Syllabus: UST 302 (Section 504) Spring 2017
Contemporary Urban Issues (Web course)
Department of Urban Studies

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Course Description

This is an upper-level undergraduate course designed to explore American urban life through the lens of race, class, and ethnicity with an emphasis on African-American communities. Through these lenses, political, social and economic issues related to urban life will be considered.

The issues selectively covered can be controversial. You are encouraged to respect differences of opinion in reading and writing about them.

Course Objectives

The purpose of the course is to provide students with academic and practical skills. By participating in the course, students are expected to gain a better understanding of:

1. Issues and challenges in urban America;
2. Public policy and politics relevant to race and ethnicity;
3. Appreciation of diversity;
4. Enhanced writing, research, critical thinking and analytical skills through writing assignments, online discussions, and a final exam;
5. Especially the African-American experience.

General Educational Requirement

UST 302 meets the criteria for the African-American Experience Social Diversity requirement and the skill areas of critical thinking and informational literacy.

African-American Experience Criteria

UST 302 has as a primary focus the African-American experience, while also including issues and perspectives of other minority groups. It provides students with both an historical and also contemporary perspective on the African-American experience within an urban context and a theoretical and empirical framework.
Skill Areas

This course emphasizes critical thinking. Students are to analyze information through the assigned readings about contemporary urban problems. They will acquire information literacy in responding to questions about the assigned readings and in researching and writing two essay papers.

Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)

Go to the CSU Writing Center website for the WAC requirements: http://www.csuohio.edu/academic/writingcenter/index.html
In order to receive WAC credit, you must receive a grade of at least “C” in the course. Students will write two essay papers, both draft and final versions.

Blackboard Learn

Because this course is web-based, students must be familiar with computers, the Internet, and Blackboard Learn. Students needing information about Blackboard Learn or needing assistance should contact the Center for eLearning or the CSU Help Desk (216) 687-5050.

Assignments

1. Discussion Responses: Every week Questions about the assigned Readings will be posted as Blackboard Assignments. Students are to respond individually.

2. Research Papers: As a WAC course, there are two essay papers: African-American Unemployment and Urban Education Reform. For each topic, there will be a draft and final paper. Instructions will be provided at the Assignment tab. These papers are to be submitted through Blackboard Learn. For the African-American Unemployment paper, the draft will be DUE by February 24 and the final version by March 10. For the Urban Education Reform, the draft will be DUE by March 24 and the final version by April 7.

3. On May 9, there will be a final online exam on selected readings.

Weekly Discussion Responses

Each week beginning the Instructor will post Questions about the assigned readings. Students are to participate individually in the discussion by responding through Blackboard Learn. Responses must be at least 150-200 words in length and be timely. Questions will be posted on Blackboard at the Assignment tab on Monday (after Week 1) and student Responses must be posted through Blackboard Learn by Wednesdays by 11:59 PM. Each Response will be worth 2 points.

Final Exam
The Final Exam will be held online on **May 9**. It will selectively cover the course readings as instructed at the Assignment tab on Blackboard Learn.

**Plagiarism**

Go to the CSU Student Life website for the link to the Student Code of Conduct:  
www.csuohio.edu/studentlife/  
You can also consult with the CSU Writing Center.

**Grading**

1. Weekly (15) Discussion Responses: 2 points x 15 weeks = 30 points  
2. Essay Papers (Final version only): 25 points x 2 = 50 points  
3. Final Exam: 20 points

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A &= 94-100 \\
A- &= 90-93 \\
B- &= 87-89 \\
B &= 83-86 \\
B- &= 80-82 \\
C+ &= 77-79 \\
C &= 70-76 \\
D &= 60-69 \\
F-59\text{-below}
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**Required Textbook**

*Twenty-First Century American City: Race, Ethnicity, and Municipal Urban Life* (2d Edition 2013, Kendall-Hunt, paper) by Doreen Swetkis and Wendy Kellogg (S&K) is the required text. It’s available through the CSU Bookstore.

This textbook will be supplemented by additional materials and there will also be reference materials. Additional materials may be provided through Announcements on Blackboard Learn.

**Course Schedule**

(Beginning Date, Topic, Readings)

**Week 1 (January 17): Immigration**

Guest and Kwong. Ethnic Enclaves and Cultural Diversity, Ch. 1, S&K

Keating. Background Memo on Immigration

Reference:

Refugees build new lives and businesses in Cleveland:
Week 2 (January 23): Inner Ring Suburbs

Leigh and Lee. Philadelphia’s Space In Between: Inner-Ring Suburb Evolution, Ch. 1, S&K

Keating Background Memo on Inner Ring Suburbs

References:


Week 3 (January 30): Regional Fair Share

Myron Orfield. Beyond Segregation: Toward a Shared Vision of our Regions, Ch. 2, S&K.

Reference:


Week 4 (February 6): Poverty and Race

Deborah Johnson. Disentangling Poverty and Race, Ch. 2, S&K

References:


Evergreen Cooperatives: www.evgoh.com

Living Wage: What It is, How It’s Calculated, and How It Compares to the Minimum Wage: http://useconomy.about.com/od/fiscalpolicy/p/Living-Wage.htm

Week 5 (February 13): African American Unemployment

Olivera Perkins. Black Unemployment rate has decreased, but still more than double that of whites. Plain Dealer (PD)(cleaveland.com) (August 12, 2015)


Travis Waldron. Black Unemployment Has Topped 10 Percent for Most of the Last 50 Years: www.thinkprogress.org/economy/2012/03/12/442500/black-unemployment-50-years/


Reference:

Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry: http://reentry.cuyahoga.us/

Week 6 (February 20): Housing and Neighborhoods: Subprime Mortgage Crisis/Housing Abandonment

Alyssa Katz. Cleveland, Ohio, 2006, Ch. 3, S&K

References:

Slavic Village Development: www.slavicvillage.org


Cuyahoga County Land Bank: www.cuyahogalandbank.org

Michelle Jarboe. Taking Stock: Cleveland Housing-Cash woes spur debate on demolition strategy. PD(cleveland.com), November 22, 2015

Week 7 (February 27): Neighborhood Gentrification

Kane & Hayslett-McCall. Neighborhood Effects on Gay and Lesbian Access to City Institutions., Ch. 3, S&K
Reference:

Feargus O’Sullivan. The ‘gaytrification’ effect: why gay neighbourhoods are being priced out (January 13, 2016): www.theguardian.org

Week 8 (March 6): Urban Education Reform

Christine Sleeter. Context-Conscious Portraits and Context-Blind Policy, Ch. 5, S&K

Jackson plan for schools taking shape. PD (April 30, 2012)

Cleveland Municipal School District (CMSD). Transformation Plan: www.cmsdnet.net/

Gauging Investment Schools’ progress is tricky. PD (May 3, 2015)

Karen Connelly. 5 Key Takeaways about school improvement in Cleveland. PD, August 13, 2015.


Patrick O’Donnell. Did Cleveland schools improve as promised? Scores Fell, but Rose when compared to state averages”. PD (September 25, 2016)


References

Kelly Patterson and Robert Silverman. *Schools and urban revitalization: Rethinking institutions and community development* (2014)


Film: *Waiting for Superman* (DVD: February 2011)

Ohio School District Report Cards: Ohio Department of Education: www.ode.state.oh.us

March 12-19 CSU Spring Recess
**Week 9 (March 20) Tax Abatements/Home Ownership**

Doreen Swetkis. Policy Makers versus citizens, Ch. 4, S&K


Reference:

“For the Black Middle Class, Housing Crisis and History Collude to Dash Dreams” (2016): http://wcpn.ideastream.org/news/npr/492251653

**Week 10 (March 27) Police Review**

Ronnie Dunn. Race and the Relevance of Citizen Complaints Against the Police, Ch. 4, S&K

Henry Gomez. Cleveland consent decree provides blueprint for long-elusive police reforms: The Big Story. PD (May 26, 2015)

Andrew Tobias. Cleveland will create citizen panel that will scrutinize city police reforms. PD (May 26, 2015)

Eric Heisig. City announces members of new Cleveland Community Police Commission. PD (September 8, 2015)

Eric Heisig. Civilian Police Review: Complaint system redo sought PD (November 30, 2016)

**Week 11 (April 3) Urban Health**

Howard Frumkin. Urban Sprawl and Public Health, Ch. 6, S&K

Brie Zeltner. Cuyahoga County partnership releases plan to address poor health, inequities. PD (June 9, 2015)

Keating Memo on Sprawl and Health

Reference:

Cuyahoga County Health Improvement Partnership: http://www.hipcuyahoga.org

**Week 12 (April 10) Urban Health**

Lead Poisoning, Infant Mortality
Lead: Crisis Abandoned:  
www.ideastream.org/news/cuyahoga-lead-contamination-often-overlaps-poverty

Brie Zeltner. Public Health: Infant Mortality initiative gets $3M. PD (June 8, 2016)

Reference:
Cuyahoga County Board of Health: http://www.ccbh.net/lead-poisoning

**Week 13 (April 17) The Digital Divide**

Wendy Kellogg and Anjali Mathur. Environmental Justice and Information Technologies, Ch. 7, S&K

Keating Memo on Digital Divide

References:
Cuyahoga County Library Technology Training:  
https://www.cuyahogalibrary.org/Events/Technology-Training.aspx

Michael McIntyre. Champion of free public Wi-Fi in Old Brooklyn wants upgrades.  

City and inner ring lag in web access: PD (April 12, 2013)

**Week 14 (April 24) Media Coverage of Cities**

Peter Dreier. How the Media Compound Urban Problems, Ch. 7, S&K

Reference:

**Week 15 (May 1) Sustainability**

Michelle Kaiser. Food Security, Ch. 8, S&K

Community Kitchen, fresh-foods café and mobile market serve Kinsman neighborhood (September 13, 2012)  
http://freshwatercleveland.com/forgood/bridgeportkitchen091312.aspx

Burton, Bell, Carr Development: http://www.bbcdevelopment.org/ Link to: CornUopia
Keating Memo on Food Deserts and Food Security

May 9 Final Exam