Urban Revitalization, 762:413:01
Fall 2017
Civic Square Building, Room 253
Wednesday, 9:50 AM - 12:50 PM

Instructor: Lee Polonsky
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Office Hours: Monday, 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm
Course Overview and Objectives

This semester, we will think critically about how we define and classify urban problems, as well as how we devise and implement solutions to those problems. Weekly readings and discussions are divided into three segments. First, we’ll explore the contexts in which efforts toward urban revitalization have unfolded throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. How do urban policies and programs respond to and reflect the political and social world? How do they shape it, intentionally and inadvertently? What patterns and ruptures can we identify? In the second segment of the course we will turn to a few of the key “problems” that are the focus of urban revitalization and development. How have these problems been understood over time? What have dominant definitions excluded from consideration? Then, in a third segment, we will take a look at contemporary approaches to urban revitalization. What kinds of problems do they identify? What strategies do they employ? Together we will ask and begin to answer all of these questions, and some more, in order to situate our understanding of urban revitalization in the context of the broader political economy, asking what works, how, and for whom.

By semester’s end, students should be able to:
- Engage in close reading of historical and theoretically-driven writing on urban revitalization
- Identify and synthesize key themes and debates in urban policy
- Explain how particular policies are situated within the broader history of urban revitalization
- Communicate these explanations in writing and class discussion
- Establish a individual perspective -- albeit provisional! -- on the goals and practice of urban revitalization

Assignments and Grading

Reflection Papers and Participation
Each week, students will write a short (1 – 2 pages) response paper engaging the week’s readings. In class, students will workshop their papers in small groups and lead class discussion.

Weekly Reflection Papers - 40%
Use your reflection papers to address themes or tensions in the week’s readings, or connect to prior weeks, or experiences in your own life and studies. Depending on the lesson, there may be a specific prompt or exercise for use in class. There are (more or less) no “right” or “wrong” reflections. Please bring two hard copies to class. No late papers will be accepted. Papers will be graded 0 – 2.

Participation - 20%
This is a discussion-driven course, and our learning as a group will depend on a complete and close reading of the weekly materials. It is expected that students arrive on time and ready to engage in thoughtful discussion about the materials and themes for the week. There are no texts to purchase for this class; all readings will be posted on Sakai under “Resources.” Over the course of the semester, readings and supplemental materials may adjust slightly, in which case students will be given at least one week’s notice.
Program or Policy Analysis
In a final paper, you will zoom in on a single program or project of interest that constitutes an effort towards urban revitalization or redevelopment. Students will work together in the final weeks of class on a graded peer assessment.

**Paper - 30%**
On or before October 9, students will identify a single policy or program as the topic of a 5 - 7 page research paper (due 12/15). Topics must be approved, and guidelines will be circulated and discussed in class.

**Peer Assessment - 10%**
Students will submit a paper draft on 12/6 and work in small groups in a paper workshop during the last class session on 12/11.

Policies and Expectations

**Writing Guidelines**
All papers should be double spaced, in a 12-point font, with reasonable margins. Proper citation formatting is also required, and the Rutgers Libraries offers several helpful tutorials on this subject (see link below). On the first week of class, we’ll review some aspects of clear and effective writing. I also strongly encourage you to review the short segments of Strunk and White’s *The Elements of Style* that are posted on Sakai in under “Resources”; it’s helpful and entertaining!

Citation and Other Tutorials: [http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/tutorials](http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/tutorials)

**Academic Integrity**
Plagiarism and “cheating” in any form will not be tolerated and will result in an “F” or (0) for the assignment. Thus, plagiarism in the final projects would it almost impossible to pass the class. As it is unlikely that we will all read the academic integrity policy (link below) in great detail, I’ll point out that you typically know it when you see/do it (and so do I). So don’t do it!

Academic Integrity Policy: [http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy)

**Attendance**
Attendance in class is mandatory. Whenever possible, notify me in advance using the University reporting absence website (link below), or by email. Most importantly, we need you to make class fun and interesting!

Self-reporting Absence Site: [https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/](https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/)

**Respect in the Classroom**
Throughout the semester we may cover topics that feel personal and/or political for many of you. In group and personal exchanges, all voices and perspectives are to be respected. Disagreement is fine; disrespect is not. If at any point you feel you have been disrespected, please reach out to me so that we can discuss a solution.
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# Course Schedule

### September 11  
**Week 1: Welcome & Introductions**

**Themes & Topics**  
Syllabus review; Introductions and interests; Expectations (all around); Mini writing lesson, etc.; Watch and discuss Zipper: Coney Island’s Last Wild Ride

### September 18  
**Week 2: “The kind of problem a city is”**

**Themes & Topics**  
Defining “Urban” and “Revitalization,” Ideas, Goals, Unintended Consequences

**Readings**  


### September 25  
**Week 3: Politics & Governance**

**Themes & Topics**  
Power, Inclusion, Authority, Governance

**Readings**  


### PART I. URBAN REVITALIZATION IN CONTEXT

### October 2  
**Week 4: The Industrial City**

**Themes & Topics**  
Urbanization, The Progressive Movement, Early Planning and Urban Interventions, The New Deal, Slum Clearance

**Readings**  


Experience, 1900 - 2010.


October 9 **Week 5: The Postwar City**
Themes & Topics *Urban Renewal, Migration, War on Poverty, Disinvestment, Suburbanization*
Fox Gotham, Kevin. 2014. Chapter 4, “Urban Renewal, Public Housing, and Downtown Redevelopment” pp. 75 - 94 in Race, Real Estate, and Uneven Development: The Kansas City Experience, 1900 - 2010.

October 16 **Week 6: The Crisis City & Beyond**
Themes & Topics *Fiscal Crisis, Restructuring Governance, Public-Private Partnerships, Neoliberalism, CDBG and Tax Credits*

PART II. TOPICS IN URBAN REVITALIZATION

October 23 **Week 7: Disinvestment & Economic Decline**
Themes & Topics *Economic Downturns/Upturns, Abandonment, Concentrated Poverty, Blight, Aesthetics*


### October 30

**Week 8: Housing**

**Themes & Topics**

*Housing-as-Shelter, Housing-as-Investment, Gentrification, Clearance, Subsidy, Ownership Models*

**Readings**


Additional readings TBD.

### November 6

**Week 9: Race, Migration & Immigration**

**Themes & Topics**

*Race-based Explanations for Poverty, Racism, Segregation, Access and Inclusion*

**Readings**


Additional readings TBD.

### PART III. CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES TO URBAN REVITALIZATION

### November 13

**Week 10: Business, Real Estate & “Creativity” (71)**

**Themes & Topics**

*Class, The “Creative Class,” Market-based Strategies, Political Economy*

**Readings**


November 20  

**Week 11: Mega-Projects & Mega-Investments**

**Themes & Topics**

*Large-scale Finance, Tax-Increment-Finance, Tax Credits, Finance*

**Readings**


November 27  

**Week 12: Financialization**

**Themes & Topics**

*Financial tools and institutions, Social Finance,*

**Readings**


Additional Readings TBD.

December 4  

**Week 12: Cooperation & Resistance**

**Themes & Topics**

*Community Land Trusts, Worker and Member Cooperatives, Social Movements*

**Readings**


Additional Readings TBD.

December 11  

**Week 14: Paper Workshops & Summary**