

The University of Calgary
Department of Sociology

Sociology 499.01 Urban Field School
Sociology 499.02 Urban Field School Professional Seminar

Fall 2008
COURSE OUTLINE

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Harry H. Hiller
OFFICE: Social Science 1056
OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays 2:00-3:00pm or by appointment
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CLASS MEETS: 499.01 Block Week September 2-7 SS 1155
499.02 Tuesdays 12:30 – 1:45 SS 1155

NOTE: Sociology 499.01 and Sociology 499.02 are both quarter courses which together make up one half course. Students are required to take both courses in order to receive credit. A joint grade will be given.

COURSE PERSPECTIVE and OBJECTIVES:

The Urban Field School is an innovative educational opportunity pioneered by the Department of Sociology. The purpose of the field school is to give the student first hand experience with the city through observation, interviews, site visits, and contacts with experts. Such an intense program in the community is impossible under the regular academic schedule. We will spend all of the Block Week Field School (499.01) in the field. The second part of the course, the Field School Seminar (499.02), will provide the context for completion of course assignments. The purpose of the course then is to learn about the city first experientially and then to link the application of knowledge with research about cities and city life.

Within an urban design approach, five questions stand behind our analyses:

1. What is the nature of urban social interaction?
2. What is the nature of the sorting process in cities?
3. In what way do cities reveal inequalities, conflicts and dilemmas?
4. Why do cities change and how do they do so?
5. How can cities be changed and improved through design and planning?

This course will engage in urban analysis through an urban design perspective. We will be relating the social aspects of how people live in the city with the physical aspects (eg.

buildings, streets, land use, circulation) and natural features (eg. rivers, view lots). How has the way we have created cities led to specific consequences for current urban life? How might we design cities in the future to enhance urban life? How is human activity and human life related to how cities are designed? How does what is designed affect and shape human life?

Readings

All students should read Ali Madanipour, "Roles and Challenges of Urban Design", *Journal of Urban Design* 11(2)2006:173-193 preferably before Block Week. (You may read and print this article on-line. This article might also be helpful in writing your Field School Analytical Journal.)

Since the Block Week course involves experiences in two different cities (Calgary and San Francisco), the goal is to understand our own city better by having a comparison city which is considerably different. Two recommended readings are:

Beverly Sandalack and Andrei Nicolai, *The Calgary Project: Urban Form/Urban Life*. University of Calgary Press, 2006.

(This book is a very good outline of the evolution of Calgary as a city and the factors which have affected its design. Chapters 6-8 are particularly helpful. This book is strongly recommended and will help you understand Calgary better. It might also be useful in your written work.)

Chester Hartman, *City for Sale: The Transformation of San Francisco*. Revised Edition 2002. University of California Berkeley Press.

(This book is very different from the Calgary book but it gives you a sense of some of the issues which have shaped San Francisco.)

There are no additional readings required jointly for all students.

COURSE NOTES:

1. This is not only a different course in that it fosters experiential learning but it is a course in *professional socialization*. In a small group context, the course allows students the opportunity to interact with the ideas of others (experts in the community as well as other students) much like what would occur in a professional work environment you will encounter in the future. You will have to interact with the ideas of others as well as make presentations to your work group. This professional orientation will also be reflected in dress codes as directed on specific occasions.
2. A Field School schedule will be distributed for both Calgary and San Francisco. Students are required to follow it carefully – particularly noting times of departure in the mornings. The University will be providing transportation from campus each day in Calgary. Each student is expected to attend all activities each day.

Any absences from the Field School must be excused by the Professor. If an emergency situation prevents you from attending, please contact the professor immediately. Because we have a tight schedule, students are expected to be on time. Suggestions regarding appropriate dress will be made for each day.

3. Students are required to bring a notebook or clipboard to the Field School in both locations in order to facilitate the taking of notes of anything said, observed, or ideas that come to your mind. These notes will be helpful and useful to you as you complete the course assignments. Students may also find that having access to a city map aids in identifying the different communities in the city.
4. Normal contact hours (meaning class time) in a half-course is 39 hours. For this course, most of these hours will be in the Field School. The normal expectation is that a student will put in 2 hours outside of class for every one hour inside of class. Since the Field School will provide most of the class time, the student is reminded that the outside class time for the completion of course assignments will have to be done during the regular term. Using the guide above, **you should expect to put in about 6 hours per week.**
5. Students are required to sign a liability waiver for the University of Calgary. If you have any questions about the waiver, please call the Risk Management Office at 220-4611.
6. Class Participation in this course is essential and required. In addition to regular attendance, students are expected to take an active role through verbal dialogue with other students and experts whom we encounter. A field experience is not meant to be a passive experience but one in which the student is constantly thinking of questions and comments which can be part of the discussion. Class participation will be a component of your final grade. Your input on the Field School Projects of others will also be important.
7. You have been selected for this course because of your skills in sociological/urban analysis. It is important that you not only observe and experience, but that you also think deeply and analyze what is going on from a sociological perspective. Remember you are not a tourist. The purpose of the course is to help you not only to understand the city from a descriptive point of view but also to make efforts to understand why things are the way they are. In short, the Field School should be both fun and eye-opening, but also hard work. This should be reflected in your Journal (see below).

ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Field School Analytical Journal**

All students will write a 5 page (doublespaced) analytical journal of their experiences and observations in the Field School. Students are encouraged to

take notes of their observations and then to later reflect on the experience and analyze it using the lens of an urban analyst with appropriate urban terms, concepts, theories, issues, and perspectives. It is not only important to know how you felt or what you observed, but also to stand back and assess what this tells you about urban life, and the structure and nature of the city. There are many things that you could write about but you will have to make some choices so that your discussion will include important insights and depth. Make sure that your paper is organized around themes or important points rather than just rambling. The journal must be handed in on September 16 but the previous class on September 9 will provide an opportunity to test your ideas.

2. Major Research Project

During the Field School, you will have become aware of a variety of issues relating to urban life. Select one of these issues and write a fifteen page paper on the topic. The paper is meant to combine library research with some practical or real-time expressions of the issue you selected. Your paper **must** include a bibliography of sources which you used in the paper (rather than just sources you saw on a list) **and** some further field component i.e. observation, interviews, document analysis, historical research, photography, or secondary data analysis that enhanced your knowledge of the topic. The latter requirement is to ensure that your paper is rooted in some real-life situation (particularly locally) rather than just dealing with the issue in general terms. You will be given guidelines for research ethics clearance if appropriate to what you are doing.

The project will proceed through the following stages:

September 23	Topic proposals Preliminary presentation of your topic idea
September 30	Confirmation of topic and presentation of research agenda in writing (i.e. what you want to study and how you want to study it- one page to be handed in)
October 14, 21, 28	Progress Reports Five students per class will report on progress to date and observations/analyses made. Class members will critique what is presented and make suggestions.
November 4, 18, 25	Final Reports Five students per class will give their final report on the project including handouts/audio-visuals/charts, tables, graphs where appropriate.
December 2	Report to the Community (Luncheon)
December 5	Paper due

3. Class Participation

Class participation will be assessed in a variety of ways from attendance to your contribution to the learning environment of the class. Asking thoughtful questions, making well-prepared presentations, and interacting with the work and ideas of others are also important.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

September 9	Field School Analytical Perspective - come prepared to share an analytical observation
September 16	Field School Analytical Journal Due
September 23	Field School Project Proposals - brainstorming your idea
September 30	Final Confirmation of Project Topics hand in a one page research proposal with a clear statement of the research problem to be investigated and how you propose to attack it.
October 7	No Class – Preparation Time
October 14	Progress Reports
October 21	Progress Reports (continued)
October 28	Progress Reports (continued)
November 4	Final Reports
November 11	Reading Days (No class)
November 18	Final Reports (continued)
November 25	Final Reports (continued)
December 2	Final Report Luncheon
December 5	Papers Due (or as negotiated)

COURSE WEIGHTS

Field School Analytical Journal	-	20 points
Major Research Project	-	60 points
Class Participation	-	20 points

The Professor will inform you of the letter grade equivalents of the points obtained on each assignment.

BACKGROUND REFERENCES

In addition to numerous urban journals such as the *Canadian Journal of Urban Research*, *City and Community*, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, and *Urban Studies* (among others), the following references are basic sources which might be useful to students for consultation for various purposes throughout the course.

- Hiller, H., Urban Canada: Sociological Perspectives. Oxford, 2005.
- Abrahamson, M. Urban Enclaves, St. Martins, 1996.
- Andrew, Caroline. Our Diverse Cities. Ottawa 2004.
- Fowler, E.P. and D. Siegel, ed., Urban Policy Issues: Canadian Perspective. Oxford 2002.
- Gottdiener, M., and R. Hutchison., The New Urban Sociology. 2nd Ed. McGraw-Hill 2000.
- Karp, Stone, and Yoels, Being Urban: A Sociology of City Life., 2nd Edition, Greenwood, 1991.
- Orum, Anthony, and Xiangming Chen. *The World of Cities: Places in Comparative and Historical Perspective*. Blackwell, 2003.
- Palen, J., The Urban World. Sixth Edition, McGraw Hill, 2002.
- Zukin, S., The Culture of Cities. Blackwell, 1995.
- Shannon, TR., Kleniewski, N., W.M. Cross. Urban Problems in Sociological Perspectives, Fourth Edition, Random 2002.
- Sassen, S., Cities in A World Economy. Pine Forge 1994.
- Smith, M. and J. Feagin. The Capitalist City. Blackwell, 1987.
- Logan, JR, and H. Molotch, Urban Fortunes: the Political Economy of Place, California, 1987.