The Just City in Theory and Practice - 705 (Section 1)

Fall 2016
Wednesday, 6:30-8:30 PM
Classroom: Powdermaker Hall, Room 115
Office: Powdermaker Hall, Room 250Q

Professor Brian Rosa
Email: brian.rosa@qc.cuny.edu
Office Hours: M 1-3, or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course offers a historical and theoretical background into processes of social, cultural, economic, and physical change in urban society and serves as an introduction to the core themes covered in the Master of Arts program in Urban Affairs. Themes covered include urban planning and policy, social movements, and inequality based on socio-economic status, race and ethnicity, sexuality, and gender. We will explore various debates and proposals around the imperative to create more socially just and sustainable cities, with an emphasis on both theory and practice. Students will be equipped with the tools and vocabulary to refine their interests and explore these themes in further detail through the course of their degree.

The Just City in Theory and Practice is a required course for all MA students in Urban Affairs at Queens College. It should be understood and expected that this is an advanced course requiring a significant amount of reading, writing, and participation.

The syllabus is subject to some change, as we may decide to focus more closely on certain issues. The most up-to-date version of the syllabus may always be found on Blackboard.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

• To establish a theoretical framework and vocabulary to discuss urban society

• To explore how social justice is conceptualized as a concept and how it is incorporated in contemporary urban social movements

• To understand the various actors involved in the decision-making processes that shape cities and the power structures that shape urban change

• To develop skills in group discussion and individual reading, reflection, and writing

REQUIRED READING

Readings will be made available digitally through Blackboard

GUEST SPEAKERS

Throughout the course of the semester, we will be having guest speakers from the faculty of the Department of Urban Studies. During these sessions, we will be combining with another section led by Prof. Nadja Eisenberg-Guyot. Speakers will present for one hour, which will be followed by a one-hour discussion.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING CRITERIA

A. Attendance and Class Participation
   Please come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings, to ask questions, and to listen and respond to others’ questions and comments. Regular attendance is the best way for you to ensure your success in this course. I will take attendance. Lecture slides and any other materials (when possible) will be posted to Blackboard.

B. Response Essays (x2)
   In these two 2500-word essays (5-6 pages, single-spaced), you will be expected to analyze contemporary urban conflicts/debates/processes through applying concepts and vocabulary we have covered in class.

C. Critical Summary Presentation
   Through the course of the semester, pairs of students will present a summary of a required reading and its relation to the broader themes covered in the course. These presentations should last approximately fifteen minutes and include a discussion prompt for the rest of the group. Students will receive an instruction sheet to guide them through preparing the presentation.

D. Group Project Paper and Presentation
   In groups of three, the final project will be a research project on a contemporary issue or debate relating to social justice in an urban context outside of the United States. The result will be a 4500-word paper (10 pages, single-spaced) and a 10-minute oral presentation which links this particular issue with theoretical concepts.

E. Extra Credit
   Attend a lecture, film screening, or exhibition in addition to any events required for the class. Write a one-page response essay on how this event related to the subject matter of the class. I will occasionally make suggestions for events to attend, or you may propose others. I will need to verify that the event is eligible before your attend. You may receive up to two points added to your final grade for completing an extra credit assignment, and you have the opportunity to complete up to two.

Final Course Grade: No grades of Incomplete will be considered, with the exception of a documented situation involving a very serious health condition. This policy is for the benefit of students’ overall academic success.

Your final course grade is comprised of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation of Critical Summary</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Response Papers (x2)</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Project Paper and Presentation</td>
<td>30%</td>
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Paper Grading: Your essay will be graded with a letter grade on an F to A scale. More information can be found in the paper section below. Late assignments will be reduced by a portion of a letter grade for each day they are late. For example, An A would be an A- if it is one day late, B+ if it is two days late, etc..
### Course Grading Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Excellent work. Shows near perfect understanding and excellent analysis of the course materials, as well as originality and creativity in research, writing, and oral presentations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Good, competent work. Shows a strong grasp of the course materials, as well as some analytical rigor, but there are some errors. Not the most original or creative work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Average work. Serious errors or misunderstanding of the course materials, and limited analysis of the research conducted. Hard to discern what the student is arguing or trying to say. Oral presentations are not very clear, not well organized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Poor work. The student appears to have made little effort and produces below average work. Very serious errors or misunderstanding of the course materials. Unclear what the student is arguing or trying to say. Little effort in research and oral presentations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Unacceptable or no work. The student either did not turn in work or what was turned in showed no effort to keep up with the course materials and assignments.</td>
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### COURSE POLICIES

**Respectful participation:** Please note that people come to this class with different kinds of academic expertise, different life experiences, and different customs (both individual and cultural). These differences can, and hopefully will, contribute positively to the substance and quality of class discussion. However, because these differences are often related to social inequalities, they can also be a source of misunderstanding and frustration. It is thus important to keep in mind that active, respectful class participation is as much about listening to and engaging the ideas of others as it is about speaking one's own mind. It also means that debate is encouraged, but only when civil and open-minded in tone.

**Electronic equipment:** You are permitted to use laptops, tablets, and smartphones in class, but only for purposes that are directly relevant to what is going on in class. This means texting your friends is not permitted, but Googling the name of an author is. Get it? Please do not violate this policy. You may think that no one will notice if you text your friends from your computer in the back of class but people will notice and this causes distraction. I will notice. And if I notice, I will call you out on it. As well, if you do use electronic equipment, please do so in a way that is not distracting to your fellow classmates or to your instructor: turn the sound and vibrations off. If devices become an issue, I may update this policy.

**Recordings:** Only official recording of lectures or class discussions is permitted. You are not allowed to record on your own.

**Grade Change Policy (for all assignments and exams):** Students wanting clarification on a particular grade must submit a request in writing explaining their question and, if they are disputing an answer marked wrong, documentation of the grading error with evidence from the text. These requests should be submitted directly to Professor Rosa.

**Email Policy:**

Email, whether directly or through Blackboard, will be our primary mode of communication outside of class. **It is your responsibility to check your QC email on a regular basis OR set your QC email to be forwarded to your primary email address.** You may also change your email address that is linked with Blackboard for notifications.

**BLACKBOARD**

The most up-to-date syllabus, reading materials, lecture outlines, homework assignments, and grades will be posted to our course web page on the Blackboard. On that site you will also find useful materials designed to
enhance your understanding of the course and its related topics. **It is YOUR responsibility to check Blackboard for all course materials.** Information on how to log on to Blackboard is available through the Office of Information Technologies. Please direct your technical questions about Blackboard access to the OIT Help Desk (x7444). If you expect to see something on our Blackboard course pages, but it is not there, please contact Prof. Rosa.

**OFFICE HOURS/CONTACT INFO**
All students may visit Professor Rosa during his office hours, which appear on the first page of this syllabus. Under some circumstances, he may be able to meet you at other times. Please feel free to send an email message if you have any questions about course content or course policies, but **please read through the syllabus first** to see if your question is answered there.

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND PLAGIARISM**
Queens College takes cheating and plagiarism very seriously; if caught you may fail the course and/or be suspended from the college. Don’t copy other people’s work. This means that you should not take the words or ideas of another person and submit them without acknowledging the original author. Examples of plagiarism include copying from another student’s homework assignment or taking phrases, sentences, paragraphs, or statistical findings from a variety of sources and piecing them together without citing them. Taking phrases, paragraphs or papers from course readings, the internet or other students and representing them as your own falls under this category. You must always indicate when you have used an idea from someone else’s work; anything else constitutes stealing from others and violates both the ethics of this class and established academic standards. There are now sophisticated search engines that prove beyond a reasonable doubt when students have downloaded web-based material and submitted it as their own (CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity, adapted June 28, 2004). See [http://web.cuny.edu/academics/info-central/policies/academic-integrity.pdf](http://web.cuny.edu/academics/info-central/policies/academic-integrity.pdf)

**COURSE SCHEDULE (Readings should be completed BEFORE the date under which they are listed)**

**Aug. 31**
Introduction

**Sept. 7**
Defining Social Justice
*Assigned Readings:*

**Sept. 14**
Urban Poverty, Inequality and Social Justice
*Guest Speaker: Prof. Jeff Maskovsky*
*Assigned Readings:*

**Sept. 21**
Social Justice and the Right to the City
*Assigned Readings:*
Sept. 28  Planning, Gentrification, and Housing Justice  
Guest Speaker: Prof. Scott Larson  

Assigned Readings:  

Oct. 5  Urban Planning: Cause or Solution to Urban Social Injustice?  

Assigned Readings:  

Oct. 12  NO CLASS

Oct. 14  Response Essay 1 is due

Oct. 19  Rethinking Justice Movements: Gender and the Movement for Black Lives  
GUEST SPEAKER: PROF. DANA AIN-DAVIS

Assigned Readings:  
Spend some time reviewing the materials on blacklivesmatter.com

Oct. 26  Public Health as a Social Justice Issue  
Required Readings:  
TBA

Nov. 2  The Right to the City as a Slogan for Social Movements  

Required Readings:  

Nov. 9  Justice, Difference and Intersectionality  

Assigned Readings:  
Nov. 16  The Social Construction of Race, Ethnicity, and (In)Justice
GUEST SPEAKER: DR. STEVEN STEINBERG

Assigned Readings:


Nov. 18  Response Essay 2 is due

Nov. 23  Gender and the City


Nov. 30  Just Sustainability
GUEST SPEAKER: PROF. MELISSA CHECKER

Assigned Readings:


Dec. 7  GROUP PROJECT PRESENTATIONS