that urban development can only be understood as a result of the dynamics of capitalism, particularly the conflict between labour and capital, and the need of capital to manage periodic crises of (over)accumulation.

*Start with Harvey (2001/1978), where he offers an explicit critique of the “Chicago School” of urban sociology and what he terms “bourgeois social science.” Next read chapters from his 1985 *Consciousness and the Urban Experience*, which offers his take on some of the same questions that we saw in Park and Simmel (money, time, and space in cities) and then more general arguments about the urban effects of the conflict between labour and capital. Finally, read his arguments about how changes in capitalism influence urban governance (Harvey 1989). You should attend to the ways in which his arguments evolve (and how they remain consistent) over the course of these selections.*

Harvey, D. 2001 [1978]. On Countering the Marxian Myth: Chicago Style, reprinted in *Spaces of capital: Towards a critical geography*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press: 68-89.

- . 1985. *Consciousness and the urban experience: Studies in the history and theory of capitalist urbanization*. Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press. Chapters 1 and 5.
- . 1989. From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism. *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 71 (1): 3-17.

Recommended:

Harvey is one of the most influential and widely cited living geographers, so this perspective is evident in a lot of contemporary urban studies. (This is not to say that the liberal perspective isn't there too. Pragmatic approaches generally find their home in urban planning and social work.) Castells (1977) is a second widely influential voice in the Marxian approach to urban studies that emphasizes capitalism as the fundamental force shaping (modern) cities. The other recommended works offer empirically grounded analyses that reflect a similar set of concerns and perspectives, although they embrace a more diverse theoretical approach to capitalist urbanization.

Castells, M. 1977. *The urban question: A Marxist approach*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Harvey, D. 1989. *The urban experience*. Oxford: Blackwell.

———. 2001. *Spaces of capital: Towards a critical geography*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Webber, M. J., and D. L. Rigby. 1996. *The golden age illusion: Rethinking postwar capitalism*. New York: Guilford Press.

Scott, A. J. 1988. *Metropolis: From the division of labor to urban form*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

———. 2012. *A world in emergence: Cities and regions in the 21st century*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Scott, A. J., and M. Storper. 1986. *Production, work, territory: The geographical anatomy of industrial capitalism*. Boston: Allen & Unwin.

Week 5: Modernity and Urbanism

October 6

Despite the sharp disagreements between the liberal-pragmatic/bourgeois approach of the Chicago School and the Marxian perspective of scholars like Harvey, there is at least one important area of overlap: the treatment of cities, and industrial/capitalist cities in Europe and North America in particular, as embodying fundamentally new and dynamic economic, social,

and political relationships. These fundamental changes are grouped under the umbrella of modernity.

Start by reading Berman (1982) who offers a succinct summary and description of modernity. He was principally a philosopher, and the book draws on several sources, including literature and poetry, to characterize modernity, and to discuss major differences in modernist thought between the 19th and 20th centuries. Next read the chapters from Harvey (2006), which focus on Paris in the 19th century and highlight how modernity both fundamentally shapes contemporary cities and how urbanism is an essential ingredient of modernity. If you are feeling ambitious, try reading the essay by Walter Benjamin (1969) written the 1930s (on the recommended list), but note that his writing is notorious difficult to decipher.

Berman, M. 1982. *All that is solid melts into air: The experience of modernity*. New York: Simon and Schuster. Introduction.

Harvey, D. 2006. *Paris: Capital of modernity*. New York: Routledge. Introduction, chapters 1, 3-5, 10 and 17.

Recommended:

There many books on modernity and urbanism, so the list below is just a small sample. Many of these only examine European cases, but Domosh (1996) focuses specifically on the U.S. Schorske (1981) classic book on Vienna makes for an interesting comparison with Harvey (2006) on Paris.

Benjamin, Walter. 1969. Paris: Capital of the Nineteenth Century. *Perspecta*. 12: 165-172.

Dennis, R. 2008. *Cities in modernity: Representations and productions of metropolitan space, 1840-1930*. Cambridge; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Domosh, M. 1996. *Invented cities: The creation of landscape in nineteenth-century New York & Boston*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Frisby, D. 2001. *Cityscapes of modernity: Critical explorations*. Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity Press.

Schorske, C. E. 1981. *Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Politics and culture*. New York: Vintage Books.

———. 1998. *Thinking with history: Explorations in the passage to modernism*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Week 6: Gender, Work, and the City

October 13

This week we focus directly on the question of gender and urbanism, a topic that appears only sporadically in the liberal and Marxian works we have read so far. Like some prior readings, Massey (1994) examines the capitalist industrialization in the 19th century and how patterns established then affect employment in the late 20th century. She argues, however, that patriarchy – the structural oppression of women – is as powerful and durable as class conflict. Hence capitalist development, and how it varies from place to place, cannot be adequately understood without considering the interaction between capitalism and patriarchy. McDowell (1997) extends this kind of analysis to examine the gendered dimension of contemporary labour relations and working conditions, and their implication for modernity and urbanism. We will also consider how such works, particularly Massey, may have influenced Harvey's (2006) analysis by reading chapter 10 of his Paris book.

Massey, D. B. 1994. A woman's place? In *Space, place, and gender*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press: 191-211.

McDowell, L. 1997. *Capital culture: Gender at work in the city*. Oxford, UK; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers. Introduction, chapters 2, 6, and 9.

Harvey, D. 2006. *Paris: Capital of modernity*. New York: Routledge. Chapter 10.

Recommended:

The books and articles below are just a sample of feminist approaches to (urban) geography and analyses of gender and urbanism. They include England's (1993) influential study and overviews (e.g., Jarvis, et al 2009; McDowell 1999). McDowell (1997) draws on Harvey (1990) in her discussion of post-modernism (chapter 2) so you may want to consult that book although it is not primarily concerned with gender nor does it use a feminist framework. Harvey (1990) should be read in conjunction with Massey (1991) which offers a complex, feminist critique of that work.

Domosh, M. & J. Seager. 2001. *Putting women in place: Feminist geographers make sense of the world*. New York: Guilford Press.

England, K. V. L. 1993. Suburban pink collar ghettos: The spatial entrapment of women. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 83 (2):225-242.

Harvey, D. 1990. *The condition of postmodernity: An enquiry into the origins of cultural change*. Oxford [England]; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Blackwell.

Jarvis, H., P. Kantor, and J. Cloke. 2009. *Cities and gender*. London; New York: Routledge.

Massey, D. 1991. Flexible sexism. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 9 (1): 31-57.

McDowell, L. 1999. *Gender, identity, and place: Understanding feminist geographies*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Pratt, G. 2003. "Valuing childcare: Troubles in suburbia." *Antipode*, 35: 581-602.

Varley, Ann. 2008. "A place like this? Stories of dementia, home, and the self." *Environment and Planning D-Society & Space*, 26: 47-67.

Week 7: Workshop: Searching the Scholarly Literature

October 20

Class is split into two parts this week. For the first hour, we will wrap up our discussion from the prior weeks and/or start our discussion of the material for Week 8.

The second half will be workshop on the use of the Web of Knowledge, Scopus, and Google Scholar for searching the scholarly literature. Class will meet in one of the library's computer labs, rather than our regular classroom. The workshop will involve "hands-on" activities so it is very important for you to attend. These research skills will be critical for the course and for any future research endeavour.

Location: TBD

Week 8: Re-thinking Urban Modernity: Post-colonialism

October 27

Robinson (2006) challenges conventional urban theory which has, she argues, emphasized cities in advanced, industrialized regions at the expense of the Global South. In particular, cities in the Global North characterized as embodying modernity, while the latter are discussed as outcomes of development. In doing so, she critiques many of the works that we have read earlier this semester and argues for attention to the particularities of individual cities. If you have time, please also read Scott and Storper (2015) (in the recommended readings) because they critique Robinson's argument (among others), and more broadly offer a positive argument for generalizable urban theory (or theories) vis-à-vis a focus on differences among cities.

Robinson, J. 2006. *Ordinary cities between modernity and development*. London; New York: Routledge. Introduction, chapters 1, 2, and 4, conclusion.

Recommended:

Robinson takes her title (if not inspiration) from Amin and Graham (1997) and draws heavily on Comaroff and Comaroff (1993), so it is worth looking at those works. Gurel (2009) and Mills (2007) are case studies, while Peake and Rieker (2013) cover some of the same ground as Robinson (2006). Walker (2016) is a response to Scott and Storper (2015). Dear and Flusty (1998) offer an alternative critique of the Chicago School, albeit one grounded in the urban patterns of late-20th century Los Angeles.

- Amin, A., and S. Graham. 1997. The ordinary city. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 22 (4):411-429.
- Comaroff, J., and J. L. Comaroff. 1993. *Modernity and its malcontents: Ritual and power in postcolonial Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Dear, M., and S. Flusty. 1998. Postmodern Urbanism. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 88 (1):50-72.
- Gurel, M. O. 2009. Defining and living out the interior: the 'modern' apartment and the 'urban' housewife in Turkey during the 1950s and 1960s. *Gender Place and Culture* 16 (6): 703-722.
- Mills, A. 2007. Gender and Mahalle (neighborhood) space in Istanbul. *Gender Place and Culture* 14 (3): 335-354.
- Peake, Linda and Martina Rieker. 2013. Rethinking feminist interventions into the urban. In *Rethinking feminist interventions into the urban*, eds. Linda Peake and Martina Rieker. London: Routledge: 1-22.
- Scott, A. J., and M. Storper. 2015. The nature of cities: The scope and limits of urban theory. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 39 (1): 1-15
- Walker, R. A. 2016. Why cities? A response. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 40 (1):164-180.

Week 9: Colonialism and the Roots of Urban Segregation

November 3

This week we begin our examination of segregation, or the separation of social groups and/or economic classes in urban space. While cities have been segregated in some fashion since they were first built, Nightingale (2012) focuses specifically on segregation by race and colour, rooting its origins in European colonialism. It is a work of history, rather than geography, so it offers less explicit theorization, but ironically, his approach could be described as “post-colonial.” Among other things, he avoids the radical separation of global north and global south cities and argues that segregation must be understood as part of the relationship between colonial cities in “the south/periphery” and metropolises in “the north/centre.”

Nightingale, C. H. 2012. *Segregation: A global history of divided cities*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Introduction, chapters 2, 3, and 7.

Recommended:

Kramer, P. A. 2006. *The blood of government: Race, empire, the United States, and the Philippines*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Week 10: Segregation and Inequality

November 10

The readings for this week continue our consideration of segregation, but focus on the United States, and examine the relationship between racial and economic segregation, and their relative roles in creating and intensifying inequality. Massey and Denton (1993) is the definitive study of racial segregation in the late 20th century United States, while Reardon and Bischoff (2011) focuses on income segregation and inequality. The latter is more technical and quantitative than other texts this semester, but do your best to understand the nature of their claims and conclusions even if you cannot follow their statistical analysis in detail.

Nightingale, C. H. 2012. *Segregation: A global history of divided cities*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 12

Massey, D. S., & Denton, N. A. 1993. *American apartheid: Segregation and the making of the underclass*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Chapters 1 and 2.

Reardon, S. F., & Bischoff, K. 2011. Income inequality and income segregation. *American Journal of Sociology*, 116, 1092-1153.

Week 11: Workshop: Scholarly Writing

November 17

This week we will depart from our usual format to address scholarly writing. We will discuss a brief reading, but most of class will be devoted to peer review of either your Proposal or Essay #2. Orwell's piece is a classic discussion of the political implications of writing, and not as you may have thought, a discussion of Quebec politics! Orwell was an essayist, a form of writing (now sadly in decline) that lies somewhere between political journalism and scholarship. He focuses on the distortions produced by lazy and imprecise prose in political essays, but his comments are directly relevant to scholarly writing as well.

The four recommended works are also worth reading, although Miller (2004) will be of use mostly to those of you working with quantitative data. Anyone who works with visual information (images, graphs, charts, maps, and the like) should read something by Edward Tufte. His book listed below is a good place to start. For writing, there are many style guides, including the perennial favourite The Elements of Style, but Williams (2005) is an outstanding modern guide and well worth buying. Finally, Biling (2013) is a delightfully acerbic commentary on contemporary writing in the social sciences.

Orwell, George. (1946) "Politics and the English Language" *Horizon*. Available from: http://www.orwell.ru/library/essays/politics/english/e_polit

Recommended

Billig, M. 2013. *Learn to write badly: How to succeed in the social sciences*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Miller, J. E. 2004. *The Chicago guide to writing about numbers*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Tufte, E. R. 1997. *Visual explanations: Images and quantities, evidence and narrative*. Cheshire, Conn: Graphics Press.

Williams, J. M. 2005. *Style: Ten lessons in clarity and grace*. New York: Pearson Longman.

Week 12: The Right to the City

November 24

Henri Lefebvre's essay "The Right to the City" – originally published in his 1968 book Le Droit à la ville -- is one of the most highly cited works in urban geography and planning. It is, however, very challenging to read and the concept of "the right to the city" is open to many different interpretations. Plan to spend a lot of time with Lefebvre's (1996) original essay, and do your best to work out his argument on your own. In particular, focus on the final three paragraphs of the paper, where he discusses the concept most directly. Blomley (2004) takes his inspiration from Lefebvre, but centres his analysis around the concept of property, using several case studies from contemporary Vancouver. The recommended works either respond directly to Lefebvre's essay (Harvey 2012, Mitchell 2003, Purcell 2002), and/or examine the issue of social-spatial order in the city.

Lefebvre, H. 1996. The right to the city. In *Writing on Cities*, eds. E. Kofman and E. Lebas, 147-159. Oxford, UK; Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers.

Blomley, N. K. 2004. *Unsettling the city: Urban land and the politics of property*. New York: Routledge. Chapters 1-2. [Chapters 3-4 are recommended but optional.]

Recommended:

Beckett, K. & S. K. Herbert. 2010. *Banished: The new social control in urban America*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

Blomley, N. K. 2011. *Rights of passage: Sidewalks and the regulation of public flow*. New York: Routledge.

Harvey, D. 2012. *Rebel cities: From the right to the city to the urban revolution*. New York: Verso.

Keller, L. 2010. *The triumph of order: Democracy and public space in New York and London*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Lefebvre, H. 1991. *The production of space*. Oxford, OX; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell. Selections.

- Low, S. M., and N. Smith. 2006. *The politics of public space*. New York: Routledge.
- Mitchell, D. 2003. *The right to the city: social justice and the fight for public space*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Purcell, M. 2002. Excavating Lefebvre: The right to the city and its urban politics of the inhabitant. *GeoJournal* 58 (2): 99-108.
- Staeheli, L. A., and D. Mitchell. 2008. *The people's property?: Power, politics, and the public*. New York: Routledge.

Week 13: The Just City?

December 1

In our final week, we explore the idea of the “just city”, a term used by Susan Fainstein as the title of her 2010 book that examines how different ideas of justice can inform urban theory and planning. The required readings all come from an edited collection, and includes a chapter by Fainstein herself and by David Harvey. These readings are an opportunity to both revisit some of the more pragmatic concerns about urban planning and practice (“Who gets what?”) and to open up the discussion of urban studies to other traditions in political theory. (When urban geographers talk about theory explicitly, they tend focus narrowly on versions of Marxism (e.g., Lefebvre), although feminist urban and queer geographies are arguably an exception.) Fainstein draws on various theories of justice, including John Rawls, in her discussions, which provides opportunities to link urban geography to works beyond Marx and Lefebvre.

- Connolly, J., and J. Steil. 2009. Introduction: Finding justice in the city. In *Searching for the just city: Debates in urban theory and practice*, eds. P. Marcuse, J. Connolly, J. Novy, Ingrid Olivo, C. Potter and J. Steil, London; New York: Routledge: 1-16.
- Fainstein, S. S. 2009. Planning and the Just City. In *Searching for the just city: Debates in urban theory and practice*, eds. P. Marcuse, J. Connolly, J. Novy, Ingrid Olivo, C. Potter and J. Steil, London; New York: Routledge: 19-39.

Recommended:

- Fainstein, S. S. 2010. *The just city*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Harvey, D., and C. Potter. 2009. The right to the Just City. In *Searching for the just city: Debates in urban theory and practice*, eds. P. Marcuse, J. Connolly, J. Novy, Ingrid Olivo, C. Potter and J. Steil, London; New York: Routledge: 40-51.
- Hayward, C. R., and T. Swanstrom eds. 2011. *Justice and the American metropolis*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

GEOG 417: Urban Geography
Prof. Benjamin Forest
Weekly Reading Response Assignment

For every class you should prepare a summary, critique(s), and question(s) for each reading assignment. *These should be emailed to me no later than 10:00 a.m. on the day of class.* Please send your responses as a nicely formatted MS Word file. These responses help demonstrate your engagement and knowledge of the readings, and will serve as a basis of discussion each week. Please note that they are worth a substantial portion of your grade.

You will need to use your judgment regarding the length of each response. The example below is one page long and addresses one article, albeit a relatively long one, but you cannot include the same level of detail for entire books. For books, you should prepare a response for each chapter, as well as one for the book as a whole (if appropriate). A book response might be two or three pages long in total (chapters plus the book as a whole), but this is not a hard and fast rule. *Keep in mind, however, that more is not more.* The ability to identify the *essential* points a long text is an absolutely critical skill for scholarship.

Your response should identify the major point(s) or claims of each article or chapter, noting the structure of the argument (how do the claims fit together?); at least one thoughtful critique or criticism of the work; and at least one question suitable for discussion.

I also expect you to take **notes** on the readings. These will be longer and more detailed than the summaries that you send to me. You should bring your **notes** as well as **responses** to class.

Example response

Note how the response on the following page is different than notes taken on the article, and how it makes an argument about (or offers an interpretation of) an article rather than condensing the text point by point.

You should **not** think of this as the one “correct” interpretation of her article. There are clearly a lot of things I have left out, and other points that I have chosen to emphasize. One could write an equally good response focusing on other points – as long as you can make a compelling argument that you have identified the most significant aspects of the article.

My summary also includes a critique at the end that incorporates some of the other reading that we did for that week. This won’t always be possible (*e.g.*, when we are only reading from one book), but try to think of questions or critiques that can help relate the readings to each other. Finally, I have also given an example of my critique framed as a question.

Marston, S. A. 2000. The social construction of scale. *Progress in Human Geography* 24 (2): 219–242.

Marston makes three major points in the article:

- 1) Scale can be conceptualized in three different ways: as size, as level, and as relation; traditionally, geography has only used the first two concepts, and have treated them more or less as natural, or objectively true. Recent work has developed the third idea, scale as relation, but this work is been incomplete because it focuses only on the “top-down” construction of scale.
- 2) She reviews the treatment of scale by political and economic geographers, but focuses on economic geographers Neil Brenner and Neil Smith. They both argue that scale is produced by global capitalist relations, particularly the tension between capitalism’s tendency toward equalization (uniform wages and labor conditions) and differentiation (uneven development, or the creation regions of economic growth and other of economic stagnation) (pp. 229-231). At particular historical moments, these two forces produce different scales. In the past, economies were defined at the state scale, but recent developments associated with globalization have generated important scales at both the sub-state and super-state level.

Although there are difference between Brenner and Smith, both identify forces of capitalist production as the primary driver of scalar relationships.

- 3) Finally, Marston turns to her own work on gender and households to argue that these theorists have ignored the role of social reproduction (as opposed to capitalist production). Social reproduction is as necessary to capitalism as production, but has not been seen as a force (re)creating scalar relationships. She argues, however, that the “bottom up” production of scale is just as important as “top down” forces of production, and illustrates this with examples from 19th and early 20th century efforts by women to extend their political influence beyond the household scale by conceptualizing the neighborhood, city, or region as a kind of “homespace.”

Critique: It is not always clear that Marston is talking about “scale” throughout the article. In particular, her discussion of Brenner and Smith, often seems to concern the idea of “regionalization” – the regions that provide the “best fit” for capitalist relations at particular moments in time. Although she rightly criticizes naturalistic concepts of scale, she often seems to substitute economic forces as the “true” source of scale, and downplays the discursive construction of scale (cf. Murphy 1990, and Newman and Paasi 1998). A true “relational” view of scale would acknowledge the role of discourse, language, and rhetoric in the creation of scalar relationships.

Critique framed as a question: Does Marston confuse the idea of “scale” with the idea of “regionalization” in her discussion of Brenner and Smith?