

**THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG**  
**Department of Sociology**  
**SOCI 2208 Urban Sociology**  
**Second Term 2024-25**

Instructor: Dr. LI Hang 李鏗  
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Office: Sino Building 432  
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Time: 2:30pm – 4:15pm Monday  
Venue: YIA LT4  
Course website:  
<https://blackboard.cuhk.edu.hk/>

Teaching assistants:

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***Course Description***

Sociology has always had an intimate relationship with cities. Urbanization — the increase of the share of the population living in cities — was one of the developments that early sociologists sought to study and explain. Since then, the global urban population has only continued to increase. Today, over half of humanity lives in cities and towns. Understanding urban society is no less essential than in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Urban sociology has many sides, but in this course, students will learn about four main topics: 1) Early theories and classic statements on urban life, 2) the distinctive social character of the “urban experience,” 3) making sense of urban space in capitalism through various theoretical perspectives, and 4) the “hardware and software” of urban cities, addressing issues such as affordable housing, gentrification, creative class and minorities in the city.

***Learning Outcomes***

After completing this course, students should be able to:

1. Describe the distinctive social character of the urban experience through urban ethnography
2. Analyze urban social phenomena and contemporary challenges through multiple theoretical frameworks and across different international contexts
3. Examine urban development patterns through both physical infrastructure and social dimensions with attention to local and global contexts

***Recommended Textbook***

Lin, J., & Mele, C. (2013). *The urban sociology reader*. Routledge.

Gottdiener, M., Hutchison, R., & Michael, T. (2018). *The new urban sociology* (5th ed.). Routledge

- These textbooks are ***accessible online*** via the library website. You can use them as companions to the main course content, though they do not cover all the topics we discuss.

## ***Course Syllabus***

1. Introduction
2. Early Theories
  - Classic Statements on City and Urban Life
  - The Chicago School of Urban Sociology
3. The Urban Experience
  - Urban Ethnography
  - In Search of Community
  - Public Space and Civic Empowerment
  - Subcultural Diversity
4. Making Sense of Urban Space in Capitalism
  - Space as Social Organization: Henri Lefebvre
  - The Commodification of Urban Space: David Harvey
  - The City and the Space of Flow: Manuel Castell
  - The Growth Machine: Logan and Molotch
  - Global Cities in the World Economy: Saskia Sassen
5. “Hardware and Software” of Urban City
  - The Crisis of Affordable Housing
  - Gentrification and Ghettoisation
  - Creative Class in the City
  - Minorities in the City

## ***Teaching Modes and Learning Activities***

The lecturer, in person, will conduct all lectures according to the schedule provided above. The teaching assistant will help students understand the course content by leading various learning activities during tutorials. The teaching assistant will schedule the class time for tutorials early in the term.

## ***Assessment Tasks***

- |                             |     |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| (I) Tutorial Participation  | 20% |
| (II) Mini Urban Ethnography | 35% |
| (III) In-class Presentation | 15% |
| (IV) Final Paper            | 30% |

## ***Assessment Rubrics***

### *Grade descriptors*

- A A thorough understanding of the course materials and an outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.
- A- A solid understanding of the course materials and an outstanding performance on almost all learning outcomes.
- B An adequate understanding of the course materials and a substantial performance, on average, on all learning outcomes.

- C A basic understanding of the course materials and a satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.
- D A partial understanding of the course materials and an inadequate performance on a number of learning outcomes
- F A poor understanding of the course materials and an unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes.