

Instructor: Brenden Beck, PhD (Brenden.Beck@ucdenver.edu)
Class time and location: Asynchronous and online
Office hours: Mondays 10:00am – 12:00pm or by appointment
Brenden's Office: 1380 Lawrence Street, Suite 420

SOCY 3001 – E01: Urban Sociology, University of Colorado Denver, Spring 2023

Course Description

Welcome! This course will expose you to urban sociology. We will look at how geography shapes and is shaped by society. We will read about immigration, segregation, city economics, suburbanization, policing, innovation, and more. This course will explore both the topics that urban sociologists study and the methods we use. We will also ask how to create more just and equitable cities.

Course Objectives

1. To think sociologically and spatially—to see how social forces, place, and individual actions shape one another.
2. To think critically about society—to interrogate the status quo.
3. To learn research methods and skills.

Course Materials

I will provide all texts as PDFs on the class Canvas page. You do not need to purchase any books for the class. Many of our readings will come from the book *Cities, Change & Conflict: A Political Economy of Urban Life* by Nancy Kleniewski and Alexander Thomas. Be sure to look at the page numbers on the syllabus because sometimes there will be more pages in the PDF than you are required to read. The lectures, audio clips, videos, and links will also be posted on Canvas.

Requirements and Grading

50% of total grade - Quizzes

Each week, starting the second week, you will complete a multiple-choice quiz assessing your knowledge of that week's course materials. The quizzes draw from all the course materials, (readings, lectures, links, videos, etc.). There are no cumulative exams. The quizzes must be completed by 11:59pm Thursday each week. They are between 10 and 15 questions and are time limited (20-30 minutes). The quizzes are open book (meaning you can refer to all course materials during the quiz), so the questions can be difficult. The best way to prepare for the quizzes is to do each reading twice, annotate the readings, and take close notes on the lectures and videos. Your lowest quiz grade of the semester will be dropped.

30% of total grade - Discussion contributions

Four times this semester, we will discuss the course materials on a Canvas discussion board. I will participate, but the conversation will mostly be happening between you, the students. During the discussions, you will respond to at least one prompt directly and to one other student's comment. Good responses address the question directly, cite evidence from the course materials, and are clearly written. To allow me and your fellow

students to read many responses in a short time, please limit your comments to one paragraph in length. Concise comments will be graded more highly than long ones, so edit your comments several times for length and clarity before posting.

5% of total grade – Article reviews

Week 10 will include a lesson on sociological research that will culminate in you summarizing an academic article. I will lecture about how to search for scholarly research and how to read journal articles. You will then summarize one article I provide and one article that you find. Detailed instructions will come the week of.

15% of total grade – Neighborhood project

The last week of class, you will apply all the knowledge you've accumulated to one Denver neighborhood of your choosing. You will analyze how the neighborhood has changed or remained the same using census data, historic Google Street View images, Denver Police Department data, and, most importantly, our course materials. More details on the project, including a rubric and instructions on how to conduct the research, will be delivered as the project approaches.

Letter grades are the unrounded percentages and follow the typical A for 93% or above, A- for 90% to 92.9%, B+ for 87% to 89.9%, etc., with the minus and plus cut-offs at the 3s and 7s.

Weekly Schedule

Each week covers a different topic, with a mix of readings, lectures, audio, and video sources on that topic. You will read/watch/listen to all the course materials then complete the quiz. Some weeks, you will contribute to a discussion board after you complete the quiz. Here is the schedule for each week:

Sundays, 9:00am	Brenden posts the week's course materials and quiz. If the week includes a discussion or project, those will be posted at this time, too. Read any texts before watching the lectures and do both before taking the quiz.
Thursdays, 11:59pm	Deadline for reading, listening to, and watching all the course materials and completing the quiz. The correct quiz answers will be made available at this time for one week.
Some Fridays, 11:59pm	Deadline for contributing to the discussion board or submitting the project, if the week includes one.

Work Time per Week

As with most college courses, one credit represents about three hours of academic work per week, so for our three-credit class, you should expect to do about nine hours of work each week. Some weeks will be more and some will be less. Online courses like this one are more flexible than in-person courses, but they are not easier. You'll have about 40 pages of reading in the typical week. This will require some extensive butt-in-chair reading time (what the Germans call [sitzfleisch](#)), so plan breaks and persevere through tough passages. I turn off my laptop's wifi and put my phone in a different room when I have a lot of reading to do.

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism or cheating of any kind, on any assignment, will result in failing the course. Cheating includes discussing quizzes with other students and looking up quiz answers online. Cheating does *not* include looking at the course materials during the quizzes. That is allowed. Plagiarism includes cutting and pasting, without attribution, words you did not write into the discussion board or into your neighborhood project. For more information, review UCD's Honor Code [here](#) and review best practices for citation at the library's site [here](#).

Late Work

If you submit work late, your grade will be reduced by one letter grade for every 24 hours it is late. Technical glitches are not an excuse for missing deadlines, so allow extra time before the deadline in case you need switch computers or call the CU Denver helpdesk (link below). If there is an emergency situation, email me 24 hours in advance of the assignment due date. CU Denver's tech help desk is at: <https://www.ucdenver.edu/offices/office-of-information-technology/get-help>.

Students with Disabilities

I am committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in our class, including students with disabilities. If you have a disability or think you have a disability and need accommodations to succeed in this course, contact Disability Resources and Services (DRS) and speak with me as soon as you can. DRS is in Academic Building 1, Suite 2116, and at disabilityresources@ucdenver.edu.

Communicating with me

To communicate with you, I will periodically send out Canvas announcements to the class with updates, links, or other items of interest. To communicate with me, email me at Brenden.Beck@ucdenver.edu. If I don't respond in 48 hours, feel free to email me again. You can also message me on Canvas, but I check my email more regularly. Before emailing me, please check the syllabus first, and consider emailing a fellow student to see if they know the answer.

Partial Schedule

See Canvas for the full course materials, available at 9:00am each Sunday.

Week 1 – Introduction – Week of January 15th

Review the syllabus

Read Baldwin, "Fifth Avenue, Uptown"

* No quiz this week, next week's quiz will cover this material

Week 2 – Urban Theory – Week of January 22nd

Read Kleniewski & Thomas, "Chapter 2: Theoretical Perspectives on the City"

Read Merrill & Leatherby, "Here's How America Uses Its Land" in *Bloomberg*

Week 3 – U.S. Urbanization – Week of January 29th

Read Kleniewski & Thomas, "Chapter 4: Urban Development in the United States"

Watch "How Highways Wrecked American Cities"

Watch "PBS Frontline. "Left Behind America." Video (55:00)

* Discussion

Week 4 – U.S. Suburbanization – Week of February 5th

Read Kleniewski & Thomas, "Chapter 5: Cities, Suburbs, and Metropolitan Areas"

Read Jackson, "Introduction," from *Crabgrass Frontier*

Watch *LA Story*'s opening

Week 5 – Gender and Sexuality in the City – Week of February 12th

Read Kleniewski & Thomas, "Chapter 11: Women in Cities"

Read Chauncey, "Building Gay Enclaves"

Week 6 – Racism, Segregation, and Ghettoization – Week of February 19th

Read Kleniewski & Thomas, "Chapter 9: African Americans in Cities"

Explore this map: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/07/08/us/census-race-map.html>

Listen to This American Life, "Prologue" (5:00) and "Rental Gymnastics" (31:00)

Watch Vox, "The Wealth Gap Explained"

Week 7 – Class Division and Urban "Development" – Week of February 26th

Read Kleniewski & Thomas, "Chapter 10: Social Class and Neighborhoods"

Read Berman, "Robert Moses: The Expressway World" in *All That Is Solid Melts into Air*

Watch *The Pruitt-Igoe Myth*

Watch *Los Angeles Plays Itself* excerpt (8:55)

* Discussion

Week 8 – The City's Economy – Week of March 5th

Read Kleniewski & Thomas, "Chapter 12: The Urban Economy"

Read Kleniewski & Thomas, "Chapter 13: Local Government and Finances"

Watch "Why Do Taxpayers Pay Billions of Dollars for Football Stadiums?" (4:09)

Watch *Rosanne* excerpt (2:00)

Week 9 – Transportation, Design, and Planning – Week of March 12th

Read Kleniewski & Thomas, "Chapter 16: Planning for the Future of Cities"

Read Jacobs, Jane. 1961. "Introduction" from *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*.

Listen: On the Media. 2018. "Walking-to-Work Stories: Heartwarming or Harmful?" (11:04)

Watch *The Social Life of Small Urban Places* (58:00)

Week 10 – City Finances and Article Reviews – Week of March 19th

Read Kleniewski & Thomas, "Chapter 13: Local Government and Finance"

* Article reviews due Friday at 11:59pm

Week 11 – Global Cities – Week of March 26th

Choose *one* of the following readings:

- 1) Kleniewski, "Chapter 6: Cities in Europe"
- 2) Kleniewski, "Chapter 7: Cities in the Developing World"
- 3) Davis, "The Urban Climactic" from *Planet of Slums*
- 4) Peng & Zhu, "Urban Transport in Chinese Cities" & Sassen, "The Global City: Introducing A Concept"

Watch *Pepe le Moko*'s opening scene

Watch *Inside Rio's Favelas* (8:59)

* No quiz this week

* Discussion

Week 12 – Immigration – Week of April 2nd

Read Kleniewski & Thomas, “Chapter 8: Immigrants, Ethnic Groups, and the City”

Read Higham, *Strangers in a Strange Land* “Chapter 1”

Watch "Adam Ruins Immigration"

Week 13 – Criminal Justice and the City – Week of April 9th

Read Sampson, “Broken Windows and the Meaning of Disorder”

Watch “Walking While Black”

Spring break, no assignments – Week of April 16th

Week 14 – What Is to Be Done? – Week of April 23rd

Readings TBD

* Discussion

Week 15 – Concluding Week – Week of April 30th

* Neighborhood project due 11:59pm on Friday, May 5th.