

This syllabus was used previously for this course and can be used as a guide for students choosing courses. The syllabus changes each semester and may be different upon students' arrival.

***IDS300 Eco-Urban Footprints of Post-Metropolis Life:
Examining an integral relationship of natural and social ecologies in urban environments
Messiah College – Philadelphia Campus***

Course Description

This course studies urban landscapes as hybrid phenomena that emerge from an integral relationship between human and ecological processes. Urban ecosystems of the Philadelphia metropolitan area are viewed as the outcome of historical and complex interactions between socio-economic and bio-physical systems in which humans have been and continue to be the dominant agents of change. A primary focus of this course is scientific in terms of concepts, methodology and analysis with an interdisciplinary emphasis on urban environmental studies. Various techniques of analysis will be learned and used in application to specific community-based research projects (including a familiarity with Geographic Information Systems). Attention will be given to strategizing new forms of urban living that are conducive to ecological sustainability. An emphasis will be placed on how theories and concepts relate to and are helpful in examining specific ecological conditions within urban settings. Students will perform community-based learning activities that assist a local non-profit organization working to resolve degraded ecological conditions and improve the quality of life of our North Philadelphia neighborhood.

Course Goals

- To think critically about how neighborhoods, cities and metropolitan regions function as ecological units that require care and protection, and how we can improve our ecological “fit.”
- To use research techniques and appropriate technologies (qualitative and quantitative data collection and GIS modeling) in identifying and assessing natural and social conditions necessary for understanding environmental issues in urban neighborhoods and ecosystems.
- To equip students with an understanding of “city” as a place of habitation by developing analytical skills and familiarity with technological tools for spatial thinking and analysis within urban environments, measuring urban ecological capacity and livability and assessing natural-social integration and compatibility within a complex and changing urban neighborhood.
- To give students an immediate, applied learning experience that links course work to neighborhood conditions and circumstances. Science and technology do not occur in a vacuum, course content includes the study of our social and geographical setting of North-Central Philadelphia providing opportunity for scientific theories to be contextually studied and relevant technologies immediately applied.
- To consider how Christian faith, teachings and practice guides us in developing an ecology of hope, in designing an appropriate eco-urban footprint and enhances natural and social economies within a post-metropolitan space.

Course Texts

- Unhealthy Places: The Ecology of Risk in the Urban Landscape. Kevin Fitzpatrick and Mark LaGory (2000). NY: Routledge
- Native to Nowhere: Sustaining Home and Community in a Global Age. Timothy Beatley (2004); Island Press.
- GIS for Everyone. David Davis (2003); ESRI
- Irresistible Revolution: Living Ordinary Radicals. Shane Claiborne (2006). Zondervan.

Course Requirements

- **Attendance and Participation:** This class will be conducted in a *seminar-style* where everyone comes to class having read assigned material and accomplished assignments in order to contribute to discussion and analysis of topics. An emphasis is placed on class participation. The smaller size of our class enables us to place a higher emphasis on individual leadership in this course and contribution to each other's acquisition and application of knowledge. Class-time will focus on student discussion of course readings. An emphasis will be placed on student-generated questions and perspectives. Emphasis is placed on having carefully read all assigned materials and being prepared to engage in thoughtful discussion and analysis.
- **Weekly Reading Assignment:** Each week specific readings will be assigned for discussion and will serve as the basis for weekly assignments and semester-long projects. *Reading Responses (RR)* are to be structured on the basis of five standard questions (format: approximately one typed page in length, single spaced with 1” margins in 10-pitch font). *Reading Responses* are due at the beginning of each class period (and sent to Dr. Peterson electronically).

Questions for each week's *Reading Response* are as follows:

- *Summarize the central thesis of this assigned reading. (4-5 sentences)*
 - *What key point do you find most compelling? What relationship can be made between this idea and readings from Native to Nowhere? (4-5 sentences)*
 - *How has this chapter altered and/or expanded your understanding and view of healthy urban neighborhoods? (2-3 sentences)*
 - *What web-site or Internet source can be identified that relates to items discussed in this chapter and relevant to our study of North-Central Philadelphia? Focus on identifying key actors who are seeking to respond to this issue and provide us an example of how to bring positive ecological change. (2-3 sentences)*
 - *What connection can be made to Christian faith, teaching and practice (4-5 sentences)*
- **Common Text Reflection Essay:** During the first month of the semester we will be reading and discussing in class Shane Claiborne's book Irresistible Revolution. Students will use course material to compose a three page essay on his book and interaction with him. In constructing this essay use course readings and materials as substantive support for key points, perspectives and conclusions. Format for this paper is to be as follows: three typed pages, single spaced, 1" margins, 10-pitch font. This essay is due at the beginning of class on March 21st.
 - **Community-based Field Work:** During the semester we will be accomplishing community-based field work at Montgomery Townhouses Community Center (22nd and Berks) - 2 hours a week for 10 weeks from January through April on Monday, Tuesday or Thursday afternoons (3-5pm). This form of community involvement will provide you with opportunity to related course material and discussion to specific urban conditions in our neighborhood. Spending time each week interacting with children of the neighborhood will be an important source of learning about its natural and social ecology.
 - **Field Journal:** Students are to keep a weekly journal of course-related community engagement, analysis and reflections. This is considered to be a dynamic and creative activity that enables each student to record experiences and reflections of our urban environment. Provide insights, thoughts, stories and illustrations of how course material enables you to critique and assess this "place." See *Addendum* for full description.
 - **Small Group Work:** Throughout the semester students working will work in small groups to study specific aspects of our neighborhood's natural and social ecologies. Three times during the semester each group will present material for in-class discussion and review. An outline of assigned readings and questions for each of these presentations is outlined in the *Addendum*.
 - **GIS Project:** Students working for a grade of "A" will collect primary data in the neighborhood around Montgomery Townhouses (street-level analysis and census-tract mapping). Course material (e.g., primary source readings from required course texts) is viewed as an important resource for thinking about and responding to each segment of this project. See *Addendum* for additional information.

Course Schedule

January 17th – Course Introduction

Readings:

Unhealthy Places - The Importance of Place (Chapter 1)

Native to Nowhere – Preface

GIS for Everyone - Introduction

Irresistible Revolution- Forward and Introduction

Jan 24th – Meaning of Place

Readings:

Unhealthy Places – The Meaning of Place (p.23-34) **RR**

Native to Nowhere – Sustaining Place (Chapter 1)

GIS for Everyone – “Varieties of GIS Experience” (Chapter 1)

Assignments:

- Form small groups and begin working on first presentation
- Field Work Begins: Monday, Tuesday or Thursday @ Montgomery Townhouses

Jan 31st – Natural-Social Connections

Readings:

Unhealthy Places - Nature of the Environment-Behavior Relationship (p.34-46) **RR**

Native to Nowhere - Place Basics (Chapter 2)

Irresistible Revolution – Chapters 1-3

Assignments:

- Field Journals
- GIS Project #1

February 7th – *Ecology of Everyday Life – Small Group Presentations*

Special Guest: Skip Wiener, Urban Tree Connections

Readings:

Unhealthy Places – Ecology of Everyday Life (p.47-61)

Native to Nowhere – Place Strengthening (Chapter 3)

GIS for Everyone – Understanding Digital Maps (Chapter 2)

Feb 14th – Urban Mosaic

Readings:

Unhealthy Places – Dimensions of the Urban Mosaic (p.61-81) **RR**

Native to Nowhere – Tackling Sprawl (Chapter 4)

Irresistible Revolution – Chapters 4-6

Assignments:

- GIS Project #2

Feb 21st - Public Health

Readings:

Unhealthy Places – Sociology of Health (p.83-93) **RR**

Native to Nowhere – Nature and Place (Chapter 5)

GIS for Everyone – Finding Answers with Digital Maps (Chapter 3)

Assignments:

- Journals

Feb 28th – Environmental Risk and Protection

Readings:

Unhealthy Places – Risk and Protective Factors (p.93-106) **RR**

Native to Nowhere – Pedestrian Places (Chapter 6)

Irresistible Revolution – Chapters 7-9

Assignments:

- GIS Project #3 (begin #4)

March 7th – Spring Break**Mar 14th - Archipelago of Risk and Protection – Small Group Presentations**

Readings:

- Unhealthy Places – Cities as Mosaics of Risk and Protection (p.107-132)
- Native to Nowhere – Place Building (Chapter 7)
- GIS for Everyone – Telling Stories with Digital Maps (Chapter 4)
- Irresistible Revolution – Chapters 10-12

Mar 21st –Special Populations: Those Without Shelter

Readings:

- Unhealthy Places – Special Populations: Homeless (p.133-151) **RR**
- Native to Nowhere – Learning by Design (Chapter 8)
- GIS for Everyone – Building the Digital Map (Chapter 5)

Assignments:

- Field Journals
- *Common Text Reflection Essay*

Mar 28th - Special Populations: Those Who Are Marginalized

Readings:

- Unhealthy Places – Special Populations: Racial and Ethnic Minorities (p.151-166) **RR**
- Native to Nowhere – Strengthening Place (Chapter 9)

Assignments:

- GIS Project #5

April 4th - Special Populations: Age

Readings:

- Unhealthy Places - Special Populations: Youth and Elderly (p.167-201) **RR**
- Native to Nowhere – Multigenerational Communities (Chapter 10)

Apr 11th - Ecology of Health – Small Group Presentations

Readings:

- Unhealthy Places – Ecology of Health Promotion and Service Delivery (p.203-231)
- Native to Nowhere – Energy and Sustainable Place Making and Politics of Place (Chapters 11 and 12)

Assignments:

- GIS Project #6

Apr 18th – Commitment to Place

Readings:

- Native to Nowhere – Politics of Place and Renewing Our Place Commitments (Chapter 12 and 13) **RR**

Apr 25th – No Class**May 2nd – Final – GIS Project Due**

Office Hours: Mondays from 10am-11am, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 1-4pm – located in room #3011 of the 2030 Building (ext.7504).

Reflection Essay

After reading Irresistible Revolution and Immersion Weekend activities with Shane Claiborne use material from assigned readings (Unhealthy Places and Native to Nowhere) to construct a three-page *reflection essay* (single spaced, 1" margins, 10-pitch font) focusing on a key concept that has been presented and its relation to urban ecology, environmental risks and vulnerability and Christian social action within the context of the city. This essay is due at class on March 21st,

Your essay will be graded on the basis of the following criteria:

1. MECHANICS (10 points)

- 1.1. **Basic Criteria:** Typed, single-spaced, 1" margins, 10 pitch font, 3 pages
- 1.2. **Grammar** and correct word usage
- 1.3. **Spelling**
- 1.4. **Punctuation**
- 1.5. **Quotations** - length and proper introduction of quote
- 1.6. **Overall Presentation**

2. ORGANIZATION (40 points)

- 2.1. **Logical, Well Designed, and Developed** - approach to and communication of this topic: ALogical@ - one point leads to and provides support for another; AWell Designed@ - each part fit and work together: ADeveloped@ - goes from simple to complex
- 2.2. **Thesis Statement** - a defensible interpretation of the text material; an analytical statement regarding a theme within the text(s): Is it clearly stated? Is it plausible?
- 2.3. **Development of Thesis Statement** - The writer=s approach to this topic is clear and well articulated or writer inadequately covered selected topic (paper is too short). The writer stayed focused on the topic and the Atask@ or writer needs to be properly focused (paper is too long and rambles). Thesis statement is developed from and supported by frequent evidence within the text(s). AFrequent@ - (1) the idea, perspective, or topic, occurs repeatedly throughout the text; and (2) the writer makes repeated use of quotes from the text(s) thereby supporting this idea, perspective, or topic.
- 2.4. **Paragraphs** - Introductory paragraph: states the thesis and offers a Amap@ to the essay=s conclusion, suggesting how the writer will take the reader to that end.
 - Paragraphs should be at least three sentences and not more than a page in length.
 - Paragraphs should enable the reader to easily follow and understand each phase and part of the essay.
 - Paragraphs should suggest a development of the writer=s ideas into a unified whole. Every part of the essay-every sentence and paragraph-needs to demonstrate a clear relationship to your thesis statement.

3. ARGUMENT & SUPPORT (50 points)

- 3.1. **Use of Facts** - objective, inarguable information or data that comes from the text. Valid and effective use of assigned reading material: quotes means what you are suggesting; quotes support your thesis statement; each point is supported by valid quotes; quotations are not to be used for Aplot summary@; quote supports the analysis; use of quotations helps to clarify, support, or make a point in articulating and arguing for the thesis statement.
- 3.2. **Good Argumentation** - interpretations about the meaning of the >facts@: good and proper use of facts from the text(s) to support the writer=s thesis statement. Is the reader drawn into the argument? Does he/she want to read further to learn more about what the writer is going to tell her/him? Stay focused on your topic. Be clear regarding what you want the reader to know. Write as concisely as possible.
- 3.3. **Evidence of Curiosity** - Make good points and offer compelling interpretations without having to explicitly state each idea in the form of a question that would be answered. Did not simply summarize the text. You are attempting to critique the action and/or subject of the text. You are suggesting a specific way of interpreting the facts. You are creating a way of Areading@ and Aseeing@ the story in this text. Support for this particular view is to come from the text itself. Your essay should reflect your own uniqueness and express ideas that you are able to draw from reading this material. Your essay should be more about why something happens, rather than what happens in the text.

Field Journal

Each week you are to complete a four-part “Field Journal” entry. This is a place for you to bring classroom knowledge into an analysis and interpretation of what is observed and experienced through the field work experience and as a point of discussion for expanded understanding and application throughout the semester. Your writing is to reflect questions and perspectives raised through class discussions and reading assignments, experiences you are having as you navigate various locations throughout the City, and, most importantly, your analytical and reflective processing of community-based work at Montgomery Townhouses. Each journal entry is to include responses to the following questions. Use the appropriate “font” for each section.

Descriptive (type in regular font)

Be as objective and accurate as possible in giving specific details. Do not be subjective in terms of your feelings, beliefs, or attitudes. Describe what you saw, what conditions exist, what changes seem to be occurring. How do the children “see” their neighborhood?

Analytic (type in *italic* font)

What can you take from what you already know (other courses you have already taken, courses you are taking this semester, assigned readings for this course) to help understand and explain what you have described, experienced and how you have responded to it? What specific theories and concepts help to explain what you saw and experienced this week? What relation can be made to the form and function of healthy communities?

Reflective (type in regular and underlined font)

What connection can be made between what you have done in terms of community-based service and research work, what you have learned about yourself through the experience, and key concepts discussed so far in class? What lessons have you learned through this work and your experience? How does a person’ faith-experience fit into what you have seen and the work you have performed?

Perceptual Mapping

Each week after you have returned from Montgomery Townhouses sit down and draw a map of the route you took and characteristics you remember. Each week try to be increasingly attentive to where you are walking, what you are seeing, and how you are processing the experience. Are there some areas where you feel more comfortable than others? What “lines of transition” can be identified? It is not important for this to be “to scale” – make it free hand. In the fourth or fifth week we will begin doing some limited “perceptual mapping” exercises with the children in order to learn from them how they view their neighborhood. It will include having them construct a “base map” of the area that includes where they live, their school and other features that are important to them. We will also use regular street maps to have them identify where their friends live, where they buy candy and food, and other activities they do. Near the end of the semester we will have the children talk to us about areas where they feel comfortable and uncomfortable. These maps can be used on important journal entries and elements of your small group and individual work.

Small Group Projects

In small groups (4 students per self-selected group) students will examine three urban ecology themes that are relevant to the census tracts of our immediate neighborhood. The goal of these projects is to use course material in collecting and analyzing specific conditions of and actions in North-Central Philadelphia.

Each project contains the following components:

- (1) Read the assigned material to focus your work on a key point or concept
- (2) Respond to each project question
 - Give special attention to conditions and actions that deplete or improve the quality of life in our neighborhood of North-Central
 - Work to identify the source for and continuation of negative environmental (natural and social) conditions.
 - What non-profit organizations, private businesses and/or public agencies are responding to correct or improve these conditions?
 - This may include going out into the field to make a visual assessment. Identify the location of these conditions (i.e., vacant lots, brownfields, abandoned buildings, etc.). Take digital photos to record conditions and characteristics
- (3) Identify websites and on-line databases that can be used to access relevant information for various organizations, businesses and agencies responding to these conditions.
 - Give special attention to various public, private and nonprofit actors and initiatives.
 - What is the impact of GreenPlanPhiladelphia (<http://greenplanphiladelphia.com/>) on our neighborhood?
- (4) Use your knowledge of GIS, American Fact Finder (www.census.gov) and other on-line data-bases (e.g., NIS data-base - <http://cml.upenn.edu/nbase/>) to create maps that illustrate specific aspects of your responses
- (5) Use course material to frame an analysis of these conditions and positive actions that could be taken.

Provide an electronic copy of your response to the questions, analysis of neighborhood conditions, list of community actors and actions, and maps. Each group will present their research to the entire class (e.g., maps and a brief summary of their research findings) – this could be done as a power-point presentation. An objective of this assignment is to provide us with a fuller understanding of our neighborhood and what is occurring to make it more sustainable. Do not hesitate to interact among yourselves (between groups) as you work on each aspect of these projects – encouraging each other in the work you are doing, giving helpful advice and direction, reducing duplication and supporting each other's learning experience.

Project #1: Ecology of Everyday Life: History of This Place (February 7th)

Readings:

Unhealthy Places – Ecology of Everyday Life (p.47-61)

Native to Nowhere – Place Strengthening (Chapter 3)

GIS for Everyone – Understanding Digital Maps (Chapter 2)

Questions:

- How is the history of this neighborhood an asset?
- What is its industrial past? How has this changed over time? Use Sanborn Maps at the TU library to identify changes in the neighborhood over time (mid-19th century to 1970).
- Are there ongoing environmental conditions that negatively impact the quality of everyday life (i.e., brownfields, types of and changes in industry)?
- Is there evidence of “reusing” post-industrial sites?
- What layers of historical fabric can be identified?
- What important events and people are linked to this place?

- How could these physical, social and historical assets be used to nurture and sustain this place?
- What incentives can be identified to increase community development?
- What agencies, businesses and organizations exist? Where? Which service programs? Who is involved in those programs?
 - Nonprofit Organizations: churches, block houses, district health offices, housing development (community centers), day-care centers, residential associations (i.e., tenant councils)
 - Private Businesses (current and former): corner convenience stores, “take-out”, umbrella business associations
 - Public Agencies: government offices, police stations, fire stations, public schools, public health clinics

Project #2: Archipelago of Risk and Protection: Role of Public Art (Mar 14th)

Readings:

- Unhealthy Places* – Cities as Mosaics of Risk and Protection (p.107-132)
- Native to Nowhere* – Place Building (Chapter 7)
- GIS for Everyone* – Telling Stories with Digital Maps (Chapter 4)
- Irresistible Revolution* – Chapters 10-12

Questions:

- Identify public art (murals and other expressions) and occurrences of community celebrations
- Identify artists who live and work in this area?
- What evidence of “Infrastructure as Art” can be found?
- What street and sidewalk art exists?
- How does public art enhance the history and heritage of this neighborhood? What role do murals play?
- What street celebrations, parades and other expressions of community art occur?
- What local nonprofit organizations that support the arts?
- Do urban gardens exist? Where? Has Philadelphia Horticultural Society or other groups funded urban gardening projects in this area? When? Where? Who?

Project #3: Ecology of Health: Sustainable Place Making (Apr 11th)

Readings:

- Unhealthy Places* – Ecology of Health Promotion and Service Delivery (p.203-231)
- Native to Nowhere* – Energy and Sustainable Place Making (Chapters 11)
- GIS/Census Tract Project -

Questions:

- Identify specific energy issues in our neighborhood and area.
- How can energy utilization be measured?
- Where is energy produced and in what forms?
- How can energy production and use be altered and sustainable? What alternative forms of energy production and use exist in our area?
- What forms of low-energy building design and materials are being used? Where? By whom? Is it affordable?
- How does energy production, use and sustainability relate to the local economy (e.g., generation of jobs, income and economic activities)?
- How can energy production become more place-based and renewable? How energy systems be designed to take advantage of our local climate and landscape?
- What can we be doing at and through MC-PC to facilitate renewable energy production and responsible energy utilization?

GIS Project

Students working for a grade of “A” will collect primary data in the neighborhood around Montgomery Townhouses (street-level analysis and census-tract mapping). Course material (e.g., primary source readings from required course texts) is viewed as an important resource for thinking about and responding to each segment of this project. It is expected that you will utilize and build on the work accomplished through the small group projects.

This project includes the following steps:

- (1) Identification of an area within the North-Central neighborhood to be studied (due Jan 31st).
- (2) Outline neighborhood characteristics and conditions about which you will collect data (due Feb. 14th).
- (3) Use various websites to collect data about your study area (due Feb. 28th). What indices and web-based resources are available as data sources? What are the historical conditions (economic, political and social) that have influenced our current circumstances? Some include:
 - a. U-Penn’s Neighborhood Information Systems database: <http://cml.upenn.edu/nbase/>
 - b. Philadelphia Department of Commerce: <http://www.phila.gov/commerce/comm/>
 - c. Pennsylvania Environmental Council: <http://www.pecpa.org/>
 - d. Census Information: www.census.gov
 - e. Philadelphia Planning Commission: <http://www.philaplanning.org/>
 - f. Green Plan Philadelphia: <http://greenplanphiladelphia.com/>
 - g. Temple University Library: you are able to access Sanborn Maps on-line! Sanborn maps will assist you in learning how have properties changed over time and where potential environmental hazards may exist.
- (4) Go into your area to collect street-level information on specific characteristics and properties. This segment of your work will begin in March. Dr. Peterson will assist you in using a PDA to collect and download your data.
- (5) Identify key community actors who are working the quality of life in our neighborhood: What agencies, organizations and groups are working to respond to the environmental conditions negatively impacting those who call this area “home”? Due March 28th
- (6) Use this data to perform a GIS analysis and create a set of maps on our neighborhood. Dr. Peterson will assist you in linking your data to maps. Due April 11th
- (7) Final Report: bring all of this material together into a final report. Use these questions as an outline: area, characteristics and conditions, sources of information, collected data, maps, identification of key community actors and a final analysis. Use course material to construct a coherent, concise report that will be presented to Montgomery Townhouses and Urban Tree Connection. Due May 2nd