

URBAN STUDIES

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The urban studies minor offers a broad, interdisciplinary introduction to the urban social and material environment. Students learn about the history of urban society in the United States and other parts of the world, different approaches to understanding the contemporary city and its problems, and the role of urban politics, economics, and culture in shaping city life. The minor provides an excellent accompaniment to a number of academic majors including Anthropology, Geography, History, Real Estate, and Sociology. It also provides excellent synergies with other interdisciplinary minors, such as Sustainability and Critical Race and Ethnic Studies. The Urban Studies minor prepares students for advanced study and professional careers that require thoughtful urban analysis and advocacy.

Urban Studies

Minor Requirements

24 credits, with no more than 8 credits selected from any discipline (listed below) participating in the minor. Exceptions to this may be made based on circumstances. Students customize their program by selecting courses that fit with their particular interests. There are no required courses. The courses listed below are only some of the courses that are relevant to the minor. Courses having urban studies content in any department listed below or in any other department on campus may be used for Urban Studies credit pending approval by the program director.

Code	Title	Credits
Anthropology		
ANTH 3040	Anthropologies of Place	4
ANTH 3500	Culture and The City	4
ANTH 3510	The Ancient City	4
Communication Studies		
COMN 1700	Fundamentals of Intercultural Communication	4
Economics		
ECON 3590	Urban Economics	4
Geography		
GEOG 3400	Urban Landscapes	4
GEOG 3420	Urban and Regional Planning	4
GEOG 3440	Urban Transportation Planning	4
GEOG 3425	Urban Sustainability	4
GEOG 3445	Sustainability and Transportation	4
GEOG 3940	Urban Geography Seminar	4
History		
HIST 1520	Immigrant Voices in Modern America	4
HIST 3100	Cities and Society in Latin America	4
HIST 3680	The Strange History of American Suburbia	4
Real Estate		
REAL 1700	Triple Bottom Line and the Built Environment	4
Sociology		
SOCI 2140	Urban Sociology	4
SOCI 2190	American Communities	4
SOCI 2320	Race and Ethnic Relations	4
SOCI 2420	Social Inequality	4
SOCI 2500	Schooling and Society	4
SOCI 2650	Sociology of Immigration	4
SOCI 2655	Latina/os in American Society	4
Other courses may work pending approval of the Director.		

ANTH 3040 Anthropologies of Place (4 Credits)

This class is an exploration of the relationship between people and places from an anthropological viewpoint. We concern ourselves with a variety of ideas about place, emphasizing not just how places are used, but how they infuse themselves into the lives, histories and ethics of those who interact with them. The course readings include book-length anthropological case studies interspersed with interdisciplinary readings about place and landscape. The course includes seminar-style discussions of readings, workshops and observations in the field. On several occasions, we take our class on the road, working together to think about how people and place interact. By the end of the class, each student creates his or her own anthropology of a place. Must be junior standing or above.

ANTH 3500 Culture and The City (4 Credits)

Examines the past and future of the city as a human built environment that reflects and reproduces social, political, economic, and cultural forces and ideals. Begins with the origin of cities in antiquity and ends with contemporary urban landscapes. Analysis is sensitive to both the technologies and aesthetics of urban form. Emphasis is on the possibilities for urban redesign to meet the problems of 21st century city life.

ANTH 3510 The Ancient City (4 Credits)

The archaeological study of ancient cities around the world is a booming and controversial area of research. This course investigates what we know about the nature of the earliest cities in the great original cradles of civilization: Mesopotamia, Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Our focus is on how the first cities were planned, built, and experienced by citizens.

COMN 1700 Fundamentals of Intercultural Communication (4 Credits)

This course explores the fundamental concepts and issues in intercultural communication. We will examine the complex relationship between culture and communication from different conceptual perspectives and consider the importance of context and power in intercultural interactions. In addition to learning theory and applying different approaches to the study of intercultural communication, this course asks that you consider your own cultural identities, values, beliefs, assumptions, worldviews, etc. through participation in class discussions. Our discussions will enhance self-reflection, critical thinking, and your own awareness to the complexity of intercultural communication. You can expect that your classmates possess varying perspectives about the materials being covered in class. We will work hard to help everyone develop their perspective and voice, embracing such factors as cultural background, race, class, gender, and sexuality.

ECON 3590 Urban Economics (4 Credits)

Covers topics and issues of economic growth and decline in metropolitan areas, emphasizing urban economic issues. A broad range of policy areas is discussed, including labor market policy, welfare reform, housing policy, racial segregation, transportation, and environmental policy, among others. Restriction: junior standing. Prerequisite: ECON 2020 or 2030.

GEOG 2401 The Human Population (4 Credits)

This course covers the fundamental concepts of demography with an emphasis on its relevance to inquiry in disciplines including economics, business, geography, environmental science, political science and sociology. This course includes computer laboratory work involving the exploration and analysis of census data using geographic information systems. This course counts toward the Scientific Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

GEOG 2430 World Cities (4 Credits)

The study of world cities from a geographical perspective emphasizes the following general topics: 1) worldwide urbanization and globalization processes; 2) the study of cities as nodes within global, regional, and national urban systems; 3) the internal spatial structure of land uses within cities; 4) the spatial dimensions of economic, social, political, and cultural processes in cities; and 5) environmental elements, involving human interrelationships with the natural environment in an urban setting. Urban patterns and processes are examined in each of the world's major regions, including in-depth analysis of focus case study cities.

GEOG 3340 Geographies of Migration (4 Credits)

This course explores contemporary movement of people across international borders and the social, cultural, political, economic, and environmental repercussions of such movements. The class looks at the global flow of people across national boundaries and the ways in which these dispersed peoples build and maintain social networks across national borders. While doing so, we address the role of globalization in international migration processes. What motivates people to move long distances, often across several international borders and at considerable financial and psychological cost? How do migrants change—and how in turn do they bring change, social as well as economic, to new destinations as well as places left behind? This course examines politics and patterns of migration, transnational migration, and immigration to the United States.

GEOG 3400 Urban Landscapes (4 Credits)

Urbanization as a process; national urban systems; internal spatial structure of cities; role of transportation in urban development; location of residential, commercial and industrial activities; agglomeration economies; residential congregation and segregation; environmental justice; urban growth and growth coalitions; decentralization and urban sprawl; edge cities; impacts on the urban environment; world cities; globalization.

GEOG 3410 Urban Applications in GIS (4 Credits)

This course uses the tools of geographic information systems (GIS) to explore concepts of traditional urban geography, including defining cities/metropolis, internal urban structures, urban systems, industrial location, social and residential patterns, urban form, environmental problems, and urban planning. The course allows students to practice fundamental skills in GIS (e.g., working with attribute tables, spatial analysis, spatial queries) and cartography (map design, color theory, display of information). Depending on the quarter, students pursue individual projects of interest or client-based projects. Prerequisite: GEOG 2100 or GEOG 3100 or equivalent.

GEOG 3420 Urban and Regional Planning (4 Credits)

Historical evolution of planning theory and practices; comprehensive planning process; legal, political, economic, social, environmental aspects of urban planning; urban design; urban renewal and community development; transportation planning; economic development planning; growth management; environmental and energy planning; planning for metropolitan regions; national planning.

GEOG 3425 Urban Sustainability (4 Credits)

The 21st century is being called the 'century of the city.' Now more than ever, humans across the globe call the city their home. Many of the world's most pressing crises are manifest in cities, including: greenhouse gas emissions, land degradation, high mass production and consumption, widespread poverty and hunger, and expanding socio-economic disparities. As 'sustainability' becomes part of mainstream discourse, this course explores what sustainability means for urban contexts around the globe. Arguably, the city has the potential to be the most efficient, equitable, and environmental form of modern human settlement. Covering all dimensions of sustainability from a social science perspective, this course focuses on theoretical groundings, practices of urban sustainability, and new research agendas. Major topics include cities and nature; planning and land use; urban form; community and neighborhoods; transportation systems and accessibility; livelihood and urban economies; and social justice and the city.

GEOG 3440 Urban Transportation Planning (4 Credits)

A specialized course in the urban planning sequence focusing on issues, practices and policies of urban transportation planning. Recommended for anyone interested in timely transportation topics, such as the feasibility and impacts of light rail transit, the planning and implementation of highway projects, and the role of freight and passenger transportation companies in transportation planning.

GEOG 3445 Sustainability and Transportation (4 Credits)

Sustainable transportation aims at promoting better and healthier ways of meeting individual and community needs while reducing the social and environmental impacts of current mobility practices. Given the importance of transport for economic growth, the uncertainties surrounding the availability and price of future sources of energy for transport use, as well as the social and environmental externalities of currently-utilized transport modes, it is imperative that more sustainable ways of providing transportation be developed and utilized.

GEOG 4420 Urban and Regional Planning (4 Credits)

The field of urban and regional planning is concerned with the future of cities, neighborhoods, metropolitan areas, and extended regions. How do local governments (cities, counties) and metropolitan planning organizations (regional planning agencies, councils of governments) work with community stakeholders (neighborhood associations, chambers of commerce, businesses, citizens, non-governmental organizations) to formulate plans that will guide the future development of a city and its region? Cities and their regions face numerous challenges including population and employment growth or decline, economic development, neighborhood vitality, housing availability and affordability, urban design, land use, transportation, sustainability, access to parks and open space, air quality, floodplain management, water resources, and social equity among many others. How places address these challenges is critical to the future health and livability of our cities, neighborhoods, metropolitan areas, and extended regions. This course will have a community-engaged service learning component. Community-engaged scholarship and teaching comprise intellectually and methodologically rigorous work that is grounded in the norms of democratic education: inclusiveness, participation, task sharing, reciprocity in public problem solving, and an equality of respect for the knowledge and experience that everyone involved contributes to education and community building. The specific service learning project for the class will be to assist the Metropolitan Denver Nature Alliance (Metro DNA) with its goal to increase the community's engagement with nearby nature by reviewing, analyzing, and collecting data from park/ open space plans of cities and counties in the Denver metropolitan area. Cross-listed with GEOG 3420.

HIST 1110 Ancient Rome (4 Credits)

This course examines the history and culture of Rome from earliest times to the death of Augustus in A.D. 14. We look at political and military developments of Rome as it went from a monarchy, a republic, and an empire. We also study social and cultural aspects of the Romans, who originally were simple pastoralists living along the Tiber but in time became rulers of the entire Mediterranean region. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

HIST 1520 Immigrant Voices in Modern America (4 Credits)

This United States has aptly been called "a nation of immigrants." In this course, we explore the immigrant experience of the last century by examining different forms of personal testimony--autobiographies, diaries, novels, personal correspondence, and oral histories. Listening to these various immigrant voices helps us to understand the processes at work as newcomers and their children (first- and second-generation immigrants) struggled to achieve economic stability and to define their identity as Americans. The course readings as well as the student projects are intended as instruments with which to assess the influence of old world customs, religion, education, work, gender and anti-immigrant prejudice in shaping the process of adaptation to American society. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

HIST 2930 From Tenochtitlan to A Global City: Urban Landscapes in the Making of Modern Mexico (4 Credits)

This course is an intensive examination of the past and present of one of the most fascinating cities in the world, Mexico City. Paying particular attention to space and place, we will examine the historical processes (political, intellectual, ecological, social, and cultural) that are manifest in the urban development of the megacity. By taking this class in Mexico City, students will be able to visit each of these locations, as well as several other significant museums and archaeological sites. Similarly, by engaging in an in-depth reflection structured along textual, visual, and in-sight materials and experiences, students will be invited to reflect about matters of change and continuity as well as how national socio-political trends are reflected in local contexts, thus also learning to reflect about the interpretive relationship between the micro-macro levels of analysis.

HIST 3100 Cities and Society in Latin America (4 Credits)

This course approaches the history of Latin America through the prism of its cities, paying particular attention to the ways in which the urban environment defined and was affected by the regional path of socio-economic and cultural development. In addition to examining how cities evolved, and how people have therein lived (worked, engaged in political activities, etc.), we seek to understand how cities were historically conceived as a primary focus of public policies and projects to the goal of modernization in the region.

HIST 3680 The Strange History of American Suburbia (4 Credits)

Everyone knows the emblems of American suburbia: single-family houses with attached garages, grassy lawns, curving streets and cul-de-sacs, office parks and shopping malls. But there's a history behind these settings that's poorly understood - that that is key to understanding much about the U.S. Suburbia sheds light on American popular attitudes toward nature, technology, health, politics, and patriotism, and on the complicated dynamics of race, gender, family, class, and religion in American society. In this course, we explore how the U.S. became a "suburban nation," from the Romantic retreats of the nineteenth century, through suburbia's triumphant yet troubled "golden age" in the 1950s, to the stereotype-shattering suburbs of our own time. We consider the surprisingly powerful ways suburbia history has shaped U.S. history more broadly.

LDRS 2040 Leading Community Change (4 Credits)

This course builds on the themes we began in the first-year PLP sequence. Specifically, we continue to expand your understanding of community, citizenship, and spheres of influence. Last year, you explored theories of leadership as well as your own assets and passions you carry into leadership. During the second-year course series we learn how to think strategically and act purposefully to make change happen in a larger context—the community. This course asks you to look at and practice leadership as a relational process that brings people together around common interests in order to effect positive change within institutions and/or communities. We will examine and practice key leadership concepts including self-interest, power, and collaboration. We will also practice specific leadership strategies, including 1-1 interviewing techniques, issue research, developing mission statements and action plans, and conducting community research. Prerequisites: LDRS 2017, LDRS 2018, LDRS 2019 and membership in the Pioneer Leadership Program (PLP), or permission of the PLP faculty.

MFJS 2220 Popular Music and Social Justice (4 Credits)

What makes popular music a powerful medium for us to "fight the power" and motivate social change, and what hinders it from achieving its full potential? This course examines a range of 20th and 21st century popular music (blues, folk, rock, hip-hop, musicals, etc.) to better understand the complex relationships between music and social (in)justices. You will also research to understand the great mind of a musician you admire and apply your learning by picking up the powerful tool of "sampling" for a final creative project of your choosing – a song, a cover, lyrics, or spoken word – to put out a message that exemplifies the powerful potential of popular music as a tool for advancing social justice.

PLSC 2200 Politics of China (4 Credits)

Napoleon Bonaparte allegedly said, "let China sleep, for when she wakes up, she will shake the world." Two hundred years later, China is indeed waking up, and the world is feeling the dragon's hot breath. In this class we will examine the fall and rise of the Chinese state, with a focus on its political and economic trajectories after the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. Some of the key issues to be examined are: China's "economic miracle," when, if ever, will China democratize, its potentially explosive relations with Taiwan, its challenges to America's global hegemony, etc.

PLSC 2450 Latinx Politics in the United States (4 Credits)

Examines the history and contemporary role of the Hispanic/Latinx population in the U.S. political system, exploring themes including identity, racialization, immigration, social movements, public opinion, political behavior, and public policy.

PLSC 2825 The Politics of Rights (4 Credits)

This course examines rights and rights-claims as complex and contingent resources for political actors. The class aims at equipping students to be better able to identify, understand, and critically evaluate how, why, and to what end rights claims are used in politics. Particular attention is paid to social and political movements that use rights-claims, as well as the various advantages, limitations, and problems that can accompany rights-based political appeals. Prerequisite: sophomore standing or above.

REAL 1700 Fundamentals of Real Estate and the Built Environment (4 Credits)

An exploration of the importance of real estate and the built environment through triple bottom line analysis of its social, environmental, and economic impacts. The course considers a "cradle to cradle" sustainability model that links the various phases, functions, and professions of real estate, project delivery, and asset/facility management to create holistic, value-generating solutions for society. Professional practices/skill sets associated with the many career options that engage the built environment are demonstrated. Also covered are the principles of real estate, real estate industry and its markets; legal aspects of home ownership from consumer's point of view, including property rights, title concepts, deeds, purchase contracts, listing contracts, law of agency, environmental issues and disclosures, types of mortgages, basics of home loan finance, appraisal investment and tax benefits. Partially satisfies Colorado real estate broker licensing requirements.

SOCI 2140 Urban Sociology (4 Credits)

Sociological study of the city focuses on interrelationships among people, social institutions and space; process of urban development; comparison of competing theoretical perspectives. Prerequisite: SOCI 1810.

SOCI 2190 American Communities (4 Credits)

Study of 'community' as a foundational concept in the discipline; consideration of the changing structural contexts of community, as well as the social-psychological aspects of community; emphasis on emerging forms of community in the contemporary U.S. Prerequisite: SOCI 1810.

SOCI 2320 Race and Ethnic Relations (4 Credits)

Relationship of racial and ethnic minority groups to systems of social stratification; emphasis on United States. Prerequisite: SOCI 1810 or permission of instructor.

SOCI 2420 Social Inequality (4 Credits)

Dimensions of social class and its effect on economic, political and social institutions as well as style of life. Cross listed with GWST 2420. Prerequisite: SOCI 1810 and sophomore standing or permission of instructor.

SOCI 2500 Schooling and Society (4 Credits)

The objective of this course is to examine the relationship between schooling and the larger social inequalities (e.g., racism, poverty, and gender) that profoundly shape education. The major focus in this seminar will be on U.S. K-12 public education. Prerequisite: SOCI 1810 or permission of instructor.

SOCI 2650 Sociology of Immigration (4 Credits)

This course applies a sociological approach to the study of international migration. Students examine early and contemporary waves of migration to the U.S.; theories of migration; processes of settlement and incorporation; the construction of immigration and citizenship; and institutional responses to immigration across and within immigrant groups. The course also examines variation in immigrant experiences along the lines of race/ethnicity, gender, and sexual and age identities. The course culminates in an examination of the impact of migration on the U.S. and on immigrants' sending communities. Prerequisite: SOCI 1810 or permission of instructor.

SOCI 2655 Latina/os in American Society (4 Credits)

Latinas and Latinos constitute one of the largest and fastest growing ethnic groups in the United States. This course uses a sociological lens to understand Latina/os' experiences in the U.S. Specifically, we address Latinas' and Latinos' historical experiences and migration trajectories; assimilation, incorporation and racial/ethnic identity formation; the family, schools and labor markets; and political participation. In so doing, we discuss and challenge stereotypes about Latina/os, present alternative perspectives about Latina/o experiences in the U.S. and most importantly, understand their contributions to their families, their communities, and to the nation as a whole. Prerequisite: SOCI 1810 or permission of instructor.

SOCI 2720 Guns and Society (4 Credits)

Guns are a fact of life in the United States; there are more guns in the US civilian stockpile than any other nation. In this course, we will take a step back from the partisan debates and assess both the history of guns and gun policy in the United States as well as the current state of knowledge around firearms in society. During the course of this class we will explore how science, politics, and culture converge to make guns a controversial topic in the US and what it means for society and policy. Prerequisite: SOCI 1810 or permission of instructor.

SPAN 2930 From Tenochtitlan to A Global City: Urban Landscapes in the Making of Modern Mexico (4 Credits)

This course is an intensive examination of the past and present of one of the most fascinating cities in the world, Mexico City. Paying particular attention to space and place, we will examine the historical processes (political, intellectual, ecological, social, and cultural) that are manifest in the urban development of the megacity. By taking this class in Mexico City, students will be able to visit some of the landmarks of Mexican History, as well as several other significant museums and archaeological sites. Similarly, by engaging in an in-depth reflection structured along textual, visual, and in-sight materials and experiences, students will be invited to reflect about matters of change and continuity as well as how national socio-political trends are reflected in local contexts, thus also learning to reflect about the interpretive relationship between the micro-macro levels of analysis. Prerequisite: SPAN 2350.