

## **“Car, Home and Job: Driving More, Enjoying it Less”**

Intersession 2004

(Time: 12:00 to 2:45, Room: Gunter Hall 101)

**Objectives:** This seminar explores current issues in North American metropolitan areas. Emphasis will be placed on emerging life styles for American families. Public and private decisions about land use patterns and social/economic diversity will be discussed. Contemporary trends such as increasing auto travel, constant levels of racial/ethnic segregation, and growing interest in “smart growth” are considered.

**Course Descriptions:** IDIS 491: An interdisciplinary study of a particular topic. Activities emphasize student discussions of assigned readings, oral and written reports. Topics vary each semester. Course may be repeated. Prerequisites: Participation in the University Honors Program and Junior or Senior standing or permission of the instructor(s).

GEOG 490: A specialized topic or recent development in geography. Variable. May be repeated for credit if topics are substantially different. Prerequisite: 6 hrs or geography or permission of instructor.

**Instructor:** Dr. H.W. Bullamore  
234 Gunter Hall, 687-4413 (voice mail available)  
e-mail: [hbullamore@frostburg.edu](mailto:hbullamore@frostburg.edu)  
Office Hours: 10:00-11:00 MWF

**Texts:** Additional short articles may be provided for selected classes, and guest lecturers may suggest additional readings.

**Required Texts:** Daniel Solomon, Global City Blues, Island Press, 2003. And, Thomas Hylton, Save Our Land, Save Our Towns: A Plan for Pennsylvania, RB Books, 1995.

**Evaluation:**

- 20% First Essay (due Jan 9)
- 20% Second Essay (due Jan 16)
- 10% Group Project (due Jan 19)
- 45% Individual Project (due Jan 23)
- 5% Field Trip (TBD—in class weather permitting)

Each element of the course is assigned a letter grade. The course grade represents an average, similar to grade point average, based on the weights noted above. Class participation, field trip attendance, insights gained from homework assignments, and other non-evaluated work may also affect course grade.

**First Essay:** Each student must prepare a 3-4 page book review (between 500-900 words) on a book selected by the student on a topic related to the seminar. Prior approval of the

book by the instructor is advised, but not required. This is to be a critical review, not a summary. See attached materials on reviewing.

**Second Essay:** Each student must complete a 3-4 page essay (between 500-900 words) on selecting and purchasing a new home. The essay will begin with a statement of household needs, preferences, and finances. You may be quite creative at this stage and assume whatever degree of future “success” you wish. Then, using the internet each student will compare at least four alternative homes, select one, and then explain their selection. The essay must also document that the home is affordable. See attached notes.

**Group Project:** The Group Project has two options. Each group will provide a written report on their experience. Students will form a support group of 2 or 3 students. Option A: The group will live without driving a car for a period of at least 48 hours. At their convenience, all students will attempt to maintain their daily schedule for the 48 hour period. The car-less period must include at least one weekday, and must involve an off campus social gathering (dinner, study group...) for the group. In addition, each member of the group must go shopping. The group report will provide a description and reaction to the experience. Option B: The group will use the mass transit system for their routine activities for 48 hours, but may drive to evening events. Each member of the group must ride the bus each day. The group will provide a description of their feeling riding the bus, the level of crowding on the bus, and an evaluation of the time and money spent on the bus.

**Individual Project:** The individual project will develop a policy recommendation to make American cities better places to live. It will involve a description of the current situation, perhaps a discussion of past efforts to improve the situation, a recommendation for change, and an evaluation of the likelihood of success. While this project should build on your own experiences, it must involve original research: traditional library materials, interviews with citizens and/or experts, internet materials, and other sources. Given the shortness of time in the winter term, use of internet materials is encouraged. Consultation with the instructor is required. Selection of a specific issue for review is strongly recommended. See attached materials.

Possible topics include:

- Is owning and operating a car too cheap in America?
- Can the US eliminate racial segregation without quotas?
- What is the role of school quality in urban development?
- Why are American cities so different from European cities?
- The political will for urban change: What will it take?
- Fear of Crime: Is this a real reason for avoiding the city?
- Walking to work: Healthy, Environmentally Friendly, and nonexistent
- Obese kids and parents: the suburban auto generations
- How will the internet affect cities and job location?

**Field Trip:** The field trip will be held during class time. Hopefully, we will experience a “January thaw”. On such a day, the class will journey to near urban areas. This is intended to be an enjoyable, observation-oriented trip, but we will visit some of the best and some of the worst in late twentieth century planning: Students not attending the field trip for any reason will have the value of the project increased from 45 to 50% of the course grade. For

trip attendees, the Field Trip 5% will be assigned an A.

Policies:

Students are expected to attend each class. A student with 3 or more absences (for any reason) will suffer loss of a letter grade.

Academic honesty is expected in all matters relating to this course. Please consult Pathfinder. Academic dishonesty on essays or the individual project will lead to course failure.

Disruptive behavior in class will not be tolerated. Please consult the Pathfinder.

Schedule and Reading Assignments:

## **Part I: Modern North American Places**

Jan 5: Images and Realities

(Solomon, Part I)

- ◆ Urban, suburban and ex-urban trends
- ◆ Urban living
- ◆ Preferences for small towns

Jan 6: The Car: Priority of Personal Mobility

(Solomon, Part 2)

- ◆ More cars, more driving
- ◆ Principles of transportation planning
- ◆ Keeping the car cheap in the US

Jan 7: The American Labor Market

(Solomon, Part 2, continued)

(Guest Speaker, economics/business background)

- ◆ New jobs, new workplaces
- ◆ Job mobility and incomes
- ◆ The journey to work

Jan 8 : No Class: Research Day

Jan 9: New Urbanism

(Solomon, Part 3)

- ◆ New communities, pedestrian amenities
- ◆ More regulations: more protections
- ◆ Ten acres in Garrett County or Baltimore townhouse: Where is the environmentalist?

Jan 12: Urban Places: The Forgotten and the Rebuilt

(Solomon, Part 4)

(Guest Speaker, Kathy McKinney, City of Cumberland)

- ◆ Urban renewal and public housing
- ◆ Downtown revitalization: I'm still waiting
- ◆ Stop the expressways

- Jan 13: Services and Institutions: Recreation and Schools  
(Solomon, Part 4 continued)  
(Guest Speaker, Dr. William AuMiller, Superintendent, ACPS)
- ◆ Suburban attractions
  - ◆ Central city problems
  - ◆ Is race a factor?

- Jan 14: And what is happening in the Rest of the World?  
(Solomon, Part 5)
- ◆ Other urban models
  - ◆ Transit roles in cities

## **Part II: Urban Policy and Change**

- Jan 15: Homeownership: Tax breaks for the Middle Class  
(Solomon, Parts 6 and 7)  
(Guest Speaker, Lynn Fike, Goodfellow Agency)
- ◆ Federal and state tax policy
  - ◆ Homeownership and Investment
  - ◆ Suburban and Exurban development

- Jan 16: Race and Poverty: Key Issues for Urban Policy  
(Hylton, Chapters 1 and 2 )  
(Guest Speaker, TBD)
- ◆ Fear and Prejudice
  - ◆ Home as an Investment
  - ◆ Amenities and Lifestyle

- Jan 19: Decentralization: Jobs and Services  
(Hylton, Chapters 3 and 4)
- ◆ From Shopping Center to Mall to Edge City
  - ◆ Why go downtown
  - ◆ Changing Commuting Patterns, Longer Commutes

- Jan 20: Transportation: Key to Successful Urban Places  
(Hylton, Chapters 5 and 6)
- ◆ Federal highway policy
  - ◆ Mass transit support
  - ◆ European comparisons

- Jan 21: Concepts of Smart Growth
- ◆ Goals: save tax money, protect the environment
  - ◆ Making rebuilding attractive
  - ◆ An alternative to suburbanization

### **Part III: Project Reports**

Jan 22: Individual Project Presentations begin

Jan 23: Individual Project Presentations conclude