

SPRING 2020
GEOGRAPHY 70AC

**THE URBAN EXPERIENCE:
RACE, CLASS & THE AMERICAN CITY**

141 McCone Hall
Tuesday / Thursday, 5:00 – 6:30

Dr. Seth Lunine

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Office Hours: 591 McCone Hall, Tu 2:30-4:00 and by appointment.

OVERVIEW

In this course we will observe and analyze how the American city has been built, imagined, experienced, and transformed. Using primary sources and recent scholarship, we will track the evolution of the city and assess change and continuity in major themes of urban life: race and difference, industry and labor, community and culture, and power and politics. We will focus on the particularities of place and the experiences of ordinary people but also seek to understand how broader political and economic processes shape the inequalities and opportunities that structure everyday life.

Because this is an American Cultures course, we will study the overlapping and interacting African American, Asian American, European American, and Latinx communities that have created and recreated the American metropolis, while considering the instability and historical novelty of these categories themselves. In doing so, we will engage in an ongoing conversation about the historical contingencies and contemporary contexts that define race and difference. We will see how oppression and inequality are both created and contested through urban space in distinctive ways in the United States. While national in scope, we will often focus on New York, Chicago, and cities in California because they epitomize key historical patterns and contemporary questions concerning racism and social justice, migration and citizenship, state power and community empowerment, economic development and industrial restructuring, and suburbanization and gentrification.

Class meetings will consist of lectures and periodic individual and group activities designed to help us synthesize course materials and understand how our own experience shapes our understanding of the city and its people, as well as of ourselves and each other. In doing so, we will pursue ways to think critically about the cities we inhabit and what they may become.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Through successful participation in the course, students will:

- Gain a critical understanding of major themes in historical and contemporary U.S. cities through key concepts in geography, including regional differentiation, the transformation of nature, the production of space, industrial clustering, and cultural landscapes;
- Develop a theoretical understanding of race and ethnicity based on geographically- and historically-specific accounts of African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinx, and European Americans;
- In addition to geographical inquiry, identify and explore approaches and insights from a range of disciplines, including political economy and cultural studies.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Assigned readings are compiled in an *Urban Experience Reader*, which costs ~\$40 and is available at Vick Copy, 1879 Euclid Avenue, near Hearst Street on the north side of campus. Please email Vick Copy to order your reader: readers@vickcopy.com.

I will also post assigned readings on our bCourse website.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Midterm exam (35% of course grade), **Tuesday, March 3**

The midterm exam will be taken in class and will likely consist of short answer and essay questions. I will distribute a midterm review handout including key terms and practice questions on Thursday, February 27.

Final exam (40% of course grade), **Friday, May 15, 11:30-2:30**

The final exam will be taken in class and will likely consist of short answer and essay questions. The exam will cover lectures and readings from the second half of the course (3/5 - 4/30). I will distribute a final review handout including key terms and practice questions on Thursday, April 30 and I will offer extra office hours and a review session during RRR week.

Participation (25% of course grade)

Participation consists of attendance and class activities (5% of participation grade), and four reading responses (each worth 5% of participation grade).

Attendance is mandatory and indispensable for doing well in this course. You are required to come to lectures on time. Please refrain from leaving class early. The instructor reserves the right to take formal attendance at any time, which will affect your course grade.

Reading responses: Please write a response to four of the assigned readings. Two of your responses are due before the midterm exam, by February 27, and two are by April 28. The choice of readings is up to you—pick the ones you find most interesting.

Reading response directions:

- Each reading response should be at least 500 words, double-spaced, and typed (not handwritten), with 1-inch margins and a 12-point font.
- Each response should be written in paragraph form.
- Your responses should be proofread and free of grammatical errors and typos.
- A paper copy of your response is due the beginning of the lecture (5:10pm) for which the reading is assigned. No need to email a digital copy.
- Late submissions will be penalized one letter grade.

Rather than a detailed summary, your reading response should include the following elements:

- *Quotation*: quote a sentence (or excerpts from linked sentences) from the text that you think is central to the author's implicit or explicit argument.
- *Argument*: in a sentence or two, state the author's explicit or implicit argument.

Additionally, your response should include at least one of the following four elements:

- *Question*: discuss a questions that is not fully, or satisfactorily, answered by the text. The question should concern analysis or inquiry, rather than a question of a fact.
- *Answer*: address a question or two from the handout I provide for the reading assignment.
- *Connection*: how is the reading connected to course topics and concepts?
- *Experience*: how does the reading directly relate to your own experience? That is, apply a key theme or concept from the reading to your own experience.

COURSE GRADING

Each of the three required parts of the class described above must be successfully completed for a passing grade. Your course grade is composed as follows:

Participation:	25%
Midterm Exam:	35%
Final Exam:	40%

Course grades will be comprised by the total points earned on all three components listed above.

I will curve scores if I think it fair. A curve can only help your grade; I will not bring grades below the standard scale.

Grade Scale

A 93-100%	B+ 87-89%	C+ 77-79%	D+ 67-69%	P > 70%
A- 90-92%	B 83-86%	C 73-76%	D 63-66%	NP < 70%
	B- 80-82%	C- 70-72%	D- 60-62%	

COURSE POLICIES

Learning Environment: We will cover some contentious topics in this course and you are not required to agree with your instructor or classmates. But you are required to treat everyone with respect and listen to their ideas. Both students and instructors have rights to academic freedom. Please respect the rights of others to express their points of view in the classroom.

Readings: *Readings are essential to this course.* Complete each reading before the lecture for which it is assigned.

We will watch several videos during class. Videos should be treated as text in that they are required and may be included on exams.

Attendance: *Attendance is mandatory and indispensable for doing well in this course.* You are required to come to lectures on time. Please refrain from leaving class early. The instructor reserves the right to take formal attendance at any time, which will affect your course grade.

A maximum of two unexcused absences from lecture is permitted. Absences may be excused in the case of a documented medical or family emergency, or other non-discretionary reasons. However, I understand the challenges of balancing scholarship and nonacademic life, so please communicate any issues.

If students miss lectures for any reason, the burden is on the students to make up the work and to decide whether they can continue in the course.

No make-up examinations will be permitted except in the case of a documented emergency.

Take notes! Engaged listening and note-taking are important skills and integral to your performance in this course.

Pens and paper: bring them to every lecture for note-taking, writing exercises, and in-class assignments.

Laptops and other Digital Devices: *Please turn off your phones and refrain from using laptops and other digital devices during lecture* (with the exception of a documented need to type or use a digital device, rather than take handwritten notes). Your performance in the class will

benefit, according to recent research, see: <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop>.

Use of electronic tablets with digital pens is allowed because this replicates manual note-taking.

Disabled Students' Services: The fundamental principles of nondiscrimination and accommodation in academic programs establish that students may not, on the basis of their "disabilities," be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any University program or activity. If you require academic accommodations for this course, please obtain a Letter of Accommodation from the Disabled Students' Program (see: <https://dsp.berkeley.edu/students/accommodations-and-services>). Once you receive your Letter of Accommodation, please make an appointment with me to confirm your accommodations. I will provide all requisite accommodations.

Reasonable Accommodation for Students' Religious Beliefs, Observations, and Practices: In compliance with Education code, Section 92640(a), it is the official policy of the University of California at Berkeley to permit any student to undergo a test or examination, without penalty, at a time when that activity would not violate the student's religious creed, unless administering the examination at an alternative time would impose an undue hardship which could not reasonably have been avoided.

Course Web Site: Our course has a web site at bCourses.berkeley.edu. It is crucial that you check the page regularly for course updates and other announcements, as well as lecture slides, handouts, and other course materials.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is a joint endeavor among not only students but the entire academic community in all scholarship and scholarly activity. *In this course each of us is responsible for fostering an environment of honesty, fairness, and respect.*

UC Berkeley has strict policies concerning academic misconduct and dishonesty. The University defines academic misconduct as "any action or attempted action that may result in creating an unfair academic advantage for oneself or an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for any other member or members of the academic community" (*UC Berkeley Code of Student Conduct*). This typically involves (1) plagiarism: copying text or ideas from another source without appropriate reference; and (2) cheating: fraud or dishonesty in an academic assignment, including examinations and attendance sign-in sheets. Cheating, plagiarism, and other academic misconduct will result in a failing grade on the assignment, paper, quiz, or exam in questions and will be reported to Student Judicial Affairs. For more information about intentional academic misconduct and attendant consequences see: <http://advocate.berkeley.edu/conduct/>

STUDENT RESOURCES

Berkeley Student Learning Center: <http://slc.berkeley.edu>

Offers peer tutoring, writing support, and other academic resources.

Disabled Students' Program: <http://www.dsp.berkeley.edu>

Provides a wide range of resources to ensure equal access to educational opportunities, including advising, assessment, note-taking services, and academic accommodations.

Tang Center Services: <http://uhs.berkeley.edu/students/counseling/cps.shtml>

Offers immediate and long-term counseling services to assist students with a variety of concerns about academic success, mental health, life management, career planning, and personal development.

Office for the Prevention of Harassment & Discrimination (OPHD): <https://ophd.berkeley.edu>

Ensures that UC Berkeley provides an environment free from discrimination, harassment, and sexual violence. OPHD takes reports alleging discrimination and harassment on the basis of categories including race, color, national origin, gender, age, sexual orientation/identity, including allegations of sexual harassment and sexual violence.

LECTURE & READING SCHEDULE

Introductions & Overviews

Lecture 1: Introduction to Geography 70AC, The Urban Experience (Tu 1/21)

We start with a broad survey of U.S. cities and review the syllabus. I also explain what you can expect from the course and offer suggestions for doing well.

Lecture 2: The Urban Experience (Th 1/23)

What is specifically urban about the human experiences that take place in cities? How do these experiences differ according to race, gender, or class? What is the role of urban space, both real and imagined, in creating meanings of race and everyday experiences of inclusion or exclusion?

Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life” [1903], in *The Blackwell City Reader* (2010).

Garnette Cadogan, “Walking While Black,” *Freeman’s* (2015).

The Modern American City, 1870s-1920s

Manufacturing the Metropolis. This section looks at the explosive growth of the Modern American Metropolis, focusing on interconnections between nature, industry, and property. We locate the city in physical geography and consider the complex and mutually constitutive relations between urban development and “nature.” Dependence on nature for water, power, and industrial inputs shaped cities’ economic expansion and specialized roles in regional and national economies. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in Chicago, where industrialization—economic specialization, labor exploitation, and mass production, consumption, and distribution of commodities—defined and drove metropolitan expansion. Nature also provides the basis of urban development—both physically and economically—through the commodification of land, or speculative property development.

Lecture 3: The Nature of Cities (Tu 1/28)

What is “nature”? How did cities depend upon, transform, and perceive the natural environment?

Colin Fisher, “Nature in the City: Urban Environmental History and Central Park,” *OHA Magazine of History* (2011).

Heather Smith, “Thirsts and Ghosts” in *Nonstop Metropolis* (2016).

Lecture 4: Cities of Industry (Th 1/30)

How did dependence on “nature” structure manufacturing and regional specialization? How did industrial production engender metropolitan expansion, and fragmentation? What is an industrial suburb?

Robert Lewis, “Chicago, The Mighty City,” in *Chicago Made* (2008).

Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle* (1906), selections.

Lecture 5: The Growth Machine (Tu 2/4)

How do cities grow? Why? Who benefits? What stakes do different groups have in shaping the direction that growth takes? Who suffers if there is no growth at all?

John Logan & Harvey Molotch, *Urban Fortunes* (1987), selections.

Delimiting & Defying Difference. An examination of the geographical and historical processes of race formation and the construction and contestation of social hierarchies is essential for understanding the Modern American Metropolis. Our look at immigration and ethnicity in New York shows how tensions between ethnic identity, labor solidarity, and American citizenship created the spatial bonds and barriers of community, while creating new, often contradictory identities. Our investigation of Chinatown in San Francisco shows how popular culture, the built environment, and legislation helped define difference in urban space. Studies of African American communities in Philadelphia and Chicago’s “Black Belt” illustrate how everyday people created and claimed urban space despite forced segregation and disenfranchisement. We also examine how gender was defined and destabilized in public space in San Francisco. In all, we examine not only the experience of racialized and gendered oppression but also how everyday acts of survival, community formation, and political agency became meaningful feats of autonomy and resistance.

Lecture 6: Immigration & Ethnicity (Th 2/6)

How did immigration transform American cities? What is the difference between race and ethnicity? How were urban neighborhoods and communities organized within the greater coherence of the metropolis? How did everyday life create spaces of ethnic identity and exclusion?

Garnette Cadogan, “Love Your Crooked Neighbour / With Your Crooked Heart,” *Catapult* (2016).

Lectures 7: Race Formations (Tu 2/11)

What is “race”? Who defines it? How? Why are cultural domination and economic exploitation necessarily intertwined?

Michael Omi and Howard Winant, “The Theory of Racial Formation,” in *Racial Formation in the United States* (2015), selections.

Lecture 8: Chinatowns (Th 2/13)

What are the links between race and space in the city? How did representations of urban places define, obscure, or aestheticize inequalities based on race and class? How were inscriptions of racial difference in urban space ensnared in broader economic and political processes?

Benjamin Lloyd, “A Night Stroll Through Chinatown,” in *Lights and Shades in San Francisco* (1876). *Note: this is a primary source written in 1876. The depiction of Chinese people in San Francisco’s Chinatown is despicable yet such literature is crucial for understanding the places and processes we are investigating.*

Lecture 9: The Color Line (Tu 2/18)

What are the origins of racial segregation and the so-called inner city? How did residential segregation shape everyday life? How did cultural practices take and make place, and contest racialized injustices?

Margaret Garb, “Drawing the ‘Color Line’: Race and Real Estate in Early Twentieth-Century Chicago,” *Journal of Urban History* (2006).

Lecture 10: (En)Gendering Spaces (Th 2/20)

What roles did built landscape play in the social construction of gender? What role did gender play in the structure of the city? How does gender interact with other forms of difference?

Rebecca Solnit, “The Power of Names,” in *Nonstop Metropolis* (2016).

Jessica Ellen Sewell, “Gender, Imagination, and Experience in the Early-Twentieth-Century American Downtown,” in *Everyday America* (2003).

Who Governs? This week we continue to consider the interrelations between public power and private profit in the city. We see how urban expansion shaped the organization and operation of political power in the city, while reshaping ethnic identities and outlooks. Next we look at how reform movements refashioned urban institutions and the city itself, and we question how reformers mirrored and molded ideas about ethnicity and what it meant to be “American.”

Lecture 11: Machine Politics (Tu 2/25)

Who governed the city? How was power obtained and institutionalized? What are the relations between political power and private profit in the city? What was the role of ethnicity in urban politics?

Jon Teaford, *The Unheralded Triumph* (1984), selections.

Lecture 12: Reformers (Th 2/27)

Who were the “reformers”? What were the ideological bases of political and social reform? What were the consequences of “Americanization” for ethnic communities?

Mara Keire, “Segregating Vice,” in *For Business & Pleasure* (2010).

*** **Midterm Exam (Tu 3/3)**

The Postwar Metropolis, 1930s-1980s

Peaks & Precipices. This section considers the hopes and failures engendered by the city during the “golden age” of American industrial capitalism. With an eye towards New York, we assess what is arguably the height of American urbanism, while examining how the postwar city entrenched patterns of prosperity and poverty along ethnic and racial lines. We also see how different groups navigated the socially fractured industrial landscape of Detroit while claiming territory and propagating identity.

Lecture 13: The City at its Height? (Th 3/5)

How did the New Deal and World War II shape the postwar city? What are the distinctive characteristics of this city?

Jane Jacobs, “The Uses of Sidewalks: Safety” [1961], in *The City Reader* (2015).

Lecture 14: The Fordist City (Tu 3/10)

What are the links between industry and metropolitan form? How were the resources sired by unprecedented national economic expansion distributed along racial and ethnic lines?

Thomas Sugrue, “Arsenal of Democracy,” in *The Origins of the Urban Crisis* (1996).

Uneven Metropolitan Development. Suburbanization reconstituted the form, economy, and culture of the metropolis, and the country. Rather than reductive notions of “white flight” and “urban crisis,” we see how federal policies institutionalized discrimination and difference by allocating resources to mostly white homeowners in suburban municipalities while withdrawing funds from increasingly African-American central cities. These divisions crucially influenced how different social groups experienced the city and helped precipitate an array of political movements.

Lecture 15: Suburban Solutions (Th 3/12)

How did the the federal government engender suburban development? Whom did it benefit? Who was left behind? How was racial segregation institutionalized and made a key determinant of property value?

Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law* (2017), selections.

Richard Walker, “The New Deal Didn’t Create Segregation,” *Jacobin* (2019).

Lecture 16: “Urban Renewal” (Tu 3/17)

What political processes concentrated poverty and lack of access to opportunity in central cities? How did federal policy and urban renewal projects reshape the city and amplify inequality?

Jonathan Tarleton, “Ways and Means,” in *Nonstop Metropolis* (2016).

Rachel Brahinsky, “‘Hush Puppies,’ Communalist Politics, and Demolition Governance: The Rise and Fall of the Black Fillmore,” in *Ten Years that Shook the City* (2011).

Lecture 17: Black Power & Tax Revolts (Th 3/19)

How did uneven metropolitan development engender political movements among both suburban homeowners (Tax Revolts) and the African American communities (Black Power)? Why did suburban homeowners feel entitled to low taxes? What were the links between property values, taxes, and racism? How did Black Power politics address the failures of local and federal government policies?

Robert Self, “American Babylon: Black Panthers and Proposition 13,” *Race, Poverty & the Environment* (2008).

Spring Recess — no class on 3/24 & 3/26

Lecture 18: From Suburbs to “Inner Cities” (Tu 3/31)

What are the successes and failures of postwar suburban integration?

Josh Sides, “Straight Into Compton: American Dreams, Urban Nightmares, and the Metamorphosis of a Black Suburb,” *American Quarterly* (2004).

The Contemporary City, 1980s-2010s

The Nature of Cities II. Today, we investigate how environmental hazards expose the deeply entrenched, racialized injustices that structure everyday life in U.S. cities.

Lecture 19: Environments of Racism and Justice (Th 4/2)

Who is exposed to the greatest social, ecological, and health hazards caused by pollution and other environmental hazards? Who is responsible? How does environmental racism create and perpetuate difference and disadvantage?

James Boyce, “Let Them Drink Pollution?” in *Economics for People and the Planet* (2019).

Andrew Herscher, “American Urbicide,” *Journal of Architectural Education* (2006).

Technopolis. Industrial clustering has refashioned metropolitan space, while technological innovation has transformed both the nature of work and the meaning of the city. This section considers the global ramifications and local contradictions created by our most celebrated industries. We study the so-called “creative class” and explore labor dynamics and racial and gendered disparities in Hollywood and Silicon Valley. We pay particular attention to Silicon Valley and the technological dynamism, worldwide connections, unparalleled prosperity, monolithic corporations, and nimble start-ups that benefit our lives and livelihoods in innumerable ways. But rather than celebrating heroic or iconoclastic entrepreneurs, we focus on industrial clustering, specialized venture capital, and labor exploitation as the basis of Silicon Valley’s growth. Indeed, the glittering symbol of urban dynamism is tarnished by wildly uneven growth, a widening wealth gap, shamefully unaffordable housing, dire homelessness, a plethora of low-wage work, and racial and gendered disparities across careers and sectors. Rather than unanticipated consequences or unfortunate outcomes, we see how these contradictions are embedded in the very logic of this preeminent success story of contemporary capitalism.

Lecture 20: Hollywood (Tu 4/7)

What is the culture-products industry? Why has Hollywood persisted despite technological innovation and global competition in the entertainment industry? How has Hollywood shaped our perceptions and understandings of American cities?

Allen J. Scott, “A New Map of Hollywood: The Production and Distribution of American Motion Pictures,” *Regional Studies* (2002).

Lecture 21: Silicon Valleys (Th 4/9)

What are the origins of Silicon Valley? Why is it a hotbed of innovation? What are the relationships between technological innovation and economic exploitation?

Walker, "Tech City," in *Pictures of a Gone City* (2017).

Resegregation. This section investigates shifting patterns of poverty and prosperity in the metropolis. We locate the contemporary city within the broad political economic transformations and focus on gentrification. We see how previous federal policies that engendered segregation have enabled the profitable redevelopment and repopulation of historically working class communities of color. We chart the ways gentrification has shifted spatial patterns of inequality in terms of income, health, and education along racial lines. We also look at the role of municipal governments in redeveloping urban cores and perpetuating patterns of inequality. Along with the "revitalization" of our central cities, we explore emergent patterns of suburban poverty and the dispersal of the "urban crisis." In all, we examine who benefits from the revitalization of our central cities, why poverty is increasingly centered in the suburbs, and why the fight for housing justice necessarily involves more than just affordable housing. We conclude this section on a more optimistic note, investigating the recent history of multiethnic suburbanization and novel relations between race and place in our suburbs.

Lecture 22: The Neoliberal City (Tu 4/14)

What is neoliberalism? How has the rise of market-oriented strategies of urban government transformed the contemporary city?

Themis Chronopoulos, "Race, Class, and Gentrification in Harlem Since 1980," in *Race Capital? Harlem as Setting and Symbol* (2019).

Lecture 23: Kicked Out (Th 4/16)

Why is gentrification so conspicuous in the San Francisco Bay Area? What is the role of the tech economy? Why is profitable property development predicated on the displacement of working class communities of color? What are the links between gentrification and the criminalization of working class people of color?

Lori Flores, "Seeing Through Murals: The Future of Latino San Francisco," *Boom* (2016).

Rebecca Solnit, "Death by Gentrification: The Killing that Shamed San Francisco," *The Guardian*, 21 Mar. 2016.

Lecture 24: Industrial Suburbs Today (Tu 4/21)

How have former industrial suburbs "successfully" mediated regional processes of industrial restructuring and gentrification? How has "revitalization" in Vernon and Emeryville impacted neighboring municipalities?

Reading TBA

Lecture 25: Suburbanization of Poverty (Th 4/23)

Why are poverty rates skyrocketing in the suburbs? What does the eruptive uprising in Ferguson after the killing of Michael Brown tell us about geographies of racialized disinvestment and the future of the American Metropolis?

John Mollenkopf & Todd Swanstrom, "Explaining Ferguson Through Place and Race," in *The Dream Revisited* (2019).

Lecture 26: Multi-Ethnic Suburbs (Tu 4/28)

How do different groups make space their own? How have multi-ethnic suburbs reshaped relations between race and space in the American Metropolis? What accounts for the relatively harmonious coexistence for Asian Americans and Latinos in the West San Gabriel Valley? Can *suburban cosmopolitanism* emerge in other U.S. metropolitan regions?

Wendy Cheng, "East of East: The Global Cosmopolitans of Suburban L.A.," *Boom* (2015).

Wrap-up & Review (Th 4/30).

*** **Final Exam**: Friday, May 15, 11:30-2:30 (location TBD)