

**GEOG 4210**  
**Urban Geography**  
**Fall, 2016**

**Monday/Wednesday 11:00 am - 12:20 pm**  
**ENV 345**

---

**Catalog Description:** The urban geography of advanced nations. Specific topics include urban systems analysis, the internal geography of cities and contemporary spatial and social changes in urban areas. Prerequisite(s): GEOG 2110 and GEOG 2170, or consent of department.

**My Description:** This course is an introduction to a geographic perspective on cities in the United States and Canada. Our major cities are the focal points for most areas of human life. The intensity of development ongoing in our cities opens up some major opportunities for social and economic advancement, but also some important issues relating to poverty and inequality. This course focuses on three key areas to provide insights into cities from a geographer's perspective: the historical development of cities worldwide, the built form of cities as they have developed specifically in North America, and a survey of selected issues and methods associated with urban planning and development today. This course provides background useful for careers in government, business, and non-profit work, since an understanding of cities and how they develop is crucial for many occupations.

**Instructor:** Dr. Murray Rice

**Class:** Monday/Wednesday, 11:00 am to 12:20 pm

**Classroom:** ENV 345

**Office Hours:** Wednesday, 9:00 to 10:45 am

**Office:** ENV 310G

**Telephone:** 940-565-3861

**E-Mail:** rice@unt.edu

**Class Web Page:** [www.murrayrice.com/teaching.html](http://www.murrayrice.com/teaching.html)

*Click on the GEOG 4210/5210 link here to find the main page for this course*

**Course Philosophy:** I am here to organize the course and introduce you to the topics and readings we will examine. I don't have all the answers and I don't pretend to have all the answers, but I will share with you from what I know. I will do my best to make the course interesting, relevant, and challenging.

This being said, it's important that you understand that you have the most important role in making GEOG 4210 a success for you. You will determine how much you actually get out of this course. Doing the readings outlined, answering the discussion questions provided ahead of time, and coming to class ready to think and participate in group discussions puts you in the best position to benefit from what this course offers. I encourage you to make full use of the learning opportunities that this class presents.

**Required Text:** Knox, Paul and Linda McCarthy (2012) *Urbanization: An Introduction to Urban Geography*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Pearson Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River NJ.

**Grading:** It is not essential to pass any particular exam or project to pass the course, but relative success in each will affect your final grade.

Discussion Questions:	Two Sets (2 x 5%, see class schedule)	10%
Group Project:	Proposal/Overview (due week 6)	5%
	Project Update (due week 10)	5%
	Paper (due week 14)	20%
	Presentation (week 14)	10%
Midterm Exams:	Two closed-book exams (week 4, week 8)	15% each
Final Exam:	Closed-book exam (to be scheduled)	20%

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

**Discussion Questions:** I will provide you with a set of discussion questions ("DQs") for you to consider for most of the weeks we will examine together this semester. In most weeks, your task is simply to review the DQs for the week and give the questions some thought before class. However, the DQ sets for two specific weeks have been specially marked to indicate that you will be handing in your responses for those weeks. In-class discussion will often be based on each of the weekly DQ sets, so it is important that you invest time in thinking your answers through for all DQ sets.

Weeks with DQs for handing in: Week 4 and Week 7.

**Group Project:** You will be asked to form groups of 2-3 people at the beginning of the course for the purpose of completing a report and presentation on a topic in urban geography. It is important that you begin thinking about your project right away; a one-page project proposal/overview is due from your group at the end of Week 6. Each project must include a significant component of discussion of an issue related to both geography and cities. These projects can focus on one of the two options highlighted below:

**1. A particular urban place.** This kind of project will provide an overview of the history, development, economy, society, and challenges facing a given town or city. Discussion of the city's future prospects given the data collected is a key component of this kind of project.

**2. A specific issue related to the development of cities in general.** This kind of project will outline some topic of importance to many cities. You have considerable freedom to explore a variety of issues here, but it is important that the geographic perspective is central to whatever topic you choose. You might want to start your thinking by considering the spectrum of topics included in our course schedule, such as the land use and transportation issues that face businesses and cities today. However, be creative and flexible in your thinking.

Regardless of the direction you go as a group, please feel free to consult with me on possible topics in the first couple of weeks of class (I'd highly recommend you do this).

**Late Policy:** Anything handed in late\* will be subject to an immediate 10% penalty. Late work will not be accepted after graded work has been handed back to the class. Graded work is usually returned to the class one week after the due date. I will grant exceptions to the above if you provide documentation substantiating a valid personal emergency.

**Exam Dates:** Exam and presentation dates are final and will not be changed regardless of student circumstances (except for emergencies as outlined above). It is your responsibility to plan outside activities so they will not conflict with class dates.

**Extra Credit:** The Department of Geography does not allow extra credit assignments (work not specified on a course syllabus).

**Attendance:** I encourage full attendance since the in-class experience is a crucial component of learning in this course. I will not take attendance in this course on a regular basis, but persistent non-attendance will result in your being withdrawn from the course with a grade of WF.

---

\* Late = "after the beginning of class on the assigned due date".

**Academic Dishonesty:** Academic dishonesty in this course will be penalized according to University of North Texas rules and regulations, including a mark of 0 on a test or assignment, a grade of “F” in the class, or possible suspension or expulsion from the university, depending on the precise nature and circumstances of the dishonesty. Learning what is dishonest and how to stay away from such conduct is good preparation for a successful career.

To help you avoid academically dishonest behavior, the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities at the University of North Texas has developed a definition of academic dishonesty and a set of strategies to protect yourself from being accused of academically dishonest behavior.

The following is a summary of definitions and strategies from CSRR:

#### **Forms of Academic Dishonesty**

- **Cheating:** intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit or hours.
- **Plagiarism:** the deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas, words or statements of another person as one’s own without acknowledgement.
- **Fabrication:** intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
- **Facilitating academic dishonesty:** intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of the institutional code of academic integrity.

#### **Proactive strategies to protect yourself from charges of academic dishonesty:**

1. Prepare thoroughly for examinations and assignments.
2. Take the initiative to prevent other students from copying your exam or assignments, e.g., shield your answer sheet during examinations, do not lend assignments to be turned in to other students.
3. Check your faculty member's course syllabus for a section dealing with academic dishonesty for that course. There may be special requirements. If you cannot find a written section in the syllabus, ask the faculty member what his/her expectations are.
4. Consult the Code of Student Conduct for a detailed definition of academic dishonesty.
5. Do not look in the direction of other students' papers during examinations.
6. Utilize a recognized handbook for instruction on citing source materials in papers.
7. Consult with individual faculty or academic departments when in doubt.
8. Utilize the services of the University Writing Center, located in room 105 of the Auditorium Building, for assistance in preparing papers.
9. Discourage dishonesty among other students.
10. Refuse to assist students who cheat.

## Course Schedule

The readings outlined below are an important part of the course. Please have each reading assignment completed before we begin each week. I have also identified additional readings from other sources not listed below – check the “Syllabus and Handouts” page on the course website for a listing of these readings by week. Lastly, please note that weeks marked on this schedule with a “DQ” have a discussion question set due on Monday.

WEEK	TOPIC
	<b>PART 1 – INTRODUCTION</b>
1 (Aug 29, 31)	<i>Urbanization and Urban Geography</i> Knox and McCarthy, Chapter 1 (3-15) “Global Cities Revisited” Article (see Course Handouts Page) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Why study urban geography?</li><li>• Definitions and applications of urban geography</li></ul>
	<b>PART 2 – HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CITIES</b>
2 (Sep 7)	<i>City Origins and Growth</i> (Mon Sep 5 is Labor Day: No Class) Knox and McCarthy, Chapter 2 (19-27, 29-37, 39-44) Week 2 Video Questions Handout (see Course Handouts Page) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Defining the city</li><li>• Theories of city origins and preconditions for urban development</li><li>• Development of early cities</li></ul>
3 (Sep 12, 14)	<i>Cities in America: The Story to 1945</i> Knox and McCarthy, Chapter 3 (47-61, 74-83) Week 3 Video Questions Handout (see Course Handouts Page) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mercantilism, Industrialization, and City Development</li><li>• Impact of the Great Depression</li></ul>

4 (Sep 19, 21)

***Cities in America: From 1945 to Present***

**DQ**

Knox and McCarthy, Chapter 4 (87-107)

**DQ Set Due This Week (Monday)**

**Mid-Term Exam #1 This Week (Wednesday)**

- Technological change and the growth of metropolitan areas
- Demographic change and the emergence of the information economy

**PART 3 – URBAN FORM**

5 (Sep 26, 28)

***Foundations of Urban Form***

Knox and McCarthy, Chapter 12 (293-321)

Week 5 Video Questions Handout (see Course Handouts Page)

- Foundations of Residential Segregation
- Residential Ecology and Urban Structure

6 (Oct 3, 5)

***Changing Metropolitan Form***

Knox and McCarthy, Chapter 3 (62-74)

“Atlanta Congestion Pricing” Article; “Decline of Detroit” Article;

“Taking Down Freeways” Article (see Course Handouts Page)

Week 6 Video Questions Handout (see Course Handouts Page)

**Group Project Proposal/Overview Due This Week (Wednesday)**

- Urban Change in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century
- Foundations of Urban Form Today

7 (Oct 10, 12)

***How Neighborhoods Change***

**DQ**

Knox and McCarthy, Chapter 9 (207-231)

“Tarrant County Life Cycle” Article (see Course Handouts Page)

**DQ Set Due This Week (Monday)**

- Neighborhood Redevelopment and Life Cycles
- Impact of Residential Mobility on Neighborhoods

**PART 4 –DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING  
IN URBAN AREAS**

8 (Oct 17, 19)

***Urban Community Planning***

Knox and McCarthy, Chapter 11 (263-273)

**Mid-Term Exam #2 This Week (Wednesday)**

- What is planning
- Context for urban planning today

- 9 (Oct 24, 26)      ***Participation in Urban Planning and Development***  
 Knox and McCarthy, Chapter 8 (189-200)  
 Arnstein's "Ladder of Citizen Participation" Article (see Further Readings in Urban Geography Page)
- Participants in urban planning and development
  - Roles of the various groups involved
- 10 (Oct 31, Nov 2)      ***Regulation and Development***  
 Knox and McCarthy, Chapter 10 (233-259) and Chapter 11 (280-283)  
 "Denton Zoning Districts" Document (see Course Handouts Page)  
**Project Progress Updates (1 Page) Due This Week (Wednesday)**
- Focus on the roles and strategies of local governments
  - Survey of incentives for development
- 11 (Nov 7, 9)      ***Development of Regions and Metropolitan Areas***  
 Knox and McCarthy, Chapter 10 (286-288)  
 Readings on the web:  
<http://www.mapc.org/index.html>  
 The MAPC page above is the home page for the Boston Metropolitan Area Planning Council. From the main page, visit the various major links available, being sure to include "About MAPC", "Regional Planning", and "Data & GIS". Explore the links available from these sub-pages.  
<http://www.ampo.org/index.php>  
 The AMPO page above is the home of the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations, a transportation-oriented group of federally mandated planning organizations. Explore the "What is AMPO" link and the sub-links within this section.
- The issues accompanying development and planning for large regions and metropolitan areas
- 12 (Nov 14, 16)      ***Planning for Small Towns***  
 "Booneville Case Study Introduction", "Endicott, WA" and "Marathon, TX" Small Town Case Studies (see Course Handouts Page)
- The unique planning issues and challenges posed by small towns

13 (Nov 21, 23)

***Video Case Study and Project Work Week***

Week 13 Video Questions Handout (see Course Handouts Page)

- We will view and discuss a video case study
- We will also set aside time for group project work this week

**PART 5 – PROJECT PRESENTATIONS & COURSE WRAP-UP**

14 (Nov 28, 30)

***Group Presentations***

No Reading for this Week

**Group Project Papers Due This Week (Wednesday)**

- Presentations scheduled for the entire week
- Please hand in a paper copy of your presentation slides/notes on your presentation day

15 (Dec 5, 7)

***Course Review and Final Exam Overview***

No Reading for this Week

- Group presentation time, if needed
- Last thoughts on urban development, overview of the final exam, and question time

**The two hour final exam will be held  
in our usual classroom**

**My goal in this course is for your time here to be of great value to you.** This course provides concepts and skills you will find a helpful starting-point for careers in urban-economic geography. However, even if you follow a career path outside of geography, my hope is that this course will provide you with insights into the North American city that can help you in many other ways, regardless of where your life and career takes you in the future.

Please do not hesitate to let me know if there is anything else we can do, beyond what you see in this course package, that could be useful in preparing you for the challenges you will face in your future.

## Weekly Discussion Questions

**Please note:** you are responsible for handing in the discussion questions for modules marked “Hand-in DQ” (Weeks 4 and 7). For each of the other modules, please read and reflect on the DQs for that module before coming to class.

### PART 1 – INTRODUCTION

#### Week 1: Urbanization and Urban Geography

Your textbook reading summarizes a number of prominent approaches or perspectives that people have in studying urban geography (see pages 6-8 of this week’s course reading). Have a look through these approaches. Is there one approach listed in this reading that makes the most sense to you? Why?

### PART 2 – HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CITIES

#### Week 2: City Origins and Growth

To begin this module, in class we will discuss the issues that city builders have been facing for thousands of years. As we will see, many of these same factors are ones that we deal with today.

Here are a few thoughts for you to consider in preparation for class this week:

- What are important site selection factors for new communities or developments today? Think of the new communities that we see emerging around the Metroplex, as well as in other parts of America.
- How might “function” have an impact on how a community is planned?
- Why is the layout of cities (land use allocation) important?
- In thinking about how we move around the city, what choices are we making in D-FW?

#### Week 3: Cities in America – The Story to 1945

Your reading this week defines some key terminology that describes the development of the American urban system. Page 48 is the beginning of one important section. The discussion here introduces the ideas of “gateway city” and “entrepôt” (see page 49). What’s the difference between the two? Note and make sure you understand the other new terms and ideas that this reading introduces as well.

## **Week 4: Cities in America – 1945 to Present (Hand-In DQ)**

What are the key characteristics of American cities today? To answer this question, read through this week's chapter and divide your response into two sections:

1. Cities in America vs. the rest of the world: imagine you are trying to describe a “typical American city” to someone from another part of the globe. What might you say? What would be the key points you would need to make so that a person from a different society and culture could begin to understand cities in America? What would you identify as being most important to communicate?
2. Modern American cities vs. the American city of the early 1900s: imagine describing the “typical American city” of today to someone living 100 years ago (I suppose you'll also have to imagine that we've perfected the “time travel machine”). As with part #1 of this assignment, you will need to decide what you believe would be the most important things for you to explain to this person. According to the reading, what has changed about American cities in recent decades? What would a person from 100 years ago need to know to have some idea about what it is like to live in a modern American city?

Grading on this DQ assignment will focus on your communication and thinking skills equally with the actual facts and specifics you choose to include.

## **PART 3 – URBAN FORM**

### **Week 5: Foundations of Urban Form**

In this module we will come back to an idea we first raised in the DQs for module 2 – urban form, or layout as we called it back in the DQs for module 2.

1. What does the phrase “urban form” mean to you? Before you read the DQs for this module any further, jot down a few thoughts about what urban form means and why it is important to society. There may be some overlap with what you said earlier, but try to think about any new insights that come to you based on all that we have studied in the course up to now.
2. Complete your textbook reading for this week and think about the cities you have visited or lived in, and note what you remember about their urban form/layout – can you come up with three or four solid examples of urban form from your own experience? Going further, can you think of any examples of “good” urban form – cities that function well in one way or another? What about “bad” urban form – have you been in cities that in some way are frustrating or just don't work so well because of their urban geography?

Do your best to think your way through these questions and come to class prepared to discuss.

## **Week 6: Changing Metropolitan Form**

The changes we have been seeing in metropolitan form over the past 50 years have, in large part, been due to a changing relationship between our downtown areas and the suburbs. In preparation for class,

1. Read this week's section from the text, and summarize the key changes we have seen in our downtowns and suburbs as reflected in the reading.
2. Based on your own observations of D-FW or other metropolitan areas, what trends or changes have occurred over your lifetime? Any services or other activities that are more available in the suburbs today than 5 or 10 years ago? Anything happening downtown today that is different from the past? If you have not observed anything matching this question, scan your textbook (this week's reading and/or other chapters) for specific examples of changes that are happening in our suburban and downtown areas, and summarize.

## **Week 7: How Neighborhoods Change (Hand-In DQ)**

Your reading for this week examines in detail the changes that neighborhoods go through as they age. In particular, the section on "neighborhood life cycles" has some important ideas (key text is on page 211, related ideas on pages 209 and 210). The neighborhood life cycle is a model that attempts to explain the process that many neighborhoods across our nation have gone through, and are going through today. For this week's discussion question,

1. Take care to read through this model very carefully, noting the key characteristics of each stage of the neighborhood life cycle.
2. Consider neighborhoods in your area (in Denton and/or any other city you are familiar with) and compare with the stage characteristics listed in the life cycle model described in your reading. Feel free to actually go out and travel around Denton or the city where you live and note the characteristics of the neighborhood around you.
3. Cite a real-world example of a neighborhood for each of the five stages of the life cycle model, and explain why you think each of the sample neighborhoods fit with one of the stages. Make sure you refer to specific neighborhood characteristics mentioned in the model stages, and line these up with specific characteristics that you actually observe in the neighborhoods you see.

A couple of notes to assist you as you complete this question:

- I expect you to make your best effort to identify an example of a neighborhood for each stage. However, depending on the city and area you choose, it is possible you may not have an example for each model. If this is the case for you, note which stages you are missing and explain why you think your area might be missing neighborhoods in those particular stages
- I provide the three-step process above to guide you in completing this exercise. However, I only expect you to hand in results for step #3. The first two steps are just steps you need to go through in order to complete the exercise. You don't have to hand in notes for those first two stages.

## PART 4 – DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING IN URBAN AREAS

### Week 8: Urban Community Planning

In this module we start to consider how decisions are made in the development of our cities, and some key principles in planning for cities that function well and are good places to live.

1. What does the phrase “urban planning” mean to you? After you’ve noted your key ideas, Google “urban planning” (or “city planning”, or just “planning”) and see what types of information come up. What are the major contexts and ideas related to planning that come up from your web search?
2. Visit the City of Denton planning and development department web site at:

<http://www.cityofdenton.com/index.aspx?page=459>

Note especially the links contained along the left-hand side of the page, as well as the content featured in the main part of the page. What are the major issues now being faced by planners in Denton? What is the planning department active in right now?

### Week 9: Urban Development – Players and Roles

Think about the community or communities you are most familiar with – perhaps your home town, or maybe the place where you currently live. If you needed to get something done that had an impact on the community, like creating a new retail development, or relocating a major transportation route, who do you think would be a key person or group involved in the lobbying and decision-making over the matter?

- Could you name some individuals who are powerful in the community and could influence whether or not a big project goes ahead? Are they powerful because of the positions they hold, or due to some other reason?
- Can you name people who would be important “behind the scenes” getting things done? What about people with a high public profile?

Use your reading to get you started, but don’t stop with the kinds of people listed there. Fill in some specifics for your community, and give some sense as to how you think your particular community works. If it helps, draw a diagram naming various people and groups you think of, and how these people and groups are connected to each other (through business links, club or church links, organizational lines of authority). Lastly, if you’re having trouble identifying influential people and groups, feel free to do some web research to help you identify people and groups who should appear in your diagram or listing of “who’s powerful” in your community (try local newspapers, chambers of commerce, and government web pages).

## **Week 10: Regulation and Development**

Name and briefly describe the structure models highlighted on pages 257-259 of your textbook reading for this week. Going beyond what is simply told you in your textbook, explain how the local power structures dealt with in these models could have an impact on developments in geographic space. Put another way:

- The structure models are not geographic in themselves, but their influence could be geographic.
- Discuss and provide examples to explain your logic as you explain local power structures have a geographical impact on development.

## **Week 11: Development of Regions and Metropolitan Areas**

Based on the web sites listed as readings in your course syllabus, provide at least three good examples of why a regional approach is valuable in urban planning.

## **Week 12: Planning for Small Towns**

Read the Booneville downloadable report listed as part of the reading for this module (I will provide the part of the report I want you to read on our course website). Based on the material in the report, how would you say that the planning and development issues for Booneville differ from the challenges that planners and developers deal with in a metropolitan setting like Dallas-Fort Worth?

## **Week 13: Video Case Study and Project Work Week**

No discussion questions for this week, but you should be using your time to work on your term project. Come to class ready to listen actively and take notes on the urban video case study we will be viewing.

## **Week 14: Term Project Presentations**

No questions for this week, but come to class prepared to listen actively and be ready to ask questions at the end of each presentation.

## **Week 15: Course Wrap-Up**

No questions for this week.