

SOCI222: Urban Sociology

Fall 2023

Tuesday and Thursday, 10:05 am - 11:25 am

Stewart Biology Building N2/2

Instructor: Professor Miloš Bročić

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Office Hours: Thursday 12:30-2:30, By appointment

Leacock 725 or via Zoom

Teaching Assistants:

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Office hours to be announced.

Course Description:

Cities encapsulate both the promises and pitfalls of modern social life. Some see them as sites of atomization, far removed from the intimacy of small towns. Others see them as a mosaic of social worlds, composed of buzzing scenes and pockets of thriving communities. They are hotspots for cultural and economic dynamism, attracting strivers, thrill seekers, and the like. However, a range of social problems can make them forbidding to others as well. These contrasts and others have made cities a topic of enduring fascination for sociologists. In this course, we will explore different dimensions of city life by surveying key topics and debates in urban sociology. We will cover major theoretical and methodological approaches to studying urban life, and survey topics including the evolution of cities, urban lifestyles and communities, and how they intersect with immigration, race, gender, and sexuality. We will also examine different aspects of post-industrial restructuring including the rise of cultural industries, gentrification, and deepening political conflict between the metropolitan core and periphery.

Required Course Materials

The course will use the *Urban Canada: Sociological Perspectives* textbook edited by Harry Hiller (3rd Edition, 2014), which can be purchased and accessed as an eBook on myCourses. All of the required readings for this course will be made available electronically and uploaded in a folder on myCourses.

Evaluation Components:

Mid-term: 25%

The midterm exam provides you with an opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of course content, including the material covered in the readings, lectures, and in-class exercises. It will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions. The midterm exam will be held during class time on Thursday, October 12.

Final Exam: 35%

The final exam will cover all course content, including the material covered in the readings, lectures, and in-class exercises. It will consist of multiple choice, short answer questions, and essay question. It will be held during the exam period. Date to be announced later in the semester.

Neighbourhood Report: 20%

You will select a neighbourhood in Montreal and write a short report (maximum 1500 words) examining how it has been affected by patterns of post-industrial restructuring discussed in the course. There are a variety of topics the student can choose to focus on including the rise of the new urban economy, gentrification, globalization, lifestyle communities, and more. You will focus on one of these themes and examine how its dynamics can be observed in the neighbourhood you select. Your report should draw on a variety of sources, including existing research, newspaper articles, documents, as well as your own field observations. The report will be due on the final class (December 5th). Further details for the assignment will be provided later in the term.

Group Exercises: 10%

Over the semester, we will do three group exercises (graded pass/fail, worth 2.5% of your overall course grade). These exercises are designed to take approximately 1.5 hours. You can complete them in class, but you can also do them remotely and/or outside of class if your group prefers working in a different environment or at a different time. It is up to you to coordinate this with your group members. For each exercise, your group must submit one written report via myCourses no later than 48 hours after the exercise has been introduced. Late submissions will not be accepted. This means that you will have to collaborate effectively with your group members and use your time efficiently. Assignments to groups will be strictly random—no reassignments will be made under any circumstances. The division of labour within your group is up to you and your fellow students. If you have to miss a group exercise, you should therefore write your group members rather than the instructor.

Discussion Board: 10%

For every class that there are readings you will be able to contribute to the discussion board on myCourses. Make sure you post in the forum for the current class. You may start a new thread by introducing a question or comment about a reading. Alternatively, you may choose to respond to someone else's post. Entries should maintain the focus on broad themes and tensions in the reading(s) but can be approached in many ways. They can point at passages that you find interesting, puzzling, or confusing. They may compare the readings with previous course material. You can also connect the readings with your personal experiences, recent news stories, or television shows. I will read the entries before each lecture to use as a guide into the discussion, and you are encouraged to participate by drawing on your responses.

There is no strict length requirement, but to receive full credit your contribution must engage substantively with some core issue in the content. Participation will be worth 10% of your final grade, and you will be awarded 1% for each class you submit a contribution. To earn this grade, however, new threads must be posted by 6pm the day before the lecture, while responses to threads are rewarded until 7pm.

Course Policy

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/ 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/).

Language of Evaluation

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. 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 (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l'un des objets est la maîtrise d'une langue).

Land Acknowledgment:

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.

Make-up Policy

There will be no make-up option for the midterm exam. If you have to miss the midterm exam, I will shift the weight to the final exam, which will then count for 60% of your final course grade. There are no

make-up options for discussion board contributions or for group work components. If you have to miss group assignments, communicate with your group members rather than the course instructor.

Grade appeals

Instructors and teaching assistants take the marking of assignments and exams very seriously, and we work diligently to be fair, consistent, and accurate. Nonetheless, mistakes and oversights occasionally happen. If you believe that to be the case, you must adhere to the following rules:

- If it is a mathematical error simply alert the TA.
- In the case of more substantive appeals, you must:
 - Wait at least 24 hours after receiving your mark;
 - Carefully re-read your paper/assignment/test, all guidelines and marking schemes, and the grader's comments.
 - Within 10 working days after results are available, submit to the instructor a one-page explanation of why you think your grade should be changed. Please note statements such as "Because I worked very hard on this" and "I need a higher grade to apply to law school" are not compelling.
 - Make an appointment to meet with the instructor during office hours, at which time the instructor will give you a decision on the appeal and explain the outcome. After that, students are entitled to a re-read or re-assessment by a professor not teaching the course should they request it.
 - Please note that upon re-grade your mark may go down, stay the same, or go up.

Tentative nature of the syllabus:

The instructor reserves the right to change the course content outlined in the syllabus at any point during the semester. Any changes to readings will be announced at least one class in advance. Students are responsible for keeping up with any changes.

Course Outline

Week 1. Thursday, August 31. Introduction

Week 2. Tuesday, September 5. The Emergence of Cities

- Sjoberg, G. 1955. The Preindustrial city. *American Journal of Sociology*, 60(5), 438-445.
- Hiller, Harry. "Canadian Urbanization in Historical and Global Perspective" (Chapter 1, *Urban Canada*)

Week 2. Thursday, September 7. Dynamics of Canadian Urbanization

- Hiller, Harry. "The Dynamics of Canadian Urbanization" (Chapter 2, *Urban Canada*)

- Guay, Louis and Pierre Hamel. “Urban Change and Policy Responses in Quebec” (Chapter 15, *Urban Canada*)

Week 3. Tuesday, September 12. Urban Mentality

- Wirth, Louis. 1938. Urbanism as a Way of Life. *American Journal of Sociology*, 44(1), 1-24
- Simmel, Georg. 1970. [1903]. The Metropolis and Mental life. In R. Guttman and D. Popenoe (Eds.). *Neighbourhood, City, and Metropolis* (pp.777-788). New York: Random House.

Week 3. Thursday, September 14. Chicago School and the Ecological Approach in Urban Sociology

- Burgess, Ernest. 1925. “The Growth of the City: An Introduction to a Research Project.” Pp.46-62 in Robert Park, Ernest Burgess, and Roderick McKenzie (eds.), *The City*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Cressey, Paul G. 1932. *The Taxi-Dance Hall: A Sociological Study in Commercialized Recreation and City Life*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 5 (“The Life-Cycle of the Taxi-Dancer”).

Week 4. Tuesday, September 19. Urban Communities and Subcultures

- Fischer, Claude S. 1975. “Toward a Subcultural Theory of Urbanism.” *American Journal of Sociology* 80(6):1319–41.
- Lloyd, Richard. 2006. *Neo-Bohemia. Art and Commerce in the Postindustrial City*. New York, NY: Routledge. Chapter 5 (“Living like an Artist”).

Week 4. Thursday, September 21. Group Exercise 1

Week 5. Tuesday, September 26. Neighbourhood Effects

- Wilson, William Julius. 1987. *The Truly Disadvantaged*. Selections.
- Sampson, Robert J. 2011. *Great American City: Chicago and the Enduring Neighborhood Effect*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 7 (“The Theory of Collective Efficacy”).

Week 5. Thursday, September 28. Microsociology: Urban Sociability

- Hogan, Mervyn and Leslie Kern. “Urban Public Spaces: Streets, Strangership, and Securitization” (Chapter 6, *Urban Canada*)
- Goffman, Erving. 1963. *Behavior in Public Places: Notes on the Social Organization of Gatherings*. New York, NY: Free Press. Selections.
- Lofland, Lyn H. 1973. *A World of Strangers. Order and Action in Urban Public Space*. New York: Basic Books. Selections.

Week 6. Tuesday, October 3. Microsociology: Race and Gender in Urban Spaces

- Anderson, Elijah. 1990. *Code of the Street*. New York: W.W. Norton. Chapter 2 (“Campaigning for Respect”).

Week 6. Thursday, October 5. Optional Review for Midterm

Week 7. Tuesday, October 10. **READING WEEK**

Week 7. Thursday, October 12. In-class Midterm

Week 8. Tuesday, October 17. Political Economy

- Hannigan, John. “The New Urban Political Economy” (Chapter 12, *Urban Canada*)
- Harvey, David. 2008. “The Right to the City.” *New Left Review* (53):23–40.

Week 8. Thursday, October 19. Creative Production in the New Political Economy

- Florida, Richard. 2003. “Cities and the Creative Class.” Chapter 2.
- Lloyd, Richard. 2006. *Neo-Bohemia. Art and Commerce in the Postindustrial City*. New York, NY: Routledge. Chapter 7 (“The Neighborhood in Cultural Production”)

Week 9. Tuesday, October 24. Place Reputation

- Suttles, Gerald D. 1984. “The Cumulative Texture of Local Urban Culture.” *American Journal of Sociology* 90(2):283–304.
- Molotch, Harvey, William Freudenburg, and Krista E. Paulsen. 2000. “History Repeats Itself, But How? City Character, Urban Tradition, and the Accomplishment of Place.” *American Sociological Review* 65(6):791–823.

Week 9. Thursday, October 26. Group Exercise 2.

Week 10. Tuesday, October 31. Immigration and Race in the City

- Fong, Eric. “Immigration and Race in the City” (Chapter 8, *Urban Canada*)
- Kim, Jinwon. 2018. “Manhattan’s Koreatown as a Transclave: The Emergence of a New Ethnic Enclave in a Global City.” *City & Community* 17(1):276–95.

Week 10. Thursday, November 2. Aboriginal Peoples in Urban Areas

- Peters, Evelyn J. “Aboriginal Peoples in Urban Areas” (Chapter 9, *Urban Canada*)
- Lawrence, Bonita. 2004. *“Real” Indians and Others*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press. Chapter 8 (“Maintaining an Urban Native Community”).

Week 11. Tuesday, November 7. Gendered Places & Spaces

- Spain, Daphne. 2014. “Gender and urban space.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 40: 581-598.
- Wekerle, Gerda R. “Gender and the City: Urban Restructuring, Social Exclusion, and Democratic Participation” (Chapter 11, *Urban Canada*).

Week 11. Thursday, November 9. Sex and the City

- Ghaziani, Amin. 2017. *Sex Cultures*. Cambridge, UK ; Polity Press. Chapter 1 (“The City”).

Week 12. Tuesday, November 14. Gentrification

- Kohn, Margaret. 2013. “What Is Wrong with Gentrification?” *Urban Research & Practice* 6(3):297–310.
- Doering, Jan. 2020. *Us versus Them: Race, Crime, and Gentrification in Chicago Neighborhoods*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapter 3 (“Racial Displacement in Action?”).

Week 12. Thursday, November 16. Neighbourhood Politics

- Martin Horak and Aaron A. Moore, “Policy Shifting without Institutional Change: The Precarious Place of Neighborhood Revitalization in Toronto”
- James Coleman, “The Dynamics of Community Controversy”
- Martin, Deborah G. 2003. “‘Place-Framing’ as Place-Making: Constituting a Neighborhood for Organizing and Activism.” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 93(3):730–50.

Week 13. Tuesday, November 21.

- Florida, Richard. 2021. “Discontent and Its Geographies.” *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society* 14(3):619–24.
- Silver, Daniel, Zack Taylor, and Fernando Calderón-Figueroa. 2020. “Populism in the City: The Case of Ford Nation.” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 33(1):1–21.

Week 13. Thursday, November 23. Group Exercise 3

Week 14. Tuesday, November 28. Course wrap-up

Week 14. Thursday, November 30. NO CLASS

Week 15. Tuesday, December 5. Optional Review for Final Exam

- Neighbourhood Report due. Submit on myCourses.