

# Geography 217: Cities in the Modern World

Winter 2024

Lecture: Wednesdays and Fridays, 10:05 a.m. – 11:25 a.m.  
McConnell Engineering 204

**Prof. Benjamin Forest**

Drop-in hours:  
Wednesdays 2:30-3:30 p.m.  
and by appointment  
308A Burnside Hall  
[benjamin.forest@mcgill.ca](mailto:benjamin.forest@mcgill.ca)

**Prof. Sarah Moser**

Drop-in hours:  
Tuesdays 3-4:00 p.m.  
and by appointment  
413 Burnside Hall  
[sarah.moser@mcgill.ca](mailto:sarah.moser@mcgill.ca)

**Course overview:** This course is an introduction to urban geography. It uses a geographic perspective to understand cities, and the economic, political, social, and cultural processes that shape them. The class is divided into two parts. The first part covers the historical development and internal structures of “industrial” cities, and the efforts to bring order to them through urban planning, focusing primarily on North America and Europe. The second part uses critical urban theory and case studies from a range of cities around the world to consider various topics on the theme of social justice and the city.

**Note:** In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control (e.g., public health emergency, major political crisis, sharknado, etc.), the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course are subject to change.

**Required texts:** All readings for GEOG 217 are available electronically through myCourses, in compliance with copyright regulations.

**Assessment:** Per Faculty of Science policy, work submitted for evaluation as part of this course may be checked with text matching software within MyCourses.

Assignment	Weight	Dates
Midterm Examination	35%	February 21, 6-9 p.m.
Final Examination	40%	TBD during final exam period
Project	5% Data 20% Report	March 12: Data April 10: Report

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

**Teaching Assistants:** The TAs serve primarily as graders for course, and typically will not meet with students. If you have questions about the course material, you should contact one of the instructors.

**Communication:** All course-related communications should be done by email. We will make every effort to respond to email within 48 hours but may not always be able to do so. We encourage you to see one or both of us during office hours.

**Expectations:** Assignments, including the set reading, should be completed in a timely fashion. Illness or family misfortune are legitimate reasons for extensions on assignments or the postponement of exams. In such cases, please advise the instructors in advance of the assignment due date or exam whenever possible to make suitable arrangements.

**Examinations:** The standard rules for closed book, closed note exams apply: You must not receive any assistance during the exam, and your answers must be entirely from your own effort. You are allowed – and encouraged – to form and participate in study groups to help *prepare* for the examinations.

**Participation:** This is a large lecture class, and there is no formal credit for class participation. Nonetheless, we expect you to be *active listeners*: attend class, take notes, and ask questions. Disruptive activities such as excessive talking, using social media, emailing, levitating, newspaper reading, and the like will not be tolerated. Students doing so will be told to leave class.

We encourage you to see one or both of us during office hours to discuss questions you have about the course material.

**Deferred examination policy:** If you are unable to attend an examination due to illness or other legitimate reason, you will be offered a deferred examination during the lecture period as indicated on the schedule. The deferred examination will be different from, but equivalent to, the original test.

Students who miss the test should notify us by email within 24 hours of the exam (preferably before the exam begins).

If a student misses the first deferred exam and/or lacks an adequate excuse for missing the original exam, they *might* be allowed to increase the weight of the final exam to partially compensate for the midterm exam. The *ability* to do so, and the associated *penalty* are at the sole discretion of the instructors.

**Late Assignment Policy:** The project for the class has two deadlines. In general, the same guidelines apply to the assignment deadlines as to the examinations. To avoid delays caused by last-minute emergencies, you should complete and submit your assignments *well before* the deadlines. In general, assignments turned in up to three days after the deadline will receive a mark no higher than B (74). Assignments that are submitted more than three days late but before the final day of classes will receive a mark no higher than C (64). Assignments submitted afterwards will receive no credit.

You are encouraged to consult with the instructors about the project before the deadline. *No consultation will be offered after the deadline regardless of circumstances.*

**Grading:** Grading will be done using the standard McGill grading grid (A=100 to 85; A- = 80 to 84; etc.) Depending on the distribution of scores, we may elect to curve letter grades (e.g., A=100 to 83; A- = 78 to 83; etc.) *at the end* of the semester.

**Project:** You will receive detailed directions for the project during the semester.

**Other Policies and Notices:**

**Copyright:** © Instructor-generated course materials (e.g., lectures, slides, notes, summaries, assignments, 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.

**Language:** Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté.

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.

**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/students/srr/honest/](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/) 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/students/srr/honest/](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/)).

**Indigenous Land Statement:** McGill University is on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. We acknowledge and thank the diverse Indigenous people whose footsteps have marked this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.

L'Université McGill est sur un emplacement qui a longtemps servi de lieu de rencontre et d'échange entre les peuples autochtones, y compris les nations Haudenosaunee et Anishinabeg. Nous reconnaissons et remercions les divers peuples autochtones dont les pas ont marqué ce territoire sur lequel les peuples du monde entier se réunissent maintenant.

**Generative AI and academic integrity:** Instructors have various policies regarding generative AI programs like chatGPT, so it is your responsibility to follow the rules for each course. In this class, we consider presentation of any work by a generative AI program as your own to be a violation of academic integrity. This includes using such programs to create initial drafts of essays that you then refine or using them to refine your initial drafts. As a practical matter, the nature of the course assignments means that generative AI will be of little assistance, and you will be doing yourself a disservice if you try to use them. If you have any questions about this, please do not hesitate to ask us.

## Schedule of Classes

### Part I: City Systems and Urban Imaginations (Prof. Benjamin Forest)

DATE	LECTURE TOPIC	READINGS
1. Fri. January 5	Introduction	Clarke, Ian F. (1992) "The city: heaven-on-earth or the hell-to-come?" <i>Futures</i> 24 (7): pp. 701-710.
2. Wed. January 10	What is a Modern City?	Bairoch, Paul. (1991) "Urbanism in Developed Countries: 1700-1980" and "The Urban Explosion in the Third World during the 20th Century" in <i>Cities and Economic Development: From the Dawn of History to the Present</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press: pp. 213-227; 427-441.
3. Fri. January 12	Urban Patterns and Processes	Burns, Elizabeth K. (1997) "Nested Hexagons: Central Place Theory" in <i>Ten Geographic Ideas that Changed the World</i> . (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press): pp.163-181.
4. Wed. January 17	Urban Systems	Badcock, Blair. (2002) "Urban Systems and the Growth of Cities" in <i>Making Sense of Cities</i> . London: Hodder Arnold: pp. 34-60.
5. Fri. January 19	The Social Mosaic of North American Cities	Harris, Chauncy D. and Edward L. Ullman (1945) "The Nature of Cities" <i>The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science</i> 242: pp.7-17.
6. Wed. January 24	Transportation and Urban Morphology	Lane, Bradley W. and Joseph Beeler (2017) "Urban Transit" in <i>The International Encyclopedia of Geography: People, the Earth, Environment, and Technology</i> , Richardson, Douglas, et al, eds. Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons: pp. 1-11.

DATE	LECTURE TOPIC	READINGS
7. Fri. January 26	The Social Impacts of Transportation  Guest Lecture: Prof. Kevin Manaugh	Lucas, Karen (2012) "Transport and social exclusion: Where are we now?" <i>Transport Policy</i> 20: pp. 105-113.
8. Wed. January 31	The Industrial City and Its Critics	Hall, Peter. (2014) "The City of Dreadful Night" in <i>Cities of Tomorrow</i> , 4 <sup>th</sup> edition (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell Publishers): pp. 12-48.  Relph, Edward. (1987). "The Invention of Modern Town Planning" in <i>The Modern Urban Landscape</i> (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press): pp. 49-75.
9. Fri. February 2	New (Sub)Urban Visions  Video: <i>The City</i> (1939)	McCann, Larry D. (1996). "Planning and Building the Corporate Suburb of Mount Royal, 1910-1925" <i>Planning Perspectives</i> 11: pp. 259-301.  Beauregard, Robert (2006). "Urbanization's Consequences" in <i>When America Became Suburban</i> (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press): pp. 19-39.
10. Wed. February 7	Mass Production Suburbs	Ruff, Joshua. (2007). "For Sale: The American Dream" <i>American History</i> 42 (5): pp. 42-49.  Gans, Herbert. (1967). "The Planners of Levittown" in <i>The Levittowners: Ways of Life and Politics in a New Suburban Community</i> . Binghamton: Vail-Balou Press: pp. 3-14.
11. Fri. February 9	Modernist Urban Design  Video: <i>Farwell Oak Street</i> (1953)  <b>Note:</b> The video includes a scene of an (attempted) sexual assault on a minor.	Hall, Peter. (2014) "The City of Towers" in <i>Cities of Tomorrow</i> , 4 <sup>th</sup> edition (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell Publishers): pp. 237-290.

DATE	LECTURE TOPIC	READINGS
12. Wed. February 14	Urban Planning in a Global Context	Shaw, Annapurna. (2009). "Town Planning in Postcolonial India, 1947-1965: Chandigarh Re-Examined" <i>Urban Geography</i> 30 (8): pp. 857-878.
13. Fri. February 16	Resistance to Modernist Design  Video: <i>The Pruitt-Igoe Myth</i> (2011)  <b>Note:</b> The video includes discussions of violence and racism.	Jacobs, Jane. (1961) "Introduction" in <i>The Death and Life of Great American Cities</i> (New York: Vintage Books): pp. 1-25.  Bristol, Katherine. (1991) "The Pruitt-Igoe Myth" <i>Journal of Architectural Education</i> 44(3): pp. 163-171.

## Part II: The Planned City, The Human City (Prof. Sarah Moser)

DATE	LECTURE TOPIC	READINGS
14. Wed. February 21	Contemporary approaches to investigating cities	Chapter 1 - Approaching the city. Andrew E. G. Jonas, Eugene McCann, and Mary Thomas. (2015) <i>Urban Geography: A Critical Introduction</i> . Wiley Blackwell. (1-26)
Wed. February 21 6-9 p.m. ENGMC 204 and 304	<b>Midterm Examination</b> <i>Covers Lectures 1-13</i>	
15. Fri. February 23	Critical urban geography	Chapter 2 - Cities for whom? The contours and commitments of critical urban geography. Andrew E. G. Jonas, Eugene McCann, and Mary Thomas. (2015) <i>Urban Geography: A Critical Introduction</i> . Wiley Blackwell. (27-52)

DATE	LECTURE TOPIC	READINGS
17. Wed. February 28 <b>Deferred midterm</b>	Right to the city	Samara, Tony R., He, Shenjing, & Chen, Guo. (Eds.). (2013) <i>Locating Right to the City in the Global South</i> (Vol. 43). London: Routledge. (1-20) Yeo, Su-Jan. (2020) Right to the city (at night). <i>Companion to Public Space</i> . (182-190) <a href="https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/apr/19/right-city-social-movement-transforming-urban-space">https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/apr/19/right-city-social-movement-transforming-urban-space</a> <a href="https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/apr/19/right-city-social-movement-transforming-urban-space">https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/apr/19/right-city-social-movement-transforming-urban-space</a>
17. Fri. March 1	Speculative urbanism	Sood, Ashima. (2019) Speculative urbanism. In Orum, A. (Ed.) <i>Encyclopedia of Urban and Regional Studies</i> . London. 1-3. Colven, Emma. (2022) A political ecology of speculative urbanism: The role of financial and environmental speculation in Jakarta's water crisis. <i>Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space</i> , 0308518X221110883. <a href="https://www.cnn.com/2021/10/14/business/ever-grande-china-property-ghost-towns-intl-hnk/index.html">https://www.cnn.com/2021/10/14/business/ever-grande-china-property-ghost-towns-intl-hnk/index.html</a>
Winter Reading Week (March 4-8)		
18. Wed. March 13	Urban gating and fortification	Bandauko, Elmond; Arku, Godwin, and Nyantakyi-Frimpong, Hanson. (2022) A systematic review of gated communities and the challenge of urban transformation in African cities. <i>Journal of Housing and the Built Environment</i> , 37(1), 339-368.

DATE	LECTURE TOPIC	READINGS
19. Fri. March 15	Gentrification	<p>Lee, Seon Young. (2018) Resisting gentrification in South Korea. <i>The Newsletter</i>, (79), Spring. (2 pages):  <a href="https://www.ias.asia/the-newsletter/article/resisting-gentrification-south-korea">https://www.ias.asia/the-newsletter/article/resisting-gentrification-south-korea</a></p> <p>Kidokoro, T., Sho, K., &amp; Fukuda, R. (2023). Urban suburbia: Gentrification and spatial inequality in workers' communities in Tokyo. <i>Cities</i>, 136, 104247.</p>
20. Wed. March 20	Global cities → a world of cities	<p>Chapter 4 - A world of cities. Andrew E. G. Jonas, Eugene McCann, and Mary Thomas. (2015) <i>Urban Geography: A Critical Introduction</i>. Wiley Blackwell. (77-99)</p>
21. Fri. March 22	Ordinary cities	<p>Das, Diganta. (2012) Ordinary lives in extraordinary Cyberabad. In <i>Transforming Asian Cities</i>. Routledge. (132-142).</p> <p>No space for vendors, hawkers, or pedestrians in Cyberabad:  <a href="https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/hyderabad/phew-hyderabad-is-no-country-for-pedestrians/articleshow/58824690.cms">https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/hyderabad/phew-hyderabad-is-no-country-for-pedestrians/articleshow/58824690.cms</a></p>
22. Wed. March 27	Urban policy mobilities	<p>Moser, Sarah. (2019) “Two days to shape the future”: A Saudi Arabian node in the transnational circulation of ideas about new cities. In (Molotch, Harvey and Ponzini, Davide, Eds.) <i>The New Arab Urban</i>. New York University Press. (213-232).</p> <p>Akon City part 1 and 2:  <a href="https://www.usatoday.com/story/entertainment/celebrities/2021/04/02/akon-visits-uganda-investments-while-akon-city-still-works/4850334001/">https://www.usatoday.com/story/entertainment/celebrities/2021/04/02/akon-visits-uganda-investments-while-akon-city-still-works/4850334001/</a>  <a href="https://www.theguardian.com/music/2023/dec/04/akon-city-tumbleweed-rolls-through-site-of-rappers-wakanda-inspired-dream">https://www.theguardian.com/music/2023/dec/04/akon-city-tumbleweed-rolls-through-site-of-rappers-wakanda-inspired-dream</a></p>
Fri. March 29	Easter Break	

DATE	LECTURE TOPIC	READINGS
23. Wed. April 3	Cities, identity, and nation building	Forest, Benjamin and Moser, Sarah. (2020). Building nations / building states / building cities: Concrete symbols of identity. <i>Handbook on the Changing Geographies of the State</i> . Edward Elgar Publishing. (145-156)
24. Fri. April 5	Urban geographies of race  Guest lecture: Prof. Darius Scott	Noxolo, Pat. (2022) Geographies of race and ethnicity 1: Black geographies. <i>Progress in human geography</i> , 46(5), 1232-1240.
25. Wed. April 10	Experiencing cities	Chapter 8 - Experiencing cities. Andrew E. G. Jonas, Eugene McCann, and Mary Thomas. (2015) <i>Urban Geography: A Critical Introduction</i> . Wiley Blackwell. (162-183)
26. Fri. April 12	New cities built from scratch	Moser, Sarah. (2020) New cities: Engineering social exclusions. <i>One Earth</i> 2(2): 125-127.  Moser, Sarah. (2018) Forest City, Malaysia, and Chinese expansionism. <i>Urban Geography</i> 39(6): 935-943.  <a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/13/magazine/a-malaysian-insta-city-becomes-a-flash-point-for-chinese-colonialism-and-capital-flight.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/13/magazine/a-malaysian-insta-city-becomes-a-flash-point-for-chinese-colonialism-and-capital-flight.html</a>

***The final examination, which focuses on course material from Lectures 15-26, will be held during the Exam Week (date TBD).***