GEOG*4200: Social Life of Cities
PROVISIONAL, SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Instructor: Dr. Anna Stanley
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Mondays & Wednesdays 11:30-12:50
Location: TBA
Office hours (HUTT 347): TBA
TA: TBA

Prerequisites: GEOG*2260 (GEOG*3050 recommended)

Course Overview
This course examines the “socio-spatial” dynamics of city life. Focusing primarily on Toronto and cities in the Global North we consider ways in which social relations and processes (“social functions”) configure city space (“urban form”) and how the geography of the city, in turn, shapes social life. Using examples of homelessness, missing and murdered women, police surveillance of racialized groups, as well as processes like gentrification and renewal to understand the geography of urban spaces we ask a series of questions about: (1) how power relations are expressed in and through the built environment; and (2) how the built environment influences social relations. A number of themes run through the course material and will be central to our discussions, including:

• The connections between urban form and social functions (the “socio-spatial dialectic”);
• The expression and repression of social differences in urban environments;
• The shifting boundaries of public/private and insider/outsider;
• “Rights to the City:” investigating who can make decisions about the functions of the city, and who is able to access the resources it provides.

Course Objectives:
• To develop students’ knowledge of themes and topics in urban social geography;
• To encourage a critical intellectual engagement with the physical forms and social functions that are found in modern urban environments in the Global North and Toronto;
• To investigate the causes and consequences of urban change
• To develop research, reading, and writing skills, as well as critical thinking.

Course Format:
This course is conceived of as a forum for facilitating critical enquiry into the dynamics of contemporary urban social geography in Toronto and the Global North. The course will be
conducted as a seminar: we meet twice a week for three hours in total and will spend a significant amount of our time in seminar-style discussion of course materials. The purpose of our meetings will be to discuss, share, and develop our understandings of the readings, as well as to distil, and together build an understanding of course themes and concepts. Each meeting you will be expected to attend class prepared to discuss the readings with your peers. This format requires close reading and significant preparation of texts before coming to class—work for which you will be evaluated on and rewarded for.

In general I will get us started by providing a contextual overview of the weekly topics at the beginning of each class, but a significant part of our class time will also be dedicated to student led discussion. All students are expected to have completed the assigned readings before the class meetings, and to come prepared with observations, reflections, and questions from the readings. Student participation will be assessed through multiple means, including written reflections, class participation, and the completion of class activities. The assignments, will assume knowledge gained from both the texts, lectures and seminars, so class attendance is highly recommended. We will be using Course link as an electronic resource for announcements, accessing course materials, and submitting assignments.

A note on seminar participation:
This is your class and I want you to get as much out of these meetings as possible. Please feel free to raise questions and topics for discussion, and contribute your understanding of course themes, arguments, concepts and connections during the discussion. But participation also involves listening to other people’s comments, thoughtfully engaging with their views, not interrupting, and letting other people express themselves. This does not mean that it is out of bounds to challenge a classmate on her/his views or to disagree about how to interpret an argument, but rather that you do so respectfully and politely and in a manner that helps us all learn. There is a distinction between contributing to discussion (where your comments build off of others’ comments, generate further discussion, and contribute overall to the class achieving a more comprehensive understanding of the topics) and making self serving or arrogant comments that embarrass others and shut down lines of communication. The purpose of these discussions is that we learn from each other and come to a deeper understanding of the readings by reading and discussing together. In these meetings you have a responsibility to your classmates to be prepared, to actively contribute to discussions and to be courteous and respectful; you also have a right to expect the same of them.

Evaluation:
Class participation & seminar engagement (45%)
  • active participation & in class discussions and activities (10%)
  • written submissions & seminar preparation (35%)
Field trip reflection (due 2 weeks following the field trip): (20%)
Take-home final exam (35%)

**Course fees:** This course includes a mandatory 1 day field trip to Toronto. Please note that the cost of going on the required course field trip to Toronto will be approximately **30 dollars** per students (there are no other cots associated with this course). This fee helps pay the bus fare and First Story Tour of Indigenous Toronto. The Department will subsidize the rest.

**Readings:**
The readings for this course consist of peer-reviewed academic articles that are available in the University of Guelph library system, as well as relevant readings from the media and civil society. Access to these readings is available through Course link.

**Course, Department, and University Policies**

**E-mail Communication:**
As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students. I check my e-mail once every weekday. Please expect that I will respond to your e-mails within 24-48 hours; if I do not, please resend your e-mail. If your question or concern is complicated, I may ask that we meet during office hours or at another scheduled time to address the issue in person. In general, please do not ask complicated, course related questions over email. Please come to discuss your questions during office hours instead. To ensure that your e-mail reaches my inbox, be sure to use a University of Guelph e-mail address, Include the course code and the nature of your question/comment in the subject line of the e-mail.

**Copies of out-of-class assignments:**
Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

**Accessibility:**
The University of Guelph is committed to creating a barrier-free environment. Providing services for students is a shared responsibility among students, faculty and administrators. This relationship is based on respect of individual rights, the dignity of the individual and the University community’s shared commitment to an open and supportive learning environment. Students requiring service or accommodation, whether due to an identified, ongoing disability or a short-term disability should contact the Centre for Students with Disabilities as soon as possible. For more information, contact CSD at 519-824-4120 ext. 56208 or email csd@uoguelph.ca or see the [website](#).
Academic Misconduct:
The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection. Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor. The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Plagiarism includes improper acknowledgement or citation of the work of others, the inclusion of false or misleading references, and the resubmission of work that has already been evaluated at the University. Prevent inadvertent academic dishonesty by carefully referencing and citing the sources you use in your work. For advice on proper referencing, please see this web page.

Recording of Materials:
Presentations that are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate, or a guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

Resources:
The Academic Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph’s procedures, policies, and regulations that apply to undergraduate, graduate, and diploma programs/