

# Geography 617: Advanced Urban Geography

Winter 2024

Tuesdays 11:35 a.m. – 2:25 p.m.

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McGill University

Office Hours: Wednesdays 2:30-3:30 p.m. and by appointment. *Office hours can be in person or by Zoom (with 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. Students should have prior coursework in urban geography or urban studies, preferably classes equivalent to GEOG 217; and one or more of the following: GEOG 316, GEOG 325, GEOG 331, and/or GEOG 525. Enrolment by permission of the instructor.

*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.*

**Note:** In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control (*e.g.*, more pandemics, major political crisis, Thanos attack, etc.), the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

**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 a major research paper on a topic related to the student's thesis or dissertation. Finally, students may be required to periodically attend talks in the department's GeoSpectives lecture series or other venues.

Reading summaries/responses/reviews	15%	11 a.m. on Tuesdays
Class participation	20%	weekly
Proposal for research paper	15%	February 27 (draft) March 10 (final)
1 research paper (~20-25 pages)	50%	April 30

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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)

**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 points, and offer an insightful critique. Your responses are due before each class *via* myCourses and I will periodically provide brief comments on them.

**Class participation:** Participation is marked based on attendance along with the frequency and quality of your participation in class discussions. I will keep a record of these items, and expect students to attend every class, to be on time, and to contribute regularly to the discussion with thoughtful comments about the readings and your peers' comments. If you have questions about your mark during the semester, please feel free to ask me.

**Due Dates:** All papers are due via myCourses as properly formatted Word documents by 12 noon on the dates listed on the first page.

**Expectations:** This class is a graduate 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.

**Research Papers.** The research paper is often a useful way to draft a chapter of such a document, or to explore a set of literature relevant to your research. Guidelines for the proposal and papers will be distributed in class. 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.benjaminforest.info/Docs/Forest-Research%20Paper%20Guide.pdf>

**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.

Most 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: **Rationality and Power**

Week 3: **The Chicago School**

Week 4: **Rationality and Race Reframed**

Week 5: **Capitalism and Urbanism**

Week 6: **Modernity and Urbanism**

Week 7: **Re-thinking Urban Modernity: Post-Colonialism**

Week 8: **Scholarly Writing (Workshop)**

Week 9: **Winter Reading Break**

Week 10: **Gender, Work, and the City**

Week 11: **Race, Time, and Urbanism**

Week 12: **World Cities/Global Cities**

Week 13: **Colonialism and the Roots of Urban Segregation**

Week 14: **TBA & Individual Meetings**

## Background Readings in Urban Geography

I have designed GEOG 617 so it can be taken without extensive prior study of urban geography or urban studies, although students will find it easier to get up to speed with prior exposure to the field. At a minimum, students should have taken some classes in theoretically-oriented human geography or equivalent. If you have not studied urban geography specifically, I recommend you review some of the following material within the first few weeks of the semester. Urban geography is a huge field, so these works are only a small selection, but should give you a foothold in the discipline. Students may also wish to review material on the syllabi of GEOG 217, GEOG 325, and/or GEOG 331.

In addition, it would be useful to review recent editions of urban geography journals to get a sense of current issues and topics in the field. Three places to start: *Urban Geography*, *Urban Studies*, and the *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*.

Brief comments on the works listed below: Abu-Lughod, Knox, Sassen, and Taylor all examine contemporary global patterns of urbanization, focusing on relationships among cities and/or patterns within representative “global” cities. In different ways, they all trace urban change to economic developments and transitions. Hall provides a classic, highly-readable account of urban planning since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and how it has shaped modern cities. Jacobs’ book (originally published in 1961) is the seminal critique of modernist urban planning practices. Many of her criticisms have now become the “common sense” that animate discussions of contemporary urban planning.

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

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

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

Knox, P. L., and P. J. Taylor. 1995. *World cities in a world-system*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sassen, S. 2013. *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

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

*McGill University policy requires or recommends the inclusion and wording of the following statements on all syllabi.*

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

**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.

## Schedule of Classes

### Week 1: Introduction

January 9

*Although we will not discuss it this week, read this article by Storper and Scott (2016) at the start of the semester. It will probably not make much sense to you at this stage because it addresses many debates that we will read over the course of the semester. Read it now simply so you have a sense of names and terms; read it again after Week 12 to see how your understanding has changed. No written response is required for this reading.*

Storper, M., & Scott, A. J. 2016. Current debates in urban theory: A critical assessment. *Urban Studies*, 53, 1114-1136.

### Week 2: Rationality and Power

January 16

*Before addressing urban geography and urban studies directly, we will briefly review major social transformations occurring in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, focused on the idea of rationality. Or more precisely, we will review some classic social theory about rationality as applied to society, politics and governance. This is obviously a vast topic with an equally vast literature, so we are merely dipping our toes into the pool.*

*We will start with the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century German sociologist Max Weber, whose work addressed topics ranging from capitalism, bureaucracy, institutions, and industrialization. It's fair to say that the influence of his scholarship in 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century social science is on par with Marx (who we will discuss in subsequent weeks). While it is worth reading his original works, I have set a chapter from a highly influential discussion of rationality in his work by Rogers Brubaker (1984).*

*While Weber has been influential in the social sciences generally, this is less true in Geography. In contrast, the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century historian and social theorist Michel Foucault is nearly ubiquitous. We will read on of his most influential works, one on "The Panopticon". (You should consider reading his essay on "governmentality" as well. While Foucault does not frame his analyses in terms of rationality by name, he is concerned with practices of systemization, calculation, and "discipline." Finally, we will read a chapter from Herbert's (1997) book on policing in Los Angeles which is one of the few works in geography that considers both Weber and Foucault seriously. The recommended works are a selection from the geographical literature that draw on Foucault in various ways.*

Brubaker, R. (1984). *The limits of rationality: An essay on the social and moral thought of Max Weber* (1st ed.). Routledge: Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 8-60).

Foucault, M. 1979. "Translator's note" and "Panopticism" (Part III, chapter 1), in *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. New York: Vintage Books.

Herbert, S. K. (1997). "Territoriality and the Police", in *Policing space: Territoriality and the Los Angeles police department*. University of Minnesota Press: 9-24.

*Recommended:*

Dobson, J. E., and P. F. Fisher. 2007. The Panopticon's changing geography. *Geographical Review* 97 (3):307-323.

Doel, M. A., and D. B. Clarke. 1999. Dark Panopticon. Or, attack of the killer tomatoes. *Environment and Planning D-Society & Space* 17 (4):427-450.

Foucault, M. 1991. Governmentality. In *The Foucault effect: Studies in governmentality*, eds. G. Burchell, C. Gordon and P. Miller. Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 87-104.

Gilmore, R. W. 1999. Globalisation and US prison growth: from military Keynesianism to post-Keynesian militarism. *Race & Class*, 40, 171-188.

----- 2007. *Golden gulag: Prisons, surplus, crisis, and opposition in globalizing California*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Hannah, M. G. 2009. Calculable territory and the West German census boycott movements of the 1980s. *Political Geography*, 28, 66-75.

Lyon, D. 1993. An Electronic Panopticon: A Sociological Critique of Surveillance Theory. *Sociological Review* 41 (4):653-678.

Murdoch, J., and N. Ward. 1997. Governmentality and territoriality: The statistical manufacture of Britain's 'national farm'. *Political Geography* 16 (4): 307-324.

Neal, S. and Walters, S. 2007. 'You can get away with loads because there's no one here': Discourses of regulation and non-regulation in English rural spaces. *Geoforum*, 38(2): 252-63.

Neyland, D. 2006. The accomplishment of spatial adequacy: Analysing CCTV accounts of British town centres. *Environment and Planning D-Society & Space*, 24(4): 599-613.

Philo, C., H. Parr, and N. Burns. 2017. The rural panopticon. *Journal of Rural Studies* 51:230-239.

Rose, N., and P. Miller. 1992. Political Power Beyond the State: Problematics of Government. *British Journal of Sociology* 43 (2): 173-205.

Rose-Redwood, R. S. 2006. Governmentality, geography, and the geo-coded world. *Progress in Human Geography* 30 (4): 469-486.

Stanziani, A. 2009. The Traveling Panopticon: Labor Institutions and Labor Practices in Russia and Britain in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51 (4):715-741.

Tuathail, G. O. 1997. Emerging markets and other simulations: Mexico, the Chiapas revolt and the geofinancial panopticon. *Ecumene* 4 (3):300-317.

### **Week 3: The Chicago School**

*January 23*

*The “Chicago School” of sociology is generally seen as the first “modern” approach to urban studies, developed by a group of scholars in Chicago in the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. As noted by numerous subsequent critiques, it tended toward a mechanistic and individualistic approach to the analysis of urban social life. Many of its scholars found inspiration in Simmel’s (1903) seminal essay on urban culture, that postulating differences between the rapid, rational, modern city and the slow, non-rational/romantic, traditional rural lifestyle. Wirth’s (1938) essay summarizes the school’s major tenets, which arguably did not develop much after this time. You can read Simmel and Wirth as the two “bookends” to the other set readings.*

*Please keep in mind that these are historical works – written as much as 100 years ago – so you will undoubtedly find much wrong with them both empirically and theoretically. Nonetheless, try to read them both critically and sympathetically. Rather than simply identifying what they get wrong, see if you can explain the logic of the argument, the evidence (as the authors see it), and any insights that may be potentially useful or relevant. Also think about ties to the work of Weber and Foucault from last week.*

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.

Burgess, E. W. 1928. Residential Segregation in American Cities. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 140, 105-115.

Park, R. E. 1936. Human ecology. *American Journal of Sociology*, 42, 1-15.

Park, R. E. 1944. Missions and the modern world. *American Journal of Sociology*, 50, 177-183.

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

*Recommended:*

*The so-called “Chicago School” of urban studies adopted the spirit - and (largely) the theoretical perspectives - laid out by Simmel. 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. The City (1967) by Park, Burgess, and McKenzie is a collection of classic essays in this tradition. If you read this material, please read carefully because the language is archaic, but the analyses are often more subtle than they first appear. They should certainly be read, however, in light of Morris (2015) history of W. E. B. Du Bois' exclusion from sociology by the Chicago scholars (see below). Entrikin (1980) lays out the complicated relationship between Park's thought and contemporary urban geography. Dear and Flusty (1998) offer a critique (and in some ways, an update) of the Chicago School, grounded in the urban patterns of late-20<sup>th</sup> century Los Angeles.*

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

Entrikin, J. N. 1980. Robert Park's human-ecology and human-geography. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 70 (1): 43-58.

Morris, A. D. 2015. *The scholar denied: W.E.B. Du Bois and the birth of modern sociology*. Oakland, California: University of California Press (especially chapter 5).

Park, R. E., E. W. Burgess & R. J. Sampson. 2019. *The city*. The University of Chicago Press.

#### **Week 4: Rationality and Race Reframed**

January 30

*This week we will read work that offer alternative ways to approach urban studies. We start with the introduction Jane Jacob's (1961) classic critique of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century urban planning practices. Pay particular attention to questions of "rationality" and how it is used – she argues – in urban planning.*

*The bulk of the readings, however, focus on William Edward Burghardt (W.E.B.) Du Bois. He was an early 20<sup>th</sup>-century intellectual who studied sociology in Germany, was the first African American to earn a doctorate at Harvard, co-founded the NAACP, and spent most of his scholarly career at the University of Atlanta studying racial exclusion and inequality. While his work remained visible to some degree in sociology and has experienced a small renaissance in political theory recently, Du Bois is still largely absent from urban geography despite renewed interest in race and Black Geographies. The following list includes a few of his major works and several contemporary commentaries in the geography literature.*

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



Du Bois, W. E. B. 2023 [1897] *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press: Chapters 1, 7, and 8.

Du Bois, W.E.B. 1984. *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept*. Routledge: Chapter 5 (pp. 97-133).

Morris, A. D. 2015. *The scholar denied: W.E.B. Du Bois and the birth of modern sociology*. Oakland, California: University of California Press: Introduction (pp. 1-5); Chapter 6 (pp. 149-167); and Chapter 7 (pp. 168-194).

*Recommended:*

Du Bois, W. E. B. 2010. *The Philadelphia negro: A social study*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

———. 1999. *The souls of Black folk: Authoritative text, contexts, criticism*. 1st ed. ed. New York: W.W. Norton.

———. 2017. *Black reconstruction in America*. London: Taylor and Francis.

Heynen, N., & Ybarra, M. (2021). On Abolition Ecologies and Making “Freedom as a Place”. *Antipode*, 53, 21-35.

Luke, N., & Heynen, N. (2021). Abolishing the frontier: (De)colonizing ‘public’ education. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 22, 403-424.

Varner, D. 2018. Nineteenth century criminal geography: WEB Du Bois and the Pennsylvania Prison Society. *Journal of Historical Geography* 59:15-26.

Wilson, B. M. 2002. Critically understanding race-connected practices: A reading of W. E. B. Du Bois and Richard Wright. *Professional Geographer* 54 (1): 31-41.

## **Week 5: Capitalism and Urbanism**

February 6

*This week’s readings address many the same themes that we discussed in the last class – 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. Castells (1977) makes a similar, powerful critique and is worth reading as well.*

*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. You should attend to the ways in which his arguments evolve (and how they remain consistent) over the course of these selections. Finally, we will read Brenner and Schmid’s (2015) influential but controversial article where they pick up the Marxian mantle to argue for a unified theory of “planetary urbanization.”*

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, 2, and 5.

Brenner, N., & Schmid, C. (2015). Towards a new epistemology of the urban? *City*, 19, 151-182.

*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. Brenner (2017) arguably represents the “next generation” of Marxist urbanists and his work is often explicitly concerned with global patterns of urbanization. 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.*

Brenner, N. (2017). *Critique of urbanization: Selected essays*. Basel: Bouverlag; Birkhäuser.

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

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

———. 1989. From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism. *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 71 (1): 3-17.

———. 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 6: Modernity and Urbanism**

*February 13*

*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 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Then tackle the essay by Benjamin (1969), a piece originally written in the 1930s. Benjamin's writing is notorious difficult to decipher, but please do your best. Finally, the chapters from Harvey (2006), takes inspiration from Benjamin, and highlight how modernity both fundamentally shapes contemporary cities and how urbanism is an essential ingredient of modernity.*

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

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

Harvey, D. 2006. *Paris: Capital of modernity*. New York: Routledge. Introduction (pp. 1-20), chapters 1, 3-9; 11-17.

*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. It is also worth looking at all of Berman (1982).*

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 7: Re-thinking Urban Modernity: Post-colonialism**

February 20

*We are lucky this week to read the work of a visiting speaker, Prof. Deborah Martin (Clark University). We will read selections from her book for class, and (if possible) you should attend her GeoSpectives lecture on Friday, February 23 (12-1 p.m.)*

*Martin's work fits broadly in a post-colonial framework, where scholars have challenged both the conceptual framework of modernity and its empirical applications. In particular, Pierce and Martin (2023) emphasis the need to consider non-Western cities and relationships among the Global North and Global South when considering both urbanism and modernity.*

*Robinson (2006, 2011) makes this argument directly, contending that conventional urban theory characterizes cities in the Global North as embodying modernity, while those in the Global South 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. Like Martin, Myers (2021), suggests that the study of cities in the Global South offer lessons for how we think about urbanism in general. Scott and Storper (2015) – in the recommended list – 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.*

*If you want to refresh yourself on the "traditional" urban studies cannon, re-read Park's (1944) piece on religious missionaries as carriers of "modern" thought (from Week 3).*

Amin, A., and S. Graham. 1997. The ordinary city. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 22 (4):411-429.

Pierce, Joseph, and Deborah Martin. 2023. *How to Think About Cities*. Cambridge, England: Polity Press. Chapter 1: Introduction; Chapter 2: City of London; Chapter 4: Worcester; Chapter 6: Chongqing; Chapter 8: Conclusion.

*If possible, read the entire book by Friday, February 23.*

*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). Dear and Flusty (1998) offer an alternative critique of the Chicago School, albeit one grounded in the urban patterns of late-20<sup>th</sup> century Los Angeles. The pair of articles by Scott and Storper (2015 and 2016) provide a critical overview of these debates, along with those reviewed in prior weeks.*

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.

Dick, H. W., and P. J. Rimmer. 1998. Beyond the Third World city: The new urban geography of south-east Asia. *Urban Studies* 35 (12):2303-2321.

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.

McFarlane, C. 2010. The Comparative City: Knowledge, Learning, Urbanism. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 34 (4):725-742.

Mills, A. 2007. Gender and Mahalle (neighborhood) space in Istanbul. *Gender Place and Culture* 14 (3): 335-354.

Myers, G. A. 2020. *Rethinking urbanism: Lessons from postcolonialism and the Global South*. Bristol: Bristol University Press.

----- 2011. *African cities: Alternative visions of urban theory and practice*. London: Zed Books Ltd.

- 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.
- Purcell, M. 2006. Urban democracy and the local trap. *Urban Studies* 43 (11):1921-1941.
- Robinson, J. 2011. Cities in a World of Cities: The Comparative Gesture. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35 (1):1-23.
- Roy, A. 2009. The 21st-Century Metropolis: New Geographies of Theory. *Regional Studies* 43 (6):819-830.
- Schindler, S. 2017. Towards a paradigm of Southern urbanism. *City*, 21, 47-64.
- 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.
- Storper, M., & Scott, A. J. 2016. Current debates in urban theory: A critical assessment. *Urban Studies*, 53, 1114-1136.
- Walker, R. A. 2016. Why cities? A response. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 40 (1):164-180.

## **Week 8: Workshop: Scholarly Writing**

*February 27*

*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 your draft proposal. 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 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](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 9: Winter Reading Break**

*March 4-8*

### **Week 10: Gender, Work, and the City**

*March 12*

*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 19<sup>th</sup> century and how patterns established then affect employment in the late 20<sup>th</sup> 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. Finally, I have set a recent article by Oswin (2018) that is part of a contemporary debate in critical urban geography about the relative roles of class and gender/sexuality and is a direct response to Brenner and Schmid (2015).*

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, 6-9. [Chapter 1 is recommended but optional.]

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

Oswin, N. 2018. Planetary urbanization: A view from outside. *Environment and Planning D-Society & Space* 36 (3):540-546.

*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 11: Race, Time, and Space**

March 19

*We will step away from the strictly "urban" by reading two works that take a highly theoretical perspective on the relationships among race, time, space, and "outsiderness" in geography more generally (McKittrick 2013). These should help bring together the material on modernity but may be helpful to review your notes on Simmel, Wirth, and Harvey from prior weeks to help you think through issues of time. Bledsoe (2020) discusses the fraught theoretical relationship between class and anti-blackness, and finally, two recent articles, Ramirez (2020) and Roberts & Butler (2022) offers empirical examples that embrace some of these ideas.*



McKittrick K 2013. Plantation futures. *Small Axe* 17(3): 1-15.

Bledsoe, A. 2020. The primacy of anti-blackness. *Area*, 52, 472-479.

Ramirez, M. M. 2020. City as borderland: Gentrification and the policing of Black and Latinx geographies in Oakland. *Environment and Planning D-Society & Space* 38 (1): 147-166.

Roberts, A. & M. L. Butler 2022. Contending with the Palimpsest: Reading the Land through Black Women's Emotional Geographies. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 112: 828-837.

*Recommended:*

*As with the required texts, these recommended readings embrace a variety of topics that may depart from the orthodox definition of "urban geography" but that intersect with the many of the major themes of the class.*

Grove, K., S. Cox, and A. Barnett. 2020. Racializing Resilience: Assemblage, Critique, and Contested Futures in Greater Miami Resilience Planning. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 110 (5):1613-1630.

Heynen, N. 2016. Urban political ecology II: The abolitionist century. *Progress in Human Geography* 40 (6):839-845.

Inwood, J. F. J., Livia Brand, A., & Quinn, E. A. 2021. Racial Capital, Abolition, and a Geographic Argument for Reparations. *Antipode*, 53, 1083-1103.

Kimari, W., and J. Parish. 2020. What is a river? A transnational meditation on the colonial city, abolition ecologies and the future of geography. *Urban Geography* 41 (5):643-656.

Koselleck, R. (2004) *Futures past: On the semantics of historical time*. New York: Columbia University Press

McKittrick, Katherine & Clyde Woods (eds). 2007. *Black Geographies and the politics of place*. South End Press.

Mollett, S. (2021). Hemispheric, Relational, and Intersectional Political Ecologies of Race: Centring Land-Body Entanglements in the Americas. *Antipode*, 53, 810-830.

———. 2016. The Power to Plunder: Rethinking Land Grabbing in Latin America. *Antipode* 48 (2):412-432.

- Ramírez, M. M. 2020. Take the houses back/take the land back: Black and Indigenous urban futures in Oakland. *Urban Geography* 41 (5):682-693.
- Safransky, S. 2017. Rethinking Land Struggle in the Postindustrial City. *Antipode* 49 (4):1079-1100.
- Shannon, J. 2021. Dollar Stores, Retailer Redlining, and the Metropolitan Geographies of Precarious Consumption. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 111, 1200-1218.
- Sharpe, C. E. (2016) *In the wake: On blackness and being*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Thomas D (2016) Time and the otherwise: Plantations, garrisons and being human in the Caribbean. *Anthropological Theory* 16(2-3): 177-200.
- Van Sant, L., E. Hennessy, M. Domosh, M. R. Arefin, N. McClintock, and S. Mollett. 2020. Historical geographies of, and for, the present. *Progress in Human Geography* 44 (1):168-188.

## **Week 12: World Cities/Global Cities**

*March 26*

*The readings this week come from the “World Cities” or “Global Cities” perspective, which sees urban development as consequence of large-scale, global economic forces. This approach emphasizes systematic comparisons of cities to each other, particularly in terms of relative inequality. It is framed (at least was originally) in terms of Immanuel Wallerstein’s World-Systems theory, a macro-scale theory of history that identifies large-scale, structural economic relationships as the driving force of social change and attempts to displace territorial states as the basic unit of analysis. In geography, Taylor and Knox are perhaps most identified with this approach. Sassen, a sociologist, is now arguably the leading scholar in this tradition of urban studies.*

- Friedmann, J., and G. Wolff. 1982. World city formation: An agenda for research and action. *International Journal of Urban & Regional Research* 6 (3): 309-344.
- Sassen, S. 2013 [1991]. *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapters 1, 9 (pp. 244-256; 279-319), and 10.
- Taylor, P. J. 2005. Leading world cities: Empirical evaluations of urban nodes in multiple networks. *Urban Studies*, 42, 1593-1608.

*Recommended:*

*The required readings are only excerpts, and it is worth looking at the rest of the material in these books. His four-volume set, starting with Wallerstein (1974), forms the basis of this perspective and it has been adopted on an industrial scale in geography, political science, sociology, and related disciplines, so articles like Scott (2001) should be considered jumping off points, not definitive summaries. Friedmann and Wolff's (1982) programmatic statement was influential in framing research on cities using the global framework.*

Knox, P. L., and P. J. Taylor. 1995. *World cities in a world-system*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Scott, A. J. 2001. Globalization and the rise of city-regions. *European Planning Studies* 9 (7): 813-826.

Taylor, P. J. 2004. *World city network: A global urban analysis*. London: Routledge.

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

Wallerstein, I. M. 1974. *The modern world-system*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

**Week 13: Colonialism and the Roots of Urban Segregation**

*April 2*

*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; and chapters 4-6 OR chapters 8, 9, and 11.

*Recommended:*

Anderson, K. 1991. *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial discourse in Canada, 1875-1980*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Jacobs, J. M. 1996. *Edge of empire: Postcolonialism and the city*. London: Routledge.

- King, A. D. 1976. *Colonial urban development: Culture, social power, and environment*. London: Routledge & Paul.
- Kramer, P. A. 2006. *The blood of government: Race, empire, the United States, and the Philippines*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Myers, G. A. 2003. *Verandahs of power: Colonialism and space in urban Africa*. 1st ed. ed. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press.
- Zaimi, R. 2020. Making Real Estate Markets: The Co-Production of Race and Property Value in Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Appraisal Science. *Antipode*, 52, 1539-1559.

### *Measuring racial segregation*

*There is a vast literature on segregation (racial and otherwise) and it is difficult to keep a list up-to-date on all of the recent developments. You should be aware that there are ongoing debates over methodology (how to measure segregation), ongoing empirical studies (how patterns of segregation are changing), and the relationships among various dimensions of segregation (e.g, class and race). These are just a few examples. Note in particular that Reardon and Bischoff (2011) focus on income segregation and inequality. It is worth reading even if you cannot follow their statistical analysis in detail. Massey and Denton (1993) is the definitive study of racial segregation in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century United States, while Ellis, et al (2018) is recent analysis of contemporary racial segregation in the U.S. (Note that that one of the co-authors, Lee Fiorio, is a McGill Geography undergraduate alumnus.)*

- Catney, G. 2018. The complex geographies of ethnic residential segregation: Using spatial and local measures to explore scale-dependency and spatial relationships. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 43 (1):137-152.
- Clark, W. A. V., and J. Osth. 2018. Measuring isolation across space and over time with new tools: Evidence from Californian metropolitan regions. *Environment and Planning B: Urban Analytics and City Science* 45 (6):1038-1054.
- Ellis, M., R. Wright, S. Holloway, and L. Fiorio. 2018. Remaking white residential segregation: metropolitan diversity and neighborhood change in the United States. *Urban Geography* 39 (4):519-545.
- Lan, T., J. Kandt, and P. Longley. 2020. Geographic scales of residential segregation in English cities. *Urban Geography* 41 (1):103-123.
- Massey, D. S., & Denton, N. A. 1993. *American apartheid: Segregation and the making of the underclass*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Sharma, M., and D. Koh. 2019. Korean Americans in Los Angeles: Decentralized Concentration and Socio-spatial Disparity. *Geographical Review* 109 (3):356-381.

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

**Week 14: TBA & Individual Meetings**

April 9

The topic for the final week of the semester is TBA depending on student interest but will include individual meetings to discuss your final papers.

**GEOG 617: Advanced 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 submitted via myCourses by the deadline stated in the syllabus.* Please send them as a nicely formatted MS Word or pdf 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 would have been set for that week. This will not 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.

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 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> 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.

Alternatively, you could write a critique as a question. It would need to be contextualized with a short discussion (as above) but sometimes it is easier to think of critiques as questions rather than as statements. You do not need to submit both a “statement-” and “question-” style critique but you may do so if you wish.

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