

Diversity & Inequality in Cities

PLAN 663

Department of City & Regional Planning

Day/Time: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:30-10:45am

Location: Murphy Hall, Room 104

Instructor: Ashley C. Hernandez, PhD

Email: Ashleych@unc.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 11:00am-12:00pm



Artwork by [Favianna Rodriguez](#)

COURSE OVERVIEW

Course Description

This course introduces students to issues related to diversity and inequality in cities within the United States. As a class, we will explore major perspectives, theories, and issues related to the relationship between diversity and the unequal distribution of resources and life trajectories often at the center of struggles pertaining to urban development, the allocation of resources,

and distributions of power. Utilizing work from urban planning and other related disciplines such as history, sociology, geography, and critical studies, we will build a conceptual understanding of how diversity (race, class, gender, nationality, ability, etc.) and inequality shape the politics of urban development, community, and space. Students in this course will be expected to analyze important social scientific and historical background information on material and cultural phenomena pertaining to these topics to improve critical thinking and analytical skills.

Course Content

All course readings and supplemental materials will be organized through weekly modules and made available each week through PDF or direct links in the Canvas course website by the instructor. Be aware that the amount of reading required for this course and the complexity of the topics covered varies from week to week. The connections among the assigned materials may not always seem obvious, which should challenge you to push yourself to make critical connections. For some, doing so may take more time and thoughtfulness. Please plan your time accordingly.

Course Goals & Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

1. Establish a conceptual framework and vocabulary to discuss the structural conditions that shape inequality and urban social movements for inclusion in U.S. cities.
2. Describe various social scientific conceptualizations of the processes by which marginalized identities are acquired, maintained, and resisted in U.S. cities historically and to the present.
3. Engage with intellectual discussions about diversity and inequality and enhance one's ability to construct and convey independent positions on which topics through both verbal and written means.

Syllabus Changes

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus, including project due dates and test dates. Changes and additions to the course outline and readings may be made in response to current events and/or student interest. Any changes will be announced as early as possible in class and posted on Canvas.

Course Expectations

In this class I expect each student to:

- Bring a critical lens;
- Embrace the messiness of community and move away from the single story of community development;
- Utilize the classroom as a space where we learn from one another;
- Take responsibility for your learning; and
- Engage in mutual accountability and trust that each person in the class will participate in fostering a safe, open, and "fault tolerant" space in the classroom.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

Course Assignments & Assessments

Attendance, Contribution to Discussion, & Professionalism

20%

Your attendance and participation are very important to your success in this class. Students are expected to (1) attend all class sessions, (2) complete all readings and assignments, and (3) participate in class discussions with questions and/or comments. The readings and assignments for this class are tailored to help you prepare for class discussions.

To receive full participation points you must do the following:

- Come prepared for class to engage in class discussion and support your peers with comments and/or questions;
- Submit assignments in full and on time. If you cannot submit an assignment on time, please reach out to me as soon as possible. I am committed to being flexible during our time together and working with you to appropriately extend deadlines if I am notified in advance; and
- Be in communication with me via email about your conflicts and questions, as well as when you may be running late to class or when you may need additional support from me.

Discussion Boards / Critical Reading Reflections

30%

There are discussion board posts due each week by **noon on Mondays** and peer responses due by **11:59 on the same day**. Discussion boards are meant to help you reflect on the assigned course materials for that week and prepare for weekly in-class discussions. You are permitted to skip 1 discussion board of your choosing.

To receive credit for your discussion board posts, you must include the following:

- At least two quotes from the assigned readings for that week.
- Two critical questions on the assigned materials to use in the in-class discussion for that week.
- A 500 word or more analysis of your takeaways from the assigned materials, which does not include your quotes and questions.
- Read and respond to one of your peers' discussion boards.

I will upload a sample of a discussion board post for reference. I will be reading, responding to, and grading your posts and peer responses each week. I will select one to three exemplary discussion board posts from week-to-week to demonstrate the thoughtfulness of analysis required to receive an A grade on your posts.

Class Discussion Facilitation

15%

Students will be placed into groups of two and take the lead in facilitating an in-class discussion on the weekly theme and material. A sign-up sheet will be made available on Canvas. Each week, the leading group is required to submit a one-page single-spaced document to the professor with their summary analysis of the readings along with three questions they will pose to the class by 9:00am the day the group is scheduled to lead discussion.

Below are some suggested questions to guide your responses:

- What do you see as the most valuable contribution, thesis, or idea from this material?
- What aspects of the author's findings or argument do you find especially useful, well argued, confusing, or unconvincing?
- How do the findings/argument connect to the other assigned readings?
- Does the material make you think of an example that you may have come across or personally experienced?

The goal of these responses is **not to summarize**. Instead, it is intended to form the raw materials that will guide our in-class discussions and should aid in pushing our collective conversation further. You will be graded on your group's ability to carefully read and consider the readings with a critical eye, as well as on the thoughtfulness of the impressions, questions, and things that your group finds puzzling or contradictory.

Final Project	20%
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Greater details and expectations on this project will be provided by the third week of the course.

Final Project Presentations	15%
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The final examination session for this course will be held according to the university schedule on **Friday, May 10th at 8:00am**. Each student will present their final project to the class. Greater details on presentation components and expectations will be provided by the third week of the course.

Grades

Each of the above-mentioned components will contribute to your final grade for the class.

Attendance, Contribution to Discussion, & Professionalism	20%
Discussion Boards / Critical Reading Reflections	30%
Class Discussion Facilitation	15%
Final Project	20%
Final Project Presentation	15%
Total	100%

Grades will be assigned according to the following criteria:

- (A) Excellent: Exceptional work for a graduate student. Work at this level is unusually thorough, well-reasoned, creative, methodologically sophisticated, and well written. Work is of exceptional, professional quality.
- (A-) Very good: Very strong work for a graduate student. Work at this level shows signs of creativity, is thorough and well-reasoned, indicates strong understanding of appropriate methodological or analytical approaches, and meets professional standards.
- (B+) Good: Sound work for a graduate student; well-reasoned and thorough, methodologically sound. This is the graduate student grade that indicates the student has fully accomplished the basic objectives of the course.
- (B) Adequate: Competent work for a graduate student even though some weaknesses are evident. Demonstrates competency in the key course objectives but shows some

indication that understanding of some important issues is less than complete. Methodological or analytical approaches used are adequate but student has not been thorough or has shown other weaknesses or limitations.

- (B-) Borderline: Weak work for a graduate student; meets the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Understanding of salient issues is somewhat incomplete. Methodological or analytical work performed in the course is minimally adequate. Overall performance, if consistent in graduate courses, would not suffice to sustain graduate status in “good standing.”
- (C/-/+) Deficient: Inadequate work for a graduate student; does not meet the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Work is inadequately developed or flawed by numerous errors and misunderstanding of important issues. Methodological or analytical work performed is weak and fails to demonstrate knowledge or technical competence expected of graduate students.

Policy on Late Work

Extensions on assignments will be granted only in case of emergency or special circumstances by prior arrangement. This policy is adopted out of respect for those who abide by deadlines despite equally demanding (and unpredictable) schedules. In the case that an extension is granted, confirmation of the extension will be provided along with a modified due date and time. Late submissions without extensions will be penalized 20% per 24-hour period.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Weekly Course Topics

Unit 1: Course Grounding

Week 1. Class Introduction

Week 2. The Paradox of Liberal Governance in Cities: The State, Difference, & Progressive Development

Unit 2: Cities as Spaces of Production, Dispossession & Displacement

Week 3. Structuring Space: Markets, Hegemony, & Change

Week 4: The Creation of White Spaces

Week 5. Manufacturing Deprivation & the Hood

Week 6. Restructuring Space & Inequality: Globalization & Surplus Humanity

Unit 3: Cities as Spaces of Racialization, Exclusion, & Criminalization

Week 7. Difference-Making through Racialization & Alienation

Week 8. Criminalizing Bodies in Space

Week 9. Restructuring Cities & Inequality: Neoliberalism

Unit 4: Cities as Spaces of Struggle Over Inclusion, Equity, & Justice

Week 10. Spring Break

Week 11: Urban Struggles & Ontologies: Making Place & Community in Unequal Spaces

Week 12: Urban Democracy & Dueling Epistemologies: Democratic Practice & Conflict

Week 13: Migrant Spaces: Between Settlement & Exclusion

Week 14: Indigenous Spaces: Between Settler Colonialism & Sovereignty

Week 15. Queer Spaces: Between Visibility & Erasure

Week 16. Urban Rebellion & Insurgent Citizenship: Reform vs. Abolition in Cities

Finals Week. Final Presentations

Week 1. Class Introduction

January 11 – Class Introduction to PLAN 663: Diversity & Inequality in Cities

Week 2. The Paradox of Liberal Governance in Cities: The State, Difference, & Progressive Development

January 16 – Grounding Lecture

January 18 – Class Discussion led by Dr. H.

Assigned Readings:

Losurdo, Domenico. 2011. "What is Liberalism" In *Liberalism: A Counter-History*. London: Verso 1-34.

Ranganathan, Malini. 2016. "Thinking with Flint: Racial Liberalism and the Roots of an American Water Tragedy." *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 27 (3):17–33.

Uday Mehta. 1997. "Liberal Strategies of Exclusion." In Fred Cooper and Ann Stoler (eds) *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*. Berkeley: University of California Press 427-454.

Week 3. Structuring Space: Markets, Hegemony, & Change

January 23 – Student-Led Class Discussion

January 25 – Lecture

Week 4. The Creation of White Spaces

January 30 – Student-Led Class Discussion

February 1 – Lecture

Week 5. Manufacturing Deprivation & the Hood

February 6 – Student-Led Class Discussion

February 8 – Lecture

Week 6. Difference-Making through Racialization & Alienation

February 13 – Well-Being Day; No Class

February 15 – Lecture

Week 7. Criminalizing Bodies in Space

February 20 – Student-Led Class Discussion

February 22 – Lecture

Week 8. Restructuring Cities & Inequality: Globalization, Neoliberalism, & Surplus Humanity

February 27 – Student-Led Class Discussion

February 29 – Lecture

Week 9. Urban Struggles: Making Place & Community in a Changing Space

March 5 – Student-Led Class Discussion

March 7 – Lecture

Week 10. Spring Break

Week 11. Urban Democracy: Democratic Practice & Epistemologies in Conflict

March 19 – Student-Led Class Discussion

March 21 – Lecture

Week 12. Migrant Spaces: Between Settlement & Exclusion

March 26 – Student-Led Class Discussion

March 28 – Well-Being Day; No Class

Week 13. Indigenous Spaces: Between Settler Colonialism & Sovereignty

April 2 – Student-Led Class Discussion

April 4 – Lecture

Week 14. Indigenous Spaces: Between Settler Colonialism & Sovereignty

April 9 – Student-Led Class Discussion

April 11 – Lecture

Week 15. Queer Spaces: Between Visibility & Erasure

April 16 – Student-Led Class Discussion

April 18 – Lecture

Week 16. Urban Rebellion: Reform vs. Abolition in Cities

April 23 – Student-Led Class Discussion

April 25 – Lecture

Finals Week

April 30 – Final Lecture & Class Recap

May 10 – Final Presentations