GESM 130 *Seminar in Social Analysis, Los Angeles as a City*. Spring 2016 TuTh 8-9:20, VKC 254.

Martin Krieger, RGL 317 [krieger@usc.edu](mailto:krieger@usc.edu) I am readily available to see you by appointment. Send me an email indicating what times will work for you, and I will get back to you pronto. DRAFT6Jan16

I want to enable you to discover and analyze Los Angeles considered as a city in terms of its social life, through a variety of fieldwork projects, to be presented as websites. I will teach you all the various application programs, programs that will boost your visual literacy, something more generally useful for your USC education and for future professional work. We’ll have class time devoted to learning the applications, and getting help when and if you get into trouble or cannot figure out what to do. (I highly recommend googling for help. It’s what I do.) You’ve got to go out and look and see and inquire, to get a sense of how things actually work. You want to visit places outside your usual haunts and commutes. And you want to talk to people you rarely have a chance to talk with. At the end of the course, you should have the capacity to see and document and present city life in a more sophisticated way.

You will do one exercise every two to three weeks (a total of six), presenting it in class. Everyone will have enough time for a presentation and critique—preliminary and final presentations. Since this is a small seminar, your classmates will be able to critique your work, and help you make it better, as will I. Grades are based on those exercises, each counting equally in your final grade, and your *participation in the seminar discussion is required*. Consequently, attendance is required since you will be presenting, and showing us preliminary versions of your project. You’ll have a chance to improve your work between the preliminary and final presentations.

I assume you all have a camera that makes still photographs, videos, and records sound—most likely your smartphone. If you do not have one, please let me know immediately, and we’ll solve the problem. Smartphones are more than adequate for our projects. You’ll need to master a few Google programs, and Google also provides webspace for your work.

There will be some reading, but our major time doing “reading” will be studying examples of what other people have done in these areas in the last 165 years.

Your **first assignment**, to be done between the first and second class, that is between 9:20am on 12 January and 8am 14 January, about a 47 hour interval, is to take a bus ride on a route that is lengthy and covers a wide swath of the city. So you must do it Tuesday or Wednesday. Take notes on what you see as the scene changes along the way, make some photographs and bring your laptop with those photographs loaded on it. You also should find a map of the route (try metro.net) and bring it along or have it as a file in your computer. I want you to be able to discuss in class on that Thursday and the following Tuesday, what you saw, what it might mean, and why it was the way it was.

As for the summary of the course, objectives, etc, we’ll get to them after we discuss your fieldwork on the bus. By the way, listen for loud arguments and other such on the bus—it’s quite amazing. Also, do not take the bus at late hours. Daylight is best, and if you are uncomfortable, take a friend along.

We meet TTh 8-9:20. I realize this is early for many of you. However, it's vital that all be present, especially since this is a quite small seminar. If there is some reason why you cannot attend regularly, let me know now. You are docked one full grade for late submissions. You must spellcheck and check for grammar, and if that is not the case, likely you will be penalized a full grade. The usual provisos re academic integrity and disability apply. They are in boilerplate at the end of the syllabus. I am required to send *all* academic integrity violations to the Student Judicial people.

Schedule:

We’ll work in two-week blocks, although one project may be three weeks long. You will receive an assignment on Tuesday, and it will be due two weeks later, in class. One week after the assignment is handed out, you should be ready to show your preliminary work—if you do not have such preliminary work, you will be graded down one full grade. (My goal is to teach you how to do work in stages.)

The projects will organize the class: We can use Google webspace and its Sites application to develop your website. You will need a google account, and it is likely that you will be better off with a non-USC account, although that may change.

Bus ride {*Google Fusion Tables*}

Interview a Working Person {*Audacity*}

Sound and video documentation of a place {*Audacity, Moviemaker or iMovie*}

Building a 3-d model of a street and creating a fly-through video {*Sketch-Up*}

Photographic documentation of urban life, some particular aspect--

?Los Angeles in the Movies

?Using a word map to understand a complex situation

?Mapping Big Data

?Video of a phenomenon or an event

I will choose one of the “?” above, when I see what you have done and what you will learn most from.

My experience in teaching these sorts of projects is that people need to learn how to make their work better between the first and final presentation, that some people are much better than others at doing this sort of work (you accept that for, say, physics or learning Chinese [if you are not a native speaker], it’s true here too), and that hard work and good mentoring makes people’s work much better. I don’t have a rubric, but it is usually not hard to distinguish Excellent, from Good, from Fair, from Poor work. My definition of Excellent is work that I would be proud to show to my colleagues, Good work does what the assignment requires, Fair work barely does the assignment, and Poor work does not deliver what I am asking for. There is no curve, so if all the work were excellent I would be quite happy to give all As, but if all were rotten I would be dismayed but have to give Cs. If you are willing to do your part, I expect that most of the time for most of you, the work will be at least Good. That’s my job. I have discovered that some students resist my assistance (not showing up, ignoring my suggestions for no good reason, etc.). I cannot force you to get an education.

Boilerplate:

**Statement for Students with Disabilities**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website and contact information for DSP: <http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html>, (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) [ability@usc.edu](mailto:ability@usc.edu).

**Statement on Academic Integrity**

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include  the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *SCampus*, the Student Guidebook, ([www.usc.edu/scampus](http://www.usc.edu/scampus) or <http://scampus.usc.edu>) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A.

**Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis**

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.

------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**Essays:** I have written lecture summaries and brief essays about the subjects of this course as well as more generally about the urban context. They follow, and I am sure I will hand out more. They do not substitute for a textbook, or readings, or the lectures. I believe they will be helpful in getting you thinking and bringing you up to speed. Comments and questions are very welcome.

The summaries and essays are divided into: Introductory and Generic; Topical; and Essays. Some of these were handouts in earlier classes. Some were part of the Academic Minute podcast. Some were previews of courses.

When I consider what is taught in classes of this sort more generally, I have less to say about urban conflict, about “capitalism,” and about gender (although I have drafted a book in that vein!) and class and domination than is usual. I’ll try to remedy this… In any case, given my focus on your fieldwork and going out and looking, there is much that would be of value that I will not cover.

I will guide you to which are the relevant essays and summaries, for this course.

------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**INTRODUCTORY AND GENERIC**

The Urban Context means: density, diversity, dispersion and concentration, the need for explicit spaces to carry on life and work, a complex market for buying and selling and so the divisions of labor and production, with a wide variety of consumption. There are public spaces. People actually encounter each other in public, and people are seen by strangers. There is as well groupings, as in neighborhoods, ethnicities, classes, and races, that lead to spatial agglomerations. Those who do not do well are likely to be encountered by all.

Cities are highly differentiated in space, activity, people… That differentiation is often expressed in heterogeneity, that is parts that do not mix well (what is sometimes called pollutions). What is notable is that such differentiation and heterogeneity is not only about difference, it also about hierarchy. And given the variety of people and activities, such hierarchy may have pervasive effects.

What we call jobs and professions become more varied, and they exist at all, because the demand for work that must be done is likely to be highly differentiated, and so there is in effect a market for labor. Factories surely need workers, but there need to be customers for their products, and if there is diversity and density, there is likely room for a large number of producers of differentiated products.

Cities, as they grow and differentiate, and as they have an influx of people from elsewhere, become rather less intimate. People come to cities because for them alienation from an intimate community may well be very uncomfortable, and they accept the consequences of such alienation as the cost of freedom. Moreover, they may find intimate friends who are not so nearby to them but are within the city—since with more people there is greater likelihood of matching.

Cities grow by natural increase, by in-migration, by economic developments and by particular advantages that become apparent when they contribute to the economy. Cities are networked with other cities and with the hinterlands, for goods and food, for services, for intermediate products. Modes of transportation, if they are inexpensive and reliable, encourage those networks, and within cities they allow for a dispersion of work, commerce, play, residence. Communications, whether by post, telephone, or various electronic means, allow for the management of widespread enterprises (originally, rail and the telegraph), for maintaining relationships that are commercial or personal, and for making connections among otherwise distant entities. Cities tend to become more dense with transactions and interactions, at least until congestion becomes too much. Infill is common, since there would always seem to be mismatched spaces and activities, and insofar as you can figure out how to take advantage of such mismatches, you are likely to thrive.

Cities decline, sometimes due to invasion or disease, sometimes because other cities take over some of their advantages.

Flows of material, capital, energy are intense, with major flow-ways among cities and within a hierarchy of cities.

Someones have to build the city, perhaps government, more likely entrepreneurs and individuals. Entrepreneurs want some assurance that property will not be taken away from them, by brigands or by government. Real property is always in tension with movable property (finance and money), and insofar as money is available for investment and building, real property will be developed. Whether there by hot-bedding, garage housing, pop-ups, … there is likely to be impromptu use of space, often not legal.

It matters where you are located. Usually it is more expensive closer to the center, or one of the centers, but in compensation transport times are shorter and transport is less expensive. Insofar as you need to interact face-to-face, you want to be located near as many of your intimates as possible. In general it is hard to be self-sufficient in a city, largely because land needed for animals and agriculture is not readily available.

The public policy and city planning issues include: providing streets and roadways, sewerage, water and utilities, safety and security (crime is more likely and possible if the population density is high), fire protection. Schooling is almost always locally provided (in the US), and the same for health facilities. Public health is a genuine problem since density means that disease can spread readily. Freight and food-distribution must be allowed, and there must be sufficient shelter provided either publicly or privately. Religious institutions, with many sects and religions, take up space. Government figures out how to divide space so that less-compatible uses are better separated yet allows for flexibility. Cities consume resources, many of which are located at a distance, and they convert resources into goods that others want. They also concentrate resources associated with human capital. And disaster is not uncommon, whether fire or flood, disease, or invasion. How do you make for protection and recovery?

Politically, cities allow for more intimate governance, but also for more corruption it would seem. But cities usually are under the purview of counties, special districts, states and federal governments. Revenue is raised from taxes and fees, and there are substantial exchanges with counties, districts, and other governments. Cities are not at all autonomous, for they have to accord with larger regional or national imperatives.

There is a deep connection between what people do, their actions, in toto, and the built environment, and we might study just one and infer something about the other. There is another connection between the structure of the city and its history (built environment structure, people structure). What we see now is an accumulation of past actions and buildings, as well as destruction and rebuilding. Hence, these connections must be informed by history, and in no sense are we in a long-term equilibrium.

1A—An introductory statement for a course on the social context of planning:

This is a signal moment for the social life of cities. *Occupy Wall Stree*t and *Black Lives Matter* epitomize the moment. *Stonewall* (1969) and*Gay Pride* and the *Immigration Marches (Si, Se Puede)* two years ago are in this line.

But we'll go back to the 1930s and Detroit and the Diego Rivera court at the Detroit Institute of Arts, murals commissioned by Edsel Ford. Eventually that montage fell apart, industrially and socially. Now more than ever we are acutely aware of difference and its meaning, the artificiality of "whiteness" (if they can get away with it, newcomers eventually whitewash themselves), the peculiarities of identity, and the limits of conventional well-intentioned policies. Cities are the sites of contest and confrontation and conflict and compromise.

What's crucial in all this discussion is to understand that individuals rarely deserve what they get, no matter how hard they might work, no matter how strong are their capabilities. They have been pulled up or pushed down by their neighborhoods and associations, they have been more or less fortunate, and they may be able to defeat bias or be damned by it. It's not that people who succeed are not worthy, but there are many worthy folks who do not succeed; and the same about failure. Nor does this mean that we cannot do better by policy and plan--it's just that unless we address larger neighborhood and associational effects we will not be so effective. What's difficult is for people to be grateful for their position and realize that there but for the grace of fortune and the rest, they too would be in less good circumstances  Rawls 'original position'--where we do not know how things will turn out--suggests we want to address inequities (for we might end up needing that help), but that involves our giving up some of our goodies--goodies that we might not have had if things had turned out differently. (I know this is mildly controversial, but I have never found arguments about desert and excellence very convincing given the number of second-rate folks in first-rate positions. More likely, most of our first-rate jobs could be well done by second- or third-raters. I am willing to believe this is not the case for the topmost musicians and mathematicians, but not for many more.)

I want to talk about **social character** of space and location, environment and pollution, markets and sorting, individual and peoples, flows of people, everyday life in public and in private, disorder, and conflict. Most of what I will be saying is well attested in the scholarly literature and is not under contention. There is lots of argument about cause, about responsibility, about modes of intervention or non-intervention.

Economic activity--industry, the informal economy, finance, entrepreneurship, innovation--is remarkably social, made possible in its current form by how society is organized. Government sets up the context in which the social is realized, in terms of what we can do as various collectivities. And globalism and migration and exchanges, too, are social--for in interaction with other places and groups of people, we create the conditions for people and goods to flow.

The actual expressions of religion and culture are social, whatever else they are.

Finally, planning and urban development, have been shaped by values that have become socially enshrined, have derived from the history of the profession of city planning and the nature of enterprise, and have in general claimed to be good for society and its members.

1. What we know about cities

When we talk about urban life, there are some scholarly findings—many obvious—that suggest how policies and plans actually work. It’s remarkable how often these facts are ignored.

Cities take up space, and one’s location in a city (often with respect to a central or other significant district) determines house prices and rents and commutes, as well as job opportunities and safety and schools. Within that space, there are public spaces and parks and cemeteries, private spaces such as homes and businesses, and shopping, commercial and industrial activities, and services and bureaucracies. (E-commerce does not replace those actual spaces, it would seem.) All cities are built by government and by private developers, the latter under the purview of government, and in general density is necessary if these endeavors are to be financially viable and socially interesting. Developers and owners need to be assured that their title and property rights are firm if they are to invest and build and buy for the long term. Moreover, government and utility companies must provide the infrastructure of roads and power and water and refuse removal, if a location is to be viable at all. And much of the stuff needed to live and build comes from elsewhere, other cities and the hinterlands.

There needs to be a way of gathering money into bundles, through taxes and banking, so that government budgets and private loans are available for construction and improvements. Zoning, informal or legal, makes sure that residents and nuisances (say, a garbage dump) are not too adjacent, and they encourage the advantages or like activities or businesses being close to each other.

Cities are attractive for migrants from the countryside and perhaps from other cities. There are as well inflows of finance, power, and goods and foodstuffs, and outflows of other goods and pollutants. Moreover, there are internal flows of people, goods, and intermediate products. The effect of these concentrations is likely to lead to much greater numbers of interactions and outputs than might be anticipated by counting population or wealth.

Cities almost always emphasize the differences among people, in their talents, their backgrounds, and their races, just because people are right next to each other and encounter each other in commerce and social life, and because in such an economy the division of labor and specialization are great advantages. Usually, those differences lead to hierarchies, where some people and institutions are considered better than others, and the spatial isolation of the various levels in the hierarchy—albeit they breathe the same air and often must interact intimately. That makes it harder for those at the tops of hierarchies to ignore those toward the bottom—for the tops’ security and their well-being depends on a stable society, one that will be threatened by these hierarchies. Societal safety nets serve the interests of those at the top by securing and legitimating their status. At the same time, cities are places where people lose their original identities—from their neighborhoods, from the countryside--developing more homogeneous ones and then new distinctive identities.

Of course, people are born, grow, go to school, form families and new households, find work, and eventually die. This life cycle sets demands on what cities must provide, hospitals and cemeteries for example. The other major influences on city life are those of politics and regulation and the sacred. There is government, and its powers are substantial and often it regulates life. Moreover, the economy and social relations set up other regulations. And usually, there are sacred commitments—religion, school, sports teams—that provide cultural regulation.

To attend to these features of cities—location, infrastructure, finance, flows of people and goods, differentiation and hierarchy, and the life cycle and its regulation—is to be able to figure out how to make our lives better.

3. Some Topics.

1. What do we mean by “**the urban context**?”

Origins and the idea of cities (and states and nations). Artifacts of early Los Angeles

US vs. other richer countries, vs. less developed countries. Many of our examples will be comparative, NY, LA, Chicago, Atlanta, and cities in other parts of the world, and the cities you come from

**Documenting and presenting visually, video, sound**. Using a website. Text and captions.

1. The **Experience of City Life**

The Public Sphere, The Private Spheres

Public Health, Public Order

The notion of a Place

Social Life

1. **Form and function of cities** (commonalities and differences)

The suburb, the country, the production by cities and their consumption of imported goods

Culture, government, transactional business

Employment—people work for a living, often for other people or firms.

Ideal and utopian cities

1. **Moving around**—Walking and People-Powered methods

Transit—work/home commute

The Automobile

Rural-urban migration, cities as nexuses

Infrastructure—roads, water, power, …

Communication, mass and individual, person to person and other such

1. The **Economy of Cities** (in states, nations, and the world)

Industry, globalization

Diversity, specialization

Location and land use, reuse, destruction

Housing, Jobs, Schools, Services

Why do cities decline? The decline of nations.

**Globalization**, and its current meanings

Colonies and hegemonies

1. Family life and **life cycle** in a city

Migration and birth and death

Health and medicine

6a. Cities as part of **Nature**

City ecologies

Waste, water, burial, security, food and materials

1. **Sorting, agglomeration**, segregation, ghettos and districts,

Neighborhoods, enclaves, nonspatial agglomerations, religion, race, etc.

How the other halves live

The left outs—elderly, disabled, people of color, family life, children

Class. Why are people poor in cities (vs. rural areas)?

The working poor, the poor, the destitute

The top one-percent.

1. **Politics** that is local vs. national

Services—garbage, water, safety, utilities

The kindness of strangers, made bureaucratic

1. Big Ideas

Density and Transport, Diversity, Dispersion and Concentration, Differentiation and Division of Labor, Alienation and Security, Flows and Networks and Economy, and $, Growth and Decline and Origin of Cities, Who Builds a City, Regulation and Governance and Taxes, Space and Built Environment (Activities of People= Structure of City), People and Family and Experience of the City.

1. Big Ideas

Density, Diversity, Transactions, Agglomeration, Division of Labor

Space: Location with respect to ?, Environment

Dollars Matter if stuff is to be built, both loans, property rights, etc. Banking

Coordination, by markets, by plans, by laws, by regulation, by schemes

Globalization: Local (mixture, “white,” migration); Global (transactions and trade and influence)

People Enact their Spatiality/Neighborhoods.

Concentrated and Cumulative (Dis-)Advantage

Individual Responsibility in this context

1. Mid-Course Lecture themes
2. Density, differentiation in space, diffusion lead to hierarchy and inequality. Agglomeration AND Dispersion.
3. Transactions and flows are coordinated by markets, plans, governmental regulations, property rights, US Federal policies, state policies…
4. Space is articulated, into districts, neighborhoods. Quality will vary, and there is decline and improvement.
5. Culture gives meaning to difference (as does the economy, which is part of the culture). Whiteness as a construct.
6. Interactions are ubiquitous, cross borders of class/race etc. There are costs of transaction such as travel, middle-men…
7. Resources are concentrated. Natural resources as a product of geomorphology and weathering and plate tectonics. Financial resources are concentrated in banks, government, large corporate entities, wealthy. In part, concentration of financial enables risky endeavors, public goods.
8. Hinterlands and the rest of the world provide markets, sellers, stuff that won’t work in dense cities.

**TOPICAL**

1. Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods: differ, everyone knows about them, $, disorder, class, race… Cities are a montage of neighborhoods and there is a flow of people among neighborhoods, often similar ones.

Neighborhoods choose people, vs. people choose neighborhoods. People enact their neighborhood expectations, and that is enforced (“collective efficacy”—Sampson)

Disorder is differently perceived vs. objectively measured. Crime and disorder have a root cause it would seem, but Disorder may not be indicative of Crime (“broken windows” vs. ?)

Spatial inequality from concentrated and cumulative (dis-advantages). Also there are other worlds, so to speak, as in the informal economy and when people have jobs that are not reliable.

There is lots of room for individual responsibility and initiative or going-along. But always in the neighborhood context.

People escape their neighborhoods, but this is not easy—going up or down. Most people and most neighborhoods are stable, for better or worse.

To make Neighborhoods better: make them less violent, give kids better schooling and early childhood education, immigrants move in an occupy a neighborhood. There are lots of efforts to make neighborhoods better through urban planning, development, etc. Not clear if they work well. Tragedy of urban renewal although those who are displaced may then find a better life.

1. Heterogeneity and Hierarchy in the City

So far we have talked about Space, Economy, Building, and Finance—and in what sense these are urban topics. Now I want to focus on people. Characteristic of cities is the larger number of people close-by each other, and that as a whole they are quite varied in race, class, wealth, health, … The reason for this is that unless migration and jobs and procreation are regulated, there will be a variety of people who end up in a city, at least for a while. Migrations, which often are group migrations, means that there can be very different and new groups in a city. In the process of social and economic interaction, some people become better off, some become worse off. It’s easy to see what your neighbors are like, and because of the flows of people, you have a sense, at least, of your not-so-neighbors. Since it is virtually impossible to grow your own food or put up your own shelter, in most cities, being poor may well make it impossible for you to thrive. At the same time, if your life depends on having a job or doing transactions with others, the variety of people and industries and … in most cities, means that you are likely to be better off than if you lived in a more isolated area.

                If there is heterogeneity, there is also hierarchy. We somehow convince ourselves that skin color, nationality, ethnic group, wealth, personal attractiveness, etc. comes not in a variety but in a hierarchy, where some ways are better than others. Poverty among mendicant monks is not the way most people view the poor in their city. It usually is a plus to be whiter, taller, richer; and then certain particular characteristics (ethnicity) may put you in a particular hierarchy (better Armenian than Azeri?).

                Why is there poverty in a rich and vibrant city, we might ask? Why are biases hierarchized? Why is there not only an economy, but also an informal economy, and an underground economy? Why do some people participate in criminality? Why are some people comparatively healthy, other subject to chronic disease? Why are people separated in somewhat more homogeneous neighborhoods, and what does this have to do with zoning and discrimination? What are the consequences of massive migrations or the US’s legacy of slavery? Why do some people choose to live in a place with little amenity, while for others amenity motivates them. And can people make such choices?

                Whatever the answers, the crucial point is that cities make heterogeneity inevitable, and people make hierarchy almost inevitable. Moreover, it helps to start out with advantages (wealth, education, …), but people sometimes squander those advantages. And substantial changes in the society, such as the decline of industrial jobs in a city, can have profound consequences for those who are most vulnerable. That unions are much less influential than they were 40-50 years ago influences what part of the economic pie goes to those who work for others, and that too creates vast differences.

What does all of this, the last two paragraphs, have to do with cities? One might well have all these phenomena in rural and agricultural areas. But cities make the differences and hierarchies rather more acute, the presence of differences and variety rather more salient, the contrasts and judgments rather more commonly felt.

Moreover, any explanation must involve a consideration of the social and political and economic environment, historical precedents, and then consideration of individual responsibility for their situation. In general if your situation is auspicious, you are much less in need of your individual resources, than if you are in an inauspicious situation.

So if you want to explain heterogeneity and hierarchy, and why some individual is lower on that totem pole or why someone is on top, you must start out with understanding that environment and how it is auspicious or inauspicious. I do not believe this is so much a political position, as a scholarly one—but perhaps I am wrong here.

Two other considerations: Cities are in general sites of alienation, although neighborhoods may well be solidaritous. Hence, when things go awry, it may be hard to get support from others, although there are more others—so there is a balance between numbers and alienation. And, second, anything that depends on interactions (infectious disease, pollution, buying/selling, crime, …) is likely proportional to the square of the number of people in an area—N2 although that N might be the number of people you are in contact with or potentially in contact with through communications or transportation (over some period of time).

1. The Economy of Cities

You surely do not need a city to have an economy, but cities create the opportunity for a lively economy: lots of buyers and sellers and manufacturers and importers, and lots of connections to other cities and the hinterlands and foreign economies.

Diversity and Division of Labor leads to lots of exchanges and often to transformations of the society. New modes of organization and communication and manufacture—technology—allow for transformation.

Location matters. Centers are valuable. People choose to live, work, do business based on quite local factors—if they have choices.

Migration is much like technology, introducing new disruptive forces.

Corruption, informal enterprises, lead to an underground economy that in effect provides the above- ground economy what it needs.

Stability and order are crucial, since so many people are in such close proximity.

Taxes and property rights, often national rather than urban, make for amenity and security and so for investment and risk-taking

Cities with great inequality (of whatever sort), and distinguish this from diversity, are less stable.

Amenities such as parks and the arts and … have to be provided, and often are best provided through the state.

Cities do decline and rise, usually over longer periods, neighborhoods too. Competition, war, invention.

Propinquity still seems to matter. Face-to-face is important in many areas. So the big question we still ask, 150+ years after the railroads, is how will such communication and transportation technologies alter urban life.

And neighborhood economies are often important, but with better transport (and freight) those economies tend to become larger in spatial extent.

---------------------------------------------------------------------

1. Space and Place in Cities

For lots more see, Spiro Kostof, *The City Shaped*. [http://www.amazon.com/The-City-Shaped-Patterns-Meanings/dp/0821220160/ref=sr\_1\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1412351716&sr=8-1&keywords=kostof+city+shaped](https://ppdpost.sppd.usc.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=aHjKP9FCkUqhQztI-a1HAWSkDF65t9EIL-0PFaAyKUDhABsS67je_o6Ew6Q0WhIrs1Wnws4-3hg.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.amazon.com%2fThe-City-Shaped-Patterns-Meanings%2fdp%2f0821220160%2fref%3dsr_1_1%3fie%3dUTF8%26qid%3d1412351716%26sr%3d8-1%26keywords%3dkostof%2bcity%2bshaped" \t "_blank)

Cities are places and they take up space. Their spaces may grow by development and annexation so that two cities grow into each other.

Cities are dense, articulated and particularized, excluding and including, outspreading and infilling places, with flows of people and goods within the city, and without to other cities in the nation and internationally.

Cities are regulated by their economies, laws, their local geographies (eg. a river). Neighborhoods are relatively homogeneous and self-identified places, usually commercial, residential, and industrial uses are present--but sometimes only one or two. Cities grow by in-migration, often of diverse peoples, who may then be pushed into or choose to live close to each other (but not their children and grand-children).

Cities provide jobs and workers, religious places, educational institutions (less usually rather than more universal, until recently). They are almost always governed locally, although the nation or other nations may well control that.

Cities are usually built by developers, who have access to capital and power--developers might well be the state or preferred agents. They are rebuilt after devastation, after decline, with robust economies helping. In very robust economies they are overbuilt, and that overhang takes a while to be worked out.

Geography matters: rivers, hills, local resources. But so does the interests of the state or of entrepreneurs.

Cities have some sort of public streets, perhaps in a grid, perhaps with multiple colliding grids, perhaps with neighborhoods with complex streetways. Those arrangements are sometimes rebuilt, with enormous disruption (Paris).

Spaces are usually private, but there are public spaces as in parks and streets and public facilities. The private provision of public space is common, although such public spaces are still under private control. This has consequences for political demonstrations, photographing, etc.

Spaces are marked by aural ambience (quiet, street noise, factory noise, hawkers) and by other sensory qualities (visual complexity, smells and fragrances, and sometimes even feel). The urban sensorium is always experienced, but often not even noted as we go about our activities. Stopping to smell the roses is occasioned by something stopping us in our tracks.

Aerial and birds-eye views, historically from the tops of hills and or imagined as such, are vital for getting an overall sense. But walking will reveal details and flavors.

Cities are not ideas, they are actual places with social and economic factors that are found in part by looking and in part by deep investigation. Cities are always planned, by the state, by developers, by political actors. What might look like a jumble has a history that makes sense. Favellas, the hillside communities in Rio de Janeiro, may look like a jumble, but the residents have discerned a plan among the complexity, in part by informal regulation. Cities are always replanned and redesigned, usually in part and pieces, almost never wholesale.

Cities must have provision for water, waste, accessibility (roads,...), safety and security, and power. Even charming seemingly unplanned cities, those wonderful hillside cities (as in *The American*) must be ordered, often by the topography and by what others have done. But cities are also quite efficient, in providing for what people need.

People who live outside of cities, almost always use the services provided by the city. Yet the city needs the produce of the hinterland, for food, for construction materials, for waste disposal. Cities always pollute, but at least pollution may be sent elsewhere or isolated.

1. SPACE

a. Space into political and economic territory, annexation

b. Location and amenity, distance from the "center" and cost of land or the rent, "natural" advantages

c. Segmentation and agglomeration, discrimination, neighborhoods, access, self-sorting and restrictive sorting

d. A center or multiple centers, lines such as streets and roadways

e. Plasticity of the city, neighborhoods and areas going up and down, Paris as a brutal example

f. Regions, perhaps for matters of control (watersheds), or because of economics as in the Sunbelt or Rustbelt.

g. Systems of cities, primary cities, exchanges among them.

12 How Cities are Built

A. Cities are built by government, by private individuals, by builders and real estate developers. The land may be owned by government, and leased for say 99 years, or it may be sold by government to raise revenue, or given away by government to encourage settlement. There are regulations concerning safety and health, zoning, size and type of building, etc. Regulations are in general not liked by owners until their neighbors do something that hurts their property. Land and improvements are often taxed to pay for government services, in part because it is hard to hid such assets. Infrastructure is in part provided by government, in part by "natural monopolists" which are private entities (and so they receive exclusive licenses from government). Some uses are relatively protected from taxation.

B. Strong property rights encourage development and building. Weak rights make it hard to justify improvements with longer term payoffs.

C. Planning in terms of comprehensive plans, zoning, incentives, etc. may be merely coercive, from a authoritarian government. In more liberal societies, planning is indicative or guiding, giving greater certainty to developers and residents about what will be nearby. Presumably, there could be a market for rights to build, or compensation to neighbors for stuff they might not prefer and to encourage them not to go to the courts. But regulation has proved helpful, since litigation is costly, has uncertain outcomes, and takes a long time to get settled.

D. As for property, it might be real or immovable property of land and buildings, but it may include air rights, floor-area ratios permission, mineral rights under the land,..  Property may be long-term leases. There are rules about when government can take over property for public purposes, compensating the owners. And there are markets for air rights, etc., where someone who has such rights but does not use them might sell them to someone who can then use them.

E. Places are valuable because they are well connected to other places, so roads, transit, ports, industry, will affect the value of property and the possibility of certain kinds of economic activity.

F. In the US, the federal government plays a very large role in city development, from guaranteeing home loans, building some roads, setting standards for safety and health. Tax rules can encourage or discourage large speculative building or office towers.

G. There is always an intimate relationship of public and private in urban development. So, if you want fire and police protection, in most places you have to pay taxes, often based on property values. But one might have private police and fire provision, but this is quite rare.

H. And of course, government builds public schools, parks,... although there is private provision of such as well.

I. Different eras have different stories of city building. I have focused mostly on the contemporary US, here. More comparatively later in the semester.

1. Where the money comes from to enable city development.

Banks make short term construction loans, with a sense that when the building is done they will be able to get their money back. For the longer run, there are mortgages, since almost no one has the money to just purchase a building or unit outright. Moreover, in general, if you want to sell, there need to be buyers, so it helps if the economy is in good shape, the loan institutions are working well, and buyers have enough credit-worthiness to pay. Hence Professor Myers argues that homeowners have an interest in the well-being of immigrants, at least in LA, since they are likely to be buyers in the future and unless they have good incomes they won’t be in the market and so your home will fetch less than you hoped.

a.       To encourage home lending, the Federal government has developed loan guarantee programs (FHA, VET HOME LOANS…) and institutions that make home loans—Fannie Mae…

b.      To encourage investors to get into lending for mortgages, securities backed by a bunch of mortgages (and their repayment) have been invented, with all sorts of wonderful “improvements” to make them more attractive in terms of risk and reward. Unfortunately, many of the mortgages were much riskier than advertised, and so these securities tumbled in value when the economy hit a blip—people walked away from their mortgages. What happens is that if a random number of mortgagees happen to default, most others continue to make their payments, and the risks are moderate. But if a large number walk away at the same time, the risk becomes much larger, the rewards correspondingly smaller.

c.       Since building takes time, it is possible that if a bunch of builders/developers decide to start a project at the same time, and the timing is not optimal, there will be an oversupply and so lots of problems.

1. “Globalization”

The main point is that cities are gathering places for diverse people, they have to work together since not only are the close-by each other, they need each other. And, I wanted to make prominent/explicit some of the issues about how various subgroups of society might well feel excluded or mis-perceived. I also indicated that the category "white" or "male", what are often taken as the dominant categories, are quite unstable. White would seem to be people who have forgotten their pasts, and have something like lighter skin or are well off. Male is ok for most part as a sexual category, but says little about sexual orientation and preference, gender display, or how to be male. Masculinity has become something of a cartoon these days.

As for globalization, per se. Basically, either because of division of labor and specialization, resources, dominance (as in colonialism), or capital value, there is an enormous trade in goods and skills among cities, often far apart. Migrations, planned and unplanned, create many groups within major cities, each group having different origins, looks, customs, yet they all eventually in a generation or two homogenize but not completely. There is still hierarchies and domination, but somewhat different than conventional colonialism. Race or nationality are modulated by class and income and religion, so so diversity is the new normal. In the course of things, there is discrimination and unfair treatment, just what eventually creates problems that make cities tumultuous.

1. International Cities and Urbanism
2. Richer nations: cultural and economic differences, as well as history. Property rights.
3. Nations with richer cities: difference of countryside and city, primacy,
4. In general cities have been invaded, rebuilt, destroyed by weather—archaeology
5. Socialist vs. Capitalist city, vs. countryside, vs. 2015 situation
6. Less Developed Countries: backward, poor, development. May have once been cradles of civilization.
   1. Governance, transparency, good government, local control?
   2. Shantytowns, men first to earn money, then families maybe to shantytowns, favelas
   3. Urbanization, why come to city or why stay in countryside, megacities, global cities. Networks and information flows.
   4. Migration, immigration, “ethnic cleansing”
   5. Health: disease and density, water, sewerage, enough calories in market world vs. on farm; resilience to disaster.
7. Heritage: colonialism, language, legal structure, education; native heritage; geomorphology and resources. (US/Britain/Spain/Mexico/Native Americans) Slavery and autocracy.

All places are peculiar, some more obviously than others. Continuity with past: Beijing and China, Moscow/St. Petersburg/Russia/USSR, Mumbai/Britain/Raj.

1. Flows and Finance (in the US)

Given an Economy and Space, both highly differentiated, there are substantial flows within and among cities. Transactions usually take place when we are in the same space (sometimes cyber, sometimes mail), and so movement is almost always necessary.

Migration from the countryside, from other regions, and from other countries populate (or depopulate) a city. Cities offer freedom from rural and agricultural work, and job growth is usually urban (but see mining, for example). Moreover, within a city there is migration among neighborhoods, people moving up, down, sideways. Places and areas become differentiated by wealth, ethnicity, race, political attitude—people moving to find a good fit between themselves and their neighbors.

Cities also extend themselves, often into agricultural land, and grow spatially (in part, by annexation) so that they bump into neighboring cities and topographic features. People like city amenities: water, power, police, schools,… Moreover, goods have to move between places because where they are produced and where consumed are often far from each other. Such freight is quite demanding of space, from roadways, rail, warehouses, and ports. Moreover, services are often centralized, as in a hospital, and people need to travel to get those services. “Sprawl” is a term used to describe urban extension before there is densification in that area.

Utilities, what we expect to be available whenever we need them: electricity, natural gas, clean water, sewerage, storm sewers, communications by means of cables and microwave,… must go along with populations and spatial extents, and they form networks and systems that have to be coordinated. Roadways and rail lines are part of this utility system. Communications may affect material flows, encouraging business, visiting, and extended families. And people have to live someplace, work someplace, and get to work, go home, shop--so there is such a traffic flow. In these systems there is sometimes overload and congestion, since peak demand is much larger than average demand. Regulation, pricing, and overbuilding may deal with such overload; often the main cost is delays and lost time. Coordination is needed among the spaces, the users, the flows, and the productions. People constantly scheme and game the system to find ways of dealing with congestion, or to create scarcity and so be able to charge more.

Flows are provided for publicly, by private enterprises, and by enterprises given rights by public entities. Taxes, bonded indebtedness, and private capital pay for the production of these flow-ways, and users are charged fees for their consumption of flows. Often the capital cost of production is very great, and so the indebtedness is paid for by future users, rather than savings made before the facilities are constructed. It is always an economic and a political decision to build a flow-way, for we may deem some ways to be so crucial that they do not have to pay their way. In the US, freedom to flow and move is taken as a given, and that you are not at the center does not mean that you don’t get flows out to where you are. Accessibility matters politically and legally. Yet, those who have more get much more, those poor, much less.

Cities are mostly built by private enterprise, with systematic help from the public sector. Zoning assures builders that conflicting uses are unlikely to be nearby, governments provide home loans and or, more likely, guarantees to banks so that the loans are less risky, and government may well subsidize private projects or industries to encourage job growth and tax increments. Bankruptcy law means that those who take risks do not end up in jail, although they may lose their assets.

Property may well be owned or under governmental control, and some is sold off or given to private individuals. To get people to build, they need to be assured that their property will not be arbitrarily taken from them, for buildings, and other such, have long useful lifetimes. You cannot get their total benefits immediately. As importantly, capital is needed to construct the built environment, and few have that capital in their back pockets. Squatters and homesteaders and renters acquire their property (it may not be ownership and be tenure), whatever its security, through legislation and political action.

The finance system (banks, various private funds) gathers the savings of individuals, of other funds (pensions, investment vehicles), so that the large capital demands of builders might be available. In the US, the federal government has been in the business of encouraging home ownership (and so home-building), by means of guaranteeing those loans and otherwise making capital available. Various schemes have developed to encourage the flow of private funds into real restate: real estate investment trusts (REIT), mortgage backed securities and variations thereon. Since, in general risk being higher demands greater reward (interest rate, say), these schemes try to modulate risk while offering bigger rewards than usual. (Future economic growth may make current bonds and loans much easier to pay off, and inflation does its work as well, but those who buy such bonds demand some premium for these risks.) One needs good measures of that risk, and rating agencies have proved unable to be honest brokers, and sellers have proved to be unreliable. Moreover, systematic risk, when there is strong correlation of risks, means that residual risk can be substantial and catastrophic. For sellers, transaction fees have come dominate the steady stream of income from loans, so there is little incentive to be reliable (they have no skin in the game once they sell a loan).

On the other hand, local governments use taxes (property, sales) and bonded indebtedness for the parts of the city built by public entities, such as roads, or electrical systems, or schools, or… Again, future users pay for the provision of flow-ways. There may be tax breaks for income from municipal bonds, so making it less expensive for a city to issue them.

Although there are periods of growth in the actual value of real estate, the costs of maintenance, taxes, and the changing market make that less sure than is commonly believed. If you have large influxes of people and industry into an area, it is likely that real estate prices will rise. Real estate markets will fall if there is a lack of liquidity (loans), neighborhoods and places decay, and bubbles burst. On the other hand real estate and buildings last a long time, much longer than planned, and population growth is common (but declines happen as well). People do make money in real estate, from their homes and their entrepreneurial ventures, and their investments, but this is a volatile asset and the chances for losing money and bankruptcy are not uncommon

**ESSAYS**

1. **The City in Gravity**

Science is part of our more general culture. For example, geographers and urban planners explain how parts of the city influence other parts using what they call a gravity law, namely interactions are proportional to 1/*d*2, where *d* is the distance between places—essentially Newton’s law of gravitation. Nearer places affect each other more than farther places. Einstein extended Newton’s law by showing how mass and energy determine the paths of falling objects, and vice versa (general relativity), and earlier that space and time must be linked (special relativity) much as a neighborhood and an era are connected.

In effect, we might have a Einsteinian explanation of the social and built environment (corresponding to mass) in terms of how people move in the city (the shape of spacetime), and an account of how people move in the city determined by the distribution of the built and social environment. Where and when you go depends on what there is to do there, and what is there depends on people’s paths and activities.

Cosmic phenomena in the stars and galaxies have similarities with how cities function: Gravity in the large in the universe vs. gravity in the small in a city, we might say. The Big Bang is the story of an expanding universe, and as it does so it cools down, in stages not unlike steam becoming water becoming ice. And eventually, it is cool enough and there is time enough to form stars and galaxies as various bits of dust gravitate toward each other—going against that explosive expansion. So cities expand, and as they expand neighborhoods and concentrations of activities are formed by people, as we say, gravitating toward each other. And just as stars might eventually explode, the gravitational attraction of their mass forcing them to become hotter and hotter from nuclear reactions, as in our Sun, so neighborhoods may dissipate as they become too dense and chaotic for the residents.

Astrophysicists account for the typical histories of various sorts of stars given what they are made of and their mass, the age in their individual history indicated by their color and brightness. So in neighborhoods, time is marked by remarkable patterned histories of development and decay.

And cities are much like Black Holes. They attract everything in their region. At the same time, much of the detailed particulars of each person so attracted are erased by city life and its anonymity.

Now we have no such accurate theory for cities, as we do in physics and astrophysics for the universe. But it is tempting to think of cities and systems of cities as modeled by the cosmos.

1. **Detroit and the Cosmology of Technology**

In the early 1930s, Edsel Ford commissioned Diego Rivera (1886-1957), the Mexican muralist, to paint, by means of fresco, an enclosed courtyard of the Detroit Institute of Arts Museum. The work is a paean to Nature, Industry, Civilization, and People. Remarkably, there was a deep overlap of Ford’s interest in industry and Rivera’s Marxist interest in modernism, so that the murals suited the commissioner and the artist.

Henry Ford, Edsel’s father, had developed the River Rouge manufacturing plant, integrated so that it took in raw materials and put out Ford automobiles. It was in effect a City of Industry. Rivera created a panoply of images, showing the process of manufacture, from the making of steel to the sewing of the automobile’s upholstery. Featured were many important actors, from the industrial capitalist Henry Ford, to the cultivated and elite Edsel, to the managers and engineers, to the supervisors and workers at the furnaces and sewing machines. My sense is that there is a mutual dependence of the managers and engineers with the workers, while the capitalists were literally sidelined.

Rivera also displayed much of modern industry in its rise to paramount status: aviation, water supply, energy production, and chemicals and pharmaceuticals. Chemistry was the science of the moment, the chemist crucial to the workings of industrial processes. And Rivera displayed Nature, from its geological strata that made for resource-rich places, in cities and hinterlands, places that made this City of Industry possible, to generativity in childbirth. Those children and their parents, who worked at River Rouge, were of many races (as the notion was then understood) with complex and rich cultures.

Despite the Great Depression, Detroit at this moment, in its location on the Great Lakes and at the nexus of many rail lines, is the center of a universe. That universe draws in capital, people, goods, and natural resources, and provides automobiles that were affordable for some portion of the population, and used cars for many others. Detroit is here a nascent hotbed of innovation in labor relations, politics, and society.

1. **Urban Tomography**

In the 1850s and 1860s Charles Marville photographed the streets of Paris before they were eviscerated and then after they were rebuilt under Napoleon III’s orders under the direction of Baron Haussmann—creating the Paris we know today with its grand boulevards. There are more than 500 such images, providing enormous detail, using the early wet-plate negative process on letter-sized glass plates.

Over the last fifteen years I have followed in Marville’s footsteps, albeit in my own fashion, but now in Los Angeles, photographing 800 storefront houses of worship, people at work at 225 industrial sites including at the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach and at the now former County-USC Hospital building (a backdrop for more than one soap opera), and all the electrical power station of the Department of Water and Power. We have also rephotographed, from Marville’s points of view, the sites Marville photographed but now 135 years later. Google *Street View* is not enough—you have to go out and be there and look. And we have recorded the sounds of Los Angeles in high-quality calibrated surround sound.

I learned from Marville that it is vital to make not just one or two photographs, iconic and wonderful, but to make suites of images much as are made in a CAT scan of your brain. Such tomography, *tomo* for slice, allows one to see in three dimensions. In our case, the dimensions are time and variations within a subject matter.

I am a professor of urban planning. We have little information about the city’s past urban sensorium of sight, sound, smell, feel, or taste, say before 1850, except through vivid descriptions and sometimes graphically, as in Marville or in etchings and maps. My work aims to is to create a living past for the future.

The work can be seen at <http://www.usc.edu/~krieger> and in the USC Digtial Library <http://digitallibrary.usc.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/p15799coll64>

1. **What’s Wrong With Plastic Trees?**

More than forty years ago I published a scholarly article, “What’s Wrong With Plastic Trees?” Based on the economics and historical literature, I argued that we live in an artificial and designed environment. As a consequence, most of us thrive because we have adequate diets, are less plagued by disease, and are well sheltered. What we call Nature is almost always designed and planned by us, whether it be wildernesses, jungles, or parks. When we go out into Nature, we now go out with smartphones equipped with GPS.

I wanted to argue against apocalyptic environmentalism. Subsequently, I wrote about how hard it is to create a credible doomsday scenario, for on the way to doom we have many chances to save ourselves and make life better. Rather than running out of resources, we discover new sources, invent substitutes, and find ways of cleaning up after ourselves. Yes, there are major latent problems in poorer countries, especially as they get richer and more resource consuming. Yes, we despoil the environment, although we also create oases and safe places, not to speak of those Nature experiences we so revere, and we enlarge our resources for nourishment and health.

Global warming is apparently real and in part caused by human activity. We need to make changes in how we live, but they are likely to save us money in the long run and increase our quality of life. The disruptions might well be costly in the short term, and affect some of us much less advantageously than others—and we might want to compensate the losers. Water shortages, here in California and in much of the developing world, will become acute if we do not act now, but again they are likely to be economically and quality-of-life beneficial.

Of course, there are the just-below-the-radar dangers, ones that we more or less accept: automobile accidents, overuse of alcohol, and so forth. We know about how they endanger us; we try to ameliorate their incidence and consequences. But we might do much better were we to see that they are more challenging—right now--than is global warming or water shortages.

Probably the biggest challenge to our well-being as a society, and often to us as individuals, is the existence of extreme poverty and alienation. In rich countries, those people who are marginalized challenge the legitimacy of those who are better off and integrated into society. They are not the major source of criminal behavior, since those who are better off have more opportunities to do harm. They are not the major budgetary costs, since tax benefits to the better off likely outweigh the costs of society’s safety net. In fact, to integrate the poor and the undocumented immigrants into society is likely to be a big boost to the economy, providing the next generation with tax-paying workers to support our old-age benefits and to buy our homes when we want to retire.

I am not sanguine about these environmental and social challenges, or the disruptions they may cause, especially to those least able to bear them. But we have made them and we can transform them into opportunities, often at great economic benefit to all of us. Historically, this is what we have always done. There is sacrifice, but there is that opportunity as well.