PBPL 84.4: Cities, Suburbs, and Metropolitan Policy  
Meeting Time: 10 (MWF 10 - 11:05, x-hour Th 12 - 12:50)  
Classroom: Rockefeller 209  
Instructor: Prof. Hachadoorian  
Office Location: Fairchild 020  
Email: Lee.Hachadoorian@dartmouth.edu  
Office Phone: 66456  
Office Hours: By appointment  
X-hours: This course will use most x-hours.

1 Course Description

Why do cities exist? How do they grow? What is the relationship between cities and suburbs? How are our lives impacted, for better and for worse, by private choice and public policy playing out in the metropolitan landscape? We will investigate these and other questions as we study growth and change in American metropolitan areas, particularly covering postwar suburbanization, the urban crisis of the 70s, and the urban resurgence of the last two decades.

Cities have remained centers of culture, commerce, and social life in spite of their being viewed as dirty, loud, and dangerous. Suburbs have retained their appeal for people wanting elbow room and a place for children to play safely, in spite of their being viewed as monotonous, stifling, and alienating. Therefore, at the heart of metropolitan development is a paradox: we alternately love and hate the places we live and work, and we move frequently to escape chaos or conformity.

While American population growth slows, the movement of people has led over the last several decades to most American urban areas adding acres much faster than they added population. Many central cities lost population as suburbs grew. Yet many cities remained important centers of commerce, culture, and governance, even as employment grew faster in the suburbs. Most recently, cities like New York have seen precipitous drops in crime and booming population (especially among school-aged children), while cities like Detroit have continued to lose population and employment.

We therefore seek to understand why people and industries locate where they do, how those choices have been influenced by government action, and what impact those choices have had, with particular emphasis on how these changes have differently affected people based on their race, socioeconomic status, and residential location. In investigating urban resurgence, we will also look at "creative class" strategies for urban growth, conflicts over gentrification, and a possible future of suburban decline.

Through the course we will focus on the role of government policy, and conclude with group projects which will investigate a specific, student-chosen policy with metropolitan implications. The course will emphasize quantitative analysis of urban problems, with a particular emphasis on the use of Census data to analyze patterns and changes racial segregation and spatial
inequality. The instructor will introduce the students to free and open source software (FOSS) for their projects, including the statistical package R and the geographic information system Quantum GIS.

This syllabus is provisional. In particular, we may progress through the material faster or slower, which would necessitate altering the schedule. Assignments may be clarified or adjusted. I will not spring any major new requirements on you.

2 Teaching Philosophy
I believe in hosting an active classroom. I try to encourage discussion in all my classes, and in a seminar class like this one, discussion about the content and about writing and research will be part of every class. In addition, I also try to incorporate activities that will get you physically out of your seats. This could be as simple as having people move around the room for breakout sessions or as complex as physically enacting the spatial complexity of the urban system. These activities help get the blood flowing, while also serving learning objectives.

I am also interested in games-based learning. One American classic, Monopoly, was created specifically as an economic simulation to demonstrate the importance of urban real estate in creating inequality. I will look for a suitable urban simulation which we will play in class, then critique. What are its assumptions? What is its ideology? How does it support or criticize the other texts we engage in the course? How would you change it?

I am a user and advocate of free and open source software. The free software philosophy is essentially the same as the academic philosophy of shared knowledge production for the common good. I try to incorporate open source software, as well as open media such as Creative Commons works, in my teaching, and to encourage students to use open source software for their research and writing and to find open knowledge outlets to share their research and writing. Quantitative analysis in this class will be done using open source software, and some class sessions will be used to install, demonstrate, and learn how to use this software.

3 Text


Additional readings (journal articles and book chapters) will be provided in electronic form.

4 Grading
Participation - 10%
4.1 Participation
As a seminar, this class will only work if you prepare, attend, and participate. Please have all readings done before the class, and be prepared to contribute to the discussion. As we will frequently be discussing conflicting empirical investigations, or conflicting policy responses to metropolitan problems, there will be ample opportunity for you to criticize or argue for specific points of view.

4.2 Class Discussion Leader
Each student will be responsible for a short summary of the reading material and leading class discussion. Students will be required to submit questions or comments regarding the readings ahead of time (the night before class) to the discussion leader.

4.3 Geographic Expertise
At the beginning of the course, each student will choose a metropolitan area of interest. Each week, as we address a different topic, you will be required to find articles discussing that topic in relation to your area of interest (e.g. sprawl in Phoenix, AZ). At a minimum this should be one journal article or longform article (such as might appear in The Atlantic or The New Yorker), or two shorter newspaper or magazine articles. You should bring information for your research into the classroom discussion as appropriate.

I will also establish a group library in the citation manager Zotero. You should add your article to the appropriate collection (Sprawl, Mortgage Crisis, etc.) with your notes on the content of the article.

4.4 Homework
Three computer-based exercises will each be worth 5% of your final grade. They will involve calculating and mapping measures of segregation, inequality, and other variables important to metropolitan policy analysis.

4.5 Policy Analysis
The course will conclude with a group project involving the analysis of a specific policy impacting urban, suburban, or metropolitan areas. Group size
will be targeted at four students. While we will form affinity groups around desired topics of study, I will also be trying to balance groups to include students with specific skills (particularly previous courses in statistics or GIS) in each group. As each student will also have developed a geographic expertise, you should address each student's area of interest as a case study in your final report.

Each group will be responsible for a written brief, which will include illustrations (charts and maps) supporting your argument. In addition, each group will do an in-class presentation with a Q&A period.

Although everyone involved in the policy analysis will receive the same grade for the final product, there will be a separate peer evaluation grade as well.

5 Schedule

Week 1 - Why Are Cities Important?
  • Bairoch - "Birth of Urbanism and the Economy"
  • O'Flaherty Ch 2
  • Hanlon Ch 2
  • O'Flaherty Ch 6
  • Kraus (CUE Ch 6)

Week 2 - Suburbanization
  • Hanlon Ch 3

Week 3 - Segregation and the Urban Underclass
  • Wilson "Reflections on Responses to The Truly Disadvantaged" from The Truly Disadvantaged 2nd edition

Week 4 - Urban Resurgence and the New Metropolitan Complexity
  • Hanlon Ch 4
  • Hanlon Ch 6
  • Orfield - American Metropolitcs

Week 5 - Local Government and Local Public Finance
  • Tiebout "A Pure Theory of Local Expenditures"
  • Fischel "A Theory of Municipal Corporate Governance with an Application to Land-Use Regulation"
  • O'Flaherty Ch 8

Week 6 - Metropolitanism
  • Bahl "Metropolitan Fiscal Disparities"
  • Orfield, selection from American Metropolitics
    • Ch 5 "Fiscal Equity"
    • Ch 7 "Metropolitan Governance Reform"
  • Hanlon Ch 10

Week 7 - Sprawl
  • Hanlon Ch 11
  • O'Flaherty Ch 7
  • Gordon & Richardson - "Prove It: The Costs and Benefits of Sprawl"
• Ewing - "Is Los Angeles Style Sprawl Desirable?"
• Ewing, Pendall & Chen - "Measuring Sprawl and Its Impact"

Week 8 - Housing and the Mortgage Crisis
  • O'Flaherty Ch 13

Week 9 - Suburban Decline?
  • Hanlon Ch 8
  • Hanlon Ch 9

Week 10 (1 class meeting) - Wrap-up