

Geography 478: Social Justice and the City

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Office hours: By appointment

Class times: Mon/Weds 7-9:20pm

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Course Description

Who are cities for? This is a more complex question that is initially apparent. At various times and in various places this question would be answered differently. *Who* is asking and *who* is answering will also color the response. Everyone – the haves and the have-nots, the powerful and the powerless – experiences the city differently.

This class is intended to be a place where students think critically about urban social relations and gain a better understanding of social justice, inequality, access, and privilege as they relate to urban space. We will explore the ways in which identity, political economy, and space come together to create different ways of “knowing” the city. We will highlight the roles of race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and resistance in shaping both the **physical** and **social** geographies of cities. The course will challenge you to interrogate dominant representations and conceptualizations of cities and to think critically about who has access and control over urban space.

The city of Seattle will be our laboratory. Through readings, class discussion, group facilitations, guest presentations, and (a fair amount of) fieldwork, we will explore Seattle as an example of how a North American city embodies the problems and opportunities inherent in modern urban social relations – and how social justice “plays out” on the ground.

Your job in this class is to *grapple* with the ideas in the course readings and in your peers’ writing and conversation. You should:

- **puzzle through** and **reflect** on the readings, not skim them; and
- consistently demonstrate **critical engagement** in your comments and writing.

Perhaps most importantly, you will need to think through your own and your peers’ contributions with a critical eye and ear, remaining open to the possibility of significant revisions of your own thinking. The city is a complex place, and social justice is not an easy topic.

Some of the goals I have for this class are for you to:

- Explore and understand various perspectives on social justice and urban space through readings, in-class discussions, and “walk-about” explorations of Seattle;

- Gain awareness of how governance, including housing, policing, and education policies, influences ones experiences and quality of life in urban environments differently, depending on *who you are*;
- See the effects of environmental problems on different sub-populations within the city;
- Gain an understanding of how an *emplaced perspective on social justice* might inform our perceptions of policies, politics and decision-making in the city

Texts

Each week you will be required to read several articles and/or book chapters. These need to be read by class time Monday. The texts will be compiled in a course reader available on the Ave.

Course Breakdown

Content Responses	20%
Fieldwork Assignments	30%
Final Presentation	30%
Class Participation	20%

While at present I have not scheduled any quizzes, if participation dwindles I may implement pop quizzes.

1. Content Responses

You will complete two content responses during the first weeks of the quarter. I will provide guiding questions for your responses. The response will be due via a Catalyst Collect It DropBox. Responses should be about 2-3 double spaced pages in length and be free of typos.

2. Field Assignments

In order to utilize our own urban laboratory, there will be two field assignments during the quarter:

Field Assignment 1: Control of Public and Private Spaces

Field Assignment 2: Transecting Seattle on Bus 48

Each of these will require a substantial time commitment outside of the classroom and some travel within the city of Seattle. (All travel can be done along bus routes.)

3. Final Project

The final projects will be conducted in groups of 3. It will consist of two parts:

- a) A power point or other 15-20 minute presentation for the class in week 10. This will involve researching and presenting on a previously chosen topic on social justice in Seattle.
- b) A short individual reflection paper on your topic

4. Class Participation

There will be a number of in-class assignments during the quarter, including on-going participation in lectures and discussions, in-class writings, etc. These in-class assignments may or may not be scheduled in advance.

Course Policies and Resources

Lectures. Students are expected to come to all class sessions and to have read all assigned readings for that day before class. Occasionally there will be in-class activities that will affect your “participation” grade. These cannot be made up.

You are *strongly* encouraged to speak up in class. I endeavor to make the class room a place where everyone is comfortable making comments, raising objections or asking questions. No question is “stupid” – if you are wondering about something, inevitably so are 5-10 of your peers. An interactive lecture is *much* more fun for all, me included. Contradictory positions and “devil’s advocate” questions are always welcome!

All students are expected to maintain a collegial and respectful atmosphere in class and while working with your classmates. Healthy scholarly debates are encouraged, and disagreements are expected. However, all students have the right to respect in the classroom.

Common courtesy: *PLEASE turn off cell phones, refrain from accessing the web, and do not text, etc., while in class. These are major distractions to me and to others.* If your use of technology in lecture becomes a distraction to me or others, I will ask you to leave.

Communication. I will communicate various issues, including any changes to readings, due dates, or assignments, important news about the course, or issues of interest using **e-mail**. It is your responsibility to monitor your UW Uniform Access e-mail address on a regular basis. This e-mail address is automatically maintained in the course list serve (see above).

If you have a question or concern, you are welcome to send it to me via e-mail. You may use the course e-mail list – most likely there are others with your concern as well – or you can send your question directly to me. If you mail directly to me, please use the course number as part of the subject so I will be able to distinguish it from my other e-mails. **NOTE:** *I read and respond to my e-mail only M-F, 9:00am-4:00pm.* Please plan your studies with this in mind – especially as deadlines approach. A late-night Saturday e-mail will get a Monday morning response.

The **course website** will be the repository for course materials. You will be able to access these materials using your UWNetID logon and password. Please check the website for any handouts you missed, etc., before contacting me.

Academic Accommodations

To request academic accommodations due to disability, please contact Disabled Student Services (DSS) as soon as possible: 448 Schmitz, Box 355839, 206-543-8925 (Voice/TTY), uwdss@u.washington.edu.

Misconduct

Plagiarism, cheating, and other misconduct are serious violations of your contract as a student. I have a “zero tolerance” policy for plagiarism and/or cheating in my classrooms.

Incompletes and make-ups: *Makeup exams will only be given in cases of documented emergencies. I will not give “incomplete” grades unless there is a documented personal or family emergency.*

Grade Changes: *Requests for grade changes on assignments will only be accepted in writing, and only within 3 days of the assignment being handed back to students. Requests must be justified in terms of the content of the assignment, not by outside considerations. If you are not satisfied with the decision on a grade change request, you may appeal to the Geography Department chair.*

Other important contacts

Evening Degree Program Website: <http://www.evedegree.washington.edu/edp/>
Evening Degree Advising: 103 Lewis Hall (206) 543-6160

Deliverables

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Due date and other information</u>
Content Response 1	Weds Jan 16 th via dropbox
Content Response 2	Weds Jan 23 rd via dropbox
Field Assignment 1	Monday Feb 4 th in class
Field Assignment 2	Weds Feb 27 in class
Final Presentation	In class week 10

Geography 478: Social Justice and the City
Course Schedule

Below is the list of required readings and their due dates. You will be responsible for all “required” readings. I may assign additional readings as the quarter progresses.

About class readings: *Keep in mind you are not reading **facts**. Rather, you are reading **arguments**. Arguments are always contested! Noting which author argues what, and provides what kind of evidence in support of his/her argument, is a fundamental part of scholarship.*

Topic One: Theories and Concepts

Weeks 1-3

What is social justice? What is the city? What spaces and places constitute urban-ness? How do geographers view social relations in cities? A major part of social justice involves understanding inequalities. In the next three weeks we will discuss the intersections between class, gender, race, sexuality, space and inequality. We will discuss “discourse” and how this influences the material realities of different groups.

Week 1: Jan 7th/Jan 9th: Course introductions- “Social Justice” and “The City”

Home/work: Throughout the quarter we will use Seattle as an example of the issues under consideration. In what ways do this week’s concepts apply or do not apply to Seattle?

Readings: While in the future readings will be due for class Monday, this week they will be due Wednesday, January 9th. I will distribute readings in class Monday.

1. David Harvey (2003) “The Right to the City” pages 939-941
2. Paul Routledge (2011). “Introduction: Cities, Justice and Conflict” pages 246-257

Week 2: Jan 14th/Jan 16th: Unpacking Social Justice Part 1

Home/work: Content Response 1 is due at the end of this week.

Readings:

1. Mustafa Dikec (2001) “Justice and the Spatial Imagination” pages 1785-1805
2. Laura Pulido (2010) “Rethinking Environmental Racism: White Privilege and Urban Development in Southern California” pages 12-40
2. City of Seattle, (2012) “Racial Equity in Seattle: Race and Social Justice Initiative Three-Year Plan, 2012-2014.” (Accessed from <http://www.seattle.gov/rsji/> Sept. 11, 2012)
3. City of Seattle (2011) “Race and Social Justice Initiative: Accomplishments 2009-2011.” (Accessed from <http://www.seattle.gov/rsji/> Sept. 11, 2012)

Week 3: Jan 21st/Jan 23rd : Unpacking inequality and privilege part 2

There will be no class Monday, January 21st

Home/work: Content Response 2 will be due at the end of this week.

Readings:

1. George Lipsitz (2011). "Section One: Social Imaginaries and Social Relations" in *How Racism Takes Place*. (This reading will be in PDF form)
2. David Wilson and Harald Bauder. (2001). "Discourse and the making of marginalized people" pages 25-26
3. Michael Brown (2011) "Queering Gay Space" pages 155-163

Topic Two: Public Space and Spatialized Social Control **Week 4-5**

What is "Public Space?" Who defines it? Who controls it? How is public space policed? In this section we will discuss the ways in which spaces are used to control "undesirable" populations. We will also analyze the ways in which public spaces are re-purposed and redefined through resistance and contestation.

Week 4: Jan 28th/Jan 30th: Contesting Space Historically

Home/work: Pass out Field Assignment 1 (due Feb 4th in class)

Readings:

1. Agnew, John (2011) "Chapter 23: Space and Place," in *The Sage Handbook of Geographical Knowledge*. pages 316-330.
2. Brown & Morrill (2011) "From Industrial to Postindustrial City." in *Seattle Geographies*, pages 168-171
3. Avila, Eric (2004) "Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Film Noir, Disneyland and the (Sub)Urban Imaginary" pages 3-22

Week 5: Feb 4th/Feb 6th: Case Studies on Spatial Control

Guest Speaker: Joe Eckert "The Occupy Movement and Spatial Control"

Home/work: For Wednesday, bring in a media article that illustrates contestation of public space in an urban area.

Readings:

1. Tony Sparks (2010) "Broke Not Broken: Rights, Privacy and Homelessness in Seattle" pages 842-862.
2. Rivera, Whitney (2008) "Addressing the Real Problem of Racial Profiling in Seattle, Washington." *Journal of Race, Gender, and Ethnicity*. vol. 2, March 2008. pages 2-36.
3. Steve Herbert (2011) "The paradoxes of social control in Seattle" pages 95-97
4. John Carr (2011) "Whose public space: The political geography of skateboarding" pages 97-100

Topic Three: Social Policies and the City

Weeks 6-8

What is the historical and current role of government policies in influencing the social and spatial processes of cities? What are the ways in which investment in capital (businesses, housing, etc) influences the landscapes and experiences within cities? What political-economic processes historically and currently impact segregation in cities? In weeks 6-8 we will turn to specific policies that produce inequalities and privilege in cities.

Week 6: Feb 11th/Feb 13th: Education and Public Schools

There will be no formal class February 13th. You will be watching a film independently.

Home/work: In lieu of class Wednesday, you will need to watch “Waiting for Superman” and complete the questions provided on Catalyst. The questions need to be uploaded by Friday.

Readings:

1. Ellis and Ruiz (2011). "Turning back the clock: The resegregation of Seattle schools" in *Seattle Geographies* pages 136-143
2. Catherine Veninga (2011) “For whom did Seattle school segregation work?” pages 143-144
3. Julianne Hing (2012) “The School-to-Prison Pipeline Gets its First Ever Airing in the Senate” in *Colorlines*.

Week 7: Feb 18th/20th: Structuring Opportunity and Inequality

There will be no class February 18th for President’s Day

Home/work: I will pass out your second field assignment Wednesday. It will be due in class February 27th.

Readings:

1. Steven M. Graves (2003). “Landscapes of predation, landscapes of neglect: A location analysis of payday lenders and banks” pages 303-317
2. Mary Beth Pudup (2007). “It takes a garden: Cultivating citizen-subjects in organized garden projects” pages 231-243

Week 8: Feb 25th/Feb 27th: Segregation, Gentrification and Housing Justice

Guest Speaker: Magie Ramirez- “A history of Seattle’s Central District”

Home/work: Come to class Monday having thoroughly explored the “Segregated Seattle” website in particular “Seattle’s Segregation Story”
<http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/films&slides.htm>

Readings:

1. Kevin Fox Gotham (2000). "Urban space, restrictive covenants and the origin of racial residential segregation in a US city, 1900-1950" pages 616-633.
2. Gary Simonson (2011) "Gentrification and the 'stayers' of Columbia City" pages 150-155
3. Nikole Hannah Jones (2012) "Living Apart: How the Government Betrayed a Landmark Civil Rights Law". <http://www.propublica.org/article/living-apart-how-the-government-betrayed-a-landmark-civil-rights-law>

Topic Four: The Future of the City**Weeks 9-10**

How are groups and citizens reworking and resisting urban inequalities? Who will control urban spaces in the next decades and what will be the purpose of cities? What is the future of social justice networks and research on cities, social justice and inequality?

Week 9: March 4th/March 6th: Another City is Possible?

Home/work: Prepare for final presentations in week 10

Readings:

1. Anna Clark (2012). "Mapping Motown"
http://www.architectmagazine.com/urban-development/mapping-motown_1.aspx
2. David Harvey (2012). "Another City is Possible".
<http://towardfreedom.com/globalism/3030-another-city-is-possible-an-interview-with-david-harvey>
3. Nik Heynen (2010). "Cooking up non-violent civil disobedient direct-action for the hungry: Food not bombs and the resurgence of radical democracy" pages 1225-1240

Week 10: March 11th/March 13th: Group Presentations

Home/work On Monday and Wednesday of this week you will be presenting your work and turning in your individual final papers about your research.