

Urban Studies 530

Alternative Urban Futures

Silverman 422-2164 carolsil@sfsu.edu

Spring 08

HSS 138

Office Hours Tuesday 6:50-7:50

In this course, we will discuss how we might reorganize our cities and metropolitan regions so as to produce a future that is more sustainable, equitable and livable. We will start our discussion by asking whether place has meaning in contemporary life. What then do we mean by a "livable" city? Is this something that reflects particular class and other values or are there more universal values at issue? We will move to a discussion of how to create cities that are more environmentally sustainable – looking at European and other models for ideas. We will then talk about issues of equity – how can our urban futures provide for all of us, rather than the affluent few.

In our conversation about the city, we will pay attention to people who talk about mechanisms for creating urban change including more traditional planning models, the new urbanism, privatism and sustainable development.

A general theme that will pervade the course is the extent, when we talk about possible urban futures we really are talking more broadly about the structure of our society. A related theme will look at the extent to which urban social change can be "planned," and at who should be responsible for determining the direction of change.

Requirements for the course include a paper that will be due in two sections and two take home quizzes. The paper will address an urban problem. It can either be broadly or narrowly defined – for example freeway congestion or the loss of affordable rental space in the Mission for community service agencies. The first 8-10 page paper will explore the dimensions of the problem. The second paper, of similar length, will present the writer's own solution. People writing on similar topics will be given class time to prepare a group presentation where they discuss the dimensions of the issue and possible solutions.

Each paper and the two quizzes will contribute twenty percent to the final grade. The final twenty percent will come from class participation. This will include both the presentations and assignments involving course readings. Students will be expected to give weekly suggested discussion questions for the reading. More details will be given in class.

Readings for the class include:

Timothy Beatley: **Green Urbanism: Learning from European Cities,**

Washington D.C.: Island Press, 2000.

Emilie Buchwald. **Toward the Livable City**. Minneapolis, Minn.: Milkweed Editions, 2003.

There will also be a short electronic reader available through the library's homepage.

Outline of Weeks

Week One 1/27	Dreaming the Future: What Might be Different? What should be different?
Week Two 2/3	<i>Livability</i> City and Suburb: Does place matter? What is uniquely urban that we want to preserve? Reading: Buchwald: pp. 5-28.
Week Three 2/10	What makes a city livable? Reading: Buchwald: pp. 55-77, 89-96.
Week Four 2/17	What is community? How is it sustained by place? How does it sustain place? Reading: Buchwald: 212-230, Beatley, C3.
Week Five 2/24	<i>Sustainability</i> What is unsustainable about the way that our communities are organized in space – issues of sprawl and environmental injustice Reading: Beatley C1,C2 Paper one due
Week Six 3/3	How can we lesson our dependence on the automobile: transit alternatives Reading: Beatley: C4,5,6, Buchwald: pp. 41-52.
Week Seven 3/10	Bringing Nature back into the City; Green Building Reading: Beatley, C7, Buchwald, pp. 79-87. First Quiz Distributed
Week Eight 3/17	Creating a more sustainable infrastructure for our city: energy, waste and water Reading: Beatley, C8,C9, Buchwald, pp. 143-157.

Week Nine
4/7

Equity

How can we provide decent affordable housing for all?

How does housing create equity?

Reading: Buchwald, pp. 181-211, National Low Income Housing Coalition, (in reader)

<http://www.nlihc.org/doc/housingmyths.pdf>

Week Ten
4/14

How can we create more opportunities and sustainable employment?

Reading: Beatley, C12

Week Eleven
4/21

Regional Equity: How can we create more equitable regions?

Reading: Buchwald, pp, 169-180, Drier, Mollenkopf, and Sundstrom, Regionalism, New and Old (in reader).

Second Paper Due

Week Twelve
4/28

Possibilities

Strategies for Change: Smart Growth and the New Urbanism

Reading: Buckwald: pp 277-282, Gearin, Smart Growth or Smart Growth Machine? (in reader)

Student presentations

Week Thirteen
5/5

The Role of Government and Citizenry

Reading: Beatley C11, Buchwald, pp 119-139, 161-148

Student presentations

Week Fourteen
5/12

Conclusion – so what is possible?

Reading Buchwald, pp 245-276 Gillham, Conclusion (in reader)

Second Quiz distributed.