

**GEO 633: Critical Urban Issues**  
Dr. Sara S. Metcalf  
Spring 2012  
Tuesdays 9:30am-12:10pm in 106 Wilkeson  
Office Hours: Mondays 11:30-1:30pm in 115 Wilkeson or by appointment  
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**Course Description:**
This graduate-level seminar is designed to develop critical thinking about current issues in urban geography pertaining to inequities, and to examine the global and local forces underlying the nature of urban evolution. Topics will be tailored to student interests, and include environmental justice, poverty, food security, community health, neighborhood development and accessibility, and issues of race and class in the urban context. Different methodologies and associated research paradigms will be considered in the study of urban spaces. Classes will center on discussion of assigned reading materials, which will be provided through UBLearns. Students will link material to their own research interests, and will rotate responsibility for leading in-class discussions.

**Evaluation:**

**Participation (20%):** This grade reflects how actively and thoughtfully the student takes part in the course throughout the semester. Students are expected to lead designated sessions as both a critic and synthesizer of peer responses to the assigned readings. As critic, each student will provoke discussion and offer alternative views. As synthesizer, each student will summarize the responses of their classmates on the basis of on-line and in-class discussion. The synthesizer will post a written summary to the discussion board for that week’s readings.

**Weekly Responses (30%):** Each Monday before 3pm, students will submit written responses to the assigned readings for Tuesday’s in-class discussion using the UBLearns “Discussion Board.” Each student should contrast one of the assigned articles with another scholarly article of their choosing from beyond the list. Responses should be 1-2 pages (less than 500 words) in length and should exhibit proper citation of source material. A hard-copy of the response should be turned in to the instructor at the start of class, and students should bring an extra copy (digital or paper) for reference during class discussion.

**Mid-term (25%):** A take-home mid-term exam will be distributed prior to February 28 and due in class on March 6. Students will be asked to relate readings to their research interests and to develop a poster/collage of urban images about their research topic. The posters will be presented and discussed in class the day they are due (March 6).

**Term Paper (25%):** Students will write a 10-15 page (less than 4000 words) research paper on a topic determined in consultation with the instructor. Students will turn in their paper on the last day of class (April 24) and will orally present the paper during the final class discussion. The term paper should locate relevant scholarly articles and relate them to empirical observations of urban issues.
Course Schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Discussion Topic</th>
<th>Assigned Readings (available on UBLearns)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>17-Jan</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>7-Feb</td>
<td>Differentiating Spaces</td>
<td>Kappeler 2010, Smith 2002, Wyly 2004</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>14-Feb</td>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>Cope 2009, Rowe 1990, Yapa 1996</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>28-Feb</td>
<td>NO CLASS – AAG</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>6-Mar</td>
<td>Urban Health</td>
<td>Dye 2008, Northridge 2011</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>13-Mar</td>
<td>NO CLASS - SPRING BREAK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>3-Apr</td>
<td>Participatory Processes</td>
<td>Elwood 2006, Knigge 2006, Metcalf 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>17-Apr</td>
<td>Complex Cities</td>
<td>Batty 2008, Cole 2011</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>24-Apr</td>
<td>Conclusions</td>
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Assigned Readings (listed by the Monday for which responses are due by 3pm to UBLearns):

January 23:

January 30:

February 6:
February 13:

February 20:

March 5:

March 19:

March 26:

April 2:


April 9:


April 16:
