

GGR339 Urban Geography, Planning and Political Processes

University of Toronto, Summer 2020

Class times:

- Class content will be posted on Quercus by 3pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays
- A live summary session will be held Thursdays from 4pm to 5pm on Blackboard Collaborate (attendance at the live session is optional)

Instructor: Killian McCormack

Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2-3pm or by appointment (Office hours will take place online through Blackboard collaborate)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course investigates North American urban political geography. The course uses our current moment of emergency as an entry point to consider the city as a site of ongoing crises, social and economic inequalities, and political struggles. Over the course of the semester, we will explore: the wider social and economic context of urban space; political struggles and competing claims on urban space; the persistent uneven power relations that exist around gender, race, sexuality and class; processes of gentrification and displacement; labour market-structuring; policing and surveillance practices in the city; and the wider colonial and imperial context North American cities are situated in. Throughout the course, we will consider different theoretical frameworks that geographers have developed to make sense of both the persistence of old problems and the emergence of new ones.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students taking this course will:

- Develop an understanding of key approaches to urban political geography
- Learn geographical theories and concepts and apply them to the study of urban space
- Develop a critical understanding of the uneven social relations that characterize North American urban geography
- Develop critical thinking, reading, and writing skills.

COURSE FORMAT

This is an online course. Class content will be posted on Quercus at 3pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays every week. The online classes will involve recorded lectures, a variety of media clips and documents.

A live session will be held every Thursday on Blackboard Collaborate from 4pm to 5pm. I will summarize some of the key ideas from that week's classes, discuss assignments, and answer any questions you have. Attendance at these sessions is not mandatory.

If you are having any issues accessing the online material, please contact me via email.

COURSE READINGS AND LECTURES

There is no textbook for the course. However, there are required readings that you are expected to read before you begin each online class. These readings will be posted on the course's Quercus site. Lecture slides for each class will also be made available on Quercus.

COURSE EVALUATION

Assessment	Weight	Due date
Weekly Quizzes (5 total)	25 % (5 x 5%)	72hrs after quiz made available
Reading response (1 total)	10%	3pm, day of relevant class
Paper proposal	10%	May 18 at 1pm
Research paper	25%	June 15 at 1pm
Final assessment	30%	Date TBA

Reading responses (500 words): 10%

One reading response is required for the course. The response should engage with the assigned readings for one specific class (from Class 3 to Class 11). In the response, you should identify the main arguments of the readings; draw connections between the readings and/or other readings from the course; and provide your own critical response to the readings. Further details will be posted on Quercus. Your response should be posted on Quercus and is due by 3pm on the date of the relevant class.

Weekly Quizzes: 25% (5 x 5%)

There will be five quizzes over the course of the semester. The quizzes will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions and will allow you to demonstrate your knowledge and

understanding of class material. Quizzes will be posted on Quercus on Fridays at 1pm, beginning May 15, and will be due the following Monday at 1pm. You will have 72 hours to complete them. These are not group assignments, and you are expected to complete them individually. Further details of the quizzes will be discussed in class.

Paper proposal (500 words): 10%

This assignment requires you to identify a topic and primary and secondary sources for your final research paper. Further details will be provided in the first week of the semester. It is due on May 18 at 1pm on Quercus.

Research paper (2000 words): 25%

This assignment asks you to identify, explore and analyze a specific case study in the GTA that relates to one of the central themes of urban political geography covered in class. The paper will build on the paper proposal and your analysis will be informed by readings, concepts and theories dealt with in the course. Further details of the assignment will be discussed in class and a full assignment outline will be posted on Quercus. It is due on Quercus at 1pm on June 15.

Final assessment: 30%

The final assessment will examine your knowledge and understanding of the course content. It will require you to answer short answer and long essay questions based on class material and readings. Further details will be provided in class. It will take place during the final assessment period from June 17 to June 25.

Writing support

Written assignments are a core component of the course's evaluation. The university has a variety of resources that can assist with writing, including writing centres and courses. Further information on these services, along with several writing and style guides, are available at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/>

ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

If you require an accessibility accommodation or have any accessibility concerns about the course, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible at: accessibility.services@utoronto.ca

COURSE POLICIES

Course environment

The online classroom is a respectful space. You are expected to enter the course with an open and eager mind, and to treat your colleagues with respect at all times. While discussion and critical thinking is encouraged in class, a respectful environment is paramount. Any language or behavior that is discriminatory or violent will not be tolerated. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have concerns about the course environment.

Assignment submission

Written assignments will be submitted online on the course's Quercus site.

Late assignments

Late assignments will incur a 3% penalty for every overdue day, with weekends counting as one day. No late assignments will be accepted one week after the original due date. Extensions will only be granted for documented medical issues or personal emergencies.

Academic integrity

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence that will be punished. It is your responsibility to submit original work that correctly cites its sources. The university's guidelines around how to avoid plagiarism are available here: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>

Email policy

I will try and get back to email messages within 24 hours, weekends not included. Email correspondence is limited to simple questions that require short responses, setting up appointments, and dealing with emergencies.

Assignment reassessment

Before asking for a course assignment to be reassessed, take 48 hours to reflect on the comments and feedback you received, as well as the assignment requirements. If you still wish to go ahead with reassessment, you must bring your paper to your TA during office hours with a brief (1-2 paragraphs) written explanation of the areas of the assignment you think should be revisited. If the assignment is accepted for reassessment, there is no guarantee that the mark will go up. Per University of Toronto policy, you have two weeks after receiving your grade to request reassessment.

COURSE OUTLINE

Class 1 (May 5) – Introduction

No readings

Class 2 (May 7) – Emergency and the North American City

Bain, B., Dryden, O. and Walcott, R. (2020) Coronavirus discriminates against Black lives through surveillance, policing and the absence of health data, *The Conversation*, April 20, <https://theconversation.com/coronavirus-discriminates-against-black-lives-through-surveillance-policing-and-the-absence-of-health-data-135906>

Ghosh, R. (2020) Rethinking the city: urban experience and the COVID-19 pandemic, *Verso*, April 7, <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/4648-rethinking-the-city-urban-experience-and-the-covid-19-pandemic?fbclid=IwAR1vyZ9zZdqC5a1gLhUfTdYfugu5tlZRO3xnkmvBILnkMy6WkZeOCeRc7ho>

Paradkar, S. (2020) Radical changes show how fast the state can act when it cares about the lives at risk, *Toronto Star*, March 18, <https://search-proquest-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/docview/2379443592?accountid=14771&pq-origsite=summon>

Ramos, H., Walks, A. and Grant, J.L. (2020) Coronavirus pandemic is an opportunity to create affordable cities, *The Conversation*, April 1, <https://theconversation.com/coronavirus-pandemic-is-an-opportunity-to-create-affordable-cities-134735>

Shenker, J. (2020) Cities after coronavirus: how COVID-19 could radically alter urban life, *The Guardian*, March 26, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/26/life-after-coronavirus-pandemic-change-world?CMP=share_btn_tw

Class 3 (May 12) – Conceptualizing the “Right to the City”

Beebeejaun, Y. (2017) Gender, urban space, and the right to everyday life, *Journal of Urban Affairs* 39: 3, 323-334, DOI: 10.1080/07352166.2016.1255526

Harvey, D. (2008) The Right to the City, *New Left Review*, 53, 23-40.

Class 4 (May 14) – Neoliberalism and the North American City

Tomiak, J. (2017) Contesting the Settler City: Indigenous Self-Determination, New Urban Reserves, and the Neoliberalization of Colonialism, *Antipode* 49: 4, 928-945, DOI: 10.1111/anti.12308

****Quiz 1 will be posted on Quercus at 1pm on Friday (May 15) and will be due by 1pm on Monday (May 18)***

Class 5 (May 19) – The City and Precarious Labour

Bates, L.K. (ed) (2019) Gigs, Side Hustles, Freelance: What Work Means in the Platform Economy City, *Planning Theory & Practice* 20: 3, 423-446, DOI: 10.1080/14649357.2019.1629197

Liu, W. (2017) The Inevitability of the Gig Economy, *New Socialist*, <https://newsocialist.org.uk/the-gig-economy/>

Class 6 (May 21) – Environmental Crises and Environmental Justice

Pulido, L., Sidawi, S. and Vos, R.O. (1996) An Archaeology of Environmental Racism in Los Angeles, *Urban Geography* 17: 5, 419-439.

Vasudevan, P. and Smith, S. (2020) The Domestic Geopolitics of Racial Capitalism, *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, 1-20, DOI: 10.1177/2399654420901567

****Quiz 2 will be posted on Quercus at 1pm on Friday (May 22) and will be due by 1pm on Monday (May 25)***

Class 7 (May 26) – Housing and Gentrification

August, M. (2014) Negotiating Social Mix in Toronto's First Public Housing Redevelopment: Power, Space and Social Control in Don Mount Court, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 38: 4, 1160-1180.

Wachsmith, S. and Weisler, A. (2018) Aribnb and the rent gap: Gentrification through the sharing economy, *Environment and Planning A* 50: 6, 1147-1170, DOI: 10.1177/0308518X18778038

Class 8 (May 28) – Immigration and Refuge (guest speaker: Mary-Kay Bachour)

Readings TBD

****Quiz 3 will be posted on Quercus at 1pm on Friday (May 29) and will be due by 1pm on Monday (June 1)***

Class 9 (June 2) – Policing and Gentrification

Maharawal, M.M. (2017) Black Lives Matter, gentrification and the security state in the San Francisco Bay Area, *Anthropological Theory* 17: 3, 338-364

Ramirez, M.M. (2020) City as borderland: Gentrification and the Policing of Black and Latinx geographies in Oakland, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 38: 1, 147-166.

Class 10 (June 4) – Urban Surveillance and Race (guest speaker: Mitra Fakhrashrafi)

Readings TBD

**Quiz 4 will be posted on Quercus at 1pm on Friday (June 3) and will be due by 1pm on Monday (June 8)*

Class 11 (June 9) – Cities, Militarism and Imperial Circulations

Cowen, D. (2019) Following the infrastructures of empire: notes on cities, settler colonialism, and methods, *Urban Geography*, 1-18. DOI: 10.1080/02723638.2019.1677990

Class 12 (June 11) – Wrap-up and exam review

No Readings

**Quiz 5 will be posted on Quercus at 1pm on Friday (June 12) and will be due by 1pm on Monday (June 15)*