Office Hours:
My office hours are Monday from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. You also are welcome to drop by any time to see if I’m available or to make an appointment to be sure that I will be.

Course Description:
If economics is the study of scarce resources, then this class is the study of one scarce resource in particular: space. My goal is to introduce you to new ways of thinking about how we organize ourselves spatially and about both the advantages and disadvantages of forming population clusters. We will start by examining how and why cities form, current population trends in the United States, and the growth of urban areas. We will then discuss land prices and land use patterns, transportation, housing, local government, and crime. Along the way we will explore issues such as poverty and discrimination in the inner city, the role of housing in the recent financial crisis, whether big box stores are bad, and what Hurricane Katrina revealed about the city of New Orleans.

Readings:

Optional Textbook:
Although several lectures are based on this book, it is not required nor, despite being a very nice text, is it recommended that you purchase it for this course. Two copies of the text are on reserve at the library. These copies are of the 5th and 6th editions, but are quite similar to the 7th.

Required Books:


Articles:
I will frequently refer to or assign readings from academic journals and the popular press. These are listed in the schedule of topics later in this syllabus. All articles are available in the classes folder. You should print each article and bring it with you to class.

Miscellaneous:
Two movies have been assigned during the semester and will be screened for the class. Please note the scheduled screening times and notify me immediately if you have a conflict.
**Honor Code:**
You must sign the Honor Code on all assignments and exams. Exams must be your work alone, without the aid of notes of any kind. On homework assignments and blog entries, you may use any resources you like and can consult with classmates, provided the work you turn in is your own and you acknowledge the names of helpful peers. Directly copying someone else’s work, ideas or answers is an Honor Code violation with serious consequences.

**Evaluation:**
Your class score is determined by participation (10%), homeworks (40%), blog entries (25%), and a final exam (25%). The grading scale is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Average</th>
<th>Final Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93.0-100%</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>90.0-92.9%</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>86.0-89.9%</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>83.0-85.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>80.0-82.9%</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<td>76.0-79.9%</td>
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<td>73.0-75.9%</td>
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<td>70.0-72.9%</td>
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<td>60.0-69.9%</td>
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<td>&lt;60%</td>
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**Quizzes (10%)**
I will frequently give short quizzes intended to measure participation via attendance, keeping up with blog entries, and completing assigned readings. There is no opportunity make up missed quizzes, but I will drop your lowest quiz score.

**Homeworks (40%)**
There will be several written homeworks assigned during the semester. You may use any resource you like on homeworks and are free to collaborate with your classmates, but each student must turn in his or her own separate work. Be sure to list the names of the students you worked with at the top of your homework. If I feel during the course of the semester that there is not enough independent work going into homeworks, I may rescind this allowance. All homeworks are due at the start of class. Late homeworks will be deducted 10 percentage points for each day they are overdue beginning with the due date. I will not accept homeworks that are more than 1 week late.

**Blog Entries (25%)**
You are required to post two entries in our class blog [http://blogs.middlebury.edu/urbanec](http://blogs.middlebury.edu/urbanec). Each entry will document a phenomenon related to urban economics and present brief commentary and analysis of the topic. Each entry is worth 10% of your final grade, and an additional 5% is based on your comments on other students’ entries. A separate handout provides more details.

**Final Exam (25%)**
There will be a final exam that is worth 25 percent of your grade. The final is cumulative. The questions on it will be very much like those on the homeworks or like examples from class. I will also make available to you sample exams from a previous class. The final is tentatively scheduled by the college for **Saturday, May 14 from 7:00-10:00 pm**. You must be present to take the final exam on the day scheduled by the college. Do not make any plans to leave campus until the date is confirmed by the registrar’s office later this spring.
Rough Schedule of Topics and Readings

Introduction to Urban Economics
Dates: February 8

The Development of Cities
Why cities exist/ What determines city size and location/ How cities grow
Dates: February 10-March 3

Reading:
Chapters 2-5 in text (optional)


Adam Jaffee et al. 1993. “Geographic Localization of Knowledge Spillovers as Evidenced by Patent Citations.” Quarterly Journal of Economics 108(3): 577-598. (Read the first and last sections. I will explain and discuss the empirical results in class.)


Land prices/ Land-use patterns/ Sprawl
Dates: March 8-March 22

Reading:
Chapters 6-7 in text (optional)


Special Topic: Big Box Stores: Boon or Boondoggle?
Dates: March 24

Reading:
Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Prices. Brave New Films, 2005. (This is a movie. We will screen it on Wednesday, March 23 from 7 pm to approximately 8:30 pm.)

Transportation

Congestion, congestion, congestion. With a side of global warming.
Dates: April 4-April 7.

Reading:
Chapters 10-11 (optional)

The Economist. "The Unbridgeable Gap: Or, why motorists always outsmart planners, economists, and traffic engineers." September 5, 1998. (Read)


Housing

Why is housing different?/Hedonic Price Models/ Race and the Housing Market
Dates: April 12-14

Reading:
Chapters 13 (optional)


Caitlin Knowles Myers. 2004. "Discrimination and neighborhood effects: Understanding racial differentials in US housing prices." Journal of Urban Economics 56(2): 279-302. (Read Sections 1-3 and skim the rest. We will discuss Figure 2 in class.)

Special Topic: The role of housing markets in the recent financial crisis
Dates: April 19

Listening:


The provision of public goods

Efficiency, the median voter, and Tiebout sorting
Dates: April 21-April 26

Reading:
Chapters 15-16 (optional)
Crime
Dates: April 28

Reading:

The inner city and the underclass
Dates: May 3- May 5

Reading:
William Julius Wilson. 1987. The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy. The University of Chicago Press. (Read; chapters TBA.)

Judith Hellerstein, David Neumark, and Melissa McInerney. 2008. “Spatial mismatch or racial mismatch?” Journal of Urban Economics 64(): 464-479. (Read Sections 1-2. We will discuss Tables 2-4 in class.)


Spike Lee. 2006. When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts. (This is a documentary. We will screen a portion of it on Wednesday, May 4 from 7 pm to approximately 9 pm.)

Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested: that is, some books are to be read only in parts, others to be read, but not curiously, and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention.
-Sir Francis Bacon