

## **URBAN ANTHROPOLOGY**

Professor: Adriana Premat  
Class times and location:  
Mondays 11:30-1:30 pm and Thursdays 12:30-1:30 SSC 3102  
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### **Course Description**

Today, with over half the world population living in cities, urban fieldsites have become the norm for many an anthropologist. Yet, not every anthropologist carrying out research in cities is equally concerned with the urban context. After an overview of the origins and contested definitions of the subfield of urban anthropology, this course invites you to reflect on key debates and subjects that have preoccupied its practitioners over the years. In particular, we will focus on questions pertaining to sociality, “community”, culture, poverty, marginalization, affluence, spatial form, conflict, contestation, fear, capitalism and globalization in contemporary urban centres. This year the course will combine lectures and selected readings with an experiential learning component that will have students engaging in ethnographic exercises in the City of London, Ontario.

**Course Prerequisite:** Any Arts and Humanities or Social Science 0.5 or 1.0 essay course. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

### **Learning Outcomes**

Upon the successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Recognize the methodological challenges faced by anthropologists working in cities.
- Outline major changes that have marked and/or framed the evolution of urban anthropology.
- Identify key themes and debates that have characterized the work of urban anthropologists.
- List key ways in which urban studies have influenced anthropological research in/on cities.
- Describe what an anthropological perspective can contribute to urban studies.
- Recognize how social differences are mapped onto, challenged, and reproduced in the use of urban space.
- Describe the way in which urban design and the built environment shape (and are shaped by) sociocultural, political, and economic processes.

- Work collaboratively with others to derive insights from London case studies.
- Critically engage with ongoing public and academic debates on a range of current urban issues, including poverty, crime and spatial segregation.
- Apply concepts learnt in the course to specific case studies.
- Communicate and summarize the insights derived from experiential learning via written assignments.

### Course Requirements:

<b>Exercise 1-</b> <i>Hanging Out Downtown</i> (October 3 <sup>rd</sup> ) (1-2 page ethnographic vignette, photographs and sample of fieldnotes)	15 points
<b>Exercise 2-</b> <i>Reflections on Public Space in the City of London</i> (October 23 <sup>rd</sup> ) (4-5 page reflection paper)	20 points
<b>Exercise 3-</b> <i>Walking the Neighbourhood</i> (November 9 <sup>th</sup> ) (2-3 page ethnographic vignette and photographs)	15 points
<b>Exercise 4-</b> <i>What kind of city is London?</i> (December 7) (4-5 page reflection paper with class exercise from September 11 <sup>th</sup> attached)	20 points
<b>Quiz 1</b> (September 28 <sup>th</sup> )	10 points
<b>Quiz 2</b> (November 2 <sup>nd</sup> )	10 points
<b>Quiz 3</b> (December 4 <sup>th</sup> )	10 points

### Course Policies

All students should familiarize themselves with Western's current academic policies regarding accessibility, plagiarism and scholastic offences, and medical accommodation. These policies are outlined, with links to the full policies, at: [http://anthropology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/course\\_information/academic\\_policies.html](http://anthropology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/course_information/academic_policies.html).

### Course Readings

The readings listed in the schedule of activities are an integral part of the class and will come up during lectures, class debates, and quizzes. All required readings are available through the OWL website. On average, you should be prepared to read from 30-60 pages per week. In order to assist you on weeks where the reading load exceeds 40 pages, the professor will highlight ahead of time the aspects of the readings you are to focus on.

### Films

The films that will be shown in this class have been carefully selected to encourage class discussion and are considered an integral part of course content. They constitute the basis for organized class debates on key topics covered during lectures. Films and related discussion sessions should not be missed and notes on them should be reviewed when preparing for the quizzes.

## Quizzes

On September 28, November 2 and December 4, you will write a one hour quiz that will focus on all assigned readings and lectures to date. These quizzes may incorporate multiple-choice questions, true and false questions, short-definition questions, and short answer questions.

## General Instructions for the Completion of Course Exercises

It is your responsibility to ensure that you compile all the material required to complete your course exercises into a single Word document and that you upload this document by the set deadlines to the appropriate assignment folder in OWL. The penalty for unexcused lateness for a late assignment is 5 % each day. If you were to submit your paper 2 days late, the grade which would have otherwise been assigned to that paper would be reduced by 10%. For example, a paper which would have received a grade of 90% would instead be assigned a grade of 80% if it were submitted 2 days late. If you submit a paper on time but neglect to include required accompanying documentation (e.g. photos, sample of fieldnotes, etc.), you will 10% from your overall grade in that exercise. For example, a paper which would have received a grade of 90% would instead be assigned a grade of 80%.

The reflection papers should be typed and double-spaced, using 12 point Times font. They should be written in essay format and should not exceed the stipulated page limit for each assignment. Each essay should have:

1. An introduction where you clearly identify the theme or concept that you will be exploring (watch out for too many themes or concepts and remember that these are short paper assignments)
2. A body made up of paragraphs where you develop your argument or storyline using concrete examples drawn from your own observations, course materials, or other sources outlined in the exercise instructions. Be sure to use proper citation of other sources—be they course readings or other student's submissions.
3. A clear concluding paragraph.
4. In the cases where you are required to cite published material, include a properly formatted bibliography.

Before submitting the papers, you should carefully proof read them for spelling and grammatical mistakes, missing transition sentences, missing references, and improper citations of sources.

## Exercise 1- Hanging out Downtown (15%)

This exercise is designed to have students reflect on different aspects of social life in downtown London based on a series of participant observation exercises that will focus on three public spaces: the main bus stop area on Dundas Street, the market Lane area opening onto Dundas Street and the outdoor farmer's market located just outside the main entrance of the Covent market on Thursdays (8 am-2 pm) and Saturdays (8 am-1 pm). This exercise will involve collecting data on the defining features of the built environment, the sensory experience of "being there", and the social interactions observed at each place.

After an in-class introduction to participant observation on September 18, over the next two and half weeks, you will engage in three twenty-minute sessions of participant observation at two of the sites mentioned

above. It is up to you how you organize the timing of your sessions but carefully record the time and date of each session in your fieldnotes.

During your sessions, you will be expected to take photographs and make written or verbal notes to help you recall the experiences, observations, and conversations you have had at the two spaces you selected. After each session, write up your fieldnotes in a diary format where you expand on your short notes and make some preliminary analysis of what you have observed.

After you have completed all your sessions, write a 2 page ethnographic vignette of your participant observation experience. This vignette, along with one or two pictures you find appropriate, and 2 scanned or photographed pages of your fieldnotes should be compiled into a single document and uploaded to the appropriate assignment folder in OWL no later than **October 3<sup>rd</sup> at noon**. Note that your vignette will be shared with the rest of the class and all submitted documents will form the basis of an in-class discussion on October 5<sup>th</sup> for which you should also bring your fieldnotes.

### **Exercise 2- Reflections on Public Space in the City of London (20%)**

After reading over the submissions made by other students in the class, you will visit the downtown area again to make some final observations as you get ready to write a 4-5 page reflection paper on the subject of public space in downtown London (Note that the Monday class will be cancelled to give you some extra time to work on this). It is your choice what you focus on for this paper but your analysis should integrate at least one source from the course reading list and integrate insights derived from reading other student's submissions, which will be made available via OWL on October 4th. This paper, in Word format, should be uploaded to the appropriate assignment folder in OWL on **October 19<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 pm**.

### **Exercise 3- Walking the Neighbourhood (15%)**

For this exercise, you are asked to turn your attention to a space you may be more familiar with: your neighbourhood. As with the downtown exercise, you will be asked to reflect on key features of the built space, the sensorial dimension of your neighbourhood and the social interactions that take place there. You will be asked to take note of your interactions and those of others you may observe in your area. You will also be asked to take photographs that you feel best encapsulate the life and identity of the neighbourhood and its inhabitants and any place that is significant to you there, outside of your home. After two weeks of in-depth participant observation, you will draw on your raw data and your own daily experience to write a 2-3 page ethnographic vignette of your neighbourhood that outlines its main physical and social characteristics and its significance, if any, for you. You should integrate at least two explicit references to course readings. Your written vignette along with 2-3 pictures should be compiled into a Word document and uploaded to the appropriate assignment folder in OWL no later than **12:30 pm on November 9<sup>th</sup>**. Note that your document will be shared with the rest of the class.

### **Exercise 4- What kind of city is London? (20%)**

This exercise ask you to write a 4-5 page reflection paper that attempts to paint a global picture of the city of London drawing on (1) the insights derived from Exercises 2 and 3 in downtown London, and (2)your classmates' and your own description of different neighborhoods. This paper should integrate at least three of

your classmates' submissions for Exercise 3 and at least two relevant course readings. You should also explicitly reflect on your initial descriptions of London as reflected in the In-class exercise we did on September 11<sup>th</sup>. This paper and a scanned/photographed copy of your September 11<sup>th</sup> exercise should be compiled into a single Word document and uploaded to the appropriate assignment folder in OWL on **December 7 at 12:30 pm**.

### **Plagiarism**

Students must write their essays in their own words. Whenever a student takes an idea or a passage from another author, they must use quotation marks where appropriate and in-text references or footnotes. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar as indicated in Course Policies).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

### **Participation**

During lectures, as well as during in-class group discussions, students are encouraged to express differences of opinion while maintaining an atmosphere of respect. Although a friendly and relaxed environment is encouraged, this does not mean that students are allowed to disrupt the class, or act in ways that obstruct the learning process. In order to be courteous to the professor and other students, it is expected that, during class time, students will turn off their cell phones and refrain from using laptops or other electronic devices for unrelated course activities (please, refer to note below).

### **Use of Electronic Devices (including laptops)**

No electronic devices of any kind will be allowed during tests, examinations and film viewings. Laptops may only be used during lectures for note taking or other course-related purposes. Voice recorders (digital or tape) are not allowed without express permission.

### **Special Needs**

If you have special needs, make sure you have seen Student Services, so I may have a written request from them to help you in arranging for alternative dates, assignments, etc.

### **Support Services**

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

## About Accessibility

If you need this or any other course information in a different format, or need other assistance to make this class accessible to you, please contact the professor as soon as possible so she can accommodate you. Where appropriate, conduct the stuff at Services for Students with Disabilities -Room 4100 in the Western Student Services Building [phone: 661-3031] since they can provide you with additional assistance.

## SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

### Week 1 (September 7) INTRODUCTION

### Week 2 (September 11 & 14) ANTHROPOLOGY TRAVELS TO THE CITY

Activities/assignments:

- Mental maps and your description of London (in-class exercise at 11:30 on Sept. 11<sup>th</sup> class)

Required Readings:

- Foster, G. and R. Kemper. 2010. Anthropological fieldwork in cities. In *Urban Life: Readings in the Anthropology of the City*, eds. Gmelch et al., pp. 5-19. Long Grove Ill: Waveland Press.
- Wirth, L. 1938. Urbanism as a way of life. *The Journal of Sociology* 44(1):1-24.

### Week 3 (September 18 & 21) ANTHROPOLOGY IN/OF THE CITY

Activities/assignments:

- Introduction to participant observation on September 18.
- Commence working on Exercise 1 this week.

Required Readings:

- Fox, R. 1980 [1972] Rationale and romance in urban anthropology. In *Urban Place and Processes: Readings in the Anthropology of Cities*. I. Press and E. Smith, pp.105-121. New York: MacMillan Publishers.
- Hannerz, U. 1982. Washington and Kafanchan: A view of urban anthropology. *L'Homme*, 22(4), 25-36.

### Week 4 (September 25 & 28) PUBLIC SPACE

Activities/assignments:

- Finish participant observation portion of Exercise 1 this week.

- **Quiz 1 on September 28<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 pm** includes lecture material and course readings up to, and including, week 4.

Required Readings:

- Eames E. and J. Granich Goode. 1980. Public places. In *Urban Place and Processes: Readings in the Anthropology of Cities*. I. Press and E. Smith, pp.337-348. New York: MacMillan Publishers.
- Low, S. 1996. Spatializing culture: The social production and social construction of public space in Costa Rica. *American Ethnologist* 23(4):861-879.
- Valverde M. 2009. Laws of the street. *City and Society* 21(2): 163-181.

**Week 5 (October 2 & 5)**  
**EXCLUSIONS**

Activities/assignments:

- Complete **Exercise 1** (*Hanging Out Downtown*) by **October 3rd at noon**.
- Read over other students' submissions in preparation for in-class discussion on October 5th. Bring your photos and fieldnotes with you to class.

Required Readings:

- Leal Martínez, A. 2016 "You cannot be here": The urban poor and the spectre of the Indian in neoliberal Mexico City. *The Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology*. 21(3):539-559.

Film:

- Excerpts from Street Walk directed by Michell Dunneir.

(October 9-13)  
**READING BREAK**  
No classes

**Week 6 (October 16 & 19)**  
**THE RIGHT TO THE CITY**

Activities/assignments:

- **No class on October 16<sup>th</sup>** to allow you to engage in unstructured participant observation downtown.

Required Readings:

- Sieber, T., G.I. Cordeiro and Ferro, L. 2012. The Neighbourhood strikes back: Community murals by youth in Boston's communities of color. *City and Society* 24(3):263-280.
- Iveson, K. 2013. Cities within the city. Do it yourself urbanism and the right to the city. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37(3): 941-56.
- Holston, J. 2009. Insurgent citizenship in an era of global urban peripheries. *City and Society* 21(2):245-267.

Film:

- Excerpts from *Bomb It: the Global Graffiti Documentary* (2008) directed by Jon Reiss.

**Week 7** (October 23 & 26)  
**STREET LIFE/NEIGHBOURHOOD LIFE**

Activities/assignments:

- Complete **Exercise 2** and submit your 4-5 page reflection paper on public space in the City of London by **October 23<sup>rd</sup> at 11:30 am**.
- Commence reflecting and taking notes on your neighbourhood for Exercise 3.

Required Readings:

- Lewis, O. 1980. A vecindad in Mexico city. In *Urban Place and Processes: Readings in the Anthropology of Cities*. I. Press and E. Smith, pp. 348-352. New York: MacMillan Publishers.
- Gans, Herbert J. 1980. "The West End: An urban village." In *Urban Place and Processes: Readings in the Anthropology of Cities*. I. Press and E. Smith, pp. 352-362. New York: MacMillan Publishers.
- Mangin, W. 1980. Squatter settlements. In *Urban Place and Processes: Readings in the Anthropology of Cities*. I. Press and E. Smith, pp. 362-369. New York: MacMillan Publishers.
- Barker, J. 2009. Introduction: Street life. *City and Society* 21(2): 155-162.

**Week 8** (October 30 & November 2)  
**URBAN "COMMUNITIES" IN CONTEXT**

Activities/assignments:

- **Quiz 2** on **November 2 at 12:30 pm** includes material and course readings up to, and including, week 8.
- Finish making notes for Exercise 3, compile information and start writing your reflection paper.

Required Readings:

- Barker, J, E. Harms and J. Lindquist. 2013. Introduction to special issue: Figuring the transforming city. *City and Society* 25(2):159-172.
- Bourgeois, P. 1989. Crack in Spanish Harlem: Culture and economy in the inner city. *Anthropology Today* 5(4):6-11.
- Sanjek, Roger. 2000. Keeping ethnography alive in an urbanizing world. *Human Organization*. 59(3):280-288.

**Week 9** (November 6 & November 9)  
**RETHINKING LIFE AT THE MARGINS**

Activities/assignments:

- Complete **Exercise 3** (Walking the Neighbourhood) by compiling ethnographic vignette and 2-3 photos into a single word document and uploading it to the appropriate assignment folder in OWL by **November 9<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 pm**.



Required Readings:

- Bourgois, P. and J. Schonberg. 2009. "Making money" In *Righteous Dopefiends*, pp. 148-181 *Berkeley: University of California Press*.
- Bayat, A. 2012. Politics in the City Inside Out. *City and Society*. 24(2):110-128.

**Week 10** (November 13 & November 16)  
**SOCIAL DISTANCE AND URBAN FEAR**

Activities/assignments:

- Start reading other students Exercise 3 submissions and compiling all relevant information to complete Exercise 4.

Required Readings:

- Engle Merry, S. 2010. Urban danger. Life in a neighbourhood of strangers. In *Urban Life: Readings in the Anthropology of the City*, eds. Gmelch et al., pp. 119-130. Long Grove Ill.: Waveland Press.
- Low, S. 2006. The erosion of public space and the public realm: paranoia, surveillance and privatization in New York City. *City and Society* 18(1):43-49.

**Week 11** (November 20 & November 23)  
**BUILT SPACE AND SOCIAL SEGREGATION**

Activities/assignments:

- In-class discussion of submissions for Exercise 3 as you continue preparing your reflection paper for Exercise 4.

Required Readings:

- Caldeira, T. 2000. Fortified enclaves: The new urban segregation. In *Theorizing the City: The New Urban Anthropology Reader*, pp. 83-110. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Low, S. 2001. The edge and the centre: Gated communities and the discourse of urban fear. *American Anthropologist* 103(1):45-58.

**Week 12** (November 27 & November 30)  
**IMAGINING "URBANITY"**

Activities/assignments:

- Put finishing touches on your reflection paper for Exercise 4.

Required Readings:

- Sadana, R. 2010. On the Delhi metro: An ethnographic view. *Economic and Political Weekly* 45(46), 77-83.

- Huffschmid, A. 2012. From the city to “lo urbano”: Exploring cultural production of public space in Latin America. *Iberoamericana*. 12(45):119-136.

**Week 13** (December 4 & 7)  
**THE CITY IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE**

Activities and Assignments:

- **Quiz 3** on **December 7 at 11:30 am** includes material and course readings up to, and including, week 13.
- Complete **Exercise 4** by uploading your paper in word format to the appropriate assignments folder in OWL by **December 7th at 12:30 pm**.

Required Readings:

- Smart A. and J. Smart. 2003. Urbanization and the global perspective. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 32:263-285.