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GRG 356T/URB 354—Urban Publics
Spring 2012

Course Description

This urban geography course will focus on the important concept of "the public" in the city. Public space and public projects have been central aspects of cities since their earliest appearance; indeed, some would argue that they are the very basis of, and reason for, the emergence of cities. However, conceptions of "the public" have shifted over time, with significant impact on the way cities are inhabited, used, and spatially organized, especially along the lines of gender, ethnicity, race, and class. We will examine some of these shifts, with an emphasis on contemporary struggles over defining "the urban public"—who's included in it, who gets to define it, what its relation is to "the private"—and how those struggles are linked to social, cultural, political, and economic forces.

Assignments/Requirements

- Participation (see below) (25% of course grade)
- Three 4-6-page papers (45% of course grade, 15% each)
- Midterm (15% of course grade)
- Final Exam (15% of course grade)

Class Participation

As this course is primarily a discussion-based class, students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the day's assigned readings & topic. Students are expected, therefore, to have completed the readings before class and to have sufficiently reflected on the ideas and issues brought up in the readings. Students should be prepared to ask questions about the reading and to offer thoughts and opinions about the ideas presented in the readings. **Students should bring a copy of the day's readings to class.**

Grading criteria for participation:

A Student consistently takes an active role in class, participating regularly in discussions, volunteering thoughts, asking thoughtful questions, and defending opinions. Comments consistently draw on the assigned readings, demonstrating a thoughtful and thorough engagement with the texts, while moving discussion forward and building on comments by other students or the instructor. Student does not monopolize discussion, but is also a thoughtful listener, fostering participation by others.

B Student sometimes takes an active role in class, sharing relevant ideas and asking appropriate questions. Student contributes to class discussions and listens to their classmates with respect. As a result of having completed assigned reading, these students are prepared to answer questions when called upon.

C Student occasionally takes an active role in class, participating and asking questions infrequently. Student hesitates to share ideas and may not always listen to or respect the opinions of others. Student usually participates only when called upon. As a result of not having completed the assigned reading, student may not be prepared to answer thoughtfully with detail or substance.

D Student rarely takes an active role in class, rarely participating in discussion and rarely sharing ideas or asking questions. Student displays poor listening skills and may show disrespect for others. As a result of being unprepared for or disengaged from class, student may fail to offer ideas even when called upon. When student does participate, comments may detract from the progress of the discussion or repeat points already covered.

Texts

- There are no required books. All readings are available on Blackboard

Policies

- Late papers will lose 1/3 of a grade for every day late (including weekends).
- I do not accept papers via email.
- No laptops, cell phones, or text messaging in class.

Attendance

This is a discussion-based course; therefore, attending class is crucial. I do take attendance. **More than 3 absences, excused or otherwise, will negatively affect your grade.**

Grading and Workload

University guidelines state that "for each hour a class meets, an average of two additional hours of preparation is expected of the student." This class meets three hours a week, which means that you should expect about six hours of out-of-class work per week. Please remember that grades are defined by university policy in the following manner: "A (excellent), B (above average), C (average), D (pass), and F (failure)."

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of using someone else's words or ideas and passing them off as your own. It constitutes a serious breach of academic honesty and can result in a failing grade or expulsion from school. Please be aware of university policies on academic integrity (http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php)

Students with Disabilities or Special Needs

One of the goals of this course is to create an environment which encourages and allows all students to participate in and benefit from class activities. Students with disabilities and/or special needs will be reasonably accommodated in this regard. If you have a disability or special need, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities (<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssd/>).

The Undergraduate Writing Center

The Undergraduate Writing Center provides individual, professional advice on all aspects of writing to UT undergraduates on a drop-in basis or by appointment. I encourage you to take advantage of this resource.

- Location: Flawn Academic Center 211, phone 471-6222.
- The UWC also runs the Writer's Advice Line at 475-VERB, or email writing@uwc.utexas.edu.
- Hours and more info at <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/uwc/>

A Few Comments

I cannot stress this enough: Communicate with me! Please ask for help when you need it. If you are having problems, let me know *early*, and I will do what I can to help. I have weekly office hours, which are times when I am specifically available for students. By all means, come and talk to me about any concerns or problems you have with any aspect of this course—or just stop by to talk about ideas and issues raised in class. Feedback (positive and negative) about the course is always welcome, and I'm happy to consider ideas you may have for improving the course along the way. I am also available at other times; just ask!

Course Schedule

	Date	Topic	Reading
Week 1	M 1/16 W 1/18 F 1/20	MLK Holiday Introduction, imagined communities Public works & spaces in ancient cities	Excerpt from Benedict Anderson (handout) Childe
Week 2	M 1/23 W 1/25 F 1/27	The Greek Agora Development of public & private life Invention of the public sphere	Mumford Bondi & Domosh Thompson
Week 3	M 1/30 W 2/1 F 2/3	Life in modern cities The parks movement Life in modern cities	Wirth Olmsted, Bender Jacobs
Week 4	M 2/6 W 2/8 F 2/10	Public space & democracy Public space & democracy Decline of public space	Berman D Mitchell Rybczynski
Week 5	M 2/13 W 2/15 F 2/17	Commodification of public space Privatization of public space Militarization of public space	Goss Lees, Zukin Davis
Week 6	M 2/20 W 2/22 F 2/24	Militarization of public space Homelessness in Austin AAG—Rich out of town	Fyfe & Bannister Reports on Homelessness in Austin
Week 7	M 2/27 W 2/29 F 3/2	AAG—Rich out of town AAG—Rich out of town Alternative publics Due: Short paper #1	Deutsche, Cresswell
Week 8	M 3/5 W 3/7 F 3/9	Alternative publics Midterm Go over midterm	McCann, Staeheli
Spring Break 3/12 – 3/16			
Week 9	M 3/19 W 3/21 F 3/23	Urban Politics & the public The “information city” & the “creative class” Development	Molotch Florida, Baris
Week 10	M 3/26 W 3/28 F 3/30	Public use & eminent domain Public use & eminent domain Public use & eminent domain	Kelo case documents Lawson
Week 11	M 4/2 W 4/4 F 4/6	Planning and the public Urban participatory democracy Planning and the public	Friedmann 1, Davidoff, Arnstein Porto Alregre, Putnam
Week 12	M 4/9 W 4/11 F 4/13	Introduction to research papers Flex day Flex day	(City Hall field trip in here somewhere)
Week 13	M 4/16 W 4/18 F 4/20	Rise of civil society Rise of civil society Civil society Due: Short paper #2	Friedmann 2 Appadurai Abu-Lughod, Theodore and Martin
Week 14	M 4/23 W 4/25 F 4/27	Presentations Presentations Presentations	
Week 15	M 4/30 W 5/2 F 5/4	Presentations Presentations Paper #3 due , wrap-up, review, course evaluations	
Finals	Wed 5/9	Final 7-10 pm	