

Geography of the Suburbs

GEOG 423

Summer 2011

Online (2nd six week session)

Course Description:

Geographic patterns of suburbanization in North America, Economic, social, political and environmental issues and planning challenges of modern suburbs. Comparative suburbanization in global perspective. Variable. Intersession and summer only.

Prerequisite: GEOG 104 and 12 credits in GEOG, SOCI, ECON, and/or POSC.

Institutional Learning Goals in this Course:

1. Liberal Knowledge and Skills of Inquiry, Critical Thinking, and Synthesis: In this course, students will utilize empirical data, conduct their own analysis, and prepare written synthesis as appropriate. In addition, issues of political and social conflict in suburbs are evaluated.
2. Core Skills: While mastering the content oriented objectives below, students will also find improvement in their written communication skills. Students will also examine statistical tables and be asked to draw conclusions from them. Problem solving skills will be addressed through evaluation of government policies, and in examining theoretical work of selected geographers.
3. Acquisition and Application of Specialized Knowledge: Selected concepts introduced in this course provide foundation knowledge for students completing the major in urban and regional planning, geography and geography-global systems.
4. Values and Social Responsibility: Students will be frequently confronted with the alternative value systems and the challenges of planning in suburban communities. Implications for decision making within and between suburbs will be developed.
5. Appreciation of Cultural Identifies: This course serves to introduce students to suburban stereotypes, and the truth of such stereotypes through the approach of contemporary geography. This course builds upon differences in the nature of places, cultural and natural landscape, and the historic perspectives of diverse cultural groups.

Specific Course Objectives:

The course will place emphasis on the economic, political, environmental and social impacts of suburban communities in North America. At the conclusion of the course, all students should be able to:

- Understand the decentralization of the American Urban system
- Learn about current trends in American Suburbs
- Discuss the process of suburban development and the need for redevelopment

- Understand the legal and political context for suburbanization in the US
- Review the efforts to enhance suburban planning in the US
- Evaluate the long term impact of suburban development on the US
- Describe differences and similarities of US and global suburbanization
- Develop an understanding of the process of urban change in the US
- Learn sources of information for the study of American suburban trends
- Examine linkages between city and suburb, and the increasing independence of suburban areas

Instructor:

Dr. Henry W. Bullamore, Gunter Hall 234
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 Office Hours: by appointment

Resource Materials:

Jon C Teaford, [The American Suburb: The Basics](#), Routledge, 2008.
 Additional materials will be available through blackboard for this course.

Evaluation:

Course evaluation will include **two exams (a midterm and a final exam)**. The exams will be short answer and essay exams. You are required to read the book ahead to do well in the class. You will need at least three hours to complete the tests. All students are required to take the tests on the examination day. If you are unable to take the test, you will need to contact me immediately. No makeup-exams will be given if you fail to contact the instructor the day before the exam. You will need to type your tests using word and send it using the Digital Drop Box. Refer to the instructions on how to use Digital Drop Box if you have not used it before.

The **two term assignments** will be due on the Friday of non exam weeks. The assignments require the student to do an independent project report on a specific topic, but as applied to a suburb of their choice. You are required to review and provide comments on appropriate readings from your book as they relate to the suburb you selected. Specific guidelines for the assignments and the scoring rubrics are posted in the assignment folder on Blackboard.

For week 1: Documenting Suburban – Central City Differences

For week 3: Exploring the Suburban Myth

There will be **one group assignment** where students will be divided into groups, and will prepare a report about suburban home renovations. The group aspect of the project will help you be aware of market forces as you develop your renovation plan.

There will be **three discussion forums**. The first forum will be posted on Tuesday of week one

and last 3 days. You are required to read the instructions carefully and respond to them. Share with others your thoughts on the issues related to the growth of suburbs. It is important that you focus more on your personal thoughts about the issues. Avoid using offensive words. Respect each others views and do not be personal. To encourage class participation, after posting your comments, you will need to respond to the comments of at least two additional students to earn full points. The second forum will be in week three, and the third in week four.

Grading of each discussion forum is:

- Your own posting = 5 points
- First response = 2 points
- Second response = 3 points

Evaluation summary for course grades:

Midterm Exam:	100 points
Assignments (2 at 75 pts each):	150 points
Final Exam:	100 points
Group Assignment:	20 points
Discussion Forum (3 at 10 pts each):	30 points
TOTAL	400 points

Course grades for undergraduates will be based on the following scale:

360-400, A; 320-359, B; 275-319, C; and 235-274, D

The grades of NC or CS are not allowed for this course. The grade of FX will be assigned to any student who does not complete all three exams and the project. Extra credit may be available based on events, news reports, or speakers during the course term. Extra credit for individual students is not possible.

Policies:

Due Dates: Students are expected to complete all exams, assignments and discussions by the scheduled date. Assignments up to 48 hours late will be accepted but will have a reduced score. Assignments will not be accepted if they are more than 48 hours late. Please note that blackboard records the submission time.

Academic Honesty: Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this course. Academic dishonesty on exams or assignments will lead to course failure. Please consult the Pathfinder for a definition of dishonesty and related issues. The Department of Geography policy on plagiarism is on blackboard for this course.

Class Disruption: Disruption of class discussions or websites will not be tolerated. Students disrupting the learning environment will be asked to leave the class. Please consult the Pathfinder for a definition of class disruption, and an explanation of university polities on disruptive behavior.

Tentative Schedule:

Lesson 1 (July 5)	Introduction: What is a suburb?
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Lesson 2 (July 7)	Development of Suburban America, Chapter 1
Lesson 3 (July 11)	Central City Decline and Suburban Impacts Assignment 1 is due by 10 pm
Lesson 4 (July 13)	Diversity in Suburban Areas, Chapter 2
Lesson 5 (July 15)	Immigration and Suburbia
Lesson 6 (July 18)	Retail Development in Suburbs, Chapter 3
Lesson 7 (July 20)	Job Opportunities and Reverse Commuting
Lesson 8 (July 22)	Midterm exam due: The exam will be available from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. You will need three hours to work on the test. Once you log onto the test module, you will need to stay in for three hours. You cannot log on and leave and come back. Blackboard allows instructor to track users.
Lesson 9 (July 25)	Governing Suburbia, Chapter 4
Lesson 10 (July 27)	Fiscal Issues in Suburban Government
Lesson 11 (July 29)	Housing in Suburbia, Chapter 5 Assignment 2 is due by 10 pm
Lesson 12 (Aug 1)	Housing Issues: Older homes and Older Americans
Lesson 13 (Aug 5)	Planning Strategies for Older Suburbs, Chapter 6
Lesson 14 (Aug 8)	Planning for new Suburban Developments
Lesson 15 (Aug 10)	Summary and Final Observations, Chapter 7
(August 12)	Final exam due: The exam will be available from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. You will need three hours to work on the test. Once you log onto the test module, you will need to stay in for three hours. You cannot log on and leave and come back. Blackboard allows instructor to track users.