Course Description

Catalogue description: Analysis of changing urban systems, with examples drawn primarily from Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

In *Urban Geography*, “One can find articles on urban transformations around the world, feminist urban geography and queer theory, homelessness and welfare reform, urban identity and citizenship, racial segregation and environmental justice, patterns of e-commerce as well as traditional manufacturing, transportation and land use, urban governance regimes, implications of globalization and transnational immigration flows. The list goes on and on, speaking to the rich tapestry of the field as it has been woven throughout its recent history, nourished by the quantitative revolution, the rise of Marxian and humanistic geographies, and the effervescence of feminist, postmodern, and post-Colonial thought.”
Jennifer Wolch

“...implicit positivism remains strong within human geography. A very large number of geographers argue that they are scientists, and seek laws or mathematical models that purport to explain the geographical world. ... However, by ignoring wider philosophical debate spatial scientists often fail to make a robust case for their approach to fellow geographers. As a consequence many [geographers] are seduced by the criticisms levelled at positivism and quantification more broadly, and become suspicious and wary of such research. Rather than tackle these criticisms, spatial science increasingly relies on the commercial and policy cache of GIS to make implicitly positivist geography sustainable.”

Rob Kitchin

“Since the heady days of the quantitative revolution, each new paradigm in geography has attacked quantitative methods for their irrelevance, abuse, or general inadequacy at revealing the human condition.... The critique from feminists, though, puts me in a difficult position: As a feminist and a quantitative geographer, I find myself torn apart. Is there a place for quantitative methods in feminist geography?”

Sara McLafferty

“As a geographer who uses mathematical methods in order to critique neoclassical economic geography and develop a Marxian political economic alternative, who has supported the growth of feminist, anti-essentialist and post-structuralist human geographies, and who works with marginal communities struggling to use GIS to better understand and improve their environments, I have long been convinced that progressive human geography can take advantage of quantitative practices. This seems to be an increasingly unpopular position.”

Eric Sheppard

“What has become of critique, I wonder, when an editorial in the New York Times” notes that Republican pollster Frank Luntz advises his Congressional clients stalling action dealing with global warming to “emphasize that the evidence is not complete. ‘Should the public come to believe that the scientific issues are settled,’ he writes, ‘their views about global warming will change accordingly. Therefore, you need to continue to make the lack of scientific certainty a primary issue.’”

Do you see why I am worried? I myself have spent some time in the past trying to show ‘the lack of scientific certainty’ inherent in the construction of facts. I too made it a ‘primary issue.’ But I did not exactly aim at fooling the public by obscuring the certainty of a closed argument -- or did I? After all, I have been accused of just that sin. Still, I’d like to believe that, on the contrary, I intended to emancipate the public from prematurely naturalized objectified facts. Was I foolishly mistaken? Have things changed so fast?

In which case the danger would no longer be coming from an excessive confidence in ideological arguments posturing as matters of fact -- as we have learned to combat so efficiently in the past -- but from an excessive distrust of good matters of fact disguised as bad ideological biases! While we spent years trying to detect the real prejudices hidden behind the appearance of objective statements, do we now have to reveal the real objective and incontrovertible facts hidden behind the illusion of prejudices? And yet entire Ph.D. programs are still running to make sure that good American kids are learning the hard way that facts are made up, that there is no such thing as natural, unmediated, unbiased access to truth, that we are always prisoners of language, that we

always speak from a particular standpoint, and so on, while dangerous extremists are using the very same argument of social construction to destroy hard-won evidence that could save our lives.

...a certain form of critical spirit has sent us down the wrong path, encouraging us to fight the wrong enemies and, worst of all, to be considered as friends by the wrong sort of allies because of a little mistake in the definition of its main target. The question was never to get away from facts but closer to them, not fighting empiricism but, on the contrary, renewing empiricism.”

Bruno Latour

“There exists an eager, even aggressive, audience for empirical research and an active market in such research. That market has altered the nature of the work. Data have become more political and therefore at once more in demand and less important. The data, in the words of Judge Jones and Professor Zywicki, are ‘mutually canceling.’ I disagree. Good studies and bad studies are not ‘mutually canceling.’ Regardless of what some advocates may claim, there are some objective facts and, hence, some objective truths. Whether public policy reflects that reality is not a choice left to those in the academy, but producing and protecting the research itself is our choice and our moral obligation.”

Elizabeth Warren

This course examines the use of systematic and synthetic analytical methods to document, diagnose, and challenge urban social inequalities. ‘Systematic and synthetic analytical methods’ is an inconvenient, cumbersome phrase, but it is necessary to convey an accurate description of our task: to mobilize a spirit of calculated orderliness to break down or dissolve complex problems into constituent parts for detailed study, and to assemble the various parts into a coherent whole. We will consider the production and distribution of quantitative data on urban phenomena at various geographical scales; the use of univariate and multivariate descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, models, and mathematical metaphors, mappings, and visualizations; the deployment of systematic searches of press, legislative, legal, and regulatory databases; mixed-methods approaches seeking to break down the quantitative-qualitative dualism; the construction of compilations, indices, and tabulations derived from abstractions of qualitative data sources; the use of historical, political, and legal analysis to diagnose the history of databases and indicators produced and used by governmental entities and private corporations; and progressive, activist organizing efforts to counter state- and corporate-driven priorities in measurement.

Our work in this seminar is premised on five key assumptions. First, the intensification of urban social inequality over the past two generations is deeply problematic, and demands a sustained commitment of theoretically-informed empirical research, activist commitment to organizing and social justice, and careful strategic engagement with existing structures of law and public policy. Second, human geographers should be part of the interdisciplinary effort to document, understand, and challenge urban inequality. Third, geographers will be excluded from large parts of this interdisciplinary effort if they are unable to engage with the array of methods and techniques recognized across many of the social sciences. Over the past generation, many geographers have been taught to avoid these techniques (especially quantitative or statistical

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7 All from Latin modifications of the original Greek, systema (calculated orderliness), analusis (a dissolving), meta (after) hodos (way) logos (knowledge), sunthesis (a putting together).
approaches), because of the ascendance of multiple, influential, and competing “post-positivist” epistemologies. Despite the foundational disagreements among post-positivist approaches, they do find common ground in a) a rejection of positivism as a fundamentally flawed epistemology, b) a presumption of the equivalence of quantitative and statistical methods with positivist epistemological claims, c) a suspicion of quantitative and statistical techniques as instruments of state surveillance, governmentality, and oppression, and d) a commitment to qualitative methods as epistemologically superior and politically progressive. Fourth, the shared assumptions of post-positivist approaches are historically and socially constructed; linkages between methodology and epistemology are negotiated and chosen, as are the presumed dichotomies between qualitative and quantitative inquiry. Fifth, these shared assumptions become facts -- quite literally, things that are done -- when they are widely performed and repeated. When talented, hardworking young scholars who see themselves as politically progressive, intellectually ambitious, and theoretically cutting-edge decide to avoid learning methods perceived as quantitative, statistical, or otherwise ‘positivist,’ the result is a powerful self-selection process. Each scholar who makes this decision helps to reduce the pool of quantitative skills amongst political progressives, while also relinquishing the opportunity to communicate with (or challenge) conservative quantitative scholars and policy analysts on their own terrain.

**Things Done, Things That Could be Done**

Not long ago, Robert W. Lake, Co-Editor of *Urban Geography*, offered a frank and sobering assessment of the state of much social science research under the simple, provocative title, “Just the Facts.” Lake is anything but a hardcore just-the-facts positivist. But amidst the horrors of impending war and worsening social exclusion and structural inequality, he noted that “One would be hard pressed to discern the severity and pervasiveness of these matters in the pages of most academic journals.” Lake suggested that we have lost the spirit of Herbert Gans, Michael Harrington, Gunnar Myrdal, and others who were “prompted by a moral repugnance of observable inequalities and an insistent, unquenchable optimism that society could and would do better if only the facts were placed in evidence.” Lake’s lament is of course one voice among many in the continuing scholarly debate on the purpose, meaning, and relevance of urban research. Yet his assessment is particularly valuable as a reminder of how much has changed in the last generation, as urban geographers have questioned the meaning, limits, and relevance of structural imperatives, observable inequalities, and the facts.

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8 *From the Latin *factum*, “*a thing done.”*


12 Facts? “There are no facts as such. We must always begin by introducing a meaning in order for there to be a fact.” Friedrich Nietzsche, cited in Michael Watts (1988). “Struggles over Land, Struggles Over Meaning: Some Thoughts on Naming, Peasant Resistance and the Politics of Place.” In Reginald G. Golledge, Helen Couclelis, and Peter Gould, editors, *A Ground for Common Search*, pp. 31-50. Goleta, CA: The Santa Barbara Geographical Press. This kind of recognition is one of the most valuable insights of poststructuralist thought. But it is vulnerable to abuse and misappropriation, where it can undermine dangerously creative reconstructions of acts “specifically intended” (the precise objective, not general intent) to cause “severe pain and suffering” (“the level that would ordinarily be associated with a sufficiently serious physical condition or injury such as death, organ failure, or serious impairment of body functions...” p. 6). The meaning being introduced in order for
Can we recover any of this unquenchable optimism? What can be done to place the facts in evidence, and to mobilize them to challenge urban inequalities, observed and otherwise? Can society do better? In this seminar, we tackle these questions from initial premises that “critical engagement and scholarly rigor are understood as compatible properties”\(^\text{13}\) and that for better or worse the links between scientific means (epistemology, methodology, technique) and ends (politics, morality, ethics) are contingent and contextual, not necessary and immutable. Our goal is to marshal a diverse set of theoretical, methodological, and empirical traditions to forge a ‘hybrid’ geography that can serve as an instrument of strategic and tactical maneuvers for social justice and new emancipatory geographies.\(^\text{14}\) The choices involved in fusing divergent traditions are never free of tightly woven networks, structures, and constructions of socio-cultural meaning and power; yet any decision to abandon methodologies on the basis of their historical abuses is a risky move of unilateral disarmament. “Genuine refutation must penetrate the power of the opponent and meet him on the ground of his strength; the case is not won by attacking him somewhere else and defeating him where he is not.”\(^\text{15}\) Insurgent quantitative practices,\(^\text{16}\) and a


\(\text{14}\) Theodore W. Adorno (1982). *Against Epistemology*. Oxford: Blackwell. Quote from p. 5, cited in Sheppard, “Quantitative Geography.” We take the tactical and strategic advice of Sheppard and Adorno seriously in this course, for the purpose of learning important maneuvers frequently deployed on the battlegrounds of urban policy and public discourse. Yet this approach does not mean that we lose respect for alternative approaches among allies. I am grateful to Josh Hite for alerting me to a quote from Slavoj Žižek, who in turn quotes Simon Critchley, who sees things very differently from Sheppard and Adorno: “Perhaps it is at this intensely situational, indeed local level that the atomising force of capitalist globalisation is to be met, contested and resisted. That is, it is not to be resisted by constructing a global anti-globalisation movement that, at its worst, is little more than a highly-colourful critical echo of the globalisation it contests. It is rather to be resisted by occupying and controlling the terrain upon which one stands, where one lives, works, acts and thinks. This needn’t involve millions of people. It needn’t even involve thousands. It could involve just a few at first. It could be what Julia Kristeva has recently called the domain of ‘intimate revolt.’ That is, politics begins right here, locally, practically and specifically, around a concrete issue and not by running off to protest at some meeting of the G8. You shouldn’t meet your enemy on their ground, but on your own, on the ground that you have made your own. Also think of the money

\(\text{15}\) “What we call the reality-based community.” The aide interrupted Ron Suskind’s questions about enlightenment principles and empiricism, saying “That’s not the way the world really works anymore .... We’re an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you’re studying that reality -- as you will -- we’ll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that’s how things will sort out. We’re history’s actors ... and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do.” Ron Suskind (2004). “Without a Doubt.” *New York Times Magazine*, October 17, p. 44. History’s actors quickly dismissed White House Economic Advisor Lawrence Lindsey in 2003 after he made the mistake of assigning an economic estimate to the cost of one of the facts of this new reality-creation enterprise. Lindsey’s estimate at the time was $200 billion for the Iraq war; three years later, the (now) dissident economist Joseph Stiglitz provides a detailed analysis of direct and indirect costs incurred and expected over the next several years, estimating a total between $1 trillion and $2 trillion. Linda Bilmes and Joseph E. Stiglitz (2006). *The Economic Costs of the Iraq War: An Appraisal Three Years after the Beginning of the Conflict*. New York: Columbia University; available at http://www.josephstiglitz.com. Of more direct interest to urbanists is the concern of Ceri Peach, commenting on urban social research on race and ethnicity. In recognition of the consensus that so many of the categories of inquiry are social constructs, scholars, “when speaking in conferences, often engage in a kind of aerobic exercise in which they raise both arms and use two fingers of each hand to inscribe inverted commas around the terms which they are forced to use but to which they do not subscribe.” Ceri Peach (2000). “Discovering White Ethnicity and Parachuted Plurality.” *Progress in Human Geography* 24, 620-626, quote from p. 621. It is deeply ironic that the rich flowering of scholarship on the social construction of science and identity has coincided with countervailing trends in politics and public policy, as conflicts, legalities, and other elements of the state have acted to undermine social constructions of scientific and welfare, affirmative action, labor, and organizing rights) while aggressively building and defending others (prisons and racialized criminality, family values and heteropatriarchal marriage, the American Homeland, a New American Century). Lake’s discussion of facts not “facts” might simply be stylistic, in the spirit of Adam Hochschild’s playful comments in the margin of the early draft of *The Commercialization of Intimate Life*: “Oy!” “So” “many” “quotation marks” “around” “so” “many” “words” “makes” “the” “essay” “seem” “weird.” Arlie Russell Hochschild (2003). *The Commercialization of Intimate Life: Notes from Home and Work*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. ix. But other unapologetic titles suggest otherwise, especially Robert W. Lake (2002). “Bring Back Big Government.” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 26(4), 815-822.

\(\text{16}\) Theor. “Just the Facts,” p. 702.
strategic positivism chastened by our witness to the reactionary appropriation of the legitimacy claims of objectivity and metaphysical realism, can help the urban geographer committed to social justice to penetrate the power of her opponent and meet him on his own territory, to create new and emancipatory urban systems. Accordingly, we will examine a series of research initiatives that fuse quasi-positivist empirical analysis of urban inequality with critical social theory, in a pluralist recognition of “the rich tapestry of the field as it has been woven throughout its recent history, nourished by the quantitative revolution, the rise of Marxism and humanistic geographies, and the effervescence of feminist, postmodern, and post-Colonial thought.” Case studies include the magnification of inequalities in so-called ‘global’ cities; recent trajectories of metropolitan class polarization; feminist perspectives on methodological debates and daily urban life; racial segregation and policy responses to concentrated urban poverty; evolving inequalities of gentrification and anti-homeless policies; dilemmas of identity and categorization in data, activism, and regulation; and informational activism in digital cities in the shadow of threats of nascent forms of ‘geo-slavery.’ Some of the material involves multivariate quantitative methods, but this seminar is not an uncritical methodological survey. It is also not an extended external critique. We’re aiming for something in between these two, a critical engagement with the value and limits of the methods for understanding and challenging contemporary urban inequalities -- sensitized to the need to frame constructive criticism within a spirit of care of the subject.

Readings

All required readings for the seminar will be available in a password-protected directory, at http://www.geog.ubc.ca/~ewyly/Private/g552/

Evaluation and Deadlines

Evaluation is based on three components: participation in seminar discussions (15 percent), written discussion papers (15 percent) and a final paper on a topic to be agreed with the instructor (70 percent).
Components of Final Course Mark

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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Participation in seminar discussions</td>
<td>Includes serving as lead facilitator for one seminar meeting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Written discussion papers</td>
<td>Due at the beginning of each seminar meeting. Bring enough copies to distribute to all seminar participants.</td>
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<td>70</td>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>Proposal deadline: 9:00 AM February 5</td>
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<td>First draft deadline: 9:00 AM March 4</td>
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Schedule

On the following pages is a tentative schedule with corresponding readings and references. For each week, we will all read a set of “core” articles or chapters. Discussants will present commentary and analysis for some of the other readings, exploring the way that respective articles relate to the core readings we’ve all examined. Written discussion papers should engage with the readings, but should not be constrained by them: be creative, take risks, ask questions, explore possibilities, and do whatever you think will be most helpful for your own project or for our collective “barn-raising” project. Bring enough copies of your discussion paper for all seminar participants.


Please read through this syllabus, either before or after our first meeting, and then read:

Some of the data sources referenced at http://www.geog.ubc.ca/~ewyly/data.html


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22 There’s a lot of data out there, of varied quality, significance, relevance, utility, and potential. I’ve compiled a list of data sources that I’ve learned about over the years, but the list only scratches the surface. There’s so much information that we are increasingly crashing against the distinction made by the national security analyst Gregory Treverton -- between puzzles and mysteries. (Think of something along the lines of Donald Rumsfeld’s famous distinction between known unknowns and unknown unknowns.) See Malcolm Gladwell (2007). “Open Secrets.” The New Yorker, January 8, 44-53.

23 I apologize for the poor quality of the multiple-generation photocopy, but I obtained this from Trevor Barnes after Bonnie Kaserman told me that Trevor got it from Jayne Walenta, who kept it in her files after taking a graduate seminar at the University of Kentucky several years ago.

Jan 15 Critical Analytical Urbanism.

*Everyone Reads:*


*Discussant Reports on:*


The conceptualization of “critical analytical urbanism” is a fusion of Eric Sheppard’s notion of “insurgent quantitative practices,” Dorling and Simpson’s work with the Radical Statistics Group, Martin Cadwallader’s reference to “analytical urban geography,” and my own thinking on the possibilities for a strategic positivism. Several years ago, Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift offered the inaugural essay in the ‘Interventions’ section of *Antipode*, under the title, “What Kind of Economic Theory for What Kind of Economic Geography?” Amin and Thrift’s intervention was born of frustration amongst economic geographers trying to engage with the powerful domain of mainstream economics, with its restrictive methodological and theoretical criteria for valid knowledge. Amin and Thrift argued that much of the best current economic thinking is taking place outside the mainstream, led by dissident economists as well as those without disciplinary credentials in economics; as a result, Amin and Thrift suggest, economic

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geographers no longer need to struggle for a seat at the table with mainstream economics: “...at this point in time, we need to think seriously about whom we as economic geographers want to play out with. We think we would be fooling ourselves if we believe we can lie down with the lion and become anything more than prey.”

Amin and Thrift’s provocative metaphor (economists as lions, geographers as prey) attracted considerable attention, including the Plummer and Sheppard essay listed above, as well as eight additional responses by prominent geographers. One of the central axes of debate over Amin and Thrift’s intervention involves a presumed dualism between means and ends: quantitative inquiry is associated with orthodox, mainstream, or reactionary status-quo research, while qualitative inquiry is believed to foster greater emancipatory possibilities. The latter side of the dualism is directly contradicted by the rich history of anthropological ethnographies placed in service of colonialism, while the former rests on a caricature of quantitative research that no longer holds. As Poon concludes in a recent review: “Few quantitative human geographers today fully subscribe to the revered modernist principles of certainty and predictability that commonly characterize nomothetic research using the scientific method. ... production of quantitative methods by geographers ... is increasingly shaped by concerns of methodological legislation, where jurors are encouraged to discriminate between wheat and chaff when confronted with evidence that encompasses spatial uncertainty and diversity.” The continued reproduction of simplified caricatures of quantitative inquiry, although understandable in light of key generational issues bound up with the distinctive disciplinary history of the (erroneously labeled) quantitative revolution and its prominent advocates, has limited trans-disciplinary engagement with important strategic movements to advance social justice on geographic issues.

For two decades beginning in the late 1960s, dissidents in geography labored to produce rich critiques of a quantitative-positivist methodology and epistemology that was understood to be hegemonic in the field. Urban geography was at the center of this intellectual, political, and methodological turmoil. Thirty years on, however, many geographers have absorbed only the most abridged versions of this rich history, perpetuating simplified caricatures of quantification and positivism. A poignant contrast with some of these caricatures (which are premised on an asserted comprehensive understanding of, and transcendence of, positivist epistemology) comes from legal scholarship, which has only recently undertaken comprehensive efforts to infuse social-scientific epistemologies and methodologies into judicial reasoning. For a lengthy yet accessible analysis of the current effort to infuse contemporary positivist social science into the law, see the work of Lee Epstein and Gary King. Within geography, one of the most systematic attempts to fuse a more productive methodological and epistemological agenda comes from John Paul Jones’ effort to engage a realist perspective with Emilio Casetti’s expansion method.

Jan 22  A New World Urban Hierarchy?

Everyone Reads:


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**Discussant Reports on:**


This week, we tackle two central questions: Have urban systems fundamentally changed amidst the much-hyped process of globalization? Precisely how does the global-financial space of flows impose constraints on individual cities?

1. Is there a world urban system? If so, is it fundamentally different from the urban networks of prior generations? In the 1990s, the work of several prominent theorists seemed to provide positive answers to both questions, and in many quarters today it is taken as axiomatic that globalization has altered the role and position of cities. Yet empirical work has lagged far behind the sweeping interpretations of the global-city theorists, and as Short and his colleagues demonstrate, the absence of relevant relational data is the “dirty little secret” of world-cities research. Given the enormous interest in global-city rankings in the popular and policy arenas, careless methodologies carry enormous risks: the questionable global-city rankings that permeate popular thinking have the effect of erasing cities of millions from the geographical
imagination -- creating, as Short puts it, “black holes” in the urban network. Fortunately, in the last few years there has been a rigorous and sustained effort to test competing hypotheses on world cities and to make data available to other researchers for independent replication. Much of this effort is underway in the Globalization and World Cities (GAWC) Research Group at Loughborough University, supervised by Peter Taylor and Jonathan Beaverstock, at http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/gy/research/gawc.html.

2. Discursive constructions, individual agency, and material structures have mutually reinforced the vulnerability of individual cities to mobile capital, raising the stakes on a broad interdisciplinary debate on local autonomy that has raged since the late 1970s. Unfortunately, many of the contributions to this debate have portrayed a global, mobile capital in highly abstract terms, with only selective and anecdotal evidence of global-local relations. Here, we examine efforts to shed light on the anatomy of a particular institutional ensemble -- a set of specific actors embedded in the national and transnational structural spaces of capital flows -- and the role of this infrastructure in disciplining local urban policy choices.

Everyone Reads:


Discussant Reports on:


Depending on how you approach the literature, there is either broad consensus or widespread skepticism in response to Saskia Sassen’s argument that global cities magnify broader polarization processes in the economic transformations of the last generation. There has been an accelerating effort to devise rigorous empirical tests for this proposition, but at this point there is relatively little evidence (particularly in contrast to the number of studies of investment flows, headquarters locations, and producer service networks). The
stakes on the global-city inequality thesis are enormous, however: if inequality is especially pronounced in global cities, then it implies some role for regional and local policy interventions (particularly if there is intransigence at the national level). Michael Storper disputes Sassen’s hypothesis, which he portrays as the ‘yuppies and servant classes’ model of an hourglass-shaped occupational structure; Storper argues that polarization is by no means limited to the highest-order ‘global’ cities, or even to cities in general -- implying that responses to polarization must be pursued at the nation-state or transnational scale. Two other detailed empirical studies provide valuable yet mixed evidence on the hypothesis for Hong Kong and New York (Chiu and Lui, Norgaard). Peter Marcuse and Ronald Van Kempen summarize a series of case studies of globalizing cities throughout the world, concluding that there is no fundamentally new spatial order, but that there are important changes in the trajectory and character of specific kinds of inequalities. The ‘global city’ research stream in urban geography and sociology is too often unconnected with the urban political science research on the relations between public policy and inequality, which typically takes globalization as a background condition before focusing on domestic political dilemmas of inequality, usually in the U.S. There are, however, several valuable case studies of specific transnational facets of polarization in particular global cities, including Cox and Watt’s limited application of survey and sample selection methods and a small number of interviews with domestic workers in London; Susser’s qualitative account based on several years of observation of local social service institutions and in-depth interviews with a small number of mothers in New York City; Boschken’s theoretical explication of the institutional and political dynamics of upper-middle class professionals and the effects on public policy, along with rankings of U.S. cities; and Swyngedouw’s comparative analysis of the context and consequences of large-scale redevelopment projects, emphasizing the increased socioeconomic polarization and the establishment of “exceptionality measures” in elite-driven, anti-democratic local governance. One final note: there is almost no empirical analysis of the relationship between hypothesized global-city processes and inequalities as measured by wealth, or alternatively measured by what economists refer to as ‘permanent’ income; this kind of analysis is sorely needed. There is a great deal of economic inquiry on the latter issues but this work has yet to be engaged with urban geographic inquiry on changing urban systems.

Feb 5 Mapping and Mobilizing: Metropolitan Class Polarization and Living Wage Movements.

Paper proposal due.

Everyone Reads:


Discussant Reports on:


Issues of difference and the construction of identity have become central to urban social inquiry in the last two decades, replacing what was at times a narrow and deterministic focus on class as an analytical category. For some, political economy research in the 1970s and 1980s “produced a discourse of Capitalism” emphasizing unity, singularity, and totality -- and thus operated “powerfully to discourage and marginalize projects of class transformation.”\(^{36}\) Poststructuralist thought offered a possible solution to this paralysis: “It may be necessary...to think within a radically different accounting regime that does not draw on a centered vision of economic totalities, an essentialist understanding of economic dynamics and a conflation of the identity of all enterprises with a singular structure and subjectivity, that of the universal rational calculating subject.”\(^{37}\) Unfortunately, such theoretical advances in the 1990s paralleled cultural and economic trends in a “tricky gestalt between a subversive progressivism and reactionary essentialism. Corporate capitalism has caught up with our categories and quite effortlessly leveraged their buyout.”\(^{38}\) Amidst the co-optation exemplified by guerrilla marketing, consumer semiotics, and other fusions of capital and hijacked poststructuralist thought, “we find ourselves without a sophisticated language of class precisely at the time when, globally, class is being reasserted with a vengeance.”\(^{39}\) And yet on-the-streets organizing and advocacy have given rise to a growing living wage movement that may alter, in some small way, the urban politics of class. The movement’s success may ultimately hinge on a fusion of political appeals based on structuralist and poststructuralist narratives, along with an arsenal of applied econometrics deployed to challenge the dominant “free” market policy bias.


\(^{39}\) Smith, “What Happened to Class?”, p. 1011.
Feb 12  Transnationalizing Workfare Cities.

Everyone Reads:


Discussant Reports on a few of these:


Any contemporary class analysis -- whether rooted in dynamic constellations of power relations or in theories of the appropriation and circulation of surplus value -- is destabilized by the massive transformation of the state in the last thirty years. In most wealthy economies, the state has abandoned its role in cushioning market-driven social inequalities, and now takes actions that often magnify and reinforce disparities. Labor market institutions are at the heart of these changes, particularly in cities. Federal and state welfare restructuring pushed hundreds of thousands of former welfare recipients into the low-wage workforce; federal and state regulatory changes have magnified macroeconomic trends encouraging the informalization and privatization of the employment relation, creating a vast quasi-underground labor market that is vulnerable to particularly severe forms of exploitation. Expanded immigration has transnationalized many aspects of these local, state, and federal policy frameworks of inequality, with sweeping consequences for native-born racialized minorities as well as new working-class immigrants.

The politics of measurement and modeling have a tortured history in all of these developments: although the destruction of the welfare social safety net ignored most social science research, there is now a growing body of post-welfare research that (perhaps unavoidably) provides legitimacy to the policy by charting the simplistic metric of the number of former recipients moving into the labor force. Countermappings are thus critically important to a) measure the extent and severity of working poverty, b) document in a systematic and representative way the individual survival strategies used by former recipients, by working-class immigrants, c) rigorously document the incidence and functions of labor markets hidden from official statistics, and d) challenge the dominant ideological abuses of poverty statistics that have culminated in urban and policy catastrophes like the current neoconservative redevelopment of post-Katrina New Orleans.

Feb 19 Reading break; no seminar meeting.

Feb 26 Feminist Urbanism, Geographic Information Science, and ‘Ground Truth.’

*Everyone Reads:*


Nadine Schuurman and Geraldine Pratt (2002). “Care of the Subject: Feminism and Critiques of GIS.” *Gender, Place, and Culture* 9(3), 291-299.


*Discussant Reports on a few of these:*

The contemporary expansion of feminist urban research was necessarily conditioned by the privileged status of positivist inquiry and quantitative methods in the 1970s. Accordingly, much of the early work emphasized application of many of the standard techniques and modes of analysis, but explicitly focusing on women (and in some cases with more nuanced treatment of gender relations). Among the foundational statements of contemporary feminist perspectives on the city include landmark articles and books in the late 1970s and early 1980s, including pieces by Dolores Hayden, Catherine Stimpson and several coauthors, and Ann Markusen. An updated, poignant, and well-crafted dispatch from the irrational exuberance of the 1990s was published in the ‘Millennial’ issue of The New Yorker, which included a series of essays on what seemed to be ‘Next’ in a variety of realms of culture, politics, and economics. The Worcester Expeditions led by Susan Hanson and Gerry Pratt in the 1990s took the comparatively narrow second-wave feminist and socialist-feminist perspectives of the 1970s into valuable new terrain on difference, identity, and their relations to socially-produced urban space. My own attempts to understand the evolving relations between gender and class relations and suburban spatial structure are deeply indebted to the work of Hanson and Pratt, Markusen, Hayden, and Melissa Gilbert; the ‘public household’ is an attempt to conceptualize the interdependencies between households and the degree to which social and familial activities are commodified. As an alternative to the quantitative approach adopted there, see the extended case study of overworked upper-middle class professionals presented by Arlie Russel Hochschild, in “Emotional Geography and the Flight Plan of Capitalism.” In the last decade, however, feminist urban inquiry that attempts to maintain a dialogue with positivism or quantification seems to have undergone a decisive shift in tandem with methodological changes in the discipline which reached a crescendo in the debates surrounding John Pickles’ Ground Truth, an engagement with the social enterprise of geographic information systems; most but not all of the contributors to this collection wrote from a critical social

theoretical perspective in a spirit of external critique.\(^{45}\) The feminist dimensions of the shift from quantification to geo-visualization debates is best exemplified by considering the special issue of *The Professional Geographer*, “Should Women Count?” in 1995, alongside the 2002 forum in *Gender, Place and Culture*, “Is GIS For Women?” Within this context, Mei-Po Kwan’s work on feminist visualization, feminist reconstructions of the behavioral geographic tradition of the 1970s, and feminist dimensions of public-participation GIS stands as some of the most innovative and critically important. I also strongly recommend Marie Cieri’s innovative disruption of taken-for-granted ways of visualizing geographical information.\(^{46}\)

Mar 4  Aftermath of the Underclass Debates: Poverty Deconcentration.

**First draft due.**

*Everyone Reads:*


*Discussant Reports on a few of these:*


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The work of William Julius Wilson from the late 1970s to the mid-1990s was the most prominent stream of an interdisciplinary literature documenting the racial dimensions of concentrated poverty and its consequences. This work involved a synthesis of careful ethnographic field research, individual and household surveys, and quantitative analysis of secondary data -- all conceived in an effort to counter the deep influence of ideological commitments to the culture-of-poverty explanation for segregation and racial inequality. And yet in the translation from liberal social science to neo-liberal and conservative policy implementation, Wilson’s evidence was used to support interventions tied closely to culture-of-poverty portrayals of an undeserving poor. By the late 1990s, a number of trends in American urban policy had coalesced into what Goetz calls a “deconcentration paradigm”: “From the nation’s almost 15-year preoccupation with concentrated urban poverty, a policy approach has gradually emerged. It is, quite simply, to break up concentrations of poverty wherever possible.” At the same time, the strategic, political rhetoric of the term ‘underclass’ has been torn out of context and exported around the world, reflecting and refracting the distinct racial and class inequalities of other urbanisms.

Mar 11 Counting, Categorization, Citizenship.

Everyone Reads:


Discussant Reports on a few of these:


As part of a broad transformation of social inquiry and cultural understanding over the past generation, problematic categorizations of social science have been challenged, contextualized, and dismantled. ‘Race’ is the most pervasive categorization to be challenged, but it is by no means the only one. Despite advances in critical social theory, however, the praxis of mainstream social science, public policy, and the law require continued engagement with the flawed, rigid taxonomies created through the statistical governmentality of political and regulatory systems. Here, we consider the implication of Matthew Hannah’s theory of “statistical citizenship” in the politics of data collection and visibility for same-sex couples, investor-class immigrants, and people facing both racial and financial exploitation. In the case of the latter, one interpretation goes like this: “Sophisticated qualitative inquiry on racialized identities yields considerable theoretical power, but a corresponding political force requires that critical theory articulate with an existing legal or policy infrastructure or tap into emerging social movements. Housing policy in the USA today is governed by a conservative/neoliberal consensus on the virtues of homeownership, an ideological commitment to market forces, and a blind faith in the synergies of public–private partnerships. Yet this regime is also premised on the strategic essentialism codified in the legislative and judicial victories of the Civil Rights era and the subsequent social movements evolving out of the 1960s. These movements are often embattled and sometimes co-opted by the forces of privatization and devolution, and Civil Rights
legislation relies on reified categorizations of racialized identities that are at odds with qualitative research on race in human geography and other fields. But this is an age of eviscerated social welfare commitments, persistent inner-city disinvestment, severe shortages of affordable housing, the emergence of aggressive and abusive predatory lenders, and pervasive racial discrimination that is itself based on problematic categories of race constructed through the processes of American urbanization and suburban development. And so the question of ‘to whom the speech is directed, whether it can be heard’ must be answered: activists in the community reinvestment movement, in alliance with progressive, politically engaged scholars, speak out forcefully against racial injustice, and the historical record shows that this speech has often been heard by judges, regulators and financial institutions. CRA activism over the last generation has achieved commitments of more than $1 trillion in loans, services and investments for minority and low income households and neighborhoods, with 99 percent of this figure committed since 1992. The cumbersome reifications of complex, interlocking axes of difference signaled by ‘minority’ and ‘low-income’ should not obscure the value of progressive strategic essentialism linked to an infrastructure of quantitative, policy-oriented research.”

Mar 18  Gentrification, Displacement, and the Right to the City.

Everyone Reads:


Discussant Reports on a few of these:


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As lexicon and theory, ‘gentrification’ is well into middle age. Four decades ago, the geographer Ruth Glass used the term in passing to punctuate a colorful description of changes underway in London’s Covent Gardens neighborhood. Ever since, the word has been at the center of urban struggle, from violent street battles to polite-veneer academic debates, from obtuse policy discussions to offbeat pulp fiction, from carefully-calculated land development schemes to colorful urban-boosterish newspaper spreads. The topic has attracted so much attention that Larry Bourne, one of North America’s most prominent urbanists, was concerned in the early 1990s that “it may appear to some observers that this single subject has dominated academic debate.... many students of the city now view the gentrification phenomenon as one of the most pervasive processes of social change operating to restructure the contemporary inner city.” More than a decade later the debate rages on, producing a rich and often contradictory literature that seems to promise too much, particularly on the connections between theory, policy, and activism. Liz Bondi, once an eloquent voice on the emancipatory possibilities and polarizing inequalities of the gentrified inner city, is now frustrated and suggests that we abandon the subject “because of its inability to open up new insights,” and she wonders if “it is time to allow it to disintegrate under the weight of these burdens.” And yet the debate is anything but academic. A suite of public policies has fostered gentrification for many years, generating enough resistance and backlash among the inner-city poor and working-class that new urbanist architect Andres Duany feels compelled to write in the pages of The American Enterprise to defend middle-class people “accused of committing that newest of social sins: ‘gentrification.'” Duany offers “three cheers” for a process that reduces concentrated poverty, brings the political constituency of the middle class back to the inner city, and provides a “rub-off work ethic” for the poor: “It is the rising tide that lifts all boats.” Or maybe, as Rowland Atkinson and Gary Bridge suggest in a recent book, it is The New Urban Colonialism.


Everyone reads:


Kosuke Imai and Gary King (2004). “Did Illegal Overseas Absentee Ballots Decide the 2000 U.S. Presidential Election?” *Perspectives on Politics* 2(3), 537-549. See also the free software tools and reprints available at http://gking.harvard.edu/

Other items that may be of interest:


Library shelves, video archives, and file servers are overloaded with the accumulated stock of books, scholarly articles, news accounts, think-tank reports, magazine stories, talking-head-talk-show debates, and blogs^53^ recounting the history of the U.S. Presidential election in November, 2000. To avoid any appearance of partisanship in assessing the facts^54^ of what happened, we will

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^53^ Web-logs. Envision a personal diary with minimal self-restraint hooked up to a high-speed Internet connection. For a fascinating evaluation of the effects of blogs on the current campaign, see Matthew Klam (2004). “Fear and Laptops on the Campaign Trail.” *New York Times Magazine*, September 26, 42-49, 115-116, 123 “Left-wing politics are thriving on the blogs the way Limbaugh has dominated talk radio, and the nastier partisan blogs have been growing the fastest.” p. 48. For an especially hilarious instance of culture-jamming, see the discussion of the ‘Sloganator’ on wonkette.com, discussed in Klam’s article on p. 47.

^54^ Al dente. See note 3, supra.
rely on the record reported (although not signed) with the pristine positivist objectivity and neutrality of William Rehnquist, Sandra Day O’Connor, Antonin Scalia, Anthony Kennedy, and Clarence Thomas. After the close-fought national election came to hinge on the outcome in Florida, the Florida Division of Elections reported on November 8, 2000 that Bush had received 2,909,135 votes to Gore’s 2,907,351, yielding Bush an apparent margin of victory of less than one half of one percent. The Florida Election Code required an automatic machine recount, which was conducted and narrowed (but did not eliminate) Bush’s lead. Gore then “sought manual recounts in Volusia, Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade Counties” under the state’s election protest provisions. After a series of disputes over the deadline for county canvassing boards to submit returns to the Florida Secretary of State, the U.S. Supreme Court vacated a Florida Supreme Court decision extending the deadline from a statutory November 14 to November 26, only to have the Florida Supreme Court issue a decision on remand, reinstating the date. On November 26 the Florida Elections Canvassing Commission declared Bush the winner of the state’s 25 electoral votes, and the next day Gore availed himself of the state’s contest provisions. The case wound up again in the Florida Supreme Court, which accepted jurisdiction, in part, on the grounds that Miami-Dade County failed to manually recount 9,000 ballots for which machines detected no Presidential selection (“undervotes”). On December 8, the Florida Supreme Court ordered a hand recount of the 9,000 ballots in Miami-Dade. Bush filed an emergency application to the U.S. Supreme Court, asking for a stay of the Florida Supreme Court mandate; on December 9, the U.S. Supreme Court granted the stay, and on December 12, reversed the judgment of the Florida Supreme Court. The December 12 opinion, an unusual, unsigned per curiam, stopped the recount on the grounds of equal protection, leaving Bush the winner of Florida’s popular vote (by an official margin of 537 votes), the loser of the national popular vote (by a margin of about half a million), and the winner of the Electoral College vote.

Bush v. Gore has generated a sizeable legal literature, and it has also catalyzed longstanding debates over gerrymandering, the applicability of the Equal Protection clause, and the potential for oppositional judicial use of the per curiam for precedent, despite the high court’s admonition that this was a one-time deal. Here, we examine the next chapter in the judiciary’s constant revisions to electoral geography textbooks, and we also consider several different methodological contributions at the nexus of geography, political science, and the law.

Apr 1 Carceral Urban Systems.

Everyone reads:


Other items that may be of interest:


Patricia Allard and Chris Muller. *Incarcerated People and the Census: Painting a Distorted Picture of Virginia.* New York: Brennan Center for Law and Justice, New York University School of Law.


Sociology, the law, and public policy scholarship traces a long and complex history of crime, criminalization, and trends in incarceration. Geographical inquiry into these topics has expanded in recent years, coinciding with a general consensus that we are seeing an era of ‘hyper-incarceration,’ led most starkly by the acceleration in the population behind bars in the United States. Simon, Jonathan. 2000. “The ‘Society of Captives’ in the Era of Hyper-Incarceration.” *Theoretical Criminology* 4(3), 285-308 (tracing evolving contexts and goals of sociological and political science inquiry on the internal social processes of prisons). Jamie Peck offers the crucial point that the debates over the demise of the nation-state (common in the 1990s) have now been overshadowed by a resurgent interest in the aggressive actions of state institutions -- and that these actions cannot simply be viewed as crisis-induced responses. “Distinctively new forms of policy reconstruction and regulatory rollout are in evidence...” We are seeing “an emergent process of ‘carceralization,’ suggesting perhaps that the prison system can be understood as one of the epicentral institutions of these neoliberalized times.” (Peck, p. 223, 226). Beyond the obvious connections to American exceptionalist debates, the transnational transfer mechanisms for public policy and political ideology have placed America’s incarceration regime at center stage in debates throughout the world. Writing from the London School of Economics, David Downes offers a striking view of America’s “macho penal economy”: “...the US prison population now amounts some 2 percent of the male labor force. As a result of prisoners being excluded from the labor force count, a convention which merits re-examination, this factor alone has reduced the official figure for male unemployment by some 30-40 percent since the early 1990s. And it is this unemployment figure that is endlessly cited, on both sides of the Atlantic, as a major sign of the superiority of the deregulated economy of the USA compared with the more corporatist economies of Western Europe. ... Making some allowance for the huge job creation aspect of imprisonment for custodial and allied staff, especially in areas of high unemployment, would enhance its significance even further. It is a tragic irony that a major flaw in the political economy of the USA -- its grotesquely high prison population -- unduly inflates what is taken to signify a major success -- its unusually low unemployment rate.”

labor. Beckett and Western’s empirical analysis is necessarily much narrower in its substantive focus, but offers strong evidence in support of Gilmore’s arguments. Additional empirically politicized dimensions of the incarceration boom are illustrated in rigorous yet critical engagements with policy by researchers at the Urban Institute and a Soros-supported effort to document the links between incarceration, the Census, and political representation. Finally, there is an expanding and rich source of information from legal scholarship and policy sources, including the Death Penalty Information Center, the Innocence Project at Cardozo Law School, and the Center on Wrongful Convictions at Northwestern University Law School.

Apr 8 The Informational City Revisited: City of Emancipatory Bits or Geoslavery?

Second draft due.

Everyone reads:


Other items that may be of interest:


At the heart of Hannah’s theory of statistical citizenship is the political management of individual information. This political management has, of course, been transformed by the accelerated diffusion of information and communications technologies. Nigel Thrift suggests that we are seeing the development of a “track-and-trace spatial imaginary” that is reshaping our visions of cities, our experience of urban life, and the relations between urban space and informational practices. The range of empirical illustrations of the new spatial dynamics of data is virtually without limit. Trademark and copyright law are colliding with the new spatialities of the Internet, raising difficult questions about the location of legal jurisdiction. Satellite remote sensing and other geographical technologies are being used by agribusiness conglomerates to monitor farms and to sue farmers for patent infringement when there is evidence of saving and replanting genetically-modified seeds. The proliferating legions of private and municipally-managed

65 Should the legality of certain forms of communication be governed by the ‘prevailing community standards’ of the location of a server? The location of the act of viewing or downloading? The networks connecting origin and destination?
surveillance cameras are being hooked up to sophisticated facial recognition software and growing databases of ‘known’ or ‘suspected’ criminals and terrorists, while FBI officers are (once again) infiltrating activist organizations to take photographs and build their databases.\(^{67}\) Wal-Mart has begun using digital thumbprinting for identification purposes for customers who write checks, and the behemoth retailer’s decision to use radio-frequency identification chips throughout its inventory system has percolated through its supplier networks across the entire wholesale trade sector -- creating the theoretical possibility of real-time monitoring of the location of a product from the factory, to the route followed by the truck driver on the way to the local Wal-Mart, to the supply on the shelf, and all the way to the consumer’s home.\(^{68}\) Here, we consider theoretical perspectives on the dangers in such trends -- Mitchell’s notion of logic prisons, and Dobson’s concept of geoslavery -- as well as the possibility of a more optimistic scenario of agency of the digital individual. Unfortunately, the digital individual envisioned in theory in the mid-1990s has now been entirely transformed in the national security state created in the New American Century since late 2001.

April 29, 9:00 AM: Final paper due.

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