



Top: Newark, New Jersey, mid-2009; Route 21 (McCarter Highway), near the New Jersey Transit / Amtrak Northeast Corridor into Manhattan (Kathe Newman). **Bottom:** Yes! Live telecast of International Olympic Committee host city decision for the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games, General Motors Place, Vancouver, July 2, 2003 (Elvin Wyly).





THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Urban Studies 400
Seminar in Urban Studies
 January-May 2011, 3 credits
 Mondays, 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm,
 Geography Room 201

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Calendar description: A seminar for students who are anxious to explore some common topics of importance to urban studies from the perspective of several disciplines.

“...those of us who have looked to the self-interest of lending institutions to protect shareholders’ equity (myself included) are in a state of shocked disbelief. Such counterparty surveillance is a central pillar of our financial markets’ state of balance So the problem here is something which looked to be a very solid edifice, and indeed, a critical pillar to market competition and free markets, did indeed break down. And I think that, as I said, did shock me. I still do not understand fully why it happened and, obviously, to the extent that I figure out where it happened and why, I will change my views. I found a flaw in the model that I perceived is the critical functioning structure that defines how the world works, so to speak.”

Alan Greenspan.¹

“In the twilight of materialism, the meaning of housing will be simplified and clarified, with a renewed emphasis on shelter and neighborhood. The false hope that everyone can get rich from real estate investment will be laid to rest for another fifty years, or perhaps for all time.”

John S. Adams²

“The city fosters art and is art; the city creates the theater, and is the theater. It is in the city, the city as the actor, that man’s more purposive activities are focused, and work out, through conflicting and cooperating personalities, events, groups, into more significant culminations.”

Lewis Mumford.³

“The ideology of globalization allows local officials, along with local business people and property owners, to argue that they have no choice but to prostrate themselves before the god Capital, offering not just tax and regulatory inducements, but also extravagant convention centers, downtown tourist amusements, up-market gentrified restaurants and bar districts, and even occasional public investment in such amenities as museums, theaters, and concert halls.”

Don Mitchell.⁴

“Remain calm and be Canadian.”

Larry Campbell.⁵

¹ Alan Greenspan (2008) *Testimony of Dr. Alan Greenspan, before the Committee on Government Oversight and Reform*. October 23. Washington, DC: U.S. House of Representatives.

² John S. Adams (1986). “Housing Markets in the Twilight of Materialism.” *Professional Geographer* 38(3), 233-237, quote from p. 234.

³ Lewis Mumford (1937). “What is a City?” *Architectural Record* 82.

⁴ Don Mitchell (1997). “The Annihilation of Space by Law: The Roots and Implications of Anti-Homeless Laws in the United States.” *Antipode* 29(3), 303-335.

⁵ Front-page headline in the *Vancouver Sun*, June 30, 2003. Widespread leaks to the press and speculation that Vancouver’s bid for the 2010 Winter Games would win prompted fears of an IOC backlash against perceived arrogance. Bid officials held a press conference, at which Bid Corporation Chair Jack Poole told reporters, “We’re in a three-horse race, the bid’s in, there’s nothing new, and we’re fighting for our life.” Vancouver’s Mayor at the time, Larry Campbell, said “I don’t think anybody here is overconfident. I don’t know how the boosters could

“...it may not be going too far to say that the Vancouver Olympics are envisaged as a showcase for a decade of neoliberalism, just as the ‘free enterprise’ Olympics in Los Angeles were celebrated by some U.S. conservatives as confirming the values of the Reagan years.”

David Whitson.⁶

“In many ways, urban tourism polarises academic disciplines, revealing the weaknesses, and producing divergent explanations.”

Martin Selby.⁷

This course is an interdisciplinary engagement with the city. We have two options for our work together, illustrated by the different images and quotes presented above. The first option focuses on the urban facets of the global financial crisis. In 2008, the world economy slipped into the most catastrophic decline since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Analysts and advocates on the political Left had been warning about the dangers of speculative Wall Street financial practices for many years; but when the crisis began in early 2007 and worsened in the summer of 2008, some of the most horrified reactions came from the political Right. The most conservative major newspaper in the United States, the Wall Street Journal, lent its name to *The Wall Street Guide to the End of Wall Street As We Know It*.⁸ The crisis had its roots in a quintessentially urban phenomenon: the granting of mortgage loans to home-buyers seeking to buy homes (or re-finance existing mortgage loans) on houses in city and suburban neighborhoods across the United States. But thanks to the dramatic innovations of financial markets over the past quarter-century, the circumstances of credit transactions between banks and home-buyers in American neighborhoods were interwoven with the needs and concerns of institutional investors in cities and towns across the world. When house prices began to slip and defaults increased in the United States, the consequences began to spread around the world. Today, millions of households around the world are still struggling to recover from the disasters of the financial crisis of 2008. In some very important ways, the crisis never really ended.

Our second option is to study the city as an engine of tourism and place-promotion. Thirty years ago, the sociologists John Logan and Harvey Molotch began a research program based on the idea of “the city as a growth machine,” which emphasized that even the most sharply polarized city politics would find common ground in the shared need of all locally-dependent elites: growth. The growth machine metaphor inspired an enormous and interdisciplinary literature on the various ways that cities compete for industrial growth and relocation, and the varied effectiveness of different cities. Recently, however, an emergent interdisciplinary literature has introduced a new metaphor that gives much more attention to the complexities of postindustrial services, tourism, travel, and consumption: “the city as an entertainment machine.”

Vancouver’s successful bid and hosting of the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games

wreck the bid. I think everyone has to remain calm and be Canadian.” Jeff Lee (2003). “Remain Calm and Be Canadian: Bid Organizers Worry Loose Lips of Over-Confident Boosters Could Cause IOC Backlash.” *The Vancouver Sun*, June 30, A1, A8.

⁶ David Whitson (2004). “Bringing the World to Canada: ‘The Periphery of the Centre.’” *Third World Quarterly* 25(7), 1215-1232, quote from p. 1228.

⁷ Martin Selby (2004). *Understanding Urban Tourism: Image, Culture, and Experience*. London: I.B. Taurus, quote from p. xi.

⁸ Dave Kansas (2009). *The Wall Street Guide to the End of Wall Street as We Know It*. New York: CollinsBusiness.

provides a perfect illustration of the central role of imagery, competition, and entertainment to contemporary urban economies and policies.

Before our first class meeting, please read a bit to learn about the two options. For an introduction to the urban aspects of the financial crisis, read the first three pages of Wyly et al. (2006), the first three pages of Wyly et al. (2009), and the first three pages of Walks (2010):

Elvin Wyly, Mona Atia, Holly Foxcroft, Daniel J. Hammel, and Kelly Phillips-Watts (2006). "American Home: Predatory Mortgage Capital and Neighbourhood Spaces of Race and Class Exploitation in the United States." *Geografiska Annaler B* 88(1), 105-132.

Elvin Wyly, Markus Moos, Daniel Hammel, and Emanuel Kabahizi (2009). "Cartographies of Race and Class: Mapping the Class-Monopoly Rents of American Subprime Mortgage Capital." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 33(2), 332-354.

R. Alan Walks (2010). "Bailing Out the Wealthy: The Global Financial Crisis, Ponzi Neoliberalism, and Urban Social Crisis." Unpublished working paper. Toronto: Department of Geography, University of Toronto.

For an introduction to the theme of the city as an entertainment machine, please read the first four pages of McCallum et al. (2005), and the first three pages of Surborg et al. (2009).

Katherine McCallum, Amy Spencer, and Elvin Wyly (2005). "The City as an Image-Creation Machine: A Critical Analysis of Vancouver's Olympic Bid." *Journal of the Pacific Coast Geographers* 67, 24-46.

Björn Surborg, Rob VanWynsberghe, and Elvin Wyly (2008). "Mapping the Olympic Growth Machine: Transnational Urbanism and the Growth Machine Diaspora." *City* 12(30), 341-355.

For these readings and other suggestions, see

<http://www.geog.ubc.ca/~ewyly/u400.html>

At our first class, we will discuss both options in detail. Then we'll put them to a vote. Our course will be structured by a democratic process, but please, no email votes: elections are decided by the people who actually show up to cast their ballots.

Books

The details of our reading list will depend, of course, on the outcome of our election on the first day of class. But below is a small sample of recommended books for each of the options. I'll bring a stack of others to our first meeting. All book purchases are optional.

Other readings will be made available in class.

Option 1: Cities and the Global Financial Crisis

Simon Johnson (2010). *Thirteen Bankers: The Wall Street Takeover and the Next Financial Meltdown*. New York: Pantheon.

Gillian Tett (2009). *Fool's Gold*. New York: Free Press.

Dan Immergluck (2009). *Foreclosed: High-Risk Lending, Deregulation, and the Undermining of America's Mortgage Market*. Ithaca: Cornell.

Michael Lewis (2010). *The Big Short: Inside the Doomsday Machine*. London: Penguin.

Andrew Ross Sorkin (2009). *Too Big To Fail: The Inside Story of How Wall Street and Washington Fought to Save the Financial System -- And Themselves*. New York: Viking.

Option 2: The City as an Entertainment Machine

John and Margaret Gold, editors (2007). *Olympic Cities: Urban Planning, City Agendas, and the World's Games*. New York: Routledge.

Bruce Hayllar, editor (2008). *City Spaces: Tourist Places, Urban Tourism Precincts*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Hellen Jefferson Lenskyj (2008). *Olympic Industry Resistance*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Christopher A. Shaw (2008). *Five-Ring Circus: Myths and Realities of the Olympic Games*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.

Holger Preuss (2008). *The Economics of Staging the Olympics*. Surrey, UK: Edward Elgar.

Schedule

A detailed schedule will be available shortly after we meet for the first class and take a vote on the two options. The schedule will be accessible at

<http://www.geog.ubc.ca/~ewyly/Private/u400schedule.html>

Evaluation and Expectations

This is an easy and enjoyable class for anyone with enthusiasm who follows directions. Yet enthusiasm and willingness to follow directions are not unlimited resources. Many people invest

far too much time, energy, and stress into devising creative excuses for missed deadlines (and so that’s why this section of the syllabus gets very detailed -- my apologies in advance!). When deadline and excuse management occupy a significant fraction of the instructor’s time, the result is an inefficient (and sometimes toxic) learning environment for everyone. My approach has been to avoid mandatory deadlines, wherever possible making them optional. I will also keep the list of required readings for this seminar very reasonable. This approach puts a great deal of responsibility in your hands, however. While many of the deadlines and readings are optional, ignoring them will have consequences. If you’re struggling to finish a paper on the last day before that one, final deadline that is mandatory, and if you’re stressed out because you didn’t get enough advice or guidance on your work, that’s because you ignored the optional deadlines that offered opportunities for feedback and guidance. Likewise, if you’re struggling to finish that paper and you feel lost, with no sense of which books or articles to consult for a particular topic, then that’s probably because you only read the absolute minimum required readings, and you ignored the long lists of optional, recommended sources. Please help me -- and all of your colleagues in this seminar -- make the learning experience enjoyable and productive, with a minimum of energy wasted on stress. Don’t abuse the flexibility of the optional deadlines, and do your best to follow the other expectations. You’re expected to attend regularly, to participate in seminar discussions, to help lead one discussion, to participate in a panel discussion with a group of your colleagues, and to complete an individual research paper or project.

1. Participation (25 percent).

Includes leading one seminar discussion, and working with a group of colleagues on a panel presentation. See the detailed discussion below.

2. Individual Paper or Project (75 percent).

Proposal	1:00 PM January 24
Annotated bibliography	1:00 PM February 7
Research design and methodology	1:00 PM March 7
First draft	1:00 PM April 4
Final paper deadline	5:00 PM April 28

Notes:

a. The final paper deadline is not negotiable. All other deadlines are optional, but firm. I’ll provide comments, constructive criticism, and suggestions for all items submitted on time and according to instructions. Late submissions, or submissions not conforming to instructions, will be ignored.

b. The **final paper** may be submitted by email to ewyly@geog.ubc.ca,⁹ or to the Geography Department Office, or in-person. **For all other deadlines, you must submit**

⁹ If you choose to submit items by email, I ask that you prepare your submission as a *single* portable document file (*.pdf). Most current Mac OS X printer drivers offer a “save as pdf” option; for Windows-based applications, freeware is available at <http://www.pdf995.com>, and at many other software providers.

a paper document (typed, on one side only of standard 8.5" x 11.0" paper) to me, in person, at the beginning of class.

c. If you are unable to meet the final, mandatory deadline because of personal circumstances or an emergency, you have my understanding and sympathy. But once we reach the final deadline, I have no authority or flexibility. You will need to speak to an academic advisor authorized to grant a Standing Deferred. For further information, see <http://www.geog.ubc.ca/~ewyly/deferred.html>

1. Participation.

Individual contributions. In our first few seminar meetings, we will assign discussants for seminar meetings in the rest of the course. For each meeting, the discussants will help guide our study of the issues and questions at hand. Each discussant will prepare a short discussion paper (about two pages). Bring at least five copies, to distribute among all colleagues in the class. Consider these kinds of questions: What is the central theoretical, methodological, or empirical contribution of the work you read? What are the most interesting questions or problems it addresses? How does the work help you to understand the financial crisis, or the city as an entertainment machine? What ideas does it give you for your own research plans? What recommendations would you offer for colleagues in the seminar on the basis of what you learned from this reading?

The discussion paper need not be a masterpiece of formal scholarship. But it must be done, submitted, and presented in the seminar. As I listen to your presentation in the seminar, I will be writing notes directly on the discussion paper you've submitted. This is one of the things that will help me decide what mark to assign for 'participation' at the end of the term. Therefore, discussion papers will only be accepted at the beginning of the seminar meeting for which you help lead the discussion; late submissions cannot be accepted.¹⁰

Collaborative contributions. In the fourth week of term, I ask that you submit a short proposal for your individual paper or project (this is described in more detail in the next section). You have considerable autonomy in designing an individual research path. I will read these proposals with considerable interest and excitement, and I will provide comments, suggestions, ideas, possible sources of literature, my thoughts on the strengths and limits of particular methods or data sources, and the connections I see between your interests and those of your colleagues. I'll

¹⁰ I am sorry, but there are no exceptions to this policy. If you miss the first day of class, simply choose one of the readings from the relevant sections of the schedule above and prepare a discussion paper. It is not necessary in this case that you correspond with others leading the seminar for that day, but on the other hand it's fine if you do want to get in touch with them. If you sign up for a particular class and then miss the class, then choose another class and prepare a reaction paper. If you prepare a reaction paper but then miss the class in which you have committed to leading the discussion, then you should prepare a new submission corresponding to the seminar you actually do help to lead. If you don't lead a seminar discussion, or if you don't submit a reaction paper, or if you miss one of these but not the other, I certainly won't impose a harsh penalty like assigning a failing grade for the course. But I may find it difficult to provide an accurate assessment of your ability to contribute to our scholarly discussion. Therefore, if you somehow find yourself in the tenth week without having led a seminar discussion and/or without having submitted a corresponding discussion paper, then it's your responsibility to prepare something that a) explains your circumstances, and, more importantly, b) gives me some reasonable intellectual basis for evaluating your ability to participate in the scholarly enterprise of an interdisciplinary seminar.

then organize these proposals into thematically coherent working groups, and members of each group will receive copies of all proposals submitted by their colleagues. Each of the working groups will prepare for panel discussions in one of the seminar meetings in the final weeks of the term. I encourage you to use the panel as an opportunity to give a short presentation of a draft version of your individual paper or project. Alternatively, you can use your time on the panel to present a review of one of the recommended books, or to present an analysis of a particular issue that is part of the research in progress for your paper. Whatever you do, you should coordinate your panel presentation with the colleagues in your working group. **Each group should appoint a manager to keep track of time. Each panelist should receive no more than ten minutes for their presentation and for class questions.**

Reading lists available on the course web site will include suggested items for consideration by each working group, but these are only suggestions. Working groups are free to choose some of these readings, all of them, or to identify alternative readings. It is not assumed that everyone in the seminar (or everyone in the working group) will read every item in the corresponding lists. Information sharing and collaboration in the working groups are strongly encouraged, so long as your final individual paper represents individual work.

Since the individual paper proposals will be used to constitute the working groups, anyone failing to meet the proposal deadline will be assigned to a group pretty much at random. Failure to participate in collaborative group preparations may affect marks assigned for this component of the course. At the end of the term, I will ask everyone to give me advice and recommendations on participation marks for members of their working group; obviously, colleagues are much more likely to provide positive comments for those they recognize as active contributors. If you anticipate a scheduling conflict that will make it impossible to contribute to your group presentation in the final weeks of the term (see the schedule), you are encouraged to move to another group.

2. Individual Paper or Project.

The most important and non-negotiable date is the deadline for submission of the final paper; no extensions are permitted under any circumstances, because this date is the latest I am allowed to set under University regulations.¹¹ All the other intermediate deadlines are *optional* but *firm*. Proposals, progress reports, and drafts received by the specified deadlines will receive comments, criticisms, and suggestions.

At the times specified for each deadline, I'll collect what I receive in class -- or, for the final deadline after classes have ended, I will check under the door of my office (Geography Room 252), in my mailbox in the Geography Department Office (Room 218), and my email (ewyly@geog.ubc.ca), and then I'll get to work on everything I've received. There are no penalties for failure to meet the optional, intermediate deadlines, but late submissions will not

¹¹ There are specific rules on the submission of grades, and this is as late as I can set the deadline while fulfilling my responsibilities. If you miss the deadline I will simply have to submit a mark that excludes consideration of your final paper or project. In cases where a missed deadline results from documented emergency circumstances, a mark of "SD" or "DNW" can be recorded; note, however, that the instructor is only permitted to assign "SD" if you have secured formal approval from Arts Academic Advising.

receive comments or suggestions. There are no exceptions to this policy. If you would like comments and suggestions, submit whatever you have when the deadline arrives -- and *not* five minutes, an hour, two hours, or two days after the deadline.¹² Your final paper should be about five thousand words, excluding references, notes, and other supplemental materials. This is just a guideline; it is entirely possible to create a first-rate piece of rigorous scholarship that is substantially shorter, and of course we've all read lengthy documents that seem to have very little redeeming intellectual value. Your paper should conform to the general guidelines at

<http://www.geog.ubc.ca/~ewyly/guidelines.html>

Additional Policies and Procedures

The official University course outline template requires the disclosure of several additional bureaucratic details, so here they are. The last date for withdrawal *without* a W on your transcript is January 17; the last date of withdrawal *with* a W is February 11. The University accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with the Disabilities Resource Centre. The University accommodates students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, submitting assignments, or completing scheduled tests and examinations. Students who plan to be absent for varsity athletics, family obligations, or other similar commitments, cannot assume they will be accommodated, and should discuss their commitments with the instructor before the drop date.

Please review the UBC Calendar "Academic regulations" for the university policies on academic dishonesty, and see <http://www.arts.ubc.ca> for useful information on correct documentation and avoiding plagiarism. You should also review the materials I've posted in the "Other Teaching Resources" section at <http://www.geog.ubc.ca/~ewyly/teaching.html>

¹² Again, I apologize for the harsh tone. But experience has taught me that I must draw the line somewhere, or I will receive a constant stream of late submissions and plaintive emails that make it absolutely impossible to plan my schedule. My time is a limited (and some would say over-priced) resource paid for by the taxpayers of British Columbia; I need your help to make sure that we use this resource wisely.