

Seminar 4: SHAPING THE FUTURE OF THE CITY (Spring 2024)

Professor Owen Gutfreund

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office hours :

<https://calendly.com/owen-officehours>

or at other days/times by arrangement

(just email me)

In this fourth and final seminar, we will study the social, economic, and political decisions that have shaped and can reshape New York City. Building on the previous three seminars, augmented by new material about the processes of urban change, you will learn about the possibilities of creating change by studying the roles that individuals, community leaders, and institutional actors – government agencies (federal, state, regional, and local), private sector interests, and grassroots organizations – have played in shaping or reshaping our city. You will be like city sleuths, learning to unravel, sort, and explain the history of government policies, the causes of urban issues, the promises and pitfalls of innovation, and the problems and possibilities of community-driven activism.

The course will have two major elements, in parallel:

- 1) a seminar in which we will discuss readings about urban topics, as examples of how the city of today came to be, what created historical changes in the city, and what might be done to make things better.
- 2) a workshop in which you each will conduct your own semester-long research project, learning how to acquire in-depth expertise, and then practicing how to communicate your newfound expertise in multiple formats and venues.

The work for this class will vary week-to-week. Some weeks you will be expected to read assigned readings and come to class prepared to actively participate in seminar-style discussion. You will also be working throughout the term on your research project, so there will be multiple work-in-progress deadlines and some of our class time will be focused on techniques for researching and writing a big paper like this. Each of you will also present your work to the class, as you go along and at the end. To support this, we will spend class time on peer-editing, and on learning to assemble a professional-quality oral presentation of your research results, both individually and in groups.

The semester-long culminating projects are individual efforts that result in research reports (written with illustrations) and formal slide presentations addressing crucial issues affecting the future of New York City. **You will get to choose your own research topic** at the beginning of the term, and you will be working on this topic throughout the semester. Based on your thorough research into the historical causes and present-day context of your topic, you will become an expert on this topic, digging past superficial, oversimplified, and standard-wisdom analysis to formulate an informed, deep, and complex understanding of the issue. You have a lot of latitude in choosing a topic, depending on your own interests. Your topic can come from any of the many general areas of urban policy inquiry, including public health, criminal justice and policing, real estate development, housing policy, homelessness, transportation, architecture, education policy, and environmental sustainability, among others.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

SUMMARY

- 1) Seminar Participation (40%)
 - a - Classroom participation, including attendance: 20%
 - b - short writing assignment based on assigned readings: 10%
 - c - Peer editing: 5%
 - d - Group work/group presentation: 5%
- 2) Fieldwork (10%)
 - e - Neighborhood Observation and Blogpost
- 3) Research Project (50%) - additional breakdown below

ADDITIONAL DETAILS

1a) Classroom Participation (20%): In-class participation is an important part of this course. Whether we are discussing readings, research projects, or something else, you are expected to contribute thoughtful questions, well-reasoned arguments, and constructive feedback to your classmates. The course depends upon your consistent, active, respectful, and informed participation in every meeting. So, please be fully *present* for every class session. There are many ways to demonstrably be present, but the most effective is to be consistently involved in discussion and visibly engaged: noticeably listening and reacting, speaking up *frequently*, responding to classmates, and asking questions.

1b) Short-format writing assignments based on assigned readings (10%): When there are assigned readings listed on the syllabus (there are five such weeks), you must read them before coming to class. For each of these five weeks, please submit (via email no later than an hour prior to class), a short writing assignment based on the readings. The exact format of these five short assignments will vary and will be explained in the prior class. For example, one week it might be a summary of the author's core arguments, another week it what you think are the most-important "takeaways," or your analysis of the author's recommendations, or an assessment of the types of evidence used in the reading, or what you think the present-day implications are, etc.

1c) Peer editing (5%): You will be paired with a classmate, to read, edit and critique each other's work on the research project. In addition to detailed editing of their paper for clarity and prose-style, you will also be asked to provide feedback (in writing and face-to-face) about their paper's organization, argument, illustrations, and evidence. You will provide them (and me) with a marked-up copy of their paper, as well as more general written overall comments, presented to your classmate in-person during class May 6 and discussed with them at that time.

1d) Group work/presentation (5%): A small-group panel presentation at the All-Macaulay conference on May 4-8, based on a small excerpt from your individual research, integrated with excerpts from your classmates' research. Details will be explained in class.

2) Fieldwork Observation and Blogpost (10%): You will conduct a detailed observation of a small part of the city -- a two-block segment or a public space (inside or outside) somewhere in the city. The outcome will be a journalistic blogpost for the course website. Details will be explained in class.

3) Research Project (50%): You will conduct an independent research project, submitted in multiple stages, based upon original research using multiple types of sources. Details will be explained in class. As soon as possible, you should discuss potential topics with me, by email or by meeting with me.

Progress-Stages for Research Project:

- Topic selection, due February 24
- Research-in-progress, in two parts
 - 1) March 4 - preliminary bibliography (list of identified/intended sources) (5%)
 - 2) March 11 - in-class presentation of History, Causes, and Background of your topic (5%)
- Paper due April 8 (10%)
- Group Presentation run-throughs in class May 1, then at all-Macaulay conference May 4-8
- Receive feedback (Peer editing and from Professor Gutfreund, May 6)
- Individual slide-presentations in class on May 13 or May 20 (10%)
- Revised/Expanded/Final Draft May 13-20 (20%)

OTHER COURSE INFORMATION

Attendance – Attendance at every class is mandatory. Arrive on-time, prepared to be fully present and to participate, and then stay until the end of the class. Please do not leave class during the session, except during our regular mid-class break for checking phones, bathroom break, etc.

Absences, departures, and late arrivals will reduce your grade.

Deadlines – I will be flexible and sympathetic about extensions, but you must ask for them well ahead of time; they will not be granted on short notice. If you miss a deadline, I will still, always, accept late work, but without an extension they will be penalized one grade. For example, an A- would be reduced to a B+, and this penalty will increase by one additional grade for each additional 48 hours past the deadline.

Collaboration and academic honesty – I have confidence that you will achieve a great deal of success in this course while maintaining high standards of integrity and honesty. I encourage you to share ideas with each other, and to help your classmates. Nevertheless, all work submitted must be your own, **and the ideas, words, images, and any other work-product of others must be properly credited using footnotes AND a bibliography.** In this class we will be using “Chicago Style” for all citations, and there is a style-guide on our course website showing how to do this properly for different types of sources.

Presenting the ideas, words, images, or any other work product of another person (or of AI) without proper credit is plagiarism. **AI programs are not an acceptable replacement for your human creativity, originality, and critical thinking.** Yet, tools that use AI to proofread your written work (such as spellcheck or Grammarly) are acceptable. However, tools that rely on generative AI (such as GPT-3, ChatGPT, Bard, etc.) that actually “write” text from a prompt are not to be used to generate drafts or written work for any assignment in this course. If you use AI to proofread individual or group work this semester, you will be expected to include proper attribution (i.e. citation or footnote required). Failure to acknowledge and attribute AI analyzed (proofread) materials in your written work, or any use of generative AI will be considered to be plagiarism.

Note about classroom disagreements: We are a diverse group, with differing opinions, experiences, values, goals, and expertise. This broad range of perspectives should serve as a strong foundation for our classroom environment. These differences may also contribute to disagreements, friction, and misunderstandings. Each of us should practice respectful and engaged listening, to better understand one another. We must be willing to consider the opinions and perspectives of others, **and to reconsider our own**. When you disagree with others, please ask questions that seek to understand rather than tear down. We *will* talk about issues that might be disturbing and/or uncomfortable, including racism and other forms of discrimination. But we should all try to do so constructively, compassionately, and respectfully.

About grades: In this course, bright students will have an opportunity to expand their capabilities, develop new analytical skills, and hone written and spoken communication skills. The elevated academic context of an Honors course enhances that learning experience. So, this class is, by design, intellectually and academically more challenging than a non-Honors course. Out of respect for you and what you are capable of, I believe that you are entitled to such a course.

All in the class have an opportunity to earn an A. There is no maximum number of As, as there is in a course that “grades on a curve,” but your final grade will depend entirely on the extent to which you fulfill the expectations described in this syllabus and in class. I would be very happy if, at the end of the term, all students in this class have earned very high grades. Whether that is the case, though, will be a function of your own actual performance, to a high standard, on all the required aspects of this course. **I am committed to your success -- to help you, to support you, and to guide you, whether things are going well or if you encounter difficulties.** *So, please, do not hesitate to get in touch with me.*

Laptops, Phones, etc. – Please don’t use telephones or mobile devices during class. You can check for messages, etc. during our mid-session break. Laptops and tablets are OK, of course, *but only during activities that require them and only for work related to this class*. For many of our class activities, you won’t need your laptop open, and you will be better able to be *present* with it closed.

Library Research Assistance – We are fortunate to have two reference librarians assigned to us, Stephanie Margolin and Gina Levitan to help you find sources for your research project. They are friendly, knowledgeable, and helpful. I encourage you to reach out to one or both of them for research help. Their email addresses are smargo@hunter.cuny.edu and gl2703@hunter.cuny.edu

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Hunter College Policy on Sexual Misconduct: Hunter reaffirms the prohibition of any sexual misconduct, which includes sexual violence, sexual harassment, and gender-based harassment, retaliation against students, employees, or visitors, as well as certain intimate relationships.

Sexual Violence: Students are strongly encouraged to immediately report the incident by calling 911, contacting NYPD Special Victims Division Hotline (646-610-7272) or their local police precinct, or contacting the College's Public Safety Office (212-772-4444).

All Other Forms of Sexual Misconduct: Students are also encouraged to contact the College's Title IX Campus Coordinator, Dean John Rose (jtrose@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-650-3262) or Colleen Barry (colleen.barry@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-772-4534) and seek complimentary services through the Counseling and Wellness Services Office, Hunter East 1123.

READING ASSIGNMENTS, DISCUSSION TOPICS, ETC.

Please note: changes may be made by e-mail, or announcements in class, or posting on the course website (<https://eportfolios.macaulay.cuny.edu/gutfreund24/>). You will be responsible for any such changes.

January 29 – Course Introduction

February 5 – The RPA Fourth Regional Plan: Actions (in twelve parts)

- 1 - Change how we govern and pay for transit
- 2 - Create new Institutions to address Climate Change
- 3 - Change Land Use Inequities
- 4 - Tech Policy
- 5 - Integrate Transit Across the Entire Region
- 6 - Rebuild our Subway System
- 7 - Adapt Streets and Highways
- 8 - World-Class airports and seaports
- 9 - Adapt to our Changing Coastline (sea-level rise, extreme flooding)
- 10 - Environmental Initiatives (water pollution, extreme heat)
- 11 - Create a Greener Energy System
- 12 - Provide Affordable Housing

In class activities: Presentations of each of the parts

Other in class content: picking a topic for your research project
overall structure of the final outcomes for this project

February 12 and 19 – No class

February 22 (**Thursday**) – The Federal Government’s Urban Plan, Part 1: Housing Policy & Segregation

Janet Hutchison, “Hoover’s Interwar Housing Policy” in John Bauman, et. al. (editors) From Tenements to the Taylor Homes

Gail Radford, “The Federal Government and Housing During the Great Depression” in Bauman, et. al. (eds) From Tenements to the Taylor Homes

Kenneth Jackson, Crabgrass Frontier, pages 219-230

Writing Assignment #1 Due

In-class material: *institutionalized* racism – zoning, redlining, steering, and restrictive covenants

February 24 – The Federal Government’s Urban Plan, Part 2: Highways, Sprawl, and Robert Moses

Owen Gutfreund, 20th Century Sprawl: Highways & the Reshaping of the American Landscape
Intro and Conclusion

Owen Gutfreund, “Robert Moses” in American National Biography Online, (Mark Carnes, editor)
(Oxford University Press and the American Council of Learned Societies, 2007)

Ray Bromley, “Not so Simple! Caro, Moses, and the Impact of the Cross-Bronx Expressway” in
Bronx County Historical Society Journal, v35 #1, Spring 1998, p4-29

Writing Assignment #2 Due

Project Deadline: Topic Selection

In-class material: electronic research tools, finding scholarly sources; discussion of different types of sources, citation/bibliography management, plagiarism/footnotes

February 28 (**Wednesday**) – Backlash and Readjustment

Jane Jacobs, “Downtown is For People”, from The Exploding Metropolis, edited by William H. Whyte (1958, reprinted by University of California Press, 1993), pages 157-201

Sherry Arnstein, “A Ladder of Citizen Participation” *Journal of American Institute of Planners*, v35 (July 1969), p216-224

Johanna Fernandez, “The Garbage Offensive”, from The Young Lords (2020), p91-114

Writing Assignment #3 Due

In-class activity – Chicago Style footnotes and bibliography

March 4 – William Whyte video, and workshop on Communication skills

Project deadline: preliminary bibliography due (identified/intended sources)

In-class activity: William H. Whyte, *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* (1970 video, 1 hour);

Explanation of Fieldwork-Observation Assignment

Other in-class material: writing/organizing a good research paper;

oral presentations

grading rubrics

March 11 – Oral presentations of History/Causes/Background

Project deadline: formal in-class oral presentation (no slides)

March 18 – Gentrification

Lance Freeman, There Goes the ‘Hood: Views of Gentrification from the Ground Up (2006)

Introduction, pp 1-16

Chapter 3, “There Goes the ‘Hood”, pp 59-94

Chapter 6, “Implications for Planning and Policy”, pp 157-187

excerpt from Chapter 7, “Gentrification Reconsidered”, pp 208-210

Writing Assignment 4 Due

In-class material: Slide presentation strategies/techniques, data visualization tools

March 25 – Policing, Incarceration, Criminal Justice

Kim Barker, Michael Keller and Steve Eder, “How Cities Lost Control of Police Discipline”, *New York Times*, December 22, 2020

Lucius Couloute and Daniel Kopf, *Out of Prison & Out of Work: Unemployment Among Formerly Incarcerated People* (Prison Policy Initiative, July 2018)

Andrew Kahn and Chris Kirk, “What It’s Like to Be Black in the Criminal Justice System: Eight Charts That Suggest There Are Racial Disparities At Every Phase of the Justice System” *Slate*, August 9 2015

Writing Assignment: Reading summary+response #5

In-class activity: Peer-editing assignments and explanation

April 1 – Field trip

April 8 – Singapore or Brasilia (student-choice by online poll – you choose, I will do the work)
(no required readings)
In-class activity: Group Assignments, in-class time to start assembling group presentation
Project deadline: Research Paper is due

April 15 – Group Presentation practice-runs and critiques
Group signup on TLC website
Groupwork to do revisions, if there is time

April 22 – Spring Break
April 29 – Spring Break

May 4-8 -- All-Macaulay Seminar 4 “Futures of New York” Conference

Your group will attend the conference for one of these time 2-hour slots blocks:

May 4 11:00-1:00, in-person
May 4 2:00-4:00, in-person
May 5 11:00-1:00, in-person
May 5 2:00-4:00, in-person
May 7 5:00-7:00, online
May 8 5:00-7:00, online

Groups be assigned on April 8

Slot signup will occur on April 15

until you have a confirmed time and mode, you should protect all of these times on your calendar

May 6 -- Peer Editing meetings and Individual work on Slides
Peer Editing is due

May 13 – Individual Presentations, first group
Project deadline: Revised/Expanded/Final paper for those not presenting

May 20 – Individual Presentation, second group (and course wrap-up)
Project deadline: Revised/Expanded/Final paper for those not presenting