

Urban Sociology – Spring 2017
SOC 415.A01 Online

Dr. Connie Robinson

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Online Office Hours: 4 to 6 pm Sundays. Other times by appointment

Course Description: This course will focus on the growth, structure, and functions of the city, their relationships to surrounding and rural areas, urban ecological patterns, and urban culture(s).

Course Objectives: By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of classical and modern sociological theories in Urban Sociology;
2. Demonstrate knowledge of social, economic, political, and cultural factors that influence how urban regions grow and develop;
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the impact of urban life, both positive and negative, on persons living in cities and surrounding regions as well as its impact locally, nationally, and globally;
4. Discuss and analyze in written form issues related to urbanization, urbanism, globalization, migration, and urban problems such as poverty, racism, and crime; and
5. Conduct and present research on a topic related to urban life and urban culture.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Required Textbook: Mark Hutter, *Experiencing Cities*, Third Edition, Routledge (2016).

Additional reading material will be assigned as needed to supplement class lectures and discussions. Any additional material will be posted in Canvas.

As a general rule, the course will follow a weekly schedule where the week's material will be posted by Monday at 12:00 pm (noon) and any assignments for the week will be due the following Sunday at 11:59 pm (midnight). Exceptions may apply so pay close to attention to the course syllabus and written notices posted in Canvas.

Students are expected to fully participate in the class by reading the textbook and additional material as assigned; listening to the recorded lectures; completing short writing assignments; participating in the class discussions on the Discussions page; and taking exams as scheduled. Details of each component are listed below:

1. **Reading Assignments:** Two or three chapters from the text and as needed, additional readings may be assigned to supplement class lecture or to serve as a basis for that week's discussion.
2. **Recorded Lectures:** Recorded lectures and other information designed to help you better understand the course material will be posted in Canvas each week.
3. **Online Discussions (90 pts total):** Each week a discussion prompt will be posted on the Discussion page and students are required to participate in the discussion by responding to the prompt and then replying to at least two classmates. The response to the prompt is worth up to six (6) points and the replies to at least two (2) classmates will be given two (2) points each. The maximum number of points available for each week's discussion is 10 points. Please see the Discussion Guidelines below for further details.

2. Research Project (70 pts total): Each student will be required to complete a research project that encompasses three parts: 1) research prospectus (10 pts); research paper (50 pts), and class presentation (10 pts). Specific guidelines for the research project will be posted separately.
1. Exams (100 pts total): There will be two exams worth 50 points each. Each exam will be designed to pull together threads from discussions, lectures, the textbook, and student’s own research to critically engage one or more topics related to globalization and apply knowledge gained to specific scenarios.

Evaluation and Grading: Total possible points equal 270 points. Final grades will be determined by taking a percentage of the total points. The breakdown is as follows:

A = 93-100%	B+ = 88-89%	B-= 80-82%	C = 73-77%	D<69%
A-= 90- 92%	B = 83 -87%	C+ = 78-79%	C-= 70-72%	F <59%

Disability Support: Central Washington University is committed to creating a learning environment that meets the needs of its diverse student body. If you anticipate or experience any barriers to learning, discuss your concerns with the instructor. Students with disabilities should contact Disability Services to discuss a range of options to removing barriers, including accommodations. Student Disability Services is located in Hogue 126. Call (509) 963-2214 or email ds@cwu.edu for more information.

COURSE POLICIES

Academic honesty and integrity: Students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity both for themselves and for their classmates. Academic dishonesty such as cheating, plagiarism, falsifying or inventing information, or interfering with another student’s efforts to complete the assignments or exams will not be tolerated. **Instances of academic dishonesty in this class will automatically result in a failing grade for the course and further action, as warranted, by the university.**

Class Etiquette and Civility: Students are expected to engage with each other and the instructor in a civil and respectful manner. Please review the section “Rules of Etiquette” under Discussion Guidelines for further details.

Late and missed assignments: Late assignments and make-up assignments or exams will **not** be allowed except under emergency circumstances. **It is the student’s responsibility to initiate contact with the instructor when emergencies arise.**

Changes to Syllabus: The instructor retains the right to change the syllabus in any way, for example, due dates for assignments, and will provide sufficient notice to allow students to plan for such changes.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1: Introduction (Hutter, Ch 1)
Discussion #1

Week 2: The Emergence of Cities (Hutter, Chs 2-3)
Discussion #2

Week 3: Theoretical Perspectives in Urban Sociology, Part 1 (Hutter, Chs 4-5)
Discussion #3

Research Prospectus Due: Sunday, April 16, 2017 at 11:59 pm

Week 4: Theoretical Perspectives in Urban Sociology, Part 2 (Hutter, Ch 6 and Ch 7, pgs 192-202 only)
Discussion #4

Week 5: Social Psychology of City Life (Hutter, Chs 9-10)
Discussion #5

Week 6: City People and Places, Part 1 (Hutter, Ch 11)
Discussion #6

Midterm Due: Sunday, May 7, 2017 at 11:59 pm

Week 7: City People and Places, Part 2 (Hutter, Ch 12)
Discussion #7

Week 8: City People and Places, Part 3 (Hutter, Ch 13)
Discussion #8

Week 9: The Urban World (Hutter, Chs 14-15)
Discussion #9

Research Paper Due: Monday, May 29, 2017 at 11:59 pm

Week 10: Conclusion

Present Research to Class: Sunday, June 4, 2017 at 11:59 pm

Final Exam Due: Wednesday, June 7, 2017, at 11:59 am (noon)

Discussion Guidelines

General Points: Online discussions will be an integral part of this class in order to allow you to gain both a broader and deeper understanding of sociological theories and concepts and develop a sociological imagination that allows you to apply this knowledge to real-world social patterns, behaviors, institutions, and other social phenomena. The online discussions also allow you to learn together as you think “out loud” on the topics and learn how to apply the sociological perspective in each situation. However, the subjects covered in this class are often controversial, as many well-educated and intelligent persons, even trained sociologists, continue to disagree about how to explain, describe, or answer the questions raised by sociological inquiry and analysis. In order to provide a safe and respectful environment to meaningfully discuss these issues and learn from each other, the following guidelines will serve as a way to allow for meaningful discussion in a respectful manner. I also outline my expectations so that you can earn the maximum number of points for each discussion. Please keep in mind that the discussion posts essentially serve as mini-essay questions that might normally appear on an exam. Please take them seriously and put in sufficient time and effort into doing them well.

Grading Expectations: Each week I will post a discussion prompt on the Discussion page. You are required to meaningfully respond to the instructor’s question(s) contained in the discussion prompt and then meaningfully respond to other students’ responses by the stated deadline. I encourage you to post your response to my discussion prompt by Thursday at midnight to ensure that a meaningful discussion can occur with plenty of opportunities for students to reply to each other rather than everybody waiting until the last minute.

The first response will be worth up to 6 points and each additional response will be worth up to 2 points each for a maximum of 10 points each week. Students are encouraged to build and maintain a dialogue thus multiple posts are strongly encouraged. However, students will be graded on the first three responses only (the response to the question(s) and the two responses to other students’ posts).

What does it mean to meaningfully respond? At the bare minimum, students need to show that they have read the relevant assignments and are actually responding to the question(s). This means that students need to reference the reading material assigned by summarizing the author’s argument and the evidence used to support the argument. In addition, students are expected to engage the actual question(s) posed by the instructor and not the general subject matter raised by the question. For instance, describe what the author says about racism and then respond accordingly. Do not engage the general issue of racism without first engaging the author or the instructor’s comments.

To allow enough time for a meaningful discussion and for your classmates the opportunity to reply to your post, please post your response to the discussion prompt by Thursday of each week. Please do not wait until the last minute to do your first post of the discussion.

Topic/Selection Choice: I have chosen a textbook and any supplemental readings that represent the best available research on the subject. The relevant author(s) has gathered data using methods that conform to the professional standards used within the social sciences, analyzed the data, and have drawn their conclusions based on the data. Some discussions may be based on points raised in a movie. Each movie is carefully screened in the same manner and chosen because they reflect the best available research on the subject and/or is the best available to teach and/or explain a particular sociological point. Quite simply, the authors or movie producers are not just giving their opinions. That said, you are certainly free to disagree with their conclusions and offer an alternative perspective. However, in formulating your response, you also must support your point with evidence. I am not expecting expert knowledge but please make an effort to educate yourself on the subject.

For the topics discussed in this class, I would encourage you to spend some time reading news websites such as the New York Times, Washington Post, the Seattle Times, and other credible sources. For our purposes here, “credible” can be measured by whether or not the reporter is fairly and relatively accurately describing all sides of the issue; is not obviously taking a side on the issue; and supports his/her statements with research gathered in credible methods, such as surveys and other statistical data or interviews with scholars, policymakers, and other researchers.

Rules of Etiquette: At all times, students are expected to engage with each other in a civil and respectful manner. To do so, students are asked to do the following:

1. Provide any background information that is necessary to illustrate/support your point. Don't assume that everybody in the class will automatically know what you are talking about.
2. Identify your sources for material not covered in the textbook, supplemental readings, or movies (i.e. my father taught me, I learned in my high school social studies class, I read in the New York Times the other day, etc.).
3. Do not allow the strength of your convictions betray you into making statements or allegations that are unfair or false. Spend considerable amount of time and effort to make sure you are using credible fact-based research.
4. Respect the different perspectives and cultures that each person brings to the class and discussions. Always assume that the other person has spent the same amount of time developing and formulating their point of view as you have for yours.
5. Listen carefully to what is being said and respond accordingly: respond to what is actually said, not what you think is the hidden meaning. Ask the speaker to clarify his or her point if you do not understand it.
6. Engage the substance of the argument, not the politics that may or may not be behind the argument. Some subjects raised in this class are inherently political; however, this is NOT the place to take a political stance on candidates and/or issues. Instead, students should be prepared to step back and use a sociological perspective to critically assess why issues are hot-button issues and why people take the stances they do.
7. Take advantage of hearing different perspectives and points of view to evaluate your own perspective. This does not mean you need to change your mind on a particular subject, but instead, remain alert to the possibility that new evidence and knowledge will prompt you to evaluate and/or change your perspective.