

Urban Anthropology and Ethnography

Fall 2012

ANT 324L * URB 354 * AMS 321

Unique #: 31172, 37741, 30658

SAC 4.118

M-W-F 11am-12pm

Dr. Amelia Rosenberg Weinreb

Office hours: 10am-11am, Fridays

SAC 4.136

amy.weinreb@mail.utexas.edu

Phone: 232-1560

I. Course description:

Over the thirty years in which urban anthropology has developed into an identifiable sub-field, it has moved towards a cohesive paradigm, linking together anthropology's interests in meaning and agency to political and economic models of urban structure. The goal of this course is to look at critically at that paradigm: the ways in which urban anthropologists work--theoretically and methodologically--in order to uncover the interaction between significant structural forces and culturally produced meaning and action on the ground in a variety of cities across the globe.

With that goal in mind, the course is organized around exploring the following: 1) structural frameworks for contextualizing cities; 2) strategies for analysis of cities and urban populations: top-down (looking at the powerful) and bottom-up (looking at the less powerful), considering the role ethnographic fieldwork can play in creating those analysis; 3) current themes of the sub-field including: neighborhoods, space as structured by the state and the market, urban social movements, poverty and class as mapped onto the city; global cities and processes of globalization; theories of place and public space, the circulation of media forms and consumer desire in urban space, and trends in urban planning and architecture as an anthropological concern. The course also enables students to design and conduct an original, small-scale project using the Austin area as an urban field site to illuminate these themes, or explore new ones. To this end, there will be a series of intensive, in-class ethnographic workshops for students to sample specialized methodologies, present their works-in-progress and receive constructive feedback from fellow course-members and the instructor.

Note: This course carries the Writing Flag. Writing Flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to write regularly during the semester, complete substantial writing projects, and receive feedback from your instructor to help you improve your writing. You will also have the opportunity to revise one or more assignments, and to read and discuss your peers' work. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work.

Required Texts (for purchase at the Co-op Bookstore)

Theorizing the City edited by Setha Low

Righteous Dopefiend by Phillipe Bourgois and Jefferey Shoenberg

On the Plaza by Setha Low

The Intimate Economies of Bangkok by Ara Wilson

Note: A required course pack is available for purchase at Abel's Copies, located at University Towers (715D West 23rd St.)

II. Course objectives:

Through workshops, discussions, papers, core concepts quizzes and a substantial final research project, students will have developed the skills to be able to:

- Articulate central themes of urban anthropology and the structural frameworks that have been used for contextualizing cities
- Place course themes within in a wider context of anthropological theory
- Consider the contribution that anthropology has made to the understanding of urban culture, nationally and internationally
- Converse, with historical and ethnographic sensitivity, about a range of contemporary urban issues
- Develop basic skills to conduct ethnographic research in an urban setting and write ethnographic vignettes

III. Course Design and Format

This course, which will be run in a seminar-style format, is recommended for motivated upper-division undergraduate who are developing an intellectual interest cities and urban cultures. It is run as series of lively, fast-paced, interactive meetings in which students are encouraged to articulate and synthesize ideas with clarity, accuracy and sensitivity, and defend positions through evidence based on a common reading list. Discussion leaders, designated weekly, will raise questions, stimulate debate, and integrate ideas from the readings and course core concepts into our collective analysis. I will be asking for your feedback regularly so there is an open flow of communication and room for improvement during the semester. As a Writing Flag course, there are writing assignments throughout the semester to encourage students analyze and synthesize information and ideas in a rigorously.

The weekly cycle normally looks like this:

Mon- An instructor-led discussion establishes the context and background for the readings and outlines their key data, arguments and ideas in the reading.

Wed- A small team of students, delegated in advance, will facilitate the discussion along with the instructor, raising questions, stimulating debate, and integrating ideas from the readings into the collective analysis.

Fri- Summary and review of readings, small group-work.

A note on attendance, contribution, and classroom vibe: Regular attendance is not only the key to your own success as a student in this course, but also for the quality of the course as a dynamic whole. Arriving late and leaving early disrupts class flow, so make every effort to arrive to class on time with your materials prepared and phones and computers, etc. off. This is a low-tech, highly interpersonal seminar.

IMPORTANT NOTE ON ABSENCES: After 2 absences (no questions asked), your final grade will be lowered two percentage points for each additional absence after that.

IV. Overview of Assignments:

● **Discussion leadership (5%):** Three students, delegated in advance, facilitate the discussion or an activity along with the instructor, raising questions, stimulating debate, and integrating ideas from the readings into the collective analysis. You will do this **once** during the semester. Participating in class more generally, as a formal leader or otherwise, has a positive influence on your grade.

• **One 2-page reading response paper (5%):** When you lead discussion (with your group), each individual in that group will write a two-page (12 pt. font, Times New Roman, double spaced) summary response to the reading for that day. The responses must have: a) At least one page is a summary of the reading that identifies the thesis of the section you read; b) s second page that include reflections, reactions, critical commentaries or overviews; and c) Three questions, based in or inspired by the readings, to stimulate class discussion and debate. They will be graded on their quality, attention to facts, examples and details in the reading as well your thoughtfulness. The two-page typed responses will be turned in class on those **Wednesdays** that students lead discussion, and are marked on the course schedule below.

• **3 short analysis papers (30%):** Three short (3-5 page, 12 pt. font, Times New Roman, double spaced) analysis papers based on each of the ethnographies we read, preparing for your final project analyzing our reading in more depth are due at various points in the semester. A prompt and rubric for each of these are on blackboard for you to review.

• **I methodological workshop paper (5%):** A brief (1-page, Times New Roman, double spaced) description of the proposed project and its methodology for feedback and instructor approval (*This will be due to be distributed in advance of the workshop, so all participants have an opportunity to comment on them thoughtfully*).

• **Final paper (35%):** A 10-15 page (12 pt. font, Times New Roman, double spaced) paper based on your local fieldwork project that combines theory, analysis and ethnography. Students will be asked to use theoretical materials from the course to think through their research projects for their final papers. A bibliography of literature cited (should have at least 6-8 references total, with at least three sources from outside the course). **Note: To receive a grade, all submissions must include at least 10 pages of field notes (typed or hand written, though I recommend typed) upon which the paper was based.**

IV. Summary of Course Requirements and Percentage of Final Grade:

- 1) **10%:** Regular, active intellectually rigorous participation in seminar component
- 2) **10%** 5 brief (fill-in-the-blank) in-class “core concepts” quizzes
- 3) **10%:** Discussion leadership (5%), including a (2 page) graded reading summary and response on day you lead (5%)
- 4) **35%:** 3 (3-5 page) analytic papers related to course readings (10% each, total of 30%), and 1, (1-3 page) project proposal (5%).
- 5) **35%** Final (10-15 page) research paper which integrates readings, literature review and local fieldwork component.

V. Grading Scale

- | | | |
|-----------|---------|---|
| A | 95-100% | <u>Excellent</u> grasp of subject matter; explains concepts clearly; provides relevant details and examples; draws clear and interesting connections, exceptionally original, coherent and well-organized; ideas clearly written/stated, outstanding classroom participation. |
| A- | 90-94% | <u>Very good</u> grasp of subject matter; explains concepts clearly; provides relevant details and examples; draws clear connections; ideas clearly written/stated |
| B+ | 86-89% | <u>Good</u> grasp of some elements above, others need work |
| B | 83-85% | <u>Satisfactory</u> grasp of some elements above |
| B- | 80-82% | <u>Uneven, spotty</u> grasp of the elements above |
| C+ | 76-79 % | <u>Limited</u> grasp of the above |
| C | 73-75% | <u>Poor</u> grasp of the above |

- C-** 70-72% Very poor grasp of the above
- D** 60-69% Little evidence of grasp of material, having done readings, attended class, or completed assignments
- F** 0-59% Insignificant evidence of having done readings, attended class, or completing assignments

VII. Important Notes on Grading Policy and Support for Students:

Complete written assignments on time: I am committed to returning assignments to you promptly so you can benefit from my feedback while material is fresh in your mind. I do not grade papers or exams until I have the entire printed set in front of me. For these reasons, **I do not accept late assignments.** Bring a hard copy at the beginning of class on the day it is due. If you anticipate a problem, or have a history of deadline problems, meet with a consultant at the learning or writing center to help you plan ahead.

The UT Learning Center: <http://www.utexas.edu/student/utlc/>

Undergraduate Writing Center: <http://uwc.utexas.edu/>

Grading policy: I am very happy to discuss how you may improve your work, and will read early drafts, but **I will not reconsider grades on papers or quizzes.** I grade all the papers in a set at the same time to ensure that I am applying the same standards, and I make every effort to be fair.

Plagiarism and copying: Although this course is designed for creative, individual work and synthesis of ideas from various sources, any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit must be the student's own work. Should copying occur from another student, both the student who copied work and the student who gave material to be copied will both automatically receive a zero for the assignment.

Penalty for violation of this Code can also be extended to include failure of the course and University disciplinary action. Here are University statements about plagiarism and the consequences of plagiarizing:

<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/faculty/plagiarism/preventing.html>

<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/plagiarism/>

Using office hours, getting help: I check email regularly, and will usually reply to emails within 24 hours for basic questions, and no longer than three days for more complicated ones. My door is open from 10am-11am on Fridays. Ask for an appointment if you can't come in during my regular hours.

VIII. University Notices and Policies

University of Texas Honor Code

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

In this course, that means we will all work to ensure that the discussion space is shared relatively equally among the participants, and to maintain an atmosphere of respect for each other's perspectives and arguments, especially when there are strong disagreements.

Students with disabilities

Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at (512) 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-

3986 (video phone). Please contact me as early in the semester as possible to let me know if you need anything to participate fully.

Religious Holy Days

By UT Austin policy, students are required to notify me of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will certainly give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

PAPER Due-dates at-a-glance: Plan ahead!
W 9/19-Paper 1 W 10/3-Project Proposal W 10/15-Paper 2 W 10/26-Paper 3 W 12/5-FINAL PAPER

IX. Tentative Course Schedule: ***This syllabus represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.*

Date	Main Topic(s)	Work to do at home Readings – to be completed before class	Evaluation
W 8/29	Introduction to the course		
F 8/31	Theorizing the City	Read over syllabus, Read “Introduction” in Low Reader pp. 1-37.	Type me a brief note about the syllabus: a) what surprises you; b) what you look forward to; c) what you most dread
M 9/3	LABOR DAY HOLIDAY: NO CLASS		
W 9/5	✂ Student-led Some classic Marxist statements on the city	Katznelson Ch. 1. “Marxism and the City?” pp. 1-42; Engels “Working Class Manchester” (579-585)	Student discussion leaders hand in 2-page reading response, typed and stapled.
F 9/7	Classic (and refuted) statements	In course pack: Wirth, “Urbanism as a way of life” pp. 97-118; Lewis, Engle Merry, “Urban Danger” Lewis, “The Culture of Poverty” pp; 119-130 with Goode, “How Urban Ethnography Counters myths about the poor” pp.185-201;	
M 9/10	The Divided City	Part I Low Reader pp. 37-105	

W 9/12	✂ Student-led <i>Righteous Dopefiend</i>	Introduction-ch.3	Student discussion leaders hand in 2-page reading response, typed and stapled.
F 9/14	<i>Righteous Dopefiend</i>	Ch. 4-6	Quiz #1 in class
M 9/17	ROSH HA SHANA HOLIDAY: NO CLASS		
W 9/19	Bring in news article featuring on anything urban to discuss		Due: Short Paper #1
F 9/21	Urban planning and design	Owens, "Pedestrian Life and Neighborhood Form" 115-135; "Looking At Cities" 1-83.	
M 9/24	Urban ethnography research and methodology	In course pack "Anthropological Fieldwork in Cities" pp. 5-18 from <i>The Craft of Research</i> 35-81; "The anthropology of Cities: Some Methodological Issues" 233-247	
W 9/26	YOM KIPPUR OBSERVED: NO CLASS		
F 9/28	Workshop: Fieldnotes practicum, meet in SAC lobby, Discussing Field notes: Tricks of the Trade; sharing/critiquing vignettes	<i>Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes</i> , Ch 1-4	
M 10/1	SUKKOT HOLIDAY: NO CLASS		
W 10/3	Workshop: Discussing student projects for development and improvement	Read all projects descriptions posted on blog, write comments	DUE: a) Type up fieldnotes, write brief vignette; *Project Proposal: 3 page description of the project and its methodology
F 10/5	The Contested City,	Low Reader Part II: "The Contested City" p. 111-138	
M 10/8	SIMHAT TORAH HOLIDAY: NO CLASS		
W10/10	✂ Student-led <i>On the Plaza</i>	Part I	Student discussion leaders hand in 2-page reading response, typed and stapled.
F 10/12	<i>On the Plaza</i>	Part II	
M 10/15	Open Conversation: New		Due: Short

	Directions in Urban Anthropology		paper #2
W 10/17	✂ Student-led The global city	Low Reader Part III: The Global City in Low p. 169-201;	
F 10/19		<i>Intimate Economies</i> , Intro-Ch. 2	
M 10/22		<i>Intimate Economies</i> Ch. 3-4	Student discussion leaders hand in 2-page reading response, typed and stapled
W 10/24	✂ Student-led <i>Intimate Economies</i>	<i>Intimate Economies</i> Ch. 5- Conclusion	Quiz #3 in class Student discussion leaders hand in 2-page reading response, typed and stapled
F 10/26	Workshop: Update and troubleshooting on student projects		Short Paper #3 Due
M 10/29	The Modernist City, Low Reader Pt. IV	245-277	
W 10/31	✂ Student-led The Modernist City, Low Reader Pt. IV	277-317	Student discussion leaders hand in 2-page reading response, typed and stapled
F 11/2	History of Suburbs	Fishman in course pack, Preface and pp. ix, Intro-2	
M 11/5	New Urbanism	Readings Posted on blackboard	
W 11/7	✂ Student-led Contemporary urban issues: Suburbs, Exurbs and Urban Decline	Bring in articles on any of these topics	Student discussion leaders hand in 2-page reading response, typed and stapled
F 11/9	Low Reader Part V: "The Postmodern City	317-342	
M 11/12	Low Reader Part V: "The Postmodern City	342-400	
W 11/14	✂ Student-led Dear and Flusty 61-94	Dear and Flusty 61-94	Student discussion leaders hand in 2-page reading response, typed and stapled
F 11/16	Writer's workshop, round 1	Bring in 1-page writing sample from final paper draft	Quiz #4 in class
M 11/19	Writer's workshop, round 2		
W 11/21	Prof. available for individual writing conferences: Please sign up in advance		
F 11/23	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY:		

	NO CLASS		
M 11/26	Photo shoot in Austin, location to be announced		
W 11/28	Workshop: Creating captions for photos		
F 11/30	50 fill-in-the-blank ID questions		FINAL QUIZ: Cumulative CORE CONCEPTS
M 12/3	Student Presentations, round 1		
W 12/5	Student Presentations, round 2		DUE: FINAL PAPERS
F 12/7	Final party with food and drink!		