

**SOCIOLOGY 476 (25376)**  
**Topics in Urban Studies**  
**Spring, 2007**

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### **Introduction**

This course adopts an integrated and comparative approach to studying the meaning of place and the global and local characteristics, conditions, and consequences of growth and transformation of cities and communities. We begin with a deep probe of the meaning of place as a crucial concept and then review and critique competing theoretical perspectives for understanding cities and communities. For an illustrative case study, we will examine Chicago and its communities and neighborhoods in depth. For case studies of larger and more embedded urban units, we will compare several Asia-Pacific transborder subregions as new transnational spaces and global or globalizing cities as networked spaces. Toward the end of class, we will take a brief look at six global cities covered in the Urban Age project in which I have been involved. Each student is required to choose an urban topic of his/her interest and complete an individual research project and term paper that uses one or more theoretical perspectives and a method of analysis to examine a city or community preferably from a comparative perspective.

### **Requirements and Grading**

Students are required to keep up with the readings. The lectures often go beyond the required readings, so regular attendance and note-taking in class is important. Written assignments include an in-class midterm exam (consisting of multiple choice and essay questions), two short essays of approximately 4 pages, and a term paper of about 15 pages based on in-depth library or field research. The midterm constitutes 30% of your overall grade, the two short essays 15%, the term project 40%, and the remaining 15% based on an oral presentation and performance in class discussions.

### **Readings**

1. Anthony M. Orum and Xiangming Chen, *The World of Cities*, Blackwell Publishing, 2003.
  2. Xiangming Chen, *As Borders Bend: Transnational Spaces on the Pacific Rim*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2005.
  3. William Julius Wilson, *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor*. Vintage, 1997.
  4. William Julius Wilson and Richard Taub, *There Goes the Neighborhood: Racial, Ethnic, and Class Tensions in Four Chicago Neighborhoods and Their Meaning for America*. Knopf, 2006.
  5. Saskia Sassen, ed. *Global Networks, Linked Cities*. Routledge, 2002.
- \*A number of articles on the Urban Age project online at [www.urban-age.net](http://www.urban-age.net).

### **Course Outline and Readings**

#### Week 1: Introduction

- 1/16 Introducing the course.
- 1/18 Introductory lecture on general issues.

#### Week 2: Historical Background and a Perspective on Place

- 1/23 Orum and Chen, Chapter 1, pp. 1-16.
- 1/25 Orum and Chen, Chapter 1, pp. 16-26.

Week 3: Theoretical Perspectives

- 1/30 Orum and Chen, Chapter 2, pp. 27-44.  
2/1 Orum and Chen, Chapter 2, pp. 44-63.

Week 4: Cities in the U.S. and Other Countries

- 2/6 Orum and Chen, Chapter 3.  
2/8 Orum and Chen, Chapter 4.

Week 5: As Borders Bend

- 2/13 Chen, Chapters 1 and 2.  
2/15 Chen, Chapter 3.

Week 6: Continued from Week 5

- 2/20 Chen, Chapters 4 and 5.  
2/22 Chen, Chapters 6 and 7.

Week 7: Continued from Week 6

- 2/27 Chen, Chapter 8.  
3/1 Chen, Chapter 9.

Week 8: **Review and the Midterm**

- 3/6 Review.  
**3/8 Midterm Exam.**

Week 9: When Work Disappears and There Goes the Neighborhood

- 3/13 Wilson, Chapters 1 and 2.  
3/15 Wilson, Chapters 3-5.

Week 10: Continued from Week 9

- 3/20 Wilson, Chapters 6-8.  
3/22 Wilson and Taub, Chapters 1 and 2.

**Spring Break (3/26-3/30)**

Week 11: Continued from Week 10

- 4/3 Wilson and Taub, Chapters 3 and 4.  
4/5 Wilson and Taub, Chapters 5 and 6.

Week 12: Back to the Global from Chicago

- 4/10 Sassen, Chapters 1 and 2.  
4/12 Sassen, Chapters 3 and 4.

Week 13: Continued from Week 12

- 4/17 Sassen, Chapters 5 and 6.  
4/19 Sassen, Chapters 7 and 8.

Week 14: Asia-Pacific Transborder Subregions

- 4/24 Sassen, Chapters 9 and 10.  
4/26 Sassen, Chapters 11 and 12.

Week 15: Conclusion and Summary

- 5/2 Summary and evaluation.  
**5/9 Term paper due.**