Overview: The city is one of humanity’s most profound and unwieldy inventions. This course surveys the culture of cities, exploring their historical development and their current dynamism. Our perspective will encompass the great global cities as well as major urban areas in the United States. We will frame the urban experience from a number of perspectives, examining the distinctive forms of expressive culture, ethnic and racial conflict, and political or economic activity that cities generate. Students will gain an understanding of the profound impact of new technologies, immigration, and gentrification on how cities grow and decline. We will consider each of these dimensions of urban experience from a cultural perspective, which focuses on how people create meaningful lives.

Dynamics: Through lectures, readings, and films, students will acquire an informed perspective on urbanism and be introduced to the methods and theories that anthropologists rely upon in analyzing urban settings. Lectures will frame the numerous dimensions that inform city life, while presenting students with a means of thinking synthetically about these complex interrelations. The readings feature a range of disciplinary perspectives on the culture of cities, but we will also develop a sustained attention to the work of urban ethnographers. Daily films will offer vivid, engaging depictions of particular dynamics related to city life. One in-class exam will test your comprehension of basic dynamics, key concepts, and critical historical developments related to urbanism. Then a final ethnographic project will allow you to pull all the strands of the course together in an applied, practice-based approach to a topic of your interest.

Class participation is comprised of the following components. Daily writing assignments allow you to respond thoughtfully to the topics examined in the readings and lectures. These are due in class and cannot be made up unless you have an excused absence. Discussions will be geared towards clarifying texts and grappling with the insights and issues raised in readings and films—attendance is a requirement of this course. Attendance is required and more than 3 unexcused absences will result in at least one letter-grade reduction. WARNING: This syllabus is not a contract; reading assignments and topics are subject to change, reflecting the general pace of student/instructor progress in this class.

Grading and Course Requirements:
1) One exam = 40%
2) One ethnographic project (10-12 pages) = 40%
3) Daily writing (paragraph summaries of films and topics selected from the readings) and class participation (showing up and engaging in class discussions of the readings and films) = 20%
Required Texts:
Rethinking Urban Parks: Public Space and Cultural Diversity, Setha Low et al.
Triumph of the City, Edward Glaeser
Barrio Dreams: Puerto Ricans, Latinos, and the Neoliberal City, Arlene Davila.

Online Resources:
Cultural Anthropology http://www.culanth.org/
American Ethnologist http://americanethnologist.org/
Anthropology News http://www.anthropology-news.org/
AnthroSource http://www.anthrosource.net/Default.aspx
Public Culture: http://publicculture.org/issues/view/25/2
New Geography: http://www.newgeography.com/
City Lab (Atlantic) http://www.citylab.com/
Cities Project (NPR) http://www.npr.org/series/155914958/npr-cities

Class Schedule:
WEEK ONE: The Origin and Design of Cities.
July 13: Introduction.
Film: Barcelona Blueprint.
July 14: Anthropology of the City:
Readings: Rethinking Urban Parks, Chp 1; On the Plaza, Chps 1 & 2; Barrio Dreams, Introduction; and Triumph, Introduction.
Film: The Nature of Cities.
Assignment: Identify an article focused on urban contexts/dynamics in an anthropology journal.
July 15: Origins of Cities and Urban Design pt 1
Readings: Triumph, Chp 1; “Death and Life of Chicago”; and “Serenade for the Public Plaza,”
Film: Rome: Impact of an Idea.
Readings: On the Plaza, chp.4-5
Film: Paris: From the Haussmann Era to the Ring Road.
July 17: Industrial City, pt. 1: European origins
Film: City Living.
DUE: Journal Article Summaries.

WEEK TWO: The Industrial and Post-Industrial City.
July 20: Industrial City, pt. 2 Segregation and the inner city
Film: Requiem for Detroit.
July 21: The Post Industrial City
Readings: The Triumph, Chp. 6-7; Harvey, “Time-Space Compression and the Postmodern Condition”; “LA as Postmodern,” Dear & Flusty.
Film: Paris Ring and Cities on Speed: Mumbai—traffic.
**July 22:** Urban Ethnography  
Film: *The Pruitt-Igoe Myth.*  

**July 23:** Infrastructure.  
Film: *The Water Front.*  

**July 24:** **EXAM.**  

**WEEK THREE: Code and Performance.**  
**July 27:** Spatializing Culture: Discussion of ethnographic sites.  
Readings: *Rethinking Urban Parks* Chapters 1-3; *Triumph,* Chp 8; Lipsitz, “White Spatial Imaginary.”  
Film: *The Garden.*  

**July 28:** Representing the City: Discussion of research sources.  
Readings: *Rethinking Urban Parks* Chapters 4-7; Stevenson, “Imagining the City: Movies, Maps, and Cyberspace,” Film: *Bomb It.*  

**July 29:** Reading the Urban: Discussion of research questions.  
Readings: *Rethinking Urban Parks* Chapter 9; Stevenson, “Meaning and Memory: Reading the Urban Text.” Film: *Let the Good Times Roll.*  

**July 30:** Methods of Urban Ethnography: Discussion of methods.  

**July 31:** Fieldwork Day.  

**WEEK FOUR: Consuming Cities.**  

**August 3:** Symbolic Economy: updates on ethnographic sites.  
Readings: *Culture of Cities,* Chp.1 & 2  
Film: *The Gods of Times Square.*  

**August 4:** Disneyfication of Cities.  
Readings: *Triumph of Cities,* Chp 5, and *Culture of Cities,* Chp. 5 & 6  
Film: *Malls R Us.*  

**August 5:** Gentrification:  
Film: *Flag Wars*  

**August 6:** Contesting Public Culture  
Readings: *Barrio Dreams,* Chps 3-4; *On the Plaza,* Chps 8 & 11.  
Film: *To Be Seen.*  

**August 7:** Fieldwork Day.  

**WEEK FIVE: The Future of Cities.**  

**August 10:** Home Owner Associations and Governing Cities  
Readings: *Barrio Dreams,* Chps 5-6;
Film: *The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill.*

**August 11:** Public Health of Cities.
Readings: *The Triumph,* Chp. 4. Film: *Unnatural Causes.*

**August 12:** Ethnographic Presentations.

**August 13:** Ethnographic Presentations.

**August 14:** Ethnographic Presentations.

**DUE August 17:** Ethnographic Papers. By noon, at my office (SCA 4.158)

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**Identifying an Ethnographic Site:**

After reading discussing chapters from Day One, spend some time in a public place. The objective is simply to try out Setha Low’s perspective on the *production of social space.* By observing how different people occupy a similar locale, Low tries to recognize social relations and social practices in space, as well as to demonstrate how public space becomes meaningful to users. She considers how differences in the use of space define social groups, and she examines the types of boundaries these users construct. This is what Low means by the “social construction of space”: “the actual transformation of space—through peoples’ social exchanges, memories, images, and daily use of the material setting—into scenes and actions that convey meaning.”

So pick a place and observe it. Consider its design features and pay attention to patterns of usage. Then try to articulate what kinds of meanings are attached to or contested in this place. *Can you picture yourself developing an ethnographic perspective on this place?*