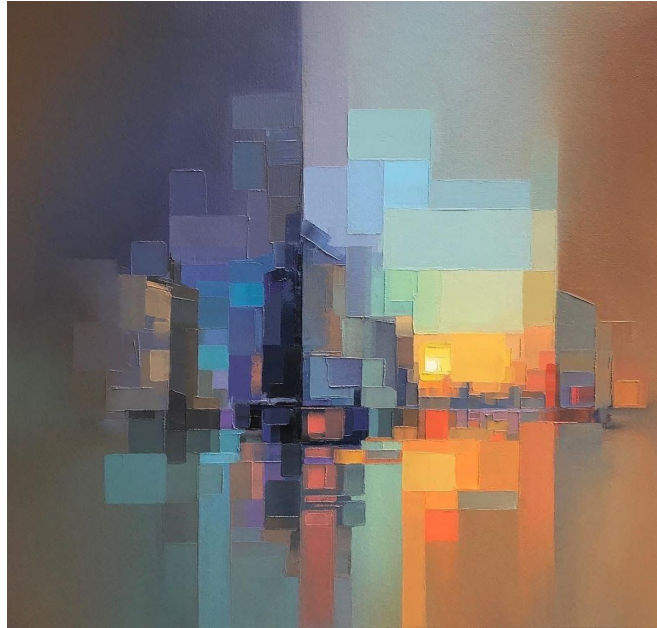


# GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

ANTH 280

SUMMER 2020



## URBAN ANTHROPOLOGY

Dr. Laurie King [lek28@georgetown.edu](mailto:lek28@georgetown.edu)

*"The city is the maximal expression of the human need - and capacity - for interdependence." ~ Ulf Hannerz*

*"Cities are problems in organized complexity." ~ Jane Jacobs*

*"Cities are places where strangers are likely to meet." ~ Richard Sennett*

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course explores the city as a product of, and a rich site for, human beings' negotiations over social and economic rights, power, identity, memory, meaning, and community. Drawing on a variety of historical, geographic, and ethnographic studies, we will ask what is qualitatively unique about urban life. The city is a site of economic and political centralization, but also a landscape of sentiment and belonging. It is a space of ritual observance and spectacle, as well as the locus of inequality, alienation, suffering, and dysfunction. Debates over urban planning encompass moral, cultural, and personal concerns, not simply the blueprints of economists, policymakers, and architects. Throughout the course, methodological questions regarding the city as an object of historical and ethnographic study are

highlighted. We will look at Tokyo's fish markets, mid-20<sup>th</sup> century New York City, contemporary Washington, DC, , and religious coexistence in Granada, Spain in order to understand the complexity of the urban experience through a holistic and critical anthropological lens.

Whether you think about it or not, you are part of a city. Each of you participate, to one degree or another, in the social, economic, recreational, and cultural matrices of Washington, DC. Although you might spend most of your time west of Wisconsin Avenue, you are intricately intermeshed in the ecological, infrastructural, economic, administrative, and imaginative systems of our nation's capital. In this class, we will not only "hit the books," but will also "hit the streets" as well by exploring the city ethnographically in order to understand what it means to be *in* and *of* a city. The anchor text of this course - Ulf Hannerz's *Exploring the City* -- states that cities are the "maximal expression of the human need - and capacity - for interdependence." Cities present us with the opportunity and necessity to play different roles at different times, and to traverse spaces and places in unpredictable ways. As we will see, the quality, not just the quantity, of human interactions are what makes a city a city.

Two key themes of this course will be *interdependence* and *interrelationship*. We will explore these themes not only through our reading, but more importantly, through our field research survey visits as well. By the end of the semester, we will gain an awareness of the ways that Georgetown University participates in relationships of interdependence and interconnection with this city. I hope you will learn more about Washington, DC, as well as learning more about yourselves and your embeddedness in this city.

## TEXTS

Bestor, Theodore. 2004. *Tsukiji: The Fish Market at the Center of the World*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Hannerz, Ulf. 1980. *Exploring the City*.

Rogozen-Soltar, Mikaela H. 2017. *Spain Unmoored: Migration, Conversion, and the Politics of Islam*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Taylor, Keeanga-Yamahtta. 2019. *Race for Profit: How Banks and the Real Estate Industry Undermined Black Homeownership*. University of North Carolina Press.

## ON CANVAS:

Krieger, P. "Aesthetics and Anthropology of Megacities: A New Field of Art Historical Research" <http://actesbranly.revues.org/318#text>

Pickett, Cadenasso, et al., "Beyond Urban Legends: An Emerging Framework of Urban Ecology, as Illustrated by the Baltimore Ecosystem Study"

Gmelch, George, Robert V. Kemper, Walter P. Zenner. 2010. *Urban Life: Readings in the Anthropology of the City*. (Selected chapters.)

Jacobs, Jane. 1992. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. (Selected chapters.)

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Participation and attendance: Read the weekly assigned material in a timely fashion. You should take an **active role in discussions** (10%) since your participation will indicate your level of engagement with the readings. **Your regular attendance** (10%) is required.
2. Two analytical essays (40%)
3. Two field research exercises (24%) (Details to be provided in class.)
4. Research proposal exercise (16%) (Details to be provided in class.)

## SUMMARY OF STUDENT EVALUATION CRITERIA:

Assessment	% of grade	Due on:
Class Attendance and Participation	20%	Throughout the semester. June 21
Two Analytical Essays (20 points each)	40%	July 6 Weeks 3 and 5
Two Field Research Survey Exercises (12 points each)	24%	(You will post these on our course blog)
Research Proposal Exercise	16%	July 6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	

## GRADING SCALE

A	B		C		D		F
	-	+	-	+	-	+	-
100-97	96-93	92-89	86-82	79-76	72-69	66-62	Below 60
		-90 -87	-83 -80	-77 -73	-70 -67	-63 -60	Percent

*Please keep your cell phones and Internet off as a common courtesy to your colleagues and instructor.*

Take notes by hand, not on your laptop. Here's why:

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/>

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### Week 1:

- Introduction to the course and urban cognitive mapping exercise
- <https://www.fastcompany.com/3053172/these-beautiful-mental-maps-of-cities-help-your-brain-regain-what-it-has-lost-to-gps>
- Krieger, P. "Aesthetics and Anthropology of Megacities: A New Field of Art Historical Research" <http://actesbranly.revues.org/318#text>
- Pickett, Cadenasso, et al., "Beyond Urban Legends: An Emerging Framework of Urban Ecology, as Illustrated by the Baltimore Ecosystem Study" (on Canvas)
- "Anaquash" (short film about life along the Anacostia River) <https://vimeo.com/61503905>
- Chapters 1 and 2 in Gmelch, Kemper, and Zenner, *Urban Lives* (on Canvas).

### Week 2:

- Chapters 4, 6 and 7 in Gmelch, Kemper, and Zenner, *Urban Lives*. (On Canvas)
- Chapters 1 and 2 in Hannerz, *Exploring the City*.

### Week 3: February 12

- Chapters 3, 4, 6, 7, and Appendix in *Exploring the City*.

**FIRST ESSAY DUE ON June 21**

### Week 4:

Selected chapters in Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*.

- Documentary about Jane Jacobs: [Jane Jacobs American Masters Documentary](#)
- North Philadelphia case study on "border vacuums" [Jane Jacobs&#39;&quot;Curse of Border Vacuums&quot;.mov](#)
- Jane Jacobs on the importance of city economies [Jane Jacobs on the nature of economies](#)
- Hi-Rise Projects Were Never a Good Idea [Why did we build high-rise public housing projects?](#)
- Jane Jacobs Revisited <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIkzwyIgA4g>
- Bestor, Theodore. *Tsukiji: The Fish Market at the Center of the World*.

Week 4

- Rogozen-Soltar, Mikaela H. *Spain Unmoored: Migration, Conversion, and the Politics of Islam*.

Week 5:

- Taylor, Keeanga-Yamahtta. 2019. *Race for Profit: How Banks and the Real Estate Industry Undermined Black Homeownership*.
- Chapter 8 in *Urban Lives* Reader (on Blackboard) on Urban Danger.

**SECOND ANALYTICAL PAPER and RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

**are due on**

**July 6<sup>th</sup> by 5 PM**