

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.

URB301/ISDE301 World-View Perspectives of City Life Messiah College - Philadelphia Campus

Course Description

This course examines how urban theories can be used to interpret and alter dominant world-view perspectives regarding settlement patterns we design and inhabit. Critical consideration is given to the systematic patterns of thought that characterize groups, impact built urban environments, guide human behavior and facilitate the development of a personal world-view.

Course Rationale

We live in a culturally heterogeneous society. Social pluralism and spatial heterogeneity is a reflection of underlying differences regarding how the world is seen and interpreted. In order to effectively understand and interact with people in our society, it is important to be able to know the basis of their system of beliefs, values, and norms. The underlying world-view perspective of a person or group influences how they construct and live their private and public lives.

Course Objectives

- To increase awareness and understanding of how theories of modernism and post-modernism influence our defining of reality and interaction with urban geographies.
- To examine how dominant ideas and perspectives influence the form and development of human settlement patterns, contemporary urban life and human communities.
- To consider the defining and function of a Christian world-view within the urban context.

Course Texts

- *Postmetropolis: Critical Studies of Cities and Regions* - Edward Soja, Blackwell Publishers
- *The City Reader* - Richard LeGates and Frederic Stout, Routledge – Primary Source Material
- *The Irresistible Revolution: Living Ordinary Radical* – Shane Claiborne, Zondervan – Common Text

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.
- **Reflection Essay:** After reading *Irresistible Revolution* (Claiborne) and attending Immersion Weekend activities use material from *Postmetropolis* and *The City Reader* to construct a three-page *reflection essay* (single spaced, 1" margins, 10-pitch font) that links contemporary urban life, worldview perspectives and Christian faith. Each essay will be read and evaluated by other students.
- **Weekly Reading Assignment:** Each week students will answer a set of questions based on the Soja reading (approximately one typed page, single spaced, 1" margins, 10-pitch font). This activity is intended to help facilitate your interaction with course texts, assist you in your critical thinking about key concepts and give you opportunity for analytic reflection. Your response to the following five questions is due at the beginning of each class period and will be used during class discussion.
 1. Summarize the central thesis of this chapter. (4-5 sentences)
 2. What key point do you find most compelling? What relationship can be made between this idea and the selection for the The City Reader? (4-5 sentences)

3. *How has this chapter altered and/or expanded your understanding of the urban landscape?* (2-3 sentences)
 4. *What from this chapter can be applied to urban life in Philadelphia?* (2-3 sentences)
 5. *What connection can be made to Christian faith, teaching and practice?* (4-5 sentences)
- ***In-Class Discussion*** – Three times during the semester students (working in pairs) will be responsible for leading our discussion on the assigned readings. Student teams will develop a set of questions (at least four total) that come from and serve to integrate the assigned readings (*Postmetropolis* and *City Reader*) for that particular week. These questions will be used by the two students to guide our in-class discussion.
- ***World-View Example***: One time during the semester students (working in self-selected small groups) will be responsible for bringing into class an illustrative example of urban world-view perspectives as it relates to a particular selection of readings (alternative readings from the *City Reader* may be used if more appropriate to the example). This “example” can be in the form of a film clip, music video, or other visual representation. The student will be responsible for leading class discussion regarding the relevance of this illustration and how it assists us in interpreting urban landscape from this particular perspective.
- ***Post-Modern Urbanism Essay***: It has been argued by many theorists that we are living in an era when a dominant social paradigm no longer is useful for or constructive in giving consistent, collective meaning to human life, especially for those living in an urbanized context. Using supportive evidence from course material (*Postmetropolis*, *Claiborne* and *The City Reader*) construct a paper (approximately four pages in length, single spaced, 10-pitch font, one-inch margins) that articulates your view of post-modern urbanism. Each student will construct an essay that defines post-modern urbanism. Essays will be read and evaluated by students for and discussed in our final class period on April 23rd.
- Some questions to help direct your thoughts include the following:
- What is the basis for building a satisfying life in our contemporary world and specifically in an urban location?
 - How are we to “see”, “interpret” and give meaningful direction to urban existence and urban form?
 - What forms of meaning can be used to construct a good life, especially for those living in urban locations?
 - What underlying beliefs, values, norms and attitudes are important for this type of urban life to be constructed and maintained in a healthy, satisfying, sustainable manner?

COURSE SCHEDULE

Jan 16th (Tuesday) - Course Introduction: Defining World-View Perspectives

Postmetropolis – Preface and Introduction
Claiborne – Forward and Introduction

Jan 22nd – Origins of Urbanism

Postmetropolis – “Putting Cities First,” Chapter 1 and “The Second Urban Revolution,” Chapter 2 **RR**
City Reader – “The Urban Revolution” (Childe, 35-42)
 “The Art of Building Cities” (Sitte, p.413-423)
Claiborne – Chapters 1-3

Jan 29th – Modern Urbanization

Postmetropolis – “Third Urban Revolution,” Chapter 3 **RR**
City Reader – “The Great Towns” (Engels, p.58-66)
 “The Growth of the City” (Burgess, p.156-163)
Claiborne – Chapters 4-6

Feb 5th –Urban Social Justice

Postmetropolis – Metropolis in Crisis, Chapter 4 **RR**
City Reader – “European Cities” (Castells, p.475-485)
 “Contested Cities” (Harvey, p.227-235)

Feb 12th – Illustrations of Conurbation

Postmetropolis – “An Introduction to the Conurbation of Greater Los Angeles,” Chapter 5 **RR**
City Reader – “The Need for a New Vision...” (Downs, p.256-266)
 “The Design of Spaces” (Whyte, p.429-436)
Claiborne – Chapters 7-8

Feb 19th - Post-Modern Post-Metropolis

Postmetropolis – “Six Discourses on Postmetropolis,” Part II, Intro and Chapter 6 **RR**
City Reader – “Broken Windows” (Wilson and Kelling, p.267-276),
 “The Competitive Advantage of the Inner City” (Porter, p.277-289)
Claiborne – Chapters 9-10

Feb 26th –Century Cosmopolis

Postmetropolis – “Cosmopolis,” Chapter 7 **RR**
City Reader - “The Impact of the New Technologies...” (Sassen, p.212-220)
 “Social Exclusion and Space” (Madanipour, p.181-188)

March 5th – Spring Break

Mar 12th - Synthesis and New Urbanism

Postmetropolis – “Exopolis,” Chapter 8 **RR**
City Reader – “Beyond Suburbia: The Rise of the Technoburb” (Fishman, p.77-86)
 “Garden Cities of Tomorrow” (Howard, p.309-316)
Claiborne – Chapters 11-12

Mar 19th – Illustrations of 20th Urban Alienation

Postmetropolis – “Fractal City,” Chapter 9 **RR**
City Reader – “The Post-City Age” (Webber, p.470-474)
 “From Institutional to Jobless Ghettos” (Wilson, p.126-135)

Mar 26th –Urban Carceral Archipelago*Postmetropolis* – “Carceral Archipelago,” Chapter 10 **RR***City Reader* – “Fortress L.A.” (Davis, p.201-206)

“How to Study Urban Political Power” (Mollenkopf, p.235-243)

Apr 2nd - Simulated Urban Imagination*Postmetropolis* – Simcities: Restructuring the Urban Imaginary, Chapter 11 **RR***City Reader* – “A Contemporary City” (Le Corbusier, 317-324)

“Designing the Region...” (Calthorpe and Fulton, p.331-336)

Apr 9th – Urban Revisions*Postmetropolis* – Lived Space (Introduction) and LA 1992: Overture to a Conclusion, Chapter 12 **RR***City Reader* - “The Teleserviced City” (Mitchell, p.497-503)

“Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning” (Davidoff, p.388-398),

Apr 16th – Illustrations of Urban Space and Place*Postmetropolis* – LA 1992: The Spaces of Representation, Chapter 13 **RR***City Reader* – “The City Image and its Elements” (Lynch, p.424-428)

“Toward an Urban Design Manifesto” (Jacobs and Appleyard, p.437-447),

Apr 23rd – Post-Postmodernism and the Urban Landscape*Postmetropolis* – Postscript: Critical Reflections on the Postmetropolis, Chapter 14 **RR**

Peterson – Faith-based Organizations and Civil Society

Apr 30th – Final Examination