

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Urban Studies Programs

URBAN STUDIES 250: EXPLORING THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

3 Credits, GER- Social Science

spring 2024, Tuesdays & Thursdays 1:00-2:15 p.m.

Instructor	Sana Avar Urban Studies Program University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Classroom	Bolton B87
Email	sanaavar@uwm.edu
Office	Bolton 792
Student Hours	Thursdays 2:45- 3:45 P.m. / Monday 3:15- 4:15 P.m.

The following is a sample syllabus that covers essential aspects of urban environments. The syllabus is divided into weekly topics, but the actual duration of the course may vary depending on the university's academic calendar and credit system. Each topic may span one or more weeks, and additional readings, assignments, and assessments should be included as appropriate.

Course Description

This course examines the various dimensions of urban environments, exploring their physical, social, economic, and environmental aspects, and provides students with a comprehensive understanding of the urban environment, focusing on the principles and dynamics that shape cities. Through a **multidisciplinary approach**, students will gain **insights** into the planning and design considerations necessary for creating sustainable and livable urban spaces and explore the physical, social, economic, and environmental aspects of urban spaces. The course will **spark curiosity** about the spaces and places present within the urban, as we look to understand their morphology and how they impact our way of life, including daily routine, behavior, spending, and relationships. We will consider why individuals and families are drawn to a range of urban environments, tied to relational networks, employment, mobility, and affordability. By the end of the course, students should be able to **analyze and critically assess** urban environments. The course incorporates perspectives and knowledge from various disciplines, including architecture, urban planning, urban design, history, and others to expose students to a range of contexts, societies, landscapes, perspectives, and variables that impact urban environments and life.

Course Objectives

At the conclusion of the course, students will be able to...

- **Identify, describe, and explain the history, underlying theory, and methodologies used in the course.**
- **Identify and analyze key elements, biases, and influences that shape thought within the subject area. Approach issues and problems within the discipline from multiple perspectives (Critical Thinking).**
- **Communicate knowledge, thoughts, and reasoning clearly and effectively (Communication)**
- **provoke questions regarding urban issue and be more sensitive about urban environment.**

You should come up with some questions: **What makes life worth living? What makes a society a fair one? How do we manage conflicts? Who are we in relation to other people or to the natural world?**

Required Materials

- All other readings will be shared on the Canvas course site

Class Structure

Classes will be held every Tuesday and Thursday from 1:00-2:15 pm. Attendance is mandatory, and I expect every student to be in attendance and ready to discuss that day's respective topics during these times. During classes, content will be provided via lectures, intended to promote discussion on the assigned readings, key concepts, and current events related to the weekly topics. A portion of each class period may be utilized for students to engage in group discussions, give presentations, and to participate in other small group activities.

Each week classes will cover a specific urban studies-related theme. Lectures and discussions will be based upon assigned readings, typically news articles, book excerpts, and/or videos for that week. Assignments will be various depend on the topic may also include short presentations and in-class discussions. The selected themes can be found in the class schedule below. In general, for this course, assessment (grades) are based on a student's ability to process, understand, and communicate the course content as well as a student's ability to express individual perspectives and opinions about these themes. Communication with the instructor regarding missing a lecture, questions about assignments, and so forth are highly encouraged if and whenever needed.

Readings: Students should come to class having thoroughly read or viewed all materials assigned for that day. This will significantly increase students' ability to understand and contextualize material presented in lecture, and it will greatly facilitate interesting and

constructive classroom discussion, questions, and debate. It is also conducive to class discussion if students have assigned texts ready and open during classes.

Class Participation

You are expected to attend lectures and participate in class during the designated class times. A different topic from the urban context will be covered each class session. The readings listed under each session below are required readings. Readings will be available on the course Canvas website. All students are expected to read all the assigned readings BEFORE class and to actively participate in the discussion. Active participation in class is an important component of this course. Being able to express concepts and opinions clearly and ask good questions are critical skills in the professional world. Class attendance will be taken. However, class participation grades are based on the quality of active participation in class discussion, not simply on attendance. In the interest of promoting a productive learning environment for all, please:

- Arrive on time and stay for the duration of class.
- Turn off or mute audible mobile devices for the duration of class.
- Turn off laptops unless they are being used for notes, you are checking facts discussed in class, or if you are instructed otherwise. Bottom line: stay engaged in the class discussions. Behaviors that detract from class learning will be penalized in the class participation grade.

Assignments: Students will be completing approximately one assignment per week.

Assignments include an urban expression methods.

- **Assignments due are mostly on Tuesday and reading presentations are on Thursday**

Grading Scheme

Students have the opportunity to earn a total of 200 points across multiple assignments and projects throughout the semester (not including bonus points). The distribution below outlines the grades based on the possible points earned in this semester.

A: 93 percent and above	185 points or more	C: 73-76 percent	145-152 points
A-: 90-92 percent	179-184 points	C-: 70-72 percent	139-144 points
B+: 87-89 percent	173-178 points	D+: 67-69 percent	133-138 points
B: 83-86 percent	165-172 points	D: 63-66 percent	125-132 points
B-: 80-82 percent	159-164 points	D-: 60-62 percent	119-124 points
C+: 77-79 percent	-158 points	F: Below 60 percent	118 points or fewer

Grading Components

Class Citizenship & Participation: 40 (20%)

Weekly Reading Activities: 30 (15%)

Mid-Semester Survey: 5 (10%)

StoryMap Project Total: 110 (55%)

-Total weekly assignments: 75 (There will be around 13 assignments) 37.5%

-Final presentation:35 (17.5%)

StoryMap Project: In the first week you are going to choose a neighborhood in a city, then you are going to work on that in the semester and Most of the assignment should relate to that neighborhood. At the end of the semester you are going to designing your own StoryMap album and present it at the end of the course.

Main Factors Considered when Grading Assignments

Factor	Definition	Low Quality	Medium Quality	High Quality
Completeness	The degree to which all aspects of the assignment are addressed in documents or presentations. In general, more thorough discussions are better, but this must be balanced with length limits.	Parts of questions are not answered or sections of a policy analysis are not included.	All parts of questions are answered and all sections of a policy analysis are included, but some responses or discussions may not cover the issue in depth.	All parts of questions are answered and sections of a policy analysis are included, and all responses and discussions are thorough.
Logic	The degree to which an argument written in text, presented on a map, or described in an oral presentation makes sense. Good arguments are supported by well researched examples, high-quality studies, and/or well-analyzed data.	Many arguments do not make sense or are not supported by examples, studies, and/or empirical data.	Some arguments do not make sense or have weak support from examples, studies, and/or empirical data.	All arguments make sense and are supported by examples, studies, and/or empirical data.
Clarity	The degree to which an assignment is written and organized well. For maps and graphics, this includes attractiveness of the layout and ease of understanding. The writing is inconsistent and poorly organized, making it very difficult to understand the issue, analysis, or conclusions.	The writing is understandable, but it suffers from some wordiness, errors, and poor proofreading.	The writing has several inconsistencies or poorly organized sentences or paragraphs.	The writing is in a professional tone that is concise and has no grammatical errors. It communicates a clear sense of the issue, analysis, & recommendations;

				paragraphs and sentences are organized logically.
Creativity	The degree to which an assignment or presentation considers a wide range of relevant analysis approaches and relevant possible solutions, including some that may not be readily apparent to a client. This also includes recognizing limitations of your approach.	Analysis approaches and possible solutions are obvious or limited in number, other potential approaches and solutions were not considered, and limitations were not discussed.	Several analysis approaches and possible solutions were considered, potentially including some that were not readily apparent to a client. A few limitations were discussed.	A wide range of relevant analysis approaches and relevant possible solutions were considered, including some that were not readily apparent to a client. Most limitations were discussed.

Class Policies

Class Citizenship & Participation: Students will be graded on their preparation for and contribution to lecturings, their punctuality when arriving to class, and their “presentness” during each lecture.

Preparation: Students are expected to come to each lecture fully prepared, having thoroughly read the assigned readings for that seminar. For each reading, you should keep the following in mind:

- What is the author’s main point? What does he/she seek to explain?
- What does the argument not explain? Is this by omission or neglect?
- What is your assessment of the reading? What particular questions were you left with, and why?

Punctuality: Students are also expected to come to class on time. Each seminar covers a lot of material and starting late puts the course and everyone in it behind.

Presentness: Attendance is mandatory. A roll will be taken in class. However, “presentness” means more than just being in attendance - it also means that students are actively participating throughout each class period. Active participation means:

- Active and respectful listening;
- Incisive and well-attuned questioning;
- Offering of judicious and relevant verbal comments that build on the conversation;
- Evident pre-preparation such that comments reflect knowledge gained through readings or other set preparation.

Communication: I will primarily be communicating with students via email, the Canvas messaging system. Students should ensure Canvas notification preferences are set up to send an alert to your UWM email account after receiving a Canvas message. You are welcome to email me or message me through Canvas or you may also email me, if you have any questions or concerns. I will do my best to reply to your messages within 24 hours, but occasionally, this may

be a challenge. When sending me an email, best practice is to use the course number/title within the subject line. This will help me prioritize responding to you.

Student Hours: Student Hours are a twice-weekly time period set aside exclusively for students to speak with me about any number of subjects. My intention with Student Hours is to set aside time to help prepare you to succeed in the course to the best of my abilities. I will happily discuss assignments, review concepts discussed in class, brainstorm ideas for projects, point you in the direction of campus/Milwaukee resources, or even just spend the time getting to know you better. Student Hours will be held in-person in my office and via a virtual meeting space. During designated Student Hours, I will be available in my office and I will also simultaneously login to the Student Hours Discord channel. During this time, you are welcome to join me in my office or via webcam, if you so wish. If you are unable to attend designated student hours, please contact me to set up an appointment

General Education Requirement (GER) Outcomes (if applicable): If this is a GER course ([search here](#)), you must include the GER category, applicable GER outcomes (and UWS Shared Learning Goals if applicable), and identify how the outcomes will be achieved and then assessed.

Student Success Policies and Resources

Course Materials Increase accessibility to course materials! Compare & contrast options using this Guide to Course Materials selection and use UWM Libraries Reserve Services. Early and low stakes feedback Frequent and low-stakes feedback helps boost student success, as do early notifications to students and advisors of any apparent student struggles - watch for the Progress Reports campaign email notification in weeks 4-9 of the fall. Accommodations for Students with Disabilities, and Universal Design In the pursuit of equal access and in compliance with federal and state laws, UWM and instructors are required to provide accommodations to students with documented disabilities. The Accessibility Resource Center (ARC) offers faculty and staff support and education for working with students who have disabilities by sharing important resources and links on their Faculty/Staff webpage, including specifics on how and where to submit requests for Media Captioning. Note: If a student requests an accommodation and their Accommodation Plan isn't in your PROConnect portal, please ask the student to reach out to ARC. Religious Observances and Students Called to Military Service Follow UWM Faculty Document 1918 on religious accommodation as required (see the 2023 and 2024 religious holiday calendars), and UWM Policy on Students Called to Active Duty. Coping with Stress or Mental Health Challenges A majority of college students who dropped out during the past year cited mental health as their main challenge. Instructors are often a primary point of contact for students. Please be observant about students' stress levels or personal crises, and compassionately refer students to resources... Student Health and Wellness Center (414-229-7429). For Medical Services and Counseling Services including individual and group counseling, "Let's Talk" brief informal virtual confidential consultations with counselors, and Expanded Counseling Services such as after hours and teletherapy. Health Promotion and Advocacy (including YOU@UWM - a digital resource for students in proactive emotional self-care and connection with campus resources). If you are concerned about a student's mental health, call Counseling Services (414-229-7429) to consult with the on-call counselor! Contact Lori Bokowy at

labokowy@uwm.edu about class and department presentations on stress, coping, and campus resources. The Mental Health at UWM website contains more general information for students, faculty, and staff, including links to UWM, Milwaukee, and national resources. The Dean of Students office helps connect students to resources including emergency grants, food pantry, mental health, and other support resources. Sexual Harassment/Sexual Violence Title IX: Familiarize yourself with critical UWM and UWS Title IX related policies, Title IX resources and reporting options, UWM employee reporting obligations online or contact the Title IX Office (titleix@uwm.edu, 414-229-7012). The SHAW Victim Advocacy Coordinator (victimadvocacy@uwm.edu or 414-229-4582) is a confidential resource for survivors of sexual harassment or violence, will provide support and resources, and does NOT report to Title IX.

Final Note

I reserve the right to adjust the syllabus and course schedule as needed. If I do make any changes, I will provide you with the details in a timely manner. We are going to have a flexible syllabus according to the story of the class.

Course schedual

Phase 1	City Form and Life
Week 1:	Introduction to the course
	<p>September 5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduction to the course and syllabus <p>September 7:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ City Definition ○ Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Reader, “what is the city” ,by Lewis mumford • City Reader, “City origins” by Henri Pirenne
Week 2:	<p>September 12:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Urban Classical Theory: <p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City reader, “Urbanism way of life”, by Louis Wirth. <p>September 14:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conceptualizing the Urban <p>What is a City? What is life like in an urban environment?</p> <p>Reading :</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Urban Revolution”, V.Gorden Childe, City Reader. • L. Wirth. 1938. “Urbanism as a Way of Life.” American Journal of Sociology. Vol. 44, No. 1. pp. 1-24. <p>video: Evolution of Our Cities Episode 1 - YouTube</p> <p>Assignment: will be announced</p>
Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City form and history of cities and city life <p>How have urban environments been established and developed? What are the elements that compose a city?</p>
	<p>September 19:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City form <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lynch, K. (1960). Chapter III: The City Image and its Elements. The Image of the City. (pp. 46-49). Cambridge, MA: Technology Press. • “A Theory of Urban Form” by Kevin Lynch & Lloyd Rodwin <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amos, D. (City Beautiful). (2017, June 19). Urban Sprawl: Which U.S. City Sprawls the Most? [Video]. YouTube <p>September 21:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • history of cities and city life <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Reader, The City in History: its origins, its transformations, and its prospects “ Lewis Mumford” • Cities, Change and Conflict: A political economy of urban life, Chapter 3: “Cities in World History”. (pp. 51-73) by Kleniewski, N. <p>- Where and Why Did the First Cities and States Form? Big History Project.</p> <p>Youtube</p> <p>- Amos, D. (City Beautiful). (2019, March 7). A Brief History of U.S. City Planning. [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/2Q5blCcek6s</p> <p>Assignment: will be announced</p>
Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture and Society <p>How do the inhabitants of a city shape the physical environment, relationships, and living?</p>

	<p>September 26:</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Introduction” and “The Use of Sidewalks: Contact” from The Death and Life of Great American Cities by Jane Jacobs ([Urban Planning]; • City reader, “ The code of the d=street” and “Decent and Street families” by Elijah Anderson (p. 131) [Urban Design] <p>September 28:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City reader,”Bowling alone: American’s Declining social capital” by Robert D.puntam <p>-Urbanization Society and Culture MCAT Khan Academy (video)</p> <p>Assignment: will be announced</p>
Week 5	<p>Living and Moving</p> <p>How does our movement within the city shape our perception, daily routine, and way of life?</p>
	<p>October 3:</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The evolution of city life James S. Santangelo, L. Ruth Rivkinand Marc T. J. Johnson321 <p>-City Life Drone Video - Free HD Video - no copyright - YouTube</p> <p>October 5:</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving around the city: discourses on walking and cycling in English urban areas Tim Jones <p>Lecture Topics: the mode and speed by which we move impacts our everyday and perception of the city; types of transportation based on culture and environment;</p> <p>Assignment: will be announced</p>
Week 6	<p>Quality of Life</p> <p>How does our physical environment impact our quality of life?</p>
	<p>October 10:</p> <p>Readings:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Walking? You’re risking your life in Florida, the deadliest state for pedestrians” by Linda Robertson in the Miami Herald (initial discussion) • Quality of Life and City Competitiveness, Robert J. Rogerson <p>October 12:</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Our Health Is a Function of Where We Live” in the Lancet by Shifalika Goenka and others (p. 2168 – 2169); • The development of quality of life indicators—a case study from the City of Bristol, UK S.K. McMahon* <p>-What is quality of life? - YouTube</p> <p>Assignment: will be announced</p>
Week 7	<p>City-Making</p> <p>How are cities made? How can we be involved in the shaping of my living environment?</p>
	<p>October 17:</p> <p>Media: "Introduction to Zoning Codes" by City Beautiful (online link through Canvas) [Urban Planning];</p> <p>"Zoning by Design" TEDtalk by George Proakis [Urban Planning History]</p> <p>Lecture Topics: Overview of land use principles, zoning, and code; Built environment professionals’, government’s, and the community’s role in city-making</p> <p>October 19:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use: <p>Reading :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Synthesis of Land Use/Land Cover Studies: Definitions, Classification Systems, Meta-Studies, Challenges and Knowledge Gaps on a Global Landscape • Applied Models of Urban Land Use, Transport and Environment: State of the Art and Future Developments <p>Assignment: will be announced</p>

<p>Week 8</p>	<p>October 24:</p> <p>Mid-term</p> <p>October 26:</p> <p>Zoning What are the main principles of land use planning and zoning? How do they change in different contexts?</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic zoning approach for urban areas: towards a shared transportation system Author links open overlay panelJihane El Ouadi a b c, Nicolas Malhene c, Siham Benhadou a b, Hicham Medromi a b • The Effect of Density Zoning on Racial Segregation in U.S. Urban Areas Jonathan Rothwell and Douglas S. Massey <p>- Zoning Matters: How Land-Use Policies Shape Our Lives (video) What Is Land Use? - YouTube</p> <p>Assignment: will be announced</p>
<p>Week 9</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing What is Housing and how is it differentiated from House? How does housing impact daily life? Lecture Topics: Housing Typologies: single family, duplex, multi-family, low-rise, midrise, high-rise; The economics of housing: market rate, affordable housing, etc; housing communities and neighborhoods.
	<p>October 31:</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The affordable housing reader book , “A citizen’s guide to public housing” by Catherine Bauer • The affordable housing reader book, “How do we know when housing is affordable?” by Edward Glaeser and Joseph Gyuorko from the Affordable Housing Reader. (p.111-115) [Urban Planning].

	<p>November 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The affordable housing reader book , Home is where the harm is: Inadequate housing as a public health crisis, Samiya A. Bashir VIDEO: CBS Mornings. 2021. "Racist housing policies had lasting impacts." (6:37) Assignment: describe housing situation in your neighborhood by designing at least 1 sheet including photos, writings, diagram, etc. Video, British housing crisis creates new conflicts as developers seek ... <p>Assignment: will be announced</p>
Week 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future Challenges and Trends in Urban Planning Emerging trends in urban development Mega-cities and urbanization in the 21st century The role of technology and innovation in shaping the urban environment
	<p>November 7: Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> City reader, Making room for a planet of cities, shlomo angel Urban environments and human health: current trends and future directions Chinmoy Sarkar¹ and Chris Webster <p>November 9:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urbanization and the future of cities - Vance Kite - YouTube VIDEO: Ed Glaeser. 2018. "The Fall of New York." CitiesX. (11:27) VIDEO: NBC Nightly News. 2018. "How Detroit went from a Booming Metropolis to a Shrinking City." (19:03) <p>Assignment: will be announced</p>
Phase 2	<p>Urban Design</p> <p>Urban Design is a critical aspect of urban planning that focuses on the physical and visual aspects of urban spaces. This course introduces students to the principles, theories, and practices of urban design, with a strong emphasis on creating attractive, functional, and inclusive urban environments.</p>
Week 11	<p>Urban Design Principles of urban design The relationship between urban form and function Sustainable architecture and its role in shaping urban environments</p>
	<p>November 14: Readings:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitions of urban design: The nature and concerns of urban design, Alan Rowley. Pages 179-197 • Knox, P. & McCarthy, L. (2012). Chapter 13: The City As Text: Architecture & Urban Design. Urbanization: An introduction to urban geography. (pp. 323-345). Boston, MA: Pearson <p>-Communities By Design. (2016, April 29). What is Urban Design? David Lewis Explains. [Video]. YouTube</p> <p>November 16:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Urban Design Reader, “Planning European Practice in for Sustainability Cities: A Review Leading Cities” in of from The Sustainable Urban Development Reader (2008) Timothy Beatley • The Urban Design Reader, Resilience: Cities of Fear and Hope” Peter Newman, Timothy Beatley, and Heather Boyer <p>- NYC Department of Urban Planning. (2021, September 15). What is Urban Design? [Video]. YouTube.</p> <p>Assignment: will be announced</p>
Week 12	<p>Streetscapes</p> <p>What is the role of the street in urban life?</p> <p>Lecture Topics: Elements of the street; relationships between the streetscape and architecture, transportation, public space, and quality of life</p>
	<p>November 21:</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Reader, “Three Types of Outdoor Activities” and “Integrate or Segregate” from Life Between Buildings: Using Public Space by Jan Gehl (p.9 – 14, 101 -120) [Architecture / Urban Design • The Urban design Reader, “Conclusion: Great Streets and City Planning” by Allan B. Jacobs (p. 214-217) <p>November 23:</p> <p>No class, Happy Thanks giving</p> <p>Assignment: will be announced</p>
Week 13	<p>Parks and Public Spaces</p> <p>How do cultures and communities use public / park spaces? Why are public / park spaces an essential amenity for urban life?</p>

	<p>November 28:</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The urban design reader “The Life of Plazas”, “Sitting Space”, and “Sun, Wind, Trees, and Water” in by William Whyte (p. 198-213) • . City Reader “The design of spaces” by William H.white <p>- The importance of parks & open spaces - YouTube</p> <p>November 30:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “what is Placemaking?” Project for Public Spaces 558 The City Reader • “The design of Spaces” William H. Whyte 587 The City Reader <p>Assignment: will be announced</p>
Week 14	Cities for People
	<p>December 5:</p> <p>No reading, We are going to wander in the campus</p> <p>December 7:</p> <p>Reading</p> <p>The urban design reader, “Design Guidelines in American Cities: Conclusions” John Punter</p> <p>Vox. (September 27, 2016). "Superblocks: How Barcelona is taking city streets back from cars." [Video].</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> City Beautiful. "What happens when a city removes a freeway?" [Video] <input type="checkbox"/> City Beautiful. "Transit Oriented Development, Explained" [Video] <input type="checkbox"/> City Beautiful. "Did pedestrian malls ruin U.S. downtowns?" [Video]. <p>Assignment: will be announced</p>
Week 15	Urban Design now and Tomorrow
	<p>December 12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The urban design reader, “Where and How Does Urban Design Happen?” Alex Krieger • “The End(s) of Urban Design” Michael Sorkin <p>December 14:</p> <p>Project Presentations</p>

	Students present their projects
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