Sociology 6300: Urban Policy and Planning
Fall 2013. Tuesdays 3:30-6:00
Newcomb Hall 446

Professor: Kevin F. Gotham
Sociology: 220 Newcomb Hall
Phone: 862-3004
Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description
In this course, we will examine processes, policies, and programs that have shaped and affected cities and metropolitan areas in the United States and around the world over the last hundred years or so. Specifically, we will explore a series of government policies pertaining to community organizing; welfare reform; adaption to climate change; post-disaster recovery and rebuilding; tourism and urban cultural production; real estate, housing, and residential segregation; and urban sustainability and economic development. The course will focus on policies that have impacted the built environment and address relationships between cities, communities, and broader socio-political and economic processes. As a Capstone course, activities are designed for advanced undergraduate students or for graduate students interested in connecting the course subject matter with a service learning project within the sociology of urban policy and planning.

Course Objectives
The objectives of this course are to present an overview of urban policies in the historical context of their development, illustrate the links between theory and research, and foster a critical understanding of policy and metropolitan development. We will examine different meanings and definitions of urban policy, how policies are evaluated, and how power relations and social structures constrain policy-making and implementation. You will learn to identify the key processes and policies that have affected the pace and trajectory of metropolitan development. You will also analyze a variety of policies from different disciplinary perspectives. In addition, you will learn how to investigate and identify the positive impacts and negative consequences of various policies on cities and built environment.

Required Prerequisites: Soc. 3040 (Research Analysis) and 3220 (Social Theory), or instructor approval.

Recommended Prerequisites: Soc. 2060 (Urban Sociology).

Program Outcomes
This course contributes to the sociology major by addressing the impact of policy on cities and metropolitan areas, such that the student will be able to:

- describe the policy making process and explain how policies have affected cities and urban life
- compare and contrast basic theoretical orientations pertaining to urban policy
- show how policies reflect the socio-historical context in which they are developed
• apply one or more policies to explain how cities develop and change

Learning Outcomes
By the end of this course, students will be able to
• describe the role of policies in the generation of new knowledge about processes of urban change and metropolitan development
• understand the key theoretical approaches to urban policy analysis
• identify and explain the key features of urban policy-making
• explain the impact and significance of political power, socio-economic trends, and government structure on the formulation and implementation of policies that affect cities and metropolitan areas
• fulfill the capstone experience by
  o integrating and synthesizing knowledge within the sociology major
  o enhancing and expanding their knowledge of sociology and social science research methods and theory through course work, class activities, and participation in a service learning experience
  o promoting connections between the sociology major and general knowledge about cities and urban policy through course work, class activities, and participation in a service learning experience
  o improve career preparation and facilitate transition from academic to professional life through the study of urban policy and related urban planning fields and urban research methods

These basic learning objectives will be assessed through two take home exams, participation in a 20-hour service learning project, a final paper (30 pages), participation in leading a seminar discussion, an in-class presentation of the service learning project, and class attendance and participation.

Required Reading


Course Requirements

The course will follow a seminar format that combines lecture material and group discussion. As I see them, seminars are primarily for intense analysis and discussion. I see my role as coordinating and facilitating this process but I take as given the active and enthusiastic participation of all members of the group. It is essential that each student complete the readings before each class session and come prepared to discuss the material. All students are required to attend every class period unless they are ill or prevented from attending by exceptional circumstances. Preparedness, attendance and participation are expected and will have a bearing on final grades. Requirements for this course include a service learning project, a final paper (30 pages), an in-class presentation of the service learning project, two take home exams, leadership of a seminar discussion, and class attendance and participation.

1. Service Learning Project (35 percent of final grade). All undergraduate students are required to participate in a service learning project for a minimum of 20 hours and write a final paper based upon the experience of working in the New Orleans community. The primary goal of the service learning project is to link your community work and experience in the New Orleans community to the course material. Service learning is also a way of illustrating the larger substantive elements to which the course pertains. Students become engaged and provide service to the community with measurable outcomes such as: completion of hours; reflection assignments; and/or completion of a final project related to their service learning assignment.

There are three components to any service learning activity: service, personal insight, and academic knowledge. The service component provides the context and content of the volunteering experience as you enter into the community to donate time and skills. The personal experience of volunteering often forces you to learn about yourself, to question your own beliefs, values, prejudices, ways of viewing the world, and the like. Academic learning occurs as you connect classroom learning with the real world, observing and participating in practitioners’ daily activities. The service learning work will help reinforce the theoretical concepts and ideas introduced in the readings and discussed in class through interactions with people in the New Orleans community. You will discover on your own the congruencies and discrepancies between theories and reality, and more important, learn to think sociologically.

In addition to participating in 20 hours of service learning work, we will devote two class periods to discussing the service learning experience.

Finally, students are required to write a 30 page paper that links the course material - e.g., concepts, theories, and related academic knowledge about cities and urban life - with the service
learning experience. Below are my expectations for this paper.

**Description**
Describe your service learning site, including its official purpose, the clientele it serves, the structure of the program, the training and use of personnel, and your role as a volunteer. When you are writing about your site, keep in mind the significant differences between comments that are descriptive (observations), comments that discuss your feelings about what you are describing (reactions), and comments that detail conclusions about what you saw (interpretations). You should not spend a lot of time describing mundane or ongoing operations of the various small groups or their formal, routine activities at the site, or what you did each time you visited the site. Keep in mind that your description should provide information that will give the necessary context for the more important components of the paper: your analysis and reflection.

**Analysis**
Provide a critical analysis of your service learning experience. Discuss how the policies, programs, and concepts from the readings are illustrated in your activities or in the group’s operations or the community’s organization. Answer the following questions: What kinds of urban problems are being addressed by the community organization(s) you are involved with? What impacts do you see the organization or agency making on the New Orleans community? What are the manifest and latent functions of the organization? What barriers and constraints (organizational, institutional, political-economic, and so on) does the organization face in achieving its goals? Finally, and most important, which policies, programs, concepts and theories addressed in the readings and class help you to understand the organization you are involved with?

**Reflection**
Discuss what you learned from your service learning experience. This may include discussions of emotional responses, contemplation of political implications, and reflections on your own personal views of how the service learning experience has caused you to think differently about cities, urban life, and urban policy. What impact is your service learning work having on you? How does your service learning experience relate to your understanding of class readings, course concepts, and different theories of cities and urban life? How has your service experience affected your views of New Orleans? How has your engagement with the course readings and service learning helped you understand the impact of power, conflict, and inequality on the formulation and implementation of urban policy.

Your paper should build upon your practical experiences at the service learning site and reflect your thoughtful engagement with the subject matter of urban sociology. You should deliberately apply the sociological concepts and theories learned in the class to your description, analysis, and reflection. The three parts - description, analysis, and reflection - should not be kept artificially separate, but should instead be interwoven as appropriate throughout your paper. Grammar, organization, spelling, and clarity all count. Through your service learning experience, you will learn how government programs and policy making have shaped the organization of cities and metropolitan areas. You will also see the kinds of community and political struggles that have historically affected public policy at the urban, regional, and national levels and come to
understand how urban policy is embedded within larger socioeconomic processes, power structures, and global forces. Finally, the service learning experience will inform the readings in the course and provide an opportunity for you to witness how urban policies are impacting the process of post-Katrina rebuilding in New Orleans.

Final papers should use American Sociological Review (ASR) style format in citations and references. Final papers will be graded on a scale of A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, and D-. One letter grade will be deducted for each day the paper is late. I will not accept any faxed papers or emailed papers.

2. Oral Presentation of Service Learning Project (15 percent of final grade)
All students are required to present their research during the last two weeks of the semester. Students should prepare and rehearse their presentation to do it smoothly and not exceed the time limit. Make your presentation using powerpoint and/or other visual aids; do not prewrite your whole presentation and then read it. The purpose of the oral presentation is to show that you understand key concepts, definitions, main findings, and can effectively communicate your research to a group of peers. Do not ramble; be as succinct as possible. I will provide more information about the organization of the oral presentation of the service learning project later in the semester.

3. Two Take Home Exams (20 percent of final grade; each exam worth 10 percent of final grade)
All students are required to complete two take home exams. These exams will test your knowledge of the course material and your ability to integrate and synthesize information within the field of urban policy. Each exam will cover three sets of questions on the readings completed prior to the exam. You will be evaluated on how well you write a clear and thoughtful exam that demonstrates an understanding of the readings. You must support your statements with specific quotes and references to the course readings (with page numbers). The exam should be well written and to the point. All exams are to be typed, doubled-spaced with 12 pt font, 8-10 pages, one-inch margins, and page numbers in the top right hand corner. Exams will be graded on a scale of A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, and D-. One letter grade will be deducted for each day the exam is late.

4. Leading a Seminar Discussion (10 percent of final grade).
All students are required to lead one seminar discussion. The order of the leadership will be alphabetical starting the second week and there will be two student leaders per class session. Leaders can organize the discussion in any number of ways. There are two requirements for all discussion leaders: (1) aim for equitable participation from all class members and equitable responsibility between discussion leaders; (2) ensure that the discussion is grounded firmly on an analysis of the assigned readings, not merely on the general topic of the week.

One simple discussion strategy is to begin class by reviewing the required reading for the week: you could raise specific questions and issues for the week, and relate the material to previous readings and class discussions. This is an acceptable strategy but your summary should not take more than 5 minutes. Longer summaries are boring for everyone. Your job is not to lecture, but to facilitate discussion about the material. The discussion should lead to a clearer understanding
of the readings, or at least a clearer understanding of the complexity of the readings.

Discussion leaders must take a strong role to ensure that the discussion covers the material and that there is equity and continuity in the discussion. One of the major concerns in leading any discussion is how to create an environment that is secure enough for people to ask questions and become involved. Leaders should devise strategies that facilitate everyone’s participation.

Here are some ideas about how to start and sustain discussion and to involve all class members:

- Ask students to describe the primary value or the central thesis of the reading.
- Ask each student to state one concrete image or moment from the texts that stands out, i.e. passages that particularly captured his or her imagination.
- Ask if any themes emerge from these images.
- Ask students to read aloud a quotation from the reading that they like or dislike, or one that illustrates the central thesis of the reading, or one that was difficult to understand.
- Ask each student to raise one or two questions that s/he has about the readings.

Please review the evaluation criteria for discussion leadership below before you begin to plan your discussion session.

**Evaluation Criteria for Discussion Leadership**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>How well organized is the class session?</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appears well-prepared with a plan for facilitating discussion</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<td>Integrates readings into discussion</td>
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<td>Maintains continuity in the discussion</td>
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<td>Provides internal summaries and transitions</td>
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<td>Summarizes &amp; distills main points at end of discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paces class session appropriately</td>
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<th>How credible is the discussion leader in his/her role?</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Understands the material</td>
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<td>Ensures many points from the reading are discussed</td>
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<td>Helps clarify material, correct misunderstandings</td>
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<td>Is able to admit insufficient knowledge when appropriate</td>
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<td>Speaks audibly and clearly</td>
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<td>Communicates enthusiasm</td>
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<th>How good is the discussion leader’s rapport with other class members?</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Achieves equitable participation</td>
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<td>Encourages class members to respond to one another</td>
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<td>Requires class members’ thoughtful participation</td>
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<td>Responds constructively to class members</td>
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<td>Recognizes when others are confused</td>
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<td>Shows respect for others’ viewpoints, criticisms</td>
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5. **Critical Essays** (10 percent of final grade). Critical Essays are short papers (about 500 - 1000 words) that convey your thoughts about and reactions to a particular reading assignment. You are required to write eight (8) critical essays on each of the assigned books during the semester. Each critical essay must be posted to the Blackboard “Discussion Board” for the course at least 24 hours before class (3:30 on Monday). The critical essays will be graded on a scale of A, B, C, and D. One letter grade will be deducted for each day the essay is late. Each student should read all essays posted to the Discussion Board and come to class ready to discuss. Critical Essays should accomplish the following two goals:

1. Reflect your thoughtful engagement with and consideration of the reading assignment.
2. Include questions or issues that you would like to have the class discuss.

Here are questions to guide your thinking about the reading and the completion of the critical essays:

- What are the central arguments in the reading?
- What data sources and/or concepts does the author use to support the argument?
- What other lines of reasoning or thinking occur to you as a result of reading this selection? What is it about the chapters that interest you?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the book chapters? If you were studying this issue, what would you have done similarly or differently?

See *A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers* for directions on writing a critical essay.

As you write your critical essay, you should select one or two concepts/issues/themes/problems/questions to orient your essay. It is tempting to try to deal with all the points raised in the readings, but this will generally lead to a paper that sets too broad of an agenda. The essay (not an outline) should reflect your thoughtful engagement with the issues you choose. It may take the form of an analysis of what is at stake in the debates or it may entail comments/critiques of specific arguments in the readings. It may also be a critical examination on how the course material connects with your research project and how your research project informs the readings.

All participants in the course have a responsibility to do the readings for the week, to listen to what is being said by other participants (rather than being overly preoccupied with what you are going to say), and not to interrupt people in the middle of sentences. We hope to create a setting in which everyone feels comfortable talking, even if they do not have something “brilliant” or “profound” to say. Sometimes very simple questions can lead to very fruitful discussions.

6. **Class Attendance and Participation** (10 percent of final grade)

Ten percent of your grade will be based on my evaluation of your participation in class. Class participation includes sharing thoughts and ideas, observations, assessments, and questions during class time. Thoughtful participation means regularly attending class and being prepared to discuss the assigned subject matter. To encourage class participation and the sharing of ideas, you should identify one or two questions from the assigned readings that you would like to discuss in class. You should always ask yourself how the assigned reading for the day can help you with your own service learning project.

Ultimately, the success of a group discussion depends on the participants. Here are a few
suggestions to make the seminar and discussions more enjoyable, productive and meaningful:

- **Speak up!** Group discussion is like a conversation; everyone takes part in it. Don't expect to be called on to speak; enter into the discussion with your comments of agreement or disagreement.
- **Share your viewpoint and experience!** When you find yourself disagreeing with other people's interpretations or opinions, say so and tell why, in a friendly way.
- **Listen thoughtfully to others!** Try to understand the other person's point of view. Remember, there are several points of view possible on every question.
- **Be respectful, but also be critical:** Don't accept ideas that don't have a sound basis.
- **Be brief!** Share the discussion with others. Be ready to let someone else speak. A good discussion includes everyone in the group.
- **This is a discussion, not a debate!**
- **Come with your own questions in mind!** As you read the articles and chapters, make note of the points on which you'd like to hear the comments of members. If the questions asked don’t address your concerns, raise your own!

All students are required to abide by the **Tulane University Honor Code**. According to the Newcomb-Tulane College website http://college.tulane.edu/code.htm this code "shall apply to academic conduct of each student from the time of application for admission through the actual awarding of a degree, even though academic conduct may occur before classes begin or after classes end, as well as during the academic year and during periods between terms of actual enrollment, and even if the academic conduct is not discovered until after a degree is awarded. The Code shall apply to a student’s academic conduct even if the student withdraws from school while a disciplinary matter is pending." "Any student behavior that has the effect of interfering with education, pursuit of knowledge, or fair evaluation of a student's performance is considered a violation. Any student found to have committed or to have attempted to commit the following misconduct is subject to the disciplinary sanctions outlined in this Code." The following are defined as violations:

- **Cheating** -- Giving, receiving, or using, or attempting to give, receive, or use unauthorized assistance, information, or study aids in academic work, or preventing or attempting to prevent another from using authorized assistance, information, or study aids. Consulting with any persons other than the course professor and teaching assistants regarding a take-home examination between the time the exam is distributed and the time it is submitted by the student for grading.
- **Plagiarism** -- Unacknowledged or falsely acknowledged presentation of another person's ideas, expressions, or original research as one's own work. Such an act often gives the reader the impression that the student has written or thought something that he or she has in fact borrowed from another. Any paraphrasing or quotation must be appropriately acknowledged. Plagiarism also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials. Please consult Acknowledging Sources In Academic Work a copy of which may be obtained in the Newcomb-Tulane College Dean’s Office or the Center for Academic Advising for more information on documenting sources.
- **Fabrication** -- Submission of contrived or altered information in any academic exercise.
- **False Information** – Furnishing false information to any University official, instructor, or Tulane University office relating to any academic assignment or issue.
• **Unauthorized collaboration** -- Collaboration not explicitly allowed by the instructor to obtain credit for examinations or course assignments.

• **Multiple submission** -- Presentation of a paper or other work for credit in two distinct courses without prior approval by both instructors.

• **Sabotage** -- Destroying or damaging another student's work, or otherwise preventing such work from receiving fair graded assessment.

• **Unfair advantage** -- Any behavior disallowed by an instructor that gives an advantage over other fellow students in an academic exercise.

• **Facilitation of academic dishonesty** -- Knowingly helping or attempting to help another student violate any provision of the code.


### Course Grades:

- Service Learning Paper (30 pages) 35% of final grade.
- Oral Presentation of Service Learning project 15% of final grade.
- Take-Home Exams (each worth 10% of final grade) 20% of final grade.
- Discussion Leadership 10% of final grade.
- Critical Essays 10% of final grade.
- Class Attendance and Participation 10% of final grade.

I do not give extra credit, extra assignments, or other opportunities for improving grades. Moreover, I do not negotiate about grades, except when you believe there is an explicit error in the grading procedures. No grades will be determined by a curve.

### TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

**Week 1 (August 27): Introduction to Urban Policy and Planning**

**Week 2 (September 3): Social Justice, Urban Policy, and the City**

- Required Reading:
- Recommended Reading:

**Week 3 (September 10): Organizing for Change: Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and the Challenges of Urban Reform**

- Required Reading:
Week 4 (September 17): **Race, Class, and Power: Welfare Reform and Urban Poverty**

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:

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Week 5 (September 24): **Segregated Cities: Real Estate, Housing Policy, and Uneven Development**

In-class discussion of the service learning experience (hand out take home exam)

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:

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Week 6 (October 1): Take-home exam due (no class; no readings)

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Week 7 (October 8): **Cities are Fun: Tourism and Urban Cultural Production**

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:

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Week 8 (October 15): **Cities and Catastrophe: Risk, Vulnerability, and Urban Disaster**

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:


Week 9 (October 22): **Cities and Global Climate Change: Urban Adaptation and Survival**

**Required Reading:**


**Recommended Reading:**


Week 10 (October 29): **Cities are Resilient: Planning for Urban Sustainability**

In-class discussion of the service learning experience (hand out take home exam)

**Required Reading:**


**Recommended Reading:**


Week 11 (November 5): Take-home exam due (no class; no readings)

Week 12 (November 12): **Oral Presentations of Service Learning Projects**

Week 13 (November 19): **Oral Presentations of Service Learning Projects**

Week 14 (November 26): Thanksgiving Break

Week 15 (December 3): **Final Discussion for Final Project**

Required Reading:

**Final Papers due Tuesday, December 17**