

FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES
York University
MES Program

GRADUATE COURSE SYLLABUS

Course: ENVS 5021 3.0 URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES

Term: Fall 2024

Calendar Description: Critical investigation of approaches to, and topics in, processes of urban growth, decline, development and redevelopment. 20th century theories of urbanization are examined and their relevancy for understanding selected recent urban problems are studied.

Course Director: Ute Lehrer, PhD, HNES 225, lehrer@yorku.ca

Time and Location: Tuesday, 2:30 – 4:20pm every week from Sept 10th to Nov 26th, HNES 141; on Sept 17th, walking tour downtown (meeting point: Shutter and Sherbourne). In addition, we will meet on Sept 19th, 11am to 1pm, room 519 Kaneff Tower (see below).

Office hours: Tuesday, 1:20 – 2:00PM, or by appointment

Purpose and Objectives of the Course: The course uses a critical approach to understanding urban change. As such, it is of interest to students of urban and regional planning, urban studies, urban politics, environmental justice, community development, environmental planning and historical processes of change. The course will focus on condominium development in Toronto.

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Understand a variety of conceptual approaches on how to frame processes of urban growth, decline, development and redevelopment;
2. Know how to do a critical analysis of the literature and topics in urban development processes;
3. Be familiar with a number of current topics in regard to land use issues and urban change;
4. Have developed a number of research skills (critical thinking and writing skills, mapping, census data, participant observation).
5. Possess critical thinking skills, including research and analytical capacity to find relevant information and conduct an analysis.
6. Practice communication skills (written and oral) to express ideas in a clear, organized and effective manner; to communicate complex matters and be persuasive.
7. Acquire ability to assess issues and their effects on development actions, and ability to debate and link relationships in urban development processes.
8. Develop a good understanding of land use regulations, legal, environmental, infrastructure, finance and economics, development control, and other considerations that are part of implementation.
9. Hold an advanced understanding of the economics of development (private and public perspectives).

Organization of the course: The course involves student presentations based on additional readings for specific topics, discussions of the readings as well as conversations of contemporary issues. Students are expected to participate in all aspects of the course. The required readings are central to the course and are accessible via York's library system; students are expected to download all of them in the first week.

Topics and approach:

- Neo-classical Economics – introduces distance and space to the optimizing calculus in consumer behaviour
- Political Economy - seeks to understand dynamic processes of urban change as related to both socio-economic and political processes
- Land and Property – looks at land and its social construction of property rights
- Condo Boom – investigates the realities of neighborhood transformation as they are an expression of both local and global pressures
- Public Space – the social construction of public space, for whom and for what?

Overall the course is strongly informed by a political-economy approach and will be enriched by two guest lectures and one field trip.

Requirements:

All students are expected to be present at **all** classes and have done **all** assigned readings before class. They are also expected to **engage** in the class by discussing, debating, commenting and questioning the assigned readings. Each class session allows for a variety of ways to participate. Participation, in one way or another, is important and is the basis of evaluating how a student has gained familiarity with, and joined the debates on, urban development issues. All assignments need to be handed in **during class**. Specific assignments will be handed out in due course. In order to keep distractions to a minimum, lap top computers or hand held devices (e.g. phones) are not allowed in the class room.

- Each week there are *reading reflections on each of the readings*. The weekly reading reflections need to address three points: What was the article about? What were its main points? What can you draw from it? (not more than one page per reading). The use of AI is considered plagiarism.
- Each week, students need to bring in *newspaper stories* in regard to urban development issues in the GTA (controversies, land use issues) that they have found in the media and discuss them in class.
- Each student has to sign up for one *class presentation* on specific class topics, and, together with one or two other classmates, they will need to demonstrate that they have engaged with the material: **it is mandatory to go beyond the readings that are listed on the syllabus**. This means that students need to do **additional searching for articles/readings, read them and use them for their presentation**. By the time the student is presenting, they are expected to have an insider view on the overall theme of the week, meaning that it is not enough to have done only the class readings and regurgitate them in class. The students are expected to work as a group and to hand in their presentation in electronic format at the date of their presentation.
- Throughout the term, students will do *field research* on the condominium boom with special attention on the role of amenities. Initially, they will identify sites that they want to analyse, followed by site visits, collecting promotional material, investigating the developers and their projects from various aspects as per assignments. Students will work individually and in groups, will do presentation and will hand in a research report/paper at the end.

Evaluation:

The course is evaluated as a pass/fail. If a student wants to have a grade assessment then they would need to let the course director know until Sept 17. Evaluation is based on participation in class, the critical reflections, the presentation and the research paper.

Required Readings:

All the readings listed in the syllabus are required. The readings are central to the success of the course and are accessible via York's library system; students are expected to download all of them in the first week of class, have read all the required readings each week, and handed in all the critical reviews.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

The following list of lecture topics and readings is subject to change.

1 Sept 10 **Introduction to course**

2 Sept 17 **Fighting the good fight: Social Housing, not Luxury**

Assignment #1: hand-out

Guest Lecture/Tour: Gaetan Héroux

Meeting place: 2:30 to 5pm; North East Corner of Moss Park (Shutter and Sherbourne); end point will be Regent Park; bring good walking shoes

Required readings:

Lehrer, Ute and Wieditz, Thorben. "Condominium Development and Gentrification: The Relationship Between Policies, Building Activities and Socio-economic Development in Toronto." *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* 18, no. 1 Supplement (2009): 140-161.

Mitchell, Don. "INTERLUDE: Homelessness, Public Space, and the Limits to Capital" *Mean Streets: Homelessness, Public Space, and the Limits of Capital*, 2020, pp. 91-102 (12 pages), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvqmp379.8>

Watch videos and read texts on website: <https://230fightback.com/>

Recommended (for tour):

Palmer, Bryand and Gaetan Héroux. 2016. "Fight to Win! The Ontario Coalition Against Poverty and the Return/Revenge of the Dispossessed, 1985-2015" *Toronto's Poor*, Toronto: Between the Lines, pp. 291-428.

[How KingSett Capital Hijacked Toronto's Revitalization Plans – Socialist Project](#)

[230 Fightback Advocates for Action on 214-230 Sherbourne St. Amidst Housing Crisis \(youtube.com\)](#)

Supplementary Readings

Mitchell, Don. 1995. "The End of Public Space?" *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 85 (1), 108-133.

Stevens, Quentin. 2009. "'Broken' public spaces in theory and in practice." *Town Planning Review* 80 (4-5), 371-391

#3 Sept 19 **Parochial territorializations. Towards a critique of insular worldbuilding**

Guest lecturer: Anke Schwarz, University of Heidelberg, Germany, @ CITY Institute, 519 Kaneff Tower

(this class replaces the class from December 2)

Required Readings

- Schwarz, Anke (2022) in: Ha, N./Picker, G. (eds.): *European Cities: Modernity, Race and Colonialism*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 37-55.
- Schwarz, A. and M. Streule (2016), A transposition of territory: decolonized perspectives in current urban research. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 40(5): 1000–1016.
- Pratt, Marie Louise (1991) Arts of the Contact Zone. *Modern Language Association*, 33-40
- Massey D (1991) A global sense of place. *Marxism Today*, June 1991: 24–29.

Supplementary Readings

- Häußermann, H. (2005), The end of the European city? *European Review* 13(2): 237–249.

#4 Sept 24 **Neo-classical Economics: *Ground Rent and the Allocation of Land-use Activities***

Assignment #1: short class presentation on initial findings

Required Readings

- David Adams & Steven Tiesdell. 2010. Planners as Market Actors: Rethinking State–Market Relations in Land and Property, *Planning Theory & Practice*, 11:2, 187-207.
- McLaughlin, Ralph B. 2012. Land use regulation: Where have we been, where are we going? *Cities*, 29, Supplement 1, Page p.50-55
- Alonso, William. 1964. “The Historic and the Structural Theories of Urban Form: Their Implications for Urban Renewal”, *Land Economics*, 40(2), 227-231

Supplementary Readings

- Alonso, William. 1964. *Location and Land Use*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Alonso, William. 1971. “A Theory of the Urban Land Market,” in Larry Bourne (Ed), *The Internal Structure of the City*, New York: Oxford University Press: 154-159.
- Miron, John. 1981. “Economic Equilibrium in Urban Land Use,” in Larry Bourne (Ed), *The Internal Structure of the City (Second Edition)*, New York: Oxford: 124-136. University Press.
- Beauregard, Robert. 2007. “More Than Sector Theory: Homer Hoyt’s Contributions to Planning Knowledge,” *Journal of Planning History* August vol. 6 no. 3 248-271

#5 Oct 1 Political Economy: *Urban Growth and Decline*

Assignment #1: Due

Assignment # 2: Hand-out

Required Readings

Harvey, David. (1978). The urban process under capitalism. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 2 (1-2), 101-131.

Garcia Lamarca, M., & Kaika, M. (2016). ‘Mortgaged lives’: the biopolitics of debt and housing financialisation. *Institute of British Geographers. Transactions*, 41(3), 313–327. DOI: 10.1111/tran.12126

Molotch, Harvey (1976). The City as a Growth Machine: Toward a Political Economy of Place, *American Journal of Sociology*, 82 (2), 309-332

Supplementary Readings

Swyngedouw, Erik. 2003. “The Marxian Alternative: Historical-Geographical Materialism and the Political-Economy of Capitalism,” in T. Barth and E. Sheppard (Eds), *Reader in Economic Geography*: Oxford: Blackwell: 41-59.

The Big Short: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Big_Short_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Big_Short_(film))

#6 Oct 8 Housing film: “Push”

“PUSH is a new documentary from award-winning director Fredrik Gertten, investigating why we can’t afford to live in our own cities anymore. Housing is a fundamental human right, a precondition to a safe and healthy life. But in cities all around the world, having a place to live is becoming more and more difficult. Who are the players and what are the factors that make housing one of today’s most pressing world issues?” <https://www.pushthefilm.com/>

Oct 15 Reading Week (no class)

#7 Oct 22 Land and Property

Assignment #2: due

Required Readings

Kruekeberg, Donald A. 1995. The Difficult Character of Property: To Whom Do Things Belong? *Journal of the American Planning Association* 61(3), 301-309

Blomley, Nicholas. 2005. Flowers in the bathtub: boundary crossings at the public–private divide, *Geoforum* 36, 281–296

Porter, Libby (2016) “How can we meaningfully recognise cities as Indigenous places?” *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/how-can-we-meaningfully-recognise-cities-as-indigenous-places-65561>

Supplementary Readings

Land Back: A Yellowhead Institute Red Paper, <https://redpaper.yellowheadinstitute.org/>

Harris, Richard and Ute Lehrer (2018), Introduction. In: Harris R. and Lehrer, U. (eds.) *The Suburban Land Question: A Global Survey*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

- Haila, Anne. 2000. Real estate in Global Cities: Singapore and Hong Kong as Property States, *Urban Studies*, 37(12), 2241-2256
- Haila, Anne. City building in the East and West: United States, Europe, Hong Kong and Singapore compared” *Cities*, 16(4), 259-267.

#8 Oct 29 **Urban Regime Theory and Power Relations within the Fabric of the City**

Guest lecturer: Sebastien Lambelet, Département Science et Politique et Relation Internationales, Université de Genève, Switzerland, and PostDoc York University.

Required Readings

- Stone, C. N. (1993). Urban Regimes and the Capacity to Govern : A Political Economy Approach. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 15(1), 1-28.
- Pierre, J. (2014). Can Urban Regimes Travel in Time and Space? Urban Regime Theory, Urban Governance Theory, and Comparative Urban Politics. *Urban Affairs Review*, 50(6), 864-889. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1078087413518175>
- Lambelet, S. (2019). Filling in the Resource Gap of Urban Regime Analysis to Make It Travel in Time and Space. *Urban Affairs Review*, 55(5), 1402-1432. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1078087417740974>

Supplementary readings:

- Stone, C. N. (1988). Preemptive Power : Floyd Hunter’s « Community Power Structure » Reconsidered. *American Journal of Political Science*, 32(1), 82-104.
- Stone, C. N. (2015). Reflections on Regime Politics : From Governing Coalition to Urban Political Order. *Urban Affairs Review*, 51(1), 101-137.

#9 Nov 5 **Financialization**

Assignment #3: Hand-out

Required Readings

- Davidson M and Ward K (2014) ‘Picking up the pieces’: austerity urbanism, California and fiscal crisis. *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society* 7(1), 81–97.
- Weber R (2010) Selling city futures: The financialization of urban redevelopment policy. *Economic Geography* 86(3), 251–274.
- Peck J and Whiteside H (2016) Financializing Detroit. *Economic Geography* 92(3), 235–268.

Supplementary Readings

- Krippner, Greta (2005): The financialization of the American economy. *Socio-Economic Review* (3): 173–208.
- Orderud, Geir Inge (2011) “Finance, Home Building and Urban Residential Structuring” *Antipode*, 43(4), 1215-1249

#10 Nov 12 Condo-Boom

Required Readings

- Lehrer, U., Keil, R. & Kipfer, K. (2010). "Reurbanization in Toronto: Condominium boom and social housing revitalization" *DISP: The Planning Review* 180 81-90.
- Harris, Douglas C. 2011. "Condominium and the City: The Rise of Property in Vancouver," *Law and Social Inquiry*, 36 (3), 694-726
- Rosen, Gillad. 2017. Toronto's condo-builders: development approaches and spatial preferences," *Urban Geography*, VOL. 38, NO. 4, 606-625.

Supplementary Readings

- Rosen, G. and Walks, Alan (2015) "Castles in Toronto's Sky: Condoism as Urban Transformation". *Journal of Urban Affairs*. 85(1): 39-66
- Rosen, Gillad and Walks, Alan (2013) "Rising Cities: Condominium Development and the Private Transformation of the Metropolis". *Geoforum*. 49: 160-172
- Lorinc, John (2019) "Vertical Subdivisions: An Interview with John van Nostrand and Drew Sinclair" In: Bozickovic, A., Case, C., Lorinc, J. (Eds) *House Divided: How the Missing Middle Will Solve Toronto's Affordability Crisis*. Toronto: Coach House Books.
- Costello, L. (2005). From prisons to penthouses: The changing images of high-rise living in Melbourne. *Housing Studies*, 20(1), 49-62.

#11 Nov 19 Public Space

Required Readings

- Lehrer, U. (2016) "Room for the Good Society? Public space, amenities and the condominium" In: Haripriya Rangan, Mee Kam NG, Libby Porter and Jacquelyn Chase (eds), *Insurgencies and Revolutions: Reflections on John Friedmann's contributions to planning theory and practice*. Boston: Routledge RTPI Library Series, pp. 141-150.
- Lehrer, U. & March, L. (2019) "Vertical urbanism: high-rise buildings and public space" *Finnish Journal of Urban Studies; Kaupunkikysymys – The Urban Question*, 57(4) 37-42
<https://journal.fi/yhdyskuntasuunnittelu/issue/view/6097>
- Staelen, L. and Mitchell, D. (2007). Locating the public in research and practice. *Progress in Human Geography*, 31(6), 792-811.

Supplementary Readings

- Ye, J. (2019). Re-orienting geographies of urban diversity and coexistence: Analyzing inclusion and difference in public space. *Progress in Human Geography*, 43(3), 478-495.
- Springer, S. (2011). Public space as emancipation: meditations on anarchism, radical democracy, neoliberalism and violence. *Antipode*, 43(2), 525-562.
- Parlette, V. and Cowen, D. (2011). Dead malls: suburban activism, local space, global logistics. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 35(4), 794-811.
- Low, S.M and Smith, N. (2006). *The politics of public space*. New York, Routledge.
- Mitchell, D. (2003). *The right to the city: social justice and the fight for public space*. New York, Guilford Press.
- Kohn, M. (2004). *Brave new neighborhoods: The privatization of public space*. New York: Routledge.

#12 Nov 26 Student presentations of their case study of condo development

Assignment #3: due

Inclusivity in the MES Program

The MES Program strives to include a broad range of perspectives and substantive material in its course offerings. Central to a clear understanding of environmental problems is the link between exploitation of the natural world, and justice issues related to racism, gender inequity, and poverty. An inclusion of non-western perspectives is therefore essential to a fruitful discussion of North-South issues, and environmental debates generally.

Religious Observance Days

York University is committed to respecting the religious beliefs and practices of all members of the community, and making accommodations for observances of special significance to adherents. Should any of the dates specified in this syllabus for in-class test or examination pose such a conflict for you, contact the Course Director within the first three weeks of class. Similarly, should an assignment to be completed in a lab, practicum placement, workshop, etc., scheduled later in the term pose such a conflict, contact the Course director immediately. Please note that to arrange an alternative date or time for an examination scheduled in the formal examination periods (December and April/May), students must complete and Examination Accommodation Form, which can be obtained from Student Client Services, W120 Bennett Centre for Student Services or online at http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/pdf/exam_accommodation.pdf

Academic Honesty

York students are required to maintain high standard of academic integrity and are subject to the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty as set out by York University and by the Faculty of Environmental Studies. Please read the *Senate Policy on Academic Honesty* (which can be found as Appendix One of the *Academic Regulations of the Faculty of Environmental Studies* or in the University Policies and Regulations section of the *York University Undergraduate Programs Calendar*), available at: <http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/legislation/senate/acadhone.htm>

There is also an academic integrity website with complete information about academic honesty. Students are expected to review the materials on the Academic Integrity website at:

<http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academicintegrity>

Student Conduct

Students and instructors are expected to maintain a professional relationship characterized by courtesy and mutual respect and to refrain from actions disruptive to such a relationship. Moreover, it is the responsibility of the instructor to maintain an appropriate academic atmosphere in the classroom, and the responsibility of the student to cooperate in that endeavour. Further, the instructor is the best person to decide, in the first instance, whether such an atmosphere is present in the class. A statement of the policy and procedures involving disruptive and/or harassing behaviour by students in academic situations is available on the York website at: <http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/document.php?document=202>