

University of Alberta Department of Sociology

## Cities and Suburbia

**SOC 445/585 B1 Winter Term 2023-24**

Thursdays 1-3:50pm, NEW ROOM: ECHA 1-436

Instructor: Prof. Rob Shields, HMTory Research Chair.

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The University of Alberta respectfully acknowledges that we are situated on Treaty 6 territory, traditional lands of First Nations and Métis people.

### COURSE INFORMATION

**Course Description:** 3 units. “The significance of urban social spaces and environments, architecture, planning, design and material culture.”

**Course Prerequisites:** SOC100 or consent of the instructor. It is your responsibility as a student to ensure that you have the appropriate prerequisites for the course.

**Course Objectives and Expected Learning Outcomes:** *What is the future of cities as social cultural economic and ecological environments?* Can justice societies continue to thrive in sprawling cities given climate and environmental challenges, their energy consumption and concentration of social pathologies? This course is organized to present an introduction to urban sociology, cultural theory and the relationship to environmental sociology through case studies and local sites. The course covers

- social spatialisation: society and social practices as spatial and spatialisation as social, the treatment of space, place and region in sociology, issues of urban and suburban forms and environmental interaction
- everyday life as a space-time experience, alienation and the right to the city
- justice and environmental aspects of social life (housing and shelter, transportation and mobility, poverty and exclusion, social networks (diversity, voluntarism, community), sustainable cities, mobilities and transport.
- city as a classroom and lab for research: reimagining derelict or declining suburban strip malls as opportunities to create walkable, convivial and more sustainable communities.

**Learning Outcomes:** This course offers a capstone that reflects on the threads of many other courses, plus a synthesis of theory and cases relevant to social science. It explores the intersection of tangible materials and intangible processes in the context of material places in cities and suburbs. It draws on lived experiences in local communities and links this to academic content, treating the city itself as the classroom for learning and fieldwork experiences. The course includes group work, critical/creative responses, field visits, meetings with the

community. By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Describe the material, social and political-economic drivers of urban change;
- Demonstrate academic literature review skills, small research project management and science communication presentation skills;
- Have a basic understanding of policy making and program delivery in local government;
- Evaluate factors that influence urban and suburban change.
- Communicate and evaluate knowledge and information from peers in short- and long-form writing

**Course Format:** This is a workshop and discussion-oriented course which depends on classroom participation and attendance for success.

## LEARNING RESOURCES

### Required Textbooks:

- J.T. Roane *Black Agoras* New York University Press 2022.
- Other readings will be downloadable

**Optional texts for interest:** Chapters from the instructor's books *Places on the Margin*. *What is a City* and *Spatial Questions* are used for several readings. Henri Lefebvre's *Production of Space* and Donald Schön's *Reflective Practitioner* are also ordered in the bookstore.

**Course Fees:** none

### Optional Learning Resources

- The [Academic Success Centre](https://www.ualberta.ca/current-students/academic-success-centre/writing-services/index.html) provides professional academic support to help students strengthen their academic skills and achieve their academic goals. Individual advising, appointments, and group workshops are available year round in the areas of Accessibility, Communication, Learning, and Writing Resources. Modest fees apply for some services.
- Writing Services through the Academic Success Centre: <https://www.ualberta.ca/current-students/academic-success-centre/writing-services/index.html> offers free one-on-one writing support to students, faculty, and staff. Students can request consultation for a writing project at any stage of development. Instructors can request class visits and presentations.
- The First Peoples' House provides an environment of empowerment for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit learners to achieve personal and academic growth.

**Important Dates:** First Day of Class: Jan 8 2024  
50% Withdrawal Date: Feb 7 2024  
Last Day of Class: Apr. 12 2024

Add/Delete Date: Jan 19 2024  
Withdrawal Date: April 5 2024

## LECTURE SCHEDULE (will be revised to reflect progress)

|    | Dates  | Topic – will be revised to reflect progress.   |  |
|----|--------|--|--|
| 1  | Jan 11 | Introduction cities and suburbs, spatialization and time, cultural topologies of postpandemic urbanism |  |
| 2  | Jan 18 | How are space and time social? Methods and problem frames  |  |
| 3  | Jan 25 | Political economy of land: jurisdiction, territory, property, strata                                   |  |
| 4  | Feb 1  | Six feet apart: CoVid impacts and postpandemic downtowns   | Notes  |
| 5  | Feb 8  | Informality. Resilience as social not physical. Community problem solving                              |  |
| 6  | Feb 15 | Androcentric <i>polis</i> and expanding relations of ruling: A city for “all of life”?                 |  |
|    | Feb 22 | Reading Week   |  |
| 7  | Feb 29 | Patriarchy household, <i>oikomene</i>  | (Brief presentations through March) Notes        |
| 8  | Mar 7  | Spatial justice  | Outlines   |
| 9  | Mar 14 | Abilities and mobilities: the Automobilized suburb and walkability                                     |  |
| 10 | Mar 21 | Disaster and the city: New Orleans, cultural capitals, ‘Other Vaticans’                                |  |
| 11 | Mar 28 | Social Spatialisation and Spatial Justice Workshop   |  |
| 12 | Apr 4  | Decolonial suburbs & the return of repressed urban histories: the Papaschase                           | Notes  |
| 13 | Apr 11 | Peer editing of papers   | Papers due, (hand in revisions online by Apr 12) |

## GRADE EVALUATION

| Assignment   | Hand-in      | %   |
|--|--------------|-----|
| <b>Reading Notes</b> of 1 course reading with an example each week. 3 hand-in dates. 250-400 words each with focus on your individual paper topics. 585 students are expected to meet with the instructor and submit min. 400 word notes on 1 or more course readings/week. Notebook, blog, wiki or word doc with diagrams, maps and your own photographs. |              |     |
| Weeks 1-3 (3 notes)  | Feb 1        | 12  |
| Weeks 4-7 (4 notes)  | Mar 7        | 16  |
| Weeks 8-11 (4 notes)   | Apr 4        | 16  |
| <b>Brief Presentation based on individual paper outline</b> Pass/Fail.   | During March | 6   |
| Marks awarded for oral presentation +3 and participation +3  |              |     |
| <b>Individual Paper outline</b> (title) and 1/2 page outline + 1/2 page sources.\  | Mar 14       | 10  |
| <b>Marking scheme:</b> basic handin +3, acceptable sources +4, notes and drafts +3   |              |     |
| <b>Papers due &amp; peer editing workshop</b> on complex anthropogenic environmental impacts/relations 2500 words plus diagrams. 1+ pages references. Hand-in <b>in class</b> . 585 Students 15 pages (4000-5000 words).   | April 11     | 15  |
| <b>Marking scheme:</b> sources +2, 1500 word draft +8, participation +5  |              |     |
| <b>Revised paper</b> Final Hand-in of revisions via eclass or email.   | April 12     | 25  |
| <b>Total</b>   |              | 100 |

**Grading:** Course grades obtained by Soc445 students will be converted from numerical to letter grades as follows with variation as noted for Soc585 students:

- A+ Original, exceptional and outstanding in all respects  $\geq 95$
- A Distinctly outstanding work 90-94
- A- Careful, thorough and insightful work 81-89
- B+ Excellent, insightful work in most respects 78-80
- B Very Good solid work 74-77
- B- Good work in most respects 70-73
- C+ Good work in some respects 67-69
- C Satisfactory work 64-66 (SOC 585: C and below is a failure for graduate students)
- C- Satisfactory but significant flaws 60-63
- D+ Substantial incomprehension of course material 57-59
- D Minimal Pass 50-56
- F Fail  $\leq 50$

**Evaluation:** All assignments in this course will be given a numerical score. A cumulative course mark will be calculated from those scores based on the conversion above. A final letter grade will be assigned based on your cumulative mark and my analysis of the class's cumulative mark distribution. Where possible, natural breaks in the cumulative mark distribution will be used in assigning grades, but no pre-determined distribution of grades will be imposed on the class. Your grade will reflect a combination of your absolute achievement and relative standing in the class. Grades are unofficial until approved by the Department and/or Faculty offering the course.

## **POLICIES FOR LATE AND MISSED WORK**

**Attendance:** Regular participation is essential for optimal performance in any course. For an excused absence where the cause is religious belief, a student must contact the instructor within two weeks of the start of Fall or Winter classes to request accommodation for the term (including the final exam, where relevant). Instructors may request adequate documentation to substantiate the student request.

**Late Policies:** A student who cannot complete a term assignment on time due to incapacitating illness, severe domestic affliction or other compelling reasons must apply to the course instructor within two days of the absence (or as soon as possible with due regard for the circumstances) for an extension of time to complete an assignment.

Receiving alternate arrangements for the completion of term work is a privilege and not a right. There is no guarantee that late work will be accepted or that an absence will be excused.

Misrepresentation of facts to gain an unfair academic advantage over other students is a serious breach of the Code of Student Behaviour.

## **REMOTE DELIVERY CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Recordings of Synchronous Activities:**

- This course is scheduled as in-person. Please note that this course may be recorded. Recordings of this course will be used for the purposes of asynchronous learning, especially in the case of pandemic lockdowns etc., and will be disclosed to other students enrolled in this section of the class.

## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

**Academic Integrity:** The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (on the [University Governance](#) website) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts, and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

Instructors are required to report suspected violations of the COSB. See the [Academic Discipline Process](#).

All students should consult [the Academic Integrity website](#). If you have any questions, ask your instructor. Students who want to strengthen their academic skills and learn more on topics such as note-taking, time management, and academic integrity are encouraged to explore [The Academic Success Centre](#).

**Recording of Lectures:** Audio or video recording, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

**Students Eligible for Accessibility-Related Accommodations:** Eligible students have both rights and responsibilities with regard to accessibility-related accommodations. Consequently, scheduling exam accommodations in accordance with Accommodations + Accessibility's deadlines and procedures is essential. Please note adherence to procedures and deadlines is required for U of A to provide accommodations. Contact Accommodations + [Accessibility](#) for further information.

## LEARNING AND WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring that all students, faculty and staff are able to work and study in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment.

If you are experiencing harassment, discrimination, fraud, theft or any other issue and would like confidential advice and information, please contact any of these campus services:

- Office of Safe Disclosure & Human Rights: A safe, neutral and confidential space to disclose concerns about how the University of Alberta policies, procedures or ethical standards are being applied. They provide strategic advice and referral on matters such as discrimination, harassment, duty to accommodate and wrong-doings. Disclosures can be made in person or online using the Online Reporting Tool
- University of Alberta Protective Services: Peace officers dedicated to ensuring the safety and security of U of A campuses and community. Staff or students can contact UAPS to make a report if they feel unsafe, threatened, or targeted on campus or by another member of the university community. For non-emergency dispatch, call 780-492-5050. For lost and found, call 780-492-2943. In an emergency, call 911.
- Sexual Violence Supports: - It is the policy of the University of Alberta that sexual violence committed by any member of the University community is prohibited and constitutes misconduct. The University takes seriously its responsibility to reduce sexual and gender-based violence through a culture of consent, gender inclusivity, anti-oppression and support, and to respond to misconduct or conditions that allow, facilitate, or give rise to sexual and gender-based violence.

## **STUDENT RESOURCES**

The University Calendar is one of the principal sources of U of A policy information for students. It includes admission requirements and deadlines, academic regulations, programs of study, academic standards, degree requirements, and University policies for both undergraduate and graduate students.

The Student Service Centre provides students with information and access to services to support academic, financial, mental, and physical well-being.

First Peoples' House provides an environment of empowerment for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit learners to achieve personal and academic growth.

The Academic Success Centre provides professional academic support to help students maximize their academic success and achieve their academic goals. They offer appointments, advising, group workshops, online courses, and specialized programming year-round to students in all university programs, and at all levels of achievement and study.

Writing Services offers free one-on-one writing support to students, faculty, and staff. Students can request a consultation for a writing project at any stage of development. Instructors can request class visits and presentations.

Under the Discrimination, Harassment and Duty to Accommodate policy, the Office of the Dean of Students coordinates academic accommodations for prospective and current students with documented disabilities affecting mobility, vision, hearing, learning, and physical or mental health. The provision of academic accommodations helps to remove structural barriers that these students encounter in academic environments in order to facilitate equivalent learning opportunities for these students. Academic Accommodations promotes an accessible, inclusive, and universally-designed environment at the University of Alberta.

Health and Wellness Support for Students outlines the mental and physical health resources which are offered on-campus and in the community.

The Office of the Student Ombuds is a confidential service which strives to ensure that university processes related to students operate as fairly as possible. They offer information, advice, and support to students, faculty, and staff as they deal with academic, discipline, interpersonal, and financial issues related to student programs.

Need Help Now webpage offers contact information for a variety of supports if you are in immediate need of mental health and wellness support. You can also call the 24-hour Distress Line: 780-482-4357 (HELP).

Disclaimer: Any typographical errors in this syllabus are subject to change and will be announced in class and posted on eClass. The date of the final examination is set by the Registrar and takes precedence over the final examination date reported in this syllabus.

Policy about course outlines can be found in Course Requirements, Evaluation Procedures and Grading in the University Calendar.

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