

URB 8097 (9012): Urban Economic Resilience

[Syllabus subject to change]

Spring 2020

Class meets in 55 Park Place, rm. 502

Instructor: Dr. Jan Nijman

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Office hrs. by appointment

By their very nature, cities are centers of economic activity and innovation. Through history, the economic roles and resilience of cities have been crucial to the progress and development of society at large. This course focuses on the role of cities in the modern world economy, their shifting economic fortunes, processes of urban economic restructuring, episodes of growth and decline, and more generally the relation between processes of urbanization and development. The main focus is on modern-day U.S. cities, with the recognition that the urban experience of the U.S. does not necessarily apply elsewhere.

It is important to consider this theme in contexts that transcend purely economic, local, issues. First, the economy of cities is part of a larger urban fabric that encompasses important political and cultural dimensions. Economic questions about the city can quickly turn into questions of political economy. Second, urban economies are historical entities with a degree of path-dependency. Hence, the importance of a historical perspective on the economic development of cities. Third, urban economies are connected to wider regional systems and to the global economy. Hence the need to consider various spatial scales in the study of urban economies.

We use this course to become familiar with some important texts on the subject, through critical reading: Alan Scott's *The Constitution of the City*; Clarence Stone's *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta*; Tom Sugrue's *The Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*; and various other readings.

Learning objectives:

- To gain knowledge and understanding of the general nature of urban economies and the relation between urbanization and development;
- To gain knowledge and understanding of U.S. cities (esp. Detroit and Atlanta) in terms of the particular connections between economy, power structures, and cultural fabric;
- To become familiar with various theoretical debates in urban studies on themes such as agglomeration theory or regime theory.
- To advance appreciation for the historic evolution of U.S. cities;
- To enhance skills in critical reading, writing, analysis, and class discussion.

The course is set up as a seminar and is intended for PhD students. Master's students who wish to enroll need approval of the instructor. The key to a successful seminar lies in thorough preparation and active participation. Students are expected to read assignments critically and to come to class ready for discussion.

Main texts:

Alan Scott (2017), *The Constitution of the City: Economy, Society, and Urbanization in the Capitalist Era*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Clarence Stone (1989), *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946-1988*. University Press of Kansas.

Thomas Sugrue (1996), *The Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*. Princeton University Press. Pp. 1-177.

The books by Scott and Sugrue should be available (e-texts) through the library; students are recommended to buy the book by Stone. Other materials are available online or will be provided by the instructor.

TESTING AND GRADING

Course grades are determined on the basis of class participation (40%) and 10 weekly written statements (60%).

- Class participation: attendance and constructive participation in class discussion. Excused absences require the instructor's approval. Note that there is no class on April 23: students are expected to attend the Atlanta Studies Symposium. See <https://www.atlantastudies.org/symposia/>
- 10 weekly statements: 600-800 word reports that briefly summarize and critically appraise the readings, plus one debate postulation. Weekly statements must be submitted via email to [jniyman@gsu.edu](mailto:jnijman@gsu.edu) by 8pm on the night before class meets. Late submissions will not be graded and receive a score of zero.

Students will be assigned a letter grade from the University letter scale: A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D, F.

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the University's Policy on Academic Honesty. GSU guidelines on academic honesty/dishonesty will be enforced. The guidelines are posted at <http://education.gsu.edu/files/2016/05/plagiarism.pdf> and <http://codeofconduct.gsu.edu/files/2013/2014-2015-Section-II-Academic-Conduct-Student-Code-of-Conduct.pdf>. Penalties can range from receiving no credit for an assignment/exam up to expulsion from the university.

Attendance and Participation

All students are expected to arrive on time and actively participate in class discussion. Simply showing up is not cause for a strong grade. If you are unable to make class please email me ahead of time with a reason. I will determine if the absence will count as excused. In general, regular employment is not considered as an excused absence.

Students with Disabilities

If you need accommodation for a disability you may do so by registering with the Georgia State University Office of Disability Services either by coming in-person or online. You will be accommodated upon issuance by the Office of Disability Services of a signed Accommodation Plan, and then you are responsible for emailing the copy of that plan to me and faculty of all the classes in which you need accommodations. Students should provide a copy of the Plan to the instructor within the first two weeks of classes. To register for accommodations please follow this link disability.gsu.edu/services/how-to-register. Phone: (404) 413-1560, Email: dismail@gsu.edu, Website: disability.gsu.edu,

Remote Academic Coaching. The Office of Disability Services also offers free remote academic coaching. To learn more go to disability.gsu.edu/services or watch a [Coaching Video](#)

Veterans & Serving Military

Students who are veterans, serving in the military, their dependents, and the survivors of serving military are encouraged to avail themselves of a range of college services and activities through the Military Outreach Center (MOC). For assistance or guidance while attending GSU on campus or online, contact the Atlanta Campus Military Student Advocate, David Garcia, at 404-413-2331. Be sure and let me know ASAP if or when there is any possibility of you being activated and deployed. For more information contact the GSU Military Outreach Center. Phone: (404) 413-233, Email: dgarcia9@gsu.edu Website: veterans.gsu.edu.

Basic Needs Statement: Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable us to provide resources that we may possess. The [Embark program at GSU](#) provides resources for students facing homelessness.

TENTATIVE WEEKLY SCHEDULE

(subject to change)

[* indicates reading will be made available by instructor]

Week 1, January 16: Intro

Week 2, January 23: Prologue

Brenner, N., & Schmid, C. (2014). The “Urban Age” in Question. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 38(3), 731–755.

Brenner, N., & Schmid, C. (2015). Towards a new epistemology of the urban? *City* 19(2–3), 151–182.

Week 3, January 30: Cities and the logic of agglomeration

- Scott, v-104
- J.V. Henderson (2010), “Cities and development.” *Journal of Regional Science* 50/1: 515–40. doi: 10.1111/j.1467- 9787.2009.00636.x.

Week 4, February 6: Urban political economies I

- *John R. Logan and Harvey L. Molotch (1987), “The City as a Growth Machine.” In: *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place*. U of California Press, pp. 50-98.
- *J. Nijman (2011), “The Miami growth machine.” In: J. Nijman, *Miami, Mistress of the Americas*. University of Pennsylvania Press, pp. 69-94.
- Stone, ix-76.

Week 5, February 13: Urban political economies II [seminar led by Dr. Choithani]

- Stone, 77-246
- J.L. Hochschild, “Clarence Stone and the study of urban politics.” Retrieve at: <https://scholar.harvard.edu/jlhochschild/publications/clarence-n-stone-and-study-urban-politics>

Week 6, February 20: Urban (mis)fortunes I [seminar led by Dr. Choithani]

- Video documentary Goin’ to Chicago
- Sugrue, 1-124

Week 7, February 27: Urban (mis)fortunes II

- Sugrue, 125-272
- W.J. Wilson, When work disappears.

Week 8, March 5: The new urban economy I

- Scott, 105-235
- Glaeser, E. and J. Gottlieb (2006): “Urban Resurgence and the Consumer City,” *Urban Studies* 43: 1275–1299.
- G. Carlino (2015). “The economic role of cities in the 21st century.” Philadelphia Federal Reserve, *Business Review* Q3 (2005): 9-15.
<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/310a/f6593b5f1cb967bafcc615d71558abeaf99.pdf>

Week 9, March 12: The new urban economy II

- J. Schor (2016), “Debating the sharing economy.” *Journal of Self Governance and Management*.
- M. Graham et al (2017), “Digital labour and development: impacts of global digital labour platforms and the gig economy on worker livelihoods.” Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research.
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1024258916687250>
- *A. Ehrenhalt (2012), *The Great Inversion and the Future of the American City*. Vintage, 1-88.

Week 10, March 26: Growth, shrinkage, and the urban-rural divide

- A. Haase et al (2014), “Conceptualizing urban shrinkage.” *Environment and Planning A* 46: 1519-1534.
- M.B. Aalbers and M. Bernt (2019), “The political economy of managing decline and

rightsizing.” *Urban Geography* 40/2: 165-173.

- N. Arnosti and A. Liu (2018). “Why rural America needs cities.” *Brookings Report*, 11-30-2018. Pp. 1-9. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/why-rural-america-needs-cities/>
- R.D. Atkinson et al (2019), *The Case for Growth Centers: How to Spread Tech Innovation across America*. Brookings Institution, 1-71.

Week 11, April 2: Reading current headlines

- D. Graeber (2019), “Against economics.” *NYRB* December 2, 2019.
- <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/taking-back-detroit/see-detroit.html>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/20/us/american-workers-moving-states-.html>
- <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2019/11/21/low-wage-work-is-more-pervasive-than-you-think-and-there-arent-enough-good-jobs-to-go-around/>
- <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/american-jobs-are-getting-worse-according-to-a-new-economic-measure/>
- A. Dua and S. Lund (2019), “Automation and economic disparity: A new challenge for CEOs.” *McKinsey Quarterly*, October 2019.
- <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-11-07/53-million-in-u-s-have-low-wage-jobs-they-ll-likely-stay-there>

Week 12, April 9: Reading current headlines

- <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/02/upshot/wealth-poverty-divide-american-cities.html>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/13/upshot/red-blue-diverging-economies.html>
- The Economist Dec. 6 2019: Inequality illusions.
- T.B. Edsall (2017), “Reaching out to the voters the Left left behind.” NYT op-ed page, April 13, 2017. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/13/opinion/reaching-out-to-the-voters-the-left-left-behind.html?_r=1
- P. Starr (2019), “The battle for the suburbs.” *New York Review of Books*, September 26, 2019, pp. 38-39.

Week 13, April 16: Beyond the U.S. experience [seminar led by Dr. Choithani]

- *J. Nijman (2019), “Urbanization and Economic Development: Comparing the Trajectories of China and United States.” In: R. Forrest, J. Ren, and B. Wissink (eds.), *The City in China: Perspectives on Contemporary Urbanism*. Polity Press, pp. 101-124.
- R. Grant & J. Nijman (2002), “Globalization and the corporate geography of cities in the less-developed world.” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 92: 320-340.
- J. Nijman (2015), “India’s urban future: Views from the slum.” *American Behavioral Scientist* 59/3: 406-423.
- F. Obeng-Odoom (2010), “Abnormal” urbanization in Africa: A dissenting view. *African Geographical Review* 29/2:13–40.

Week 14, April 23: Atlanta Studies Symposium