

# Urban Sociology

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Last Updated: Wed, 07/16/2025

**Course prefix:** HTS

**Course number:** 3012

**Section:** A

**CRN (you may add up to five):**

93582

**Instructor First Name:** Allen

**Instructor Last Name:** Hyde

**Semester:** Fall

**Academic year:** 2025

**Course description:**

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the field of urban sociology by exploring the history and current conditions of cities, especially the cities of Atlanta, GA, USA and Cape Town/the Cape Flats, South Africa. This course will be geared toward viewing the city as a simultaneously social, cultural, and political economic phenomenon, with particular attention to the following: a) urbanization and the structure of cities; b) suburbanization; c) urban growth and economics; d) race and segregation; e) immigration; g) culture; h) gender and sexuality; and i) housing and social policy. This class will give students a strong overview of some of the major issues related to urban life, politics, and economics. The course may have a service-learning component, pending approval from a local community partner. This community-engaged project will likely work with [Rebuild Atlanta](#) to collect oral histories of residents of Atlanta's west side communities and a virtual project with the YMCA Cape Flats outside of Cape Town. We will also lean into the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): [Goal 10 Reduced Inequalities](#) and [Goal 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities](#).

**Course learning outcomes:**

- Students will describe major concepts in the discipline of sociology and the sociological study of cities.
- Students will compare and contrast the major theoretical perspectives and methodological issues in studying cities.
- Students will identify how sociocultural and economic forces shape cities and suburbs.
- Students will analyze the American and international trends in cities and urban life and how geographic, social, and temporal context shapes these processes.

## **Required course materials:**

Textbook: *The Urban Sociology Reader, 2nd edition*. Edited by Jan Lin and Christopher Mele. 2013. Routledge. (Abbreviated by *USR*)

**An e-book version of the textbook can be found for free via the GA Tech Library website. Note: you must sign in through the website to access the free version.**

## **Grading policy:**

### **Grades and Assignments (1000 total points for course)**

**Reading summaries and discussion questions (150 points):** Before every class, students have the opportunity to post 1 key point summary and discussion question on the Canvas discussion board before the before class at 11am related to the readings that could be potentially discussed in class that day. You will write a total of 5 postings for the semester (this means you can pick and choose the days you want to do). These questions should involve critical thinking skills thus critical questions of the authors' arguments are allowed. For each question, you should also provide a few sentences explaining the relevance of your question to the readings. Weekly questions and summaries will receive a 30 for excellent questions, a 20 for average, and a zero (0) for no posting at all. Both questions can be posted in one post for the week (you do not have to do separate postings for each question).

For example, a good question would be: *"In the Growth of the City by Ernest Burgess, the author outlines his concentric circle theory of the growth of cities. In particular, it argues that a city core is typically surrounded by poorer communities, and as you move farther away from the city center you encounter more affluent and orderly communities. Do all cities in the United States follow this pattern? And how might the growth of cities be different in European or non-Western cities?"* An example of a poor question would be *"What is concentric circle theory?"* (Note: You are welcome to ask clarifying questions during class or by email. They just will not work for the weekly questions portion of your grade.) If students are clearly not reading, I reserve the right to change this portion of the grade to random pop quizzes on the readings.

**Classroom participation (100 points):** Students are expected to be in class whenever possible and participate in discussion of the readings. I will be taking attendance this semester. It is difficult to participate when you are not in class. Occasionally, in class writing assignments may also be assigned to aid in the writing assignments for the class and will be graded if attendance gets poor over the semester.

**Community biography interviews (200 points):** The goal of this assignment is for you to critically reflect on your own life, as well as the life of other students in the class, and both describe and analyze the communities you have lived have shaped your own life. Some of the following questions will be explored: Have the places (or place) you have lived given you any opportunities or restricted others? How has your community shaped the

person that you are today? How has your experience been different from others that grew up in the same community? Then you will be required to write a reflection paper, at least 4 pages long, will account for 200 points.

**IRB Training Completion (100 points):** Because we are doing student and community engaged research, you will need to complete the Group 2 Social / Behavioral Research Investigators and Key Personnel Basic IRB CITI training course in order to

understand the ethics associated with doing research, particularly in relation to human subjects. This guided process should take around 2 hours to complete. Please save a PDF version of the confirmation page and upload it to Canvas for credit.

**East Lake Meadows Reflection Papers (150 points):** For this assignment, there will be a short 3- to 4-page reflection papers in response to the documentary East Lake Meadows. These reflection papers will be guided by prompts that are shared later in the semester.

**Final Course Project (300 points):** The major writing component of the class will be a report that either a) describes the process of creating an exhibit related to YMCA Cape Flats goals around culture, forced relocation, and community heroes in the Cape Flats of Cape Town, South Africa or b) summarizes the interviews of 2-3 Grove Park or other West Side of Atlanta residents. In the interview version of the assignment, you should also reflect upon the interviewees' answers using theory and literature learned throughout the course. In the YMCA Cape Flats assignment, students will reflect upon the data and lessons learned and how it relates to urban sociology. This paper (250 points) will be formally written with proper citation of sources and should be 6-8 pages. A 1-page rough draft or outline will be due for some initial feedback (50 points). More info on this assignment will be provided as the semester progresses and may change the details pending discussions with the community partner.

**Final Grades Rubric out of 1000 points possible (what appears on your transcript)**

900 and above = A 800-899 = B

700-799 = C

600-699 = D

Less than 600 points = F

**Late assignments:** The policy for late assignments is that you will need a documented health, funeral, or university sponsored excuse for turning in late assignments at full credit. Assignments turned in after their due dates without an excuse will receive a drop in letter grade every two days beyond their due date.

**Attendance policy:**

**Attendance:** Attendance will be taken in every class period, and this will determine the classroom participation grade listed above. Excused and documented absences will not affect the participation grade, though.

**Academic honesty/integrity statement:**

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

In this course, we aim to conduct ourselves as a community of scholars, recognizing that academic study is both an intellectual and ethical enterprise. You are encouraged to build on the ideas and texts of others; that is a vital part of academic life. You are also obligated to document every occasion when you use another's ideas, language, or syntax. You are encouraged to study together, discuss readings outside of class, share your drafts during peer review and outside of class, and go to the Writing Center with your drafts. In this course, those activities are well within the bounds of academic honesty.

However, when you *use* another's ideas or language—whether through direct quotation, summary, or paraphrase—you must formally acknowledge that debt by signaling it with a standard form of academic citation. Even one occasion of academic dishonesty, large or small, on *any* assignment, large or small, can result in failure for the entire course and referral to Student Judicial Affairs.

**Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):**

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Sciences area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcomes:

- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social or geographic relationships develop, persist or change.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion