

Sociology/USP 901, Fall 2023:
Urban Social Structure
Tuesdays, 5:30 – 8:10 pm, Bolton 757

Prof. Marcus Britton
E-mail: britton@uwm.edu

Office: Bolton 728
Office Hours: Wednesday, 2–3 pm

Course Overview

In sociology, structural perspectives emphasize that understanding social organization and social change requires careful analysis of how individuals and other social actors are distributed across social positions, as well as of the patterns of interactions and relationships between these positions. Such perspectives assert that examining the development and consequences of social structures is a more fruitful path to understanding human societies than attending to individual cognition or cultural values and norms, or “what goes on in people’s heads.” This course applies structural perspectives to the analysis of urban neighborhoods, cities, and metropolitan regions, while also comparing social structural perspectives with those that emphasize the social psychological and cultural dimensions of urban life. Our focus will be primarily on neighborhoods, cities and metropolitan regions in the contemporary United States, but we will also selectively compare and contrast these urban social structures with those in other times and places. While we will primarily focus on sociological perspectives on urban social organization, we will also explore relevant perspectives from urban planning, geography, history, political science and policy research.

Required Texts

- Garrido, Marco Z. 2019. *The Patchwork City: Class, Space and Politics in Metro Manila*. Chicago: University of Chicago. Available online at <https://ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/login?url=http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uwm/detail.action?docID=5790860>
- Korver-Glenn, Elizabeth. 2021. *Race Brokers: Housing Markets and Segregation in 21st Century America*. New York: Oxford University Press. Available online at <https://ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/login?url=http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uwm/detail.action?docID=6510820>
- Stacey, Paul. 2019. *State of Slum: Precarity and Informal Governance at the Margins in Accra*. London: Zed Books. (available in PDF format on Canvas)
- Neal, Zachary. 2013. *The Connected City: How Networks are Shaping the Modern Metropolis*. New York: Routledge. Available on-line at <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/books/connected-city-zachary-neal/10.4324/9780203101728>

Perry, Evelyn M. 2017. *Live and Let Live: Diversity, Conflict and Community in an Integrated Neighborhood*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press. Available on 2-day course reserve at the UWM Library

Kolb, Kenneth H. 2021. *Retail Inequality: Reframing the Food Desert Debate*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

Sullivan, Esther. 2018. *Manufactured Insecurity: Mobile Home Parks and Americans' Tenuous Right to Place*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press. Available online at <https://ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/login?url=http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uwm/detail.action?docID=5434711>

All other assigned readings will be available on the course Canvas site in PDF format.

Assignments & Grading

Class Participation: I expect each student in the class to complete all the assigned readings each week and to participate actively in the class discussion. Attendance is required, though, of course, if you feel ill, you should not come to class. Absences due to illness, family emergency, etc. will be excused.

Response Papers: Each student will write **two** short-ish response papers over the course of the semester. (Note that this modest figure, namely, two, is predicated on the assumption that I remain confident throughout the semester that students are making a good faith effort to keep up with the reading even when not committed to writing a response or co-facilitating the class discussion on a given week. While I have every confidence that students will rise to this challenge, I reserve the right to increase the number of required response papers during the semester as necessary!) Response papers should comprise two to four double-spaced pages of coherent, critical reflections that demonstrate that you have completed the assigned readings and given them some thought. Each response paper may include brief statements of what you see as the major themes that cut across the assigned readings, findings you thought were particularly surprising or significant, and critiques of specific authors' logic, method or interpretation of evidence. Your response papers should NOT merely summarize each assigned reading but instead focus on identifying general themes and/or advancing critiques. Your response paper should end with 2 or 3 questions that will inform our class discussion. We will discuss the timing of student response papers during the first class meeting of the semester.

Discussion Facilitation: During our first class, I will ask each student to sign up to be a co-facilitator for two class meetings over the course of the semester. (Students should sign up to serve as co-facilitator on a week in which they will NOT write a response paper). As co-facilitator, you will initiate the evening's discussion by making a brief (ca. 5-minute), informal presentation in which you provide a broad overview of the assigned readings and your reactions to them. Your informal presentation should NOT summarize each reading in detail, but instead

identify general themes and present critiques, either of arguments or interpretations offered by specific authors or of the overall approach to the topic taken by the assigned readings as whole. Your goal should be to get the discussion going—so don't hesitate to be creative and even provocative! Toward that end, you should post roughly 3-5 discussion questions about each assigned reading (with corresponding more questions in those weeks in which we will be reading a single text, i.e., a book!). You will then take a lead role (in collaboration with me) in keeping the discussion going throughout the evening's class.

Exercises: By the beginning of class during Week 6 (i.e., on October 10th), students will need to complete a short assignment that applies some simple concepts from network analysis, as discussed in Neal's (2013) text, *The Connected City*. Detailed instructions for this assignment will be available on Canvas by the end of the second week of the semester (i.e., by about September 15th). While this is definitely NOT primarily a course in quantitative network analysis, students will nonetheless benefit from applying some of the network analysis concepts and metrics discussed in Neal's (2013) text, which will give students practice with thinking social structural terms. Toward that end, it will be vital to read carefully the "Method Notes" included in the grey boxes in this text. Students are NOT required to use software (e.g., [UCINET](#)) but will instead rely on simple calculations with small datasets that can be done "by hand," though students will be encouraged (not required!) to use the freeware program [PAJEK](#) for network data visualization. (I also encourage interested students to take SOCIOL 952: Social Network Analysis, periodically taught by my colleague Dr. John Roberts, when offered if at all possible!) There may also be a second exercise during the second half of the semester based on Chapters 7 through 9 from Neal (2013), though this exercise will be extra credit rather than required (also, note that only Chapter 7, not Chapters 8 and 9, are required reading for the course).

Final Paper: My goal with the final paper assignment is to give you an opportunity to reflect more deeply on some of the assigned readings from the semester, delve further into one or more of the topics we covered (or a closely related one), and make progress on a major task that you are required to complete to finish your degree (e.g., a preliminary exam, your master's proposal or thesis, or your dissertation). Accordingly, you may select some variation on one the following options: a literature review, a "white paper"/policy recommendation, or a research proposal. Whichever option you choose, the final product should comprise approximately 15 double-spaced pages and should include complete documentation of your sources using ASA or APA format for both in-text citations and your reference list. Your cited sources should include, but not be limited to, several of the assigned readings from the course. Due dates associated with this assignment are as follows:

- 1) You must submit a one-page prospectus outlining your topic and approach at the beginning of class on November 21st. You should also be prepared to discuss your topic briefly with the class.
- 2) Your final paper must be uploaded to Canvas by 11:59 pm on Tuesday, December 19th.

In addition, I encourage you to submit a rough draft of your paper in advance of the deadline, ideally by the last day of class (Tuesday, December 12th). I will do my best to provide feedback on your draft if I receive it after that, but I cannot guarantee that you will receive a detailed review.

Grading Scale

Class Participation	25%	Discussion Facilitation	15%
Exercise	10%	Response Papers	15%
Final Paper	25%		

95% = A; 90% = A-; 87% = B+; 84% = B; 80% = B-

Policies

Attendance and class participation. As noted above, it is essential that you come to each class meeting prepared, having completed all the assigned readings and prepared to participate actively in class discussion. Attendance is required. *Repeated absences and/or failure to participate in discussions will result in a lower grade.*

Classroom environment. Some of the assigned readings express strong, controversial views, explicitly or otherwise. I encourage you to challenge the perspectives offered by the assigned readings, by me, and by your fellow students. However, please voice opinions, disagreements and criticism in a respectful tone; I will make every effort to do the same. We all have a responsibility to ensure that the classroom environment provides both a venue for the free exchange of ideas and perspectives and a welcoming, respectful environment.

Grading: Except in cases of medical or family emergency or similar circumstances, late work will not be automatically accepted. Please contact me via e-mail as soon as possible in the event you are unable to complete an assignment by the due date.

Disability Accommodation: To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact the UWM Accessibility Resource Center and inform me as soon as possible about special accommodations so that I can best meet your needs. The Accessibility Resource Center, Mitchell Hall Room 112, (414) 229-6287, <http://www4.uwm.edu/arc/>

Course Schedule

Part I: Social Structures, Social Psychology & History: Perspectives on the Urban

Week 1: Introductions (9/5)

Week 2: Sociological Perspectives on Social Structure and Social Change (9/12)

Mayhew, Bruce H. 1980. "Structuralism vs. Individualism: Part 1, Shadowboxing in the Dark." *Social Forces* 59(2):335–74.

Blau, Peter. 1977. "A Macrosociological Theory of Social Structure." *American Journal of Sociology* 83(1):26–54.

Britton, Marcus L. 2011. "Close Together, but Worlds Apart? Residential Integration and Interethnic Friendship in Houston." *City & Community* 10(2):182–204.

Small, Mario L. 2002. "Culture, Cohorts and Social Organization Theory: Understanding Local Participation in a Latino Housing Project." *American Journal of Sociology* 108(1):1–54.

Week 3: Cities & Urbanism: Social-Psychological, Cross-Cultural & Historical Perspectives (9/19)

Wirth, Louis. 1938. "Urbanism as a Way of Life." *American Journal of Sociology* 44(1):1–24.

Lofland, Lyn. 1973. "Chapter 1 / The Problematic World of Strangers" Pp. 3–23 in *World of Strangers: Order and Action in Urban Public Space*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.

Chase, Arlen F. and Diane Z. Chase. 2016. "Urbanism and Anthropogenic Landscapes." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 45:361–76.

Weinstein, Liza. 2021. "Evictions: Reconceptualizing Housing Insecurity from the Global South." *City & Community* 20(1):13–23.

Garrido, Marco. 2021. "Reconceptualizing Segregation from the Global South." *City & Community* 20(1):34–37.

Ren, Xufei. 2021. "Suburbs and Urban Peripheries in a Global Perspective." *City & Community* 20(1):38–47.

Villareal, Ana. 2021. "Reconceptualizing Urban Violence from the Global South." *City & Community* 20(1): 48–58.

Part II: Public & Parochial Spaces; Neighborhoods and Community

Week 4: Public Space (9/26)

Jacobs, Jane. 1993 [1961]. "Chapter 2 / The Uses of Sidewalks: Safety" and "Chapter 3 / The Uses of Sidewalks: Contact." Pp. 37–96 in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Modern Library Edition. New York: Modern Library.

Lofland, Lyn. 1998. "Chapter 1: Toward of Geography and History of the Public Realm." Pp. 1–19 in *The Public Realm: Exploring the City's Quintessential Social Territory*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Blumenberg, Evelyn, and Renia Ehrenfeucht. 2008. "Civil Liberties and the Regulation of Public Space: The Case of Sidewalks in Las Vegas." *Environment and Planning A* 40: 303–22.

Britton, Marcus L. 2008. "'My Regular Spot': Race and Territory in Urban Public Space." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 37(4):442–68.

Elliott, James R., Elizabeth Korver-Glenn, and Daniel Bolger. 2019. "The Successive Nature of City Parks: Making and Remaking Unequal Access over Time." *City & Community* 18(1):109–27.

Week 5: Neighbors and Neighboring (10/3)

Neal, "Chapter 2 / Community: Lost or Found," "Chapter 3 / Subculture / Finding Your Crowd in a Crowd," and "Chapter 5 / Form / Getting from Here to There," pp. 11–49, 69–87

Sharp, Gregory. 2018. "Eclipsing Community? Neighborhood Disadvantage, Social Mechanisms, and Neighborly Attitudes and Behaviors." *City & Community* 17(3):615–35.

Putnam, Robert. 2007. "E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-first Century / The 2006 Johan Skytte Prize Lecture." *Scandinavian Political Studies* 30(2):137–74.

Spitz, Gina. 2015. "Segregated Integration in a Racially Diverse Milwaukee Neighborhood." *Journal of Ethnographic & Qualitative Research* 10:53–69.

Underhill, Megan. 2021. "Managing Difference: White Parenting Practices in Socioeconomically Diverse Neighborhoods." *City & Community* 20(2):79–98.

Week 6: Neighborhood Reputation, Social Control, and Crime (10/10)

Shaw, Clifford and Henry McKay. 1969 [1942]. "Chapter VII: Differences in Social Values and Organization among Local Communities." Pp. 170–88 in *Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Sampson, Robert. 2012. "Chapter 6 / 'Broken Window' and the Meanings of Disorder," and "Chapter 7 / The Theory of Collective Efficacy." Pp. 121–78 in *The Great American City: Chicago and the Enduring Neighborhood Effect*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Leverentz, Andrea, Adam Pittman, and Jennifer Skinnon. 2018. "Place and Perception: Construction of Community and Safety across Neighborhoods and Residents." *City & Community* 17(4):972–95.

Bell, Monica C. 2020. "Located Institutions: Neighborhood Frames, Residential Preferences, and the Case of Policing." *American Journal of Sociology* 125(4): 917–73.

Week 7: Urban Nightlife (10/17)

Grazian, David. 2009. "Urban Nightlife, Social Capital, and the Public Life of Cities." *Sociological Forum* 24(4):908–17.

Selections from Grazian, David. 2019. *On the Make: The Hustle of Urban Nightlife*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Hunter, Marcus Anthony. 2010. "The Nightly Round: Space, Social Capital and Urban Black Nightlife." *City & Community* 9(2):165–86.

Mattson, Greggor. 2020. "Small-City Gay Bars, Big-City Urbanism." *City & Community* 19(1):76–97.

Livermon, Xavier. 2014. "Soweto Nights: Making Black Queer Space in Post-Apartheid South Africa." *Gender, Place & Culture* 21(4):508–25. doi: 10.1080/0966369X.2013.786687

Week 8: Neighbors & Neighborhood: Case Study (10/24)

Perry, Evelyn M. 2017. *Live and Let Live: Diversity, Conflict and Community in an Integrated Neighborhood*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press. (read all ca. 200 pages)

Part IV: Macrosociological Perspectives on Cities and Housing

Week 9: Urban Sprawl and Sustainability in Metropolitan Regions (10/31)

Neal, "Chapter 7 / Regional: From City to Metropolis," pp. 109–24

Laidley, Thomas. 2016. "The Problem of Sprawl." *Contexts* 15(3):74–7.

Gonzalez, George A. 2009. "Chapter 1: Urban Sprawl and the Empire of Capital" and "Chapter 4: The Federal Government and the National Establishment of Urban Sprawl." Pp. 1–18, 53–66 *Urban Sprawl, Global Warming and the Empire of Capital*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Kim, Jeongseob, Ruth L. Steiner, and Yizhao Yang. 2014. "The Evolution of Transportation Concurrency and Urban Development Pattern in Miami-Dade County, Florida." *Urban Affairs Review* 50(5):672–701.

Thiers, Paul, Mark Stephan, Sean Gordon, and Alexander Walker. 2018. "Metropolitan Eco-Regimes and Differing State Policy Environments: Comparing Environmental Governance in the Portland-Vancouver Metropolitan Area." *Urban Affairs Review* 54(6):1019–52.

Sýkora, Luděk and Ondřej Mulíček. 2014. "Prague: Urban Growth and Regional Sprawl." Pp. 133–62 in *Confronting Suburbanization: Urban Decentralization in Postsocialist Central and Eastern Europe*, edited by Kiri Stanilov and Luděk Sýkora. Chichester, UK: Wiley.
<https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/doi/book/10.1002/9781118295861>

Fang, Yiping and Anirban Pal. 2016. "Drivers of Urban Sprawl in Urbanizing China – A Political Ecological Analysis." *Environment & Urbanization* 28(2):599–616. doi: 10.1177/0956247816647344

Week 10: Urban Inequality (11/7)

Korver-Glenn, Elizabeth. 2021. *Race Brokers: Housing Markets and Segregation in 21st Century America*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Week 11: Urban Inequality, continued (11/14)

Kolb, Kenneth H. 2021. *Retail Inequality: Reframing the Food Desert Debate*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

Week 12: Manufactured Housing & Mobile Home Parks (11/21)

Sullivan, Esther. 2018. *Manufactured Insecurity: Mobile Home Parks and Americans' Tenuous Right to Place*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

Week 13: Placed-Based Inequality in the Global South (11/28)

Garrido, Marco Z. 2019. *The Patchwork City: Class, Space and Politics in Metro Manila*. Chicago: University of Chicago.

Week 14: Place-based Inequality in the Global South, continued (12/5)

Stacey, Paul. 2019. *State of Slum: Precarity and Informal Governance at the Margins in Accra*. London: Zed Books. (available in PDF format on Canvas)

Week 15: Place-based Inequality in the Global South, continued (12/12)

Caldeira, Teresa P.R. 2000. "Part III: Urban Segregation, Fortified Enclaves and Public Space." Pp. 213–338 in *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.