Geography 261:

Introduction to Urban Geography

DR. EUGENE McCANN

Office: RCB 6229
Email: emccann@sfu.ca (best way to reach me)
Phone: 778.782.4599 (not a good way to reach me!)
Office Hours: Thurs 9.30-10.20
(or by appointment)

Course website (including electronic versions of syllabus and assignments) can be found here:
http://www.lib.sfu.ca/help/subject-guides/geography/home

TEACHING ASSISTANT
Rob Ruzanic (rruzanic@sfu.ca): Office: RCB 7232; Office Hours: 12:00-12:50 or by appointment.

COURSE FORMAT
Lecture: Tuesday, 2:30pm-4:20pm, Room: AQ5037

Tutorial, D101: Tuesday, 4:30pm - 5:20pm Room: RCB6100
Tutorial, D103: Wednesday, 2:30pm - 3:20pm Room: RCB6122

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Cities – their bright lights, spectacular buildings, and jarring contrasts – have sparked our imaginations for centuries. They are places of possibility and danger, of hope and disappointment, of power and powerlessness, of glamour and destitution, of production and consumption. They are often seen as different or special. They are frequently places where new innovations emerge and places that epitomize new forms of social organization. If you are interested in cities, if you are excited about living in one and by the opportunity to learn more about them, then this course is for you.

Urban geographers study the spaces, environments, and ways of life of cities. This course introduces key concepts and approaches in contemporary urban geography. It will draw upon examples from North America and other parts of the world. The following broad themes will feature in the course: The process of urbanization; the urban built environment; public space; inequality, exclusion, and segregation; politics in (and of) the city; suburbanization; city-regions; representations of the city; social identity and urban space; nature and the city; urban futures.
REQUIRED TEXTS


**This book isn’t published yet. I will provide draft versions of the chapters via the Library Electronic Reserves system [http://troy.lib.sfu.ca/screens/reserves.html](http://troy.lib.sfu.ca/screens/reserves.html).


**You must read the Saturday edition every week. It will be the basis for discussion of current urban issues in lecture and, especially, in tutorial. I don’t mind if you read it online or in paper copy. I recommend that you subscribe. They do a student rate for the paper copy – delivered to your door! – as well as online subscription [https://customer.globeandmail.ca/Start.aspx](https://customer.globeandmail.ca/Start.aspx)

Handouts, websites, videos, and in-class assignments (including brief writing and presentation assignments) will supplement the texts. You are also responsible for these.

GRADING SCHEME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>90% and above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>85% - 89.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>80% - 84.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>77% - 79.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>73% - 76.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>70% - 72.99%</td>
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<td>C+</td>
<td>67% - 69.99%</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>60% - 62.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>50% - 59.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F (fail)</td>
<td>49.99% and below</td>
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**Note: the following performance standards guide the grading in this class:**

Excellent = A; Good = B; Satisfactory = C; Marginal = D; Unacceptable = F.

These match the standards in the University Calendar: [https://students.sfu.ca/calendar/2013/fall/student-info/grading-systems-policies/grading-systems-and-policies.html](https://students.sfu.ca/calendar/2013/fall/student-info/grading-systems-policies/grading-systems-and-policies.html)

COURSE EVALUATION

- **Tutorial participation:** 20%

You can see that tutorial participation is taken very seriously in this course. Your TA will take attendance at each tutorial but showing up does not mean you are participating. You must read all assigned readings in advance and you must speak up in tutorial, not by dominating or only expressing your point of view, but by listening and engaging in respectful discussion. If you are not comfortable speaking in tutorial, you must get over this. If you don’t engage in discussion it will be assumed that you have not done the reading.

- **U-Pass self-directed fieldtrip & writing assignment:** 15%
- **Photovoice virtual fieldtrip assignment:** 15%

These are two related assignments which get you out into the city and that involve writing and photography. This is instead of a standard term paper. I will explain these more in class.
**COURSE EVALUATION (Continued)**

- **Quizzes:** 5% (2 @ 2.5% each)
- **Midterm exam:** 15%
- **Final Exam:** 30%

The **Midterm Exam** is scheduled for ... the middle of the term (see schedule below). The date and time for the **Final Exam** are also listed in the schedule below. There are also **2 Quizzes, each worth 2.5% of the course grade**. These are **not scheduled**: One will be given before the midterm, the other between the midterm and the end of semester. Quizzes are based on the reading for that day, and on the lecture material from the class immediately preceding it (i.e., from the week prior). There are **no make-up quizzes, no exceptions** (apart from documented medical emergencies or similar situations – see policies below).

**POLICIES**

**EXCUSED ABSENCES**: If you are absent for an exam, you must: (1) contact me or your TA before, or in the 24 hours following, the end of the exam; and (2) provide a written doctor’s or other official’s note stating that you were incapacitated and/or unable to attend. (I may request an obituary for a relative’s or friend’s death and I may request official documentation of a relative’s or friend’s illness or hospitalization if these events impact your participation in the course). These policies are not to indicate my suspicions about individuals’ circumstances but, rather, to be fair and transparent for the sake of all students. If in doubt, contact me.

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS**: These will only be accepted without penalty if you provide me with the same notice and documentation as required for absences (see above). Otherwise, late assignments will be penalized 5% if handed in during the 24-hour period after the deadline and another 5% for each 24 hour period thereafter. **You are responsible for getting all written assignments into my hands or those of your TA by the deadline.** You should not put written assignments in a mailbox, under a door, send them by email etc. without express permission. If you do this without permission and the paper is lost, your grade will be zero.

**CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM**: As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off, as one’s own, ideas, words, writing, etc. that belong to another. In accordance with this definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you have the permission of that person. You are also plagiarizing if you submit work that you have already submitted for another course at SFU or elsewhere and if you change a few words in a quote then use it in your paper without citation. Plagiarism is one of the worst academic sins, since the plagiarist destroys the trust among colleagues without which knowledge cannot be safely communicated.

- **You are responsible for reading and understanding SFU’s plagiarism policy.** See this guide: [https://www.sfu.ca/students/academicintegrity/resources/academichonestyguide.html](https://www.sfu.ca/students/academicintegrity/resources/academichonestyguide.html)
- **You are expected to complete this online tutorial:** [http://www.lib.sfu.ca/help/tutorials/plagiarism-tutorial](http://www.lib.sfu.ca/help/tutorials/plagiarism-tutorial)

I will take strong action against anyone who cheats or plagiarizes. Not knowing what plagiarism is will not stand as a valid excuse.
**ETIQUETTE:** Disruptive behavior in class will not be tolerated.
- Arrive on time
- Do not eat or drink in a disruptive manner
- Do not sleep or read non-course materials during class
- Keep unrelated conversations to a minimum during class
- Turn cell phones off or to vibrate during class
- Do not text message, surf unrelated web sites, etc. during class.

All these activities are distracting to me and to those around you. I will ask you to stop or leave for the remainder of the class period if this behavior is persistent and/or distracting.

**NETIQUETTE:** This is a professional work environment. Be professional!
- When communicating with me or my TA on email, please be respectful (as we will be in response): Address us by name, be polite, be clear (including **making it clear who you are and what course and section you are in**). And, if we do something for you (e.g., if we answer a question), it’s polite to email back with a ‘thank you’!
- Act similarly if you contact me by phone. Note that if you leave a phone message, do not ask me to return your call. I will not do this. It is your responsibility to catch me during office hours or class or by email. TAs are not contactable by phone.
- You can normally expect a reply to your email within 48 hours (not including weekends, holidays, or other scheduled absences). Feel free to politely prompt us after the 48 hours has passed.
- A note on social media: I instruct my TAs not to become “friends” with you, not to “follow” you etc. on social media. Needless to say, I won’t do this either.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** Efforts will be made to accommodate students with disabilities. Students with disabilities are responsible for making their needs known to me and for seeking available assistance in a timely manner. **You must be registered with the Centre for Students with Disabilities.** Need an accommodation? Contact me as soon as possible.

**READ ALL ASSIGNED READINGS, ATTEND ALL CLASSES & TUTORIALS, TO PARTICIPATE & TAKE NOTES:** These are basic expectations of the course. Do not wait to the last minute to read the assigned readings. Students who do not attend regularly and do not read carefully will do poorly.

If you are having problems with the class, please see me or your TA. If you are not having problems but feel like talking about the course or about becoming a geography major or minor or about opportunities for graduate work in geography (here or elsewhere), I will be happy to speak to you during office hours.
## TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of lecture</th>
<th>Lecture topic, readings, &amp; assignments (all readings are required unless otherwise stated)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>JMT = Urban Geography textbook; G&amp;MS = Globe &amp; Mail Saturday edn.</strong></td>
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</table>
| Week 1 | Lecture: Introduction to the course  
Reading: None. |
| Jan 7 |  |
| Week 2 | Lecture: Approaching the city  
Reading: JMT Ch. 1; G&MS |
| Jan 14 |  |
| Week 3 | Lecture: A world of cities  
Reading: JMT Ch. 4; G&MS |
| Jan 21 |  |
| Week 4 | Lecture: Urban economies: production & labour  
Reading: JMT Chs. 3 & 5; G&MS |
| Jan 28 |  |
| Week 5 | Lecture: Going to town: Exploring the urban region  
3 G&MS  
• ~U-Pass Fieldtrip assignment instructions distributed today in lecture~ |
| Feb 4 |  |
| Week 6 | Lecture: The city & social reproduction  
Reading: JMT Ch. 6; G&MS |
| Feb 18 |  |
| Week 7 | Midterm Exam. Usual time, usual place: 2.30-4.20pm, AQ 5037  
No Tutorials this week. |
| Feb 25 |  |
| Week 8 | Lecture: The state, planning, & urban politics  
Reading: JMT Ch. 7; G&MS  
• ~U-Pass Fieldtrip assignment due at the beginning of lecture~ |
| Mar 4 |  |
| Week 9 | Lecture: Experiencing cities  
Reading: JMT Ch. 8; G&MS |
| Mar 11 |  |
| Week 10 | Lecture: Molding, marketing, and challenging cities’ identities  
Reading: JMT Chs. 9 & 11; G&MS |
| Mar 18 |  |
| Week 11 | Lecture: Urban nature & environment  
Reading: JMT Ch. 10; G&MS |
| Mar 25 |  |
| Week 12 | Lecture: Encountering the city  
Reading: TBA  
• ~Photovoice assignment due by noon on Friday April 4~ |
| Apr 1 |  |

Schedule continues on the next page
Week 13  
Apr 8  
Lecture:  
Another city is possible / Course wrap-up  
Readings:  
JMT Ch. 12; G&MS  
•  "Photovoice assignment grades returned this week"  

Wednesday  
Apr 16  
Final Exam (comprehensive). 9:30am - 11:30am. Location: TBA  
(Note that the Student Information System says this exam begins at 8:30 and lasts for three hours. This is wrong! It is a two-hour exam, beginning at 9:30).