

# Film and the City

## LAS 1063-09, Spring 2017

Instructor: Rick Moore

Office: Walker Center 206

Office Hours: Mondays, 9:30-10:30a or by appointment

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## Class Information:

M/W 11:00a - 12:15p

Sarkeys 205

Course Prerequisite: None

## Course Description:

This course explores theories of urban life as portrayed in various films. Students will read current and classic works dealing with the cultures, structures, and problems of contemporary urban life. The class will then use a series of movies as a lab in which to debate these theories, explore the place of the city in an increasingly globalized world, and consider the media's portrayal of the modern metropolis. Students will also apply what they learn to understanding and exploring the local urban environments of Oklahoma City.

## Course Objectives:

The students who successfully complete this course should:

- (1) Become familiar with major approaches to understanding urban life
- (2) Be able to analyze the content of films in relation to theory
- (3) Learn to apply urban theories to critically understand issues in the Oklahoma City metro area
- (4) Improve writing, reading and oral presentation skills

## Required Texts (Available @ Campus Bookstore)

Lipson, Charles. 2008. *Doing Honest Work in College: How to Prepare Citations, Avoid Plagiarism, and Achieve Real Academic Success, Second Edition (Chicago Guides to Academic Life)*. 2nd edition. University of Chicago Press.

Kasinitz, Philip, ed. 1995. *Metropolis: Center and Symbol of Our Times*. New York: New York University Press.

Park, Robert E., and Ernest W. Burgess. 2012 [1925]. *The City: Suggestions for Investigation of Human Behavior in the Urban Environment*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Additional required readings are available on our D2L site. Further readings may be added during the semester.

## Requirements:

### 1. Film Viewing Guides (30%)

In this course we will use 15 films to explore issues surrounding modern cities. You are responsible for viewing each week's film outside of class (think of them as part of your assigned reading). Some films will be on reserve in the library, while others will require you to stream them online. I will give you

guidance each week on options on how to watch the week's film. *You will likely have to rent or purchase several films throughout the semester.*

For 12 of the 15 films, you must complete and submit a viewing guide for grading by Monday 9a of each week. Late film viewing guides will not be accepted late for any reason. These weekly viewing guides will you ask specific questions about the film and its relationship to the week's readings that will help prepare you for in-class discussion. Guides and instructions for each film can be found on D2L under Assignments→Dropbox. You can choose the weeks that you skip the guide, but remember you are still responsible for watching the film, even if you are not writing a guide that week.

## **2. Class Participation and in-class exercises (20%)**

Active class participation is essential for our collective learning project. This means that attendance is mandatory. However, class participation is more than just attendance: *You must come to class having read the assigned readings for that day, watched the film for that week, and be prepared to discuss them in detail.* Bring copies of the readings to class; we will refer to and discuss specific pages. Many of the readings will be posted on D2L. Some days there will also be ungraded exercises to complete in class. There may also be a number unannounced quizzes covering the reading for that particular day. In-class exercises and quizzes cannot be made up at a later date. If for some reason you cannot come to class, please refer to the procedures in the course attendance policy located under the General Course Policies section of this syllabus.

## **3. Analytical Essays & Field Visits (50%)**

You will write three short analytical essays where you will relate concepts from the films, readings and in-class discussions to our immediate urban environment here in Oklahoma City. There will be one essay for each of the major course sections: Studying Cities, Issues of Urbanism, and Global Urbanism. Each essay will require you to visit various parts of the Oklahoma City metro to make firsthand observations of urban life.

Each essay should be 4-5 double-spaced pages with approximately 1 inch margins and with a sensible 11 or 12 pt font (e.g. Times New Roman or similar). Paper topics and further instructions will be distributed in class. You will also give one oral presentation to the class on one of your essays.

Essays due dates:

Essay 1 (Studying Cities): Wed, Oct 11

Essay 2 (Issues of Urbanism): Wed, Nov 15

Essay 3 (Global Urbanism): Wed, Dec 13

### **Course Hashtag:**

When I see news related to topics we're covering in the course I occasionally post it on Twitter using the #FilmAndCity hashtag. You can see the feed on the course D2L page or you can search for it in Twitter. My twitter handle is @prairiedogking. More information will be given during the semester.

### **Notes on Reading:**

Reading scholarly texts well, like good writing, is a skill that must be learned. Careful, "active" reading takes more time and effort than merely passively skimming a text. I encourage you read slowly and to take notes. Notes are good not only to help understand an author's ideas but also to begin to critically engage them, not to

mention that they will be handy when you write your papers. It's also useful to write in your books; I often make comments in the margins, mark important passages, etc. (Only do this in your personal copy; never write in a library book!) Such active reading that combines a slow, deliberative approach with writing and reflection will be harder and take a lot more time, but it will be well worth it.

### **Course Outline and Readings:**

*(Remember: Film viewing guides always due on Mondays 9a)*

## *SECTION 1: STUDYING CITIES*

### **Week 1: Introduction**

NOTE OUR FIRST CLASS IS WED 8/23

Film: N/A

Readings: N/A

### **Week 2: City as a Celebration**

Film: Ferris Beuller's Day Off (1986)

Readings:

M 8/28: Park "The City: Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behavior in the Urban Environment," in The City

W 8/30: Wirth – "Urbanism as a Way of Life," in Metropolis

W 8/30: Lefebvre (1996) "The Specificity of the City"

### **Week 3: City as a Problem**

Film: Adventures in Babysitting (1987)

NOTE: NO CLASS ON MONDAY 9/4 (LABOR DAY)

Readings:

W 9/6: Simmel – "Metropolis & Mental Life," in Metropolis

W 9/6: Lipson – "Part One" in *Doing Honest Work in College*

### **Week 4: Chicago School**

Film: Taxi Driver (1976)

Readings:

M 9/13: Burgess – "Growth of the City," in The City

W 9/15: Drake & Cayton (1945) "The Black Ghetto" (D2L)

## **Week 5: L.A. School**

Film: The Big Lebowski (1998)

Readings:

M 9/18: Dear (2002), “Los Angeles and the Chicago School: Invitation to a Debate” (D2L)

W 9/20: Katz (1999) "Pissed off in LA" (D2L)

## **Week 6: Structure of Urban Space**

Film: Tangerine (2015)

Readings:

M 9/25: Jacobs – “The Use of Sidewalks,” in Metropolis

M 9/25: Laumann et al (2004), Selections (D2L)

W 9/27: Duneier (1999) “Sidewalk Sleeping” (D2L)

## **Week 7: Global Cities**

Film: Lost in Translation (2003)

Readings:

M 10/2: Sassen (2001), selections (D2L)

W 10/4: Ethnographic Reading on Global Cities TBA (D2L)

## *SECTION 2: ISSUES OF URBANISM*

## **Week 8: Inequality**

Film: Metropolis (1927)

Readings:

M 10/9: Desmond (2016), *Evicted*, selections (D2L)

W 10/11: Marx, selections (D2L)

*Essay 1 Due: Wednesday Oct 11*

## **Week 9: Cultures of Cities**

Film: Swingers (1996)

NOTE: NO CLASS ON MONDAY (FALL BREAK)

Readings:

W 10/18: Lloyd 2006, *Neo-Bohemia*, selections (D2L)

## **Week 10: Urban Change**

Film: Goodbye, Lenin! (2003)

Readings:

M 10/23: Freeman (2006), *There Goes the 'Hood*, selections (D2L)

W 10/25: Pattillo-McCoy (1999), "Generations through a Changing Economy" (D2L)

## **Week 11: Suburbia**

Film: American Beauty (1999)

Readings:

M 10/30: Gans – "Urbanism and Suburbanism as Ways of Life," in Metropolis

W 11/1: Jacques and Write (2015) "The Pursuit of Coolness" (D2L)

## **Week 12: Racial Tensions**

Film: Do the Right Thing (1989)

Readings:

M 11/6: Doering (2016) "Visibly White" (D2L)

W 11/8: TBA

### *SECTION 3: GLOBAL URBANIZATION*

## **Week 13: Megalopolis**

Film: Beijing Bicycle (2001)

Readings:

M 11/13: Fishman – "Megalopolis Unbound," in Metropolis

W 11/15: Hsu (2005) "A Taste of Modernity" (D2L)

*Essay 2 Due: Wednesday Nov 15*

## **Week 14: Delhi**

Film: Fukrey (2013)

Readings:

TBA

## **Week 15: Rio**

Film: City of God

Readings:  
TBA

## **Week 16: Bringing it all together**

Film: TBA – Class choice

Readings:  
None

*Essay 3 Due: Wed Dec 13*

## **General Course Policies:**

### Academic Integrity:

All work that is not your own must be cited appropriately. Academic dishonesty *of any sort* will not be tolerated and may result in a failing grade for the course plus other actions that the university deems appropriate. Unless I have informed you otherwise in writing, reusing material from previous work you wrote for this class or other classes also constitutes plagiarism. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or academic honesty please speak with me and I will be happy to help you.

The university's academic honesty policy is published in the undergraduate catalog (page 30) and graduate catalog (page 31).

A helpful page with resources for citation practices is  
<http://guides.lib.uchicago.edu/cite>

### Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory and unexcused absences will significantly lower your grade. Excused absences (e.g. athletic participation) for a regular class require notice by email 48 hours before the absence in order for it to count as excused. Absences on exam days should be avoided whenever possible; if the absence cannot be avoided you must email me at least 2 weeks before the exam date to arrange an alternate time to take the exam. The final exam, however, must without exception be taken during our final exam time. If you are sick and cannot come to class, I hope you feel better! Also, if you are sick please email me within 24 hours of the class you missed for your absence to count as excused. Frequent or extended absences may require additional documentation.

### Course Changes:

Over the quarter there might be changes made to the syllabus, especially concerning the exact readings. If any changes are made, we will go over them in class.

### Grade Changes:

If you feel that I have graded something incorrectly, or not entered the correct grade in the D2L gradebook, you have one week from the time the assignment was returned (or graded on D2L) to discuss the possibility of any changes.

### Grade checks:

If you require a grade check form signed for any reason, please inform me via email 48 hours before you would like me to sign it. If I do not receive an email from you, I will not sign any grade check forms.

### Grading Scale:

A	> 93%	A-	90.0 – 92.9%	B+	88.0 – 89.9%
B	83.0 – 87.9%	B-	80.0 – 82.9%	C+	78.0 – 79.9%
C	73.0 – 77.9%	C-	70.0 – 72.9%	D+	68.0 – 69.9%
D	63.0 – 67.9%	D-	60.0 – 62.9	F	< 60%

### Email and Electronic Etiquette:

*You are expected to regularly check your official OCU email account, as important class emails will be periodically sent to it. Having not checked that account or having technical problems are not excuses for missing something in the class.*

I do my best to answer emails quickly. However, I cannot guarantee that last minute emails will be answered as soon as you might wish. Please do not expect an answer to your email faster than 48 hours. Most likely I'll answer much sooner but there are no guarantees - please plan accordingly. Also, I will not answer emails related to an assignment after 5p the day before the assignment is due.

Computers are great for taking and organizing notes but can also be distracting from class discussion. If you choose to bring a laptop or tablet to class please be respectful and do not use it for anything except taking notes relevant to this class (i.e. no internet, no email, no working on other assignments). Phones must be turned off unless you work for some type of emergency agency (i.e., medical or law enforcement). Failing to adhere to this policy will affect your participation grade.

### Exceptions:

Any exceptions to standard course procedures due to exceptional circumstances must be worked out with me over email in addition to any in-person discussions we might have. This helps prevent any misunderstandings.

### Incompletes:

An incomplete will only be given in exceptional circumstances. For the university's incomplete course policy see the applicable undergraduate or graduate catalog graduate catalog. The catalogs are posted on StarNet and on [www.okcu.edu](http://www.okcu.edu).

### Late Work:

Assignments that are accepted late will be penalized 1/3 of a grade for each day overdue – for example, A will become A-, B- will become C+ etc. Late assignments can receive grades below failing (< 59%) as there will be a continued reduction of 3.3% credit each day late beyond the time the work would receive an F. In-class assignments and quizzes will not be accepted late and cannot be made up. No work will be accepted after the end of the semester.

## **University/College Required Notifications:**

### *Academic Complaints*

Students are encouraged to utilize Oklahoma City University's internal complaint policies through the Office of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs prior to filing a complaint with any external entity. Students may submit an official Academic Complaint at <http://www.okcu.edu/academics/complaints>. Academic complaints submitted will be received by the Office of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, and will be investigated by that office for action or further resolution.

Submitting an academic complaint via this form does not initiate a formal appeal process under the student handbook or University catalogue.

For information on submitting a complaint related to the accreditor of your program, please visit <http://www.okcu.edu/admin/academic-affairs/accreditation>.

For information on submitting a complaint for distance education courses, please visit <http://www.okcu.edu/academics/distance-learning-complaints>.

### *ADA/Section 504*

If you believe that you need reasonable accommodations for a documented physical, psychiatric, and/or learning disability or attention disorder, please make sure to register with Campus Disability Services by filling out the New Student Application at the following link: <https://andes.accessiblelearning.com/OKCU/>. The Senior Coordinator for Access and Academic Support is responsible for coordinating student disability-related accommodations and, if approved, will issue students a Letter of Accommodation. Reasonable accommodations may require early planning and are not provided retroactively, so please start this process as soon as possible. If you have general questions about reasonable accommodations, you may contact the Senior Coordinator for Access and Academic Support, Jenny Minsberg, at [jaminsberg@okcu.edu](mailto:jaminsberg@okcu.edu) and in DBL 106C.

Students with approved reasonable accommodations are expected to meet with me during the first two weeks of class so that we can discuss how we can work together to meet your needs in this course.

*Emergency Preparedness:*

Our classroom has information posted on what to do in the case of an emergency. Please familiarize yourself with this information. In the case of an evacuation from our Sarkey's classroom, please assemble on the Activities Lawn.

*Petree College*

Welcome to a course in the Petree College of Arts and Sciences! Our academic programs and the coursework associated with them provide the foundation of knowledge one gains through earning a college degree – that centered on the essential liberal arts and sciences. Oklahoma City University graduates are expected to be servant leaders in an increasingly challenging world, and the broad knowledge we impart at the Petree College provides much of the basis upon which you will make wise, thoughtful decisions in your leadership role.

We want you to be intellectually and morally prepared for the future that awaits you, and we seek to develop the skills that will undergird that preparation through critical reading, writing, and thinking; through aesthetic and moral awareness; and through on and off campus experiences in service learning. We care about your future as an OCU graduate and look forward to doing our part to prepare you for the brightest one possible. All we ask, in return, is that you study hard in this course and absorb as much knowledge as you can from what we offer.

*Statement on Sex and Gender-Based Discrimination:*

Under Title IX, you have the right to an education free of sex or gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence. Issues addressed by Title IX include acts of discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, and sex or gender-based hate crimes. Title IX also addresses acts of discrimination and/or harassment that are based on gender identity, gender expressions, sexual orientation, and pregnancy and/or parenting status. Title IX applies to students, faculty, staff, guests, and anyone accessing OCU programs and services.

As OCU employees, all faculty members are required to report any form of discrimination, harassment, or violence addressed by Title IX to the Title IX Coordinator within 24 hours. After the university receives a report, you will be contacted by one of OCU's Title IX administrators to discuss the report, the support the university can provide, and your options for pursuing a resolution to the issue through the university's established process.

If you would like to make a report or learn more, please contact OCU's Title IX Coordinator by calling (405) 208-5075 or visit <http://www.okcu.edu/admin/hr/titleix>.

That website also contains links to other local resources, OCU's non-discrimination policies and procedures, and contact information for the University's Title IX administrators.

For emergencies, you can contact OCU's police department at (405) 208-5911. For free and confidential support on campus, you can contact University Counseling by calling (405) 208-7901. For medical issues, you

**Acknowledgements:**

Parts of this syllabus draw on a syllabus written by Omar McRoberts, as well as: Halasz, Judith R. "Sociology of Film Syllabus." Assignment, Film List, Syllabus published in *TRAILS: Teaching Resources and Innovations Library for Sociology*. Washington DC: American Sociological Association. (<http://trails.asanet.org>).