

URBAN INEQUALITY

UPPP 102

Winter 2021

Remote / Zoom + Recorded

Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30-10:50



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Office hour: Tuesdays 12:30-1:30
226B Social Ecology I

WHAT IS THIS COURSE ABOUT

A proposition to start your thinking—

Where you grew up has likely had major influences on the opportunities afforded you (or foreclosed to you). In this respect, “place matters”.

A significant challenge facing policymakers and planners today is how to lessen urban inequality and to build cities and urban regions that facilitate tolerance and interaction across racial, ethnic, and income groups. The significant income inequality in America today is being inscribed in substantial geographies of class inequalities, both in central cities and their suburbs. Meanwhile, amidst an unprecedented multiculturalism of America's cities, policymakers face the need to accommodate the pluralistic needs of diverse cultures in an urban environment while also pursuing collective interests that transcend any one ethnic group.

In terms of income inequality, Richard Florida (*The New Urban Crisis*) will describe to you how the same forces that power urban economic growth are also creating cities' daunting problems, such as segregation, place-based inequality, and unaffordable housing. With small areas of privilege surrounded by wide swaths of poverty and disadvantage, this “winner-takes-all” urbanism poses a profound crisis to today's knowledge-based economy and to the fabric of American social life.

In terms of racial and ethnic inequality, Richard Rothstein (*The Color of Law*) will painstakingly show you how cities (and other levels of governments) have created hindrances to racial relations through intentional or indirect policies that separate races and contain minority access to urban opportunities.

Today, issues of social equity, the poverty-stricken underclass, environmental racism, bilingual education, housing discrimination and segregation, minority political power, affirmative action, minority criminality and police brutality dominate both the popular press and scholarly discussions in urban sociology, political science, and planning. Race is our "American obsession" (Studs Terkel). Others contend that unless we satisfactorily resolve racial antagonisms in the United States, the ideology of equal opportunity will be overturned as the basic bedrock of this country. Here, "race is entwined with the future of the American dream and of the society it represents" (J. Hochschild. *Facing Up to the American Dream: Race, Class, and the Soul of the Nation.*)

This course examines urban income, racial, and ethnic inequality and the influence that cities and urbanization have in impacting inter-group relations in this country. The course examines inequality using an 'urban' lens or perspective, revealing how inequality "takes place" in physical settings. Urban and regional policies pertaining to economic development, housing, education, local land use regulation, and social benefits can have significant effects on the relative conditions of urban ethnic, racial, income groups and on the level of tolerance or tension between these groups.

Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white--separate and unequal.

1968 Report of the National Advisory Commission
on Civil Disorders ("Kerner Report").

WHAT ARE OUR OBJECTIVES

1. To expose you to the role of cities in either lessening or increasing racial, ethnic, and income inequalities. Most of the problems of the city are in the city, but not of the city. Their roots, however defined, are in the larger society and not in the city per se. Yet, inequalities "take place" in urban environments, becoming manifest in contemporary society in ways that have substantial impacts on opportunities provided individuals, households, and families.
2. To reveal to you how contemporary economic growth is creating a "winner-take-all" urbanism that is intensifying urban inequality and creating a "new urban crisis". **Florida, *The New Urban Crisis*.**
3. To develop an awareness of how urban space, housing, economic development, public education and land policy intersect in America's cities, both historically and today. To examine the nexus between the physical development of a city and its social structure and impacts.

4. To show you how U.S governments (cities, states, and federal) have in the twentieth century deliberately imposed racial segregation on metropolitan areas nationwide, contrary to constitutional principles. **Rothstein, *The Color of Law*.**
5. To examine options available to us (as policy analysts and planners) that may lessen urban inequality and increase equality of opportunity.

HOW WILL I TEACH

I will instruct through *lectures* that will encourage involvement by you in the form of questions, constructive comments, and opinions. This is a very lively and provocative topic and I strongly encourage your input. There will also be one *video* and two *PowerPoint* presentations.

REQUIRED READINGS

**Note: they are important to read to assure a good grade, so be sure to purchase.
Both are available at UCI Bookstore (*The Hill*) and widely available elsewhere.
Good news is that they are both reasonably priced**

Florida, Richard. 2017. ***The New Urban Crisis: How Our Cities Are Increasing Inequality, Deepening Segregation, and Failing the Middle Class—And What We Can Do About It.*** New York: Basic Books.

Rothstein, Richard. 2017. ***The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America.*** New York: Liveright Publishers.