Contract/Syllabus for URB STD 987, Seminar-Urban Social Control

THURSDAYS, 4:30PM-7:10PM,

JOE AUSTIN

Office hours: Thursdays 1-3:30pm, and by appointment

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Introduction:
“Order” of any sort is a difficult matter to pin down in advanced studies, and the resistance of defining “urban social order” clearly follows this pattern. Governance (control) of the city’s social order was among the foundational problematics of the social sciences and humanities disciplines in the modern era. Social order has remained a central (and proliferating) set of theoretical and empirical objects of academic knowledge over the last two centuries, while pragmatically establishing, maintaining, modifying, and enforcing legitimate social orders are still a (if not THE) major undertaking in the current arts of governance. The range of tasks that might fit under the umbrella of “urban social control” is overwhelming, including law and criminal justice, the cultural norms of individual and collective behavior in almost every realm of social life, and the problematics of “freedom” within a competitive and unequal economic system, among others. The historical success of these undertakings (both academic and in practice) has been questionable, at best. The urban social order has been a most contentious, continuous, and bloody site of struggle, and the scars of those struggles have created some of the definitive markers of the modern (and current) era. Whether the urban social can or should be controlled is an open question.

READINGS:

Approximately 50 ARTICLES LISTED BELOW, AVAILABLE FROM E-RESERVE, UWM LIBRARY

Graded Work:
The class is discussion-based, with student interests taking the lead, and intermittent lecturettes from Joe as called for in the specifics of a discussion. The course will adhere to common expectations for advanced graduate seminars, including an expectation that every student contribute to each class discussion. Written work for class participation consists of 10 “discussion starters” (2-3 pages, 20% of the final grade; see descriptions below). 30% of the final grade is determined by your spoken participation in discussions. Thus, class discussion/participation constitutes 50% of the final grade. A research project of about 20 pages, to be negotiated with Joe, is also worth 50% of the final grade. See research paper description below.

Discussion Starters: 2 or more double-spaced pages, responding to the strengths, weakness, and points of particular interest in one or more of the assigned reading(s) for that week. These short writings will be the main “jumping off points” for our discussions of the readings, as well as a way for the class to collectively or individually “think out loud” about concepts and research. For this short discussion starter, you might include (but need not be limited to) any questions the reading(s) raised for you, your analytical observations and critical reflections on the authors’ method(s) of analysis, the selection and types of evidence the author considered, the author’s interpretations and arguments, the readings’ intersections with other disciplines, subfields and/or debates, or any relationships with prior readings, and/or intersections with your own research. Extensive
description and/or quotation of the assigned readings are not acceptable. Assume that everyone in the class has read the material thoroughly; this assignment is not intended to be a summary of the readings. I value papers that take up a few, carefully-considered, significant points over papers that attempt to briefly mention every point of interest. Please use footnotes. Students are selectively asked to read these papers to the class. Our collective discussion of the readings will follow these presentations, with the hope that the critical inquiries undertaken and presented by students’ responses will open up an informed discussion of the reading’s significance.

Research Projects: 20 or more typed, double-spaced, numbered pages, with standard margins and fonts, footnotes and bibliography. I like papers that use subheadings, but they are not required. Three class sessions are devoted to researching, writing, discussing, and revising your paper; this is a significant assignment, worth half of your final grade. That said, I am open to almost any topic that reasonably fits under the very broad umbrella of “urban social control,” and I encourage you to think carefully about what sort of paper might be most useful for your own research agenda (article, thesis, methodology, dissertation). I encourage you to meet or email with me about topic ideas, but this should be finalized no later than March 29, Session 9. “Final Topics” are due that evening – please submit a paragraph describing your plan for the paper and 3-5 primary sources from outside the class readings.

Discussion Schedule

Session 1 -- 1/26 Introductions and Initial Disorientations
Readings for discussion this evening:

Session 2 -- 2/2 Culture of Control

Session 3 -- 2/9 The Condemnation of Blackness

Session 4 -- 2/16 Frameworks for Investigating Social Control #1
Readings for discussion this evening:
- Selections from The Rule of Freedom
Session 5 -- 2/23  Frameworks for Investigating Social Control #2
Readings for discussion this evening:


Session 6 -- 3/1  Queer
Readings for discussion this evening:


Session 7 -- 3/8  Foucault, Subjectivity, Governmentality
Readings for discussion this evening:


Session 8 -- 3/15  Battling the Plantation Mentality
Session 9 -- 3/29  Space, the Public, and Territorial Controls

“Final Topics” are due this evening – please submit a paragraph describing your plan for the research paper, the sources of evidence you will be using, and 3-5 primary sources from outside the class readings.


Session 10 -- 4/5  Youth


Session 11 -- 4/12  NO CLASS MEETING; Research week for your project

Session 12 -- 4/19  Assembling the Social

Session 13 -- 4/26  Black, White, Immigrant, and Some Final Disorientations

Readings for discussion this evening:


Session 14 -- 5/3  INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS WITH JOE

Session 15 -- 5/10  PAPER WORKSHOP

**Final Paper Due 5/17, noon**