

PARIS 237: Understanding Contemporary Paris: Urban and Global Processes

Instructor: François Bonnet

The course aims at providing a general overview of urban sociology; an introduction to core notions such as urban economics, segregation, ethnicity, stratification, crime, urban riots, local social policy, urban politics, etc.; and to systematically compare US and French perspectives on the same issues. Field trips in Paris will be organized to train students to match concepts and theories with everyday experience.

Evaluation:

- An oral presentation in class on an assigned reading (Thursday) (25%)
- 2 in-class exams (about the texts) (50%)
- A final take-home exam (about the field trips) (25%)

Classes will take place on Monday (5pm-6pm) and on Thursday (3:30pm-5:30pm).

Mondays last 1 hour and focus on learning theories, concepts and facts about the week's theme.

Thursdays last 2 hours and focus on group discussion: presentation and discussion of assigned readings, discussion about news events, and field trips.

Part 1. Introduction

1. Course outlook

Monday 9/14: Presentation, introduction to basic notions of the social sciences

Thursday 9/17: Introduction to the field of urban sociology, introduction to space and behavior

Reading: Gieryn T. 2000, "A Space for Place in Sociology", *Annual Review of Sociology*

2. Urbanization

Historical perspectives on the urbanization of Western societies

Monday 9/21: Le Galès P. 2002, *European Cities*, chapter 2

Thursday 9/24: Engels F. 1845, "The Great Towns", in *The Condition of the Working Class in England*

4. Urban theory

Introduction to urban theory: ecological and political economy perspectives.

Monday 9/28: Marx and Engels *Communist manifesto*

Thursday 10/1: Field trip to Belleville, a vibrant neighborhood of Paris where Tunisians, Asians, and Africans coexist along with working-class and upper-class white French

Part 2. White flight and secession

3. Race, ethnicity and class in the city

Introduction to concepts of stratification and race relationships.

Monday 10/5: Elias 1965, "Theoretical introduction" in *The Established and the Outsiders*

Thursday 10/8: Pritchett W. 2002, "Racial change in a progressive neighborhood", in *Brownsville, Brooklyn. Blacks, Jews and the Changing Face of the Ghetto*. Chicago: Chicago University Press

5. White flight and secession

Suburbanization and white flight

Monday 10/12: Jackson K.T., « All the World's a Mall : Reflections on the Social and Economic Consequences of the American Shopping Center », *American Historical Review*, 1996,

Thursday 10/15: Massey and Denton 1998, *American Apartheid*, chapter 6

Part 3. Segregation

6. Dynamics of residential segregation

Segregation of the rich (gated communities) and of the poor (banlieues, ghettos).

Monday 10/19: Venkatesh S.A. 2006, *Off the Books*. Cambridge, Prologue and Chapter 1

Thursday 10/22: **Midterms in-class exam**

~~10/26, 10/29~~

11/2, 11/5

7. The underground economy, crime and policing

Introduction to urban problems related to crime and its control.

Monday 11/9: Cohen L. and M. Felson 1979, « Social Change and Crime Rate Trends : A Routine Activity Approach », *American Sociological Review*, 44 (4), pp. 588-608

Thursday 11/12: Field trip to one of the richest Parisian neighborhoods. Special attention will be dedicated to architecture and inequality.

8. Social problems, continued: urban riots

Monday 11/16: Katz M.B. 2008, "Why Don't American Cities Burn Very Often?", *Journal of Urban History*, Vol. 34, No. 2, pp. 185-208

Thursday 11/19: Field trip to a poor, minority neighborhood in the north of Paris with various social problems.

9. Crime and welfare

Monday 11/23: Mike Davis, *City of quartz*, “Fortress City”

Thursday 11/26: Marwell N.P. 2004, « Privatizing the Welfare State: Nonprofit Community Based Organizations as Political Actors », *American Sociological Review*, 69 2, pp. 265-291

Part 4. Gentrification

10. Perspectives on gentrification: Economic vs. cultural theories

Debates and controversies about gentrification positive and negative aspects, consumption vs. production theory

Monday 11/30: Davis M. 1992, *City of Quartz*, « The Junkyard of Dreams »

Thursday 12/3: Field trip to a recently gentrified area: Bercy

Part 5. Coping with urban problems

11. Urban politics, urban policy and civil society

Local politics, “politique de la ville”, social movements, NGOs.

Monday 12/7: **Final in-class exam**

Thursday 12/10: Michael Gecan, *Going Public*, Anchor Books, chapitre 2: “The world as it is”