

# Modeling, valuing, & modifying the city

---

University of Southern California | MHP 102 | Spring 2024 | Tuesdays 2:00-4:20 | PHIL 540

## Instructor

Jake Monaghan, PhD. My email address is [jmonagha@usc.edu](mailto:jmonagha@usc.edu). My office is Mudd Hall 105E and my office hours are Tuesday from 11 to noon or by appointment. You might also find me in the Mudd Hall courtyard during office hours.

## About the Course

Welcome to Modeling, Valuing, & Modifying the City. Our focus in this course is the substantive and methodological questions of the **political ethics of cities**. We'll begin by reflecting on a variety of formal and informal models of the city. These models all emphasize certain values, and in this way clearly influence the inferences theorists make from the model to actual cities. The concern is both substantive and methodological: which model(s) are the most illuminating, and how do we adjudicate disputes involving different kinds of model-based reasoning? Once we finish our brief foray into the issue of models and values, we'll apply the lessons to a host of moral problems in the city. This includes homelessness, housing markets, segregation and integration, gentrification, and so on. We'll conclude with a reflection on the idea—popular outside of philosophy—of the “right to the city.” Unfortunately, life is about opportunity costs, and we won't be able to cover important topics like transportation, natural resource access, etc. **All required materials will be provided through Blackboard<sup>1</sup>**, but you might want to own Jacobs' *Death and Life*, Scott's *Seeing Like a State*, and Kukla's *City Living*.

## Grade Distribution

15% Discussion leadership  
15% Journal  
70% Term paper (due May 7)

## Discussion Leadership

Because this is a seminar, most of our time will be spent discussing the readings. Each student will be required to pick one reading for which they will provide an overview and lead the class discussion.

## Reading Journal

The reading journal is a mildly paternalistic way to ensure that you are actively writing on the topic throughout the semester. One goal is to improve seminar discussions and to give you some more fleshed out ideas for your term paper. Another goal is to build daily writing habits (like I said—mildly paternalistic). For each week, please write at least couple hundred words on something you found interesting, frustrating, compelling, or whatever, about the readings for the week. Occasionally I'll give you a more specific prompt to respond to. I will periodically collect these throughout the semester to audit them.

## Term Paper

The term paper is practice for a journal article. As long as it engages the material from the course and looks recognizably like a journal article, you'll have satisfied the basics of the assignment. If you actually publish the article, I will be pleased. In the meantime, the paper will be graded on the basis of quality of interpretation, argumentation, and style.

---

<sup>1</sup> Our reading schedule probably has too much on it. I might trim readings as we go.

## Schedule: Modeling, valuing, & modifying cities

---

### Weeks 1-8 City models & city values

- Cities as cemeteries or citadels**
- 1/9 "Sanctuary, village, and stronghold," Lewis Mumford  
"The nature of the city," Max Weber
- Cities as tragic commons**
- 1/16 "A view of the evils existing in the metropolis," Patrick Colquhoun  
"A ride on the bus," Joel Feinberg  
"Controlling chronic misconduct in city space," Robert Ellickson
- Cities as communities or social structures**
- 1/23 "Broken windows," George W Kelling & James Q Wilson  
"City life and difference," Iris Marion Young  
"Structure as the subject of justice," Iris Marion Young
- Cities as artworks**
- 1/30 Selections from *The Radiant City*, Le Corbusier  
"The use of sidewalks: safety," Jane Jacobs  
"The high modernist city," James C Scott
- 2/6 "Compulsory villagization in Tanzania," James C Scott  
"Urban planning and urban values," Sanford Ikeda  
"Dealing with urban diversity," Bart van Leeuwen
- Cities as (eco)systems**
- 2/13 "The kind of problem a city is," Jane Jacobs  
"Inhabiting space," Quill Kukla  
"Urban space and city living," Quill Kukla
- 2/20 "Sorting and mixing: race and sex," Thomas Schelling  
"Segregation that no one seeks," Ryan Muldoon et al
- Cities as labor markets or competitors in a market**
- 2/27 Selections from *Order without Design*, Alain Bertaud  
"A pure theory of local expenditure," Charles M. Tiebout

### Weeks 9-15 City problems

- Housing**
- 3/5 "Homelessness and the issue of freedom," Jeremy Waldron  
"Homelessness and freedom," Katy Wells
- 3/12 *Spring recess*
- 3/19 *Pacific APA*
- Housing markets**
- 3/26 "Housing markets," Kristina Meshelski  
"What could be wrong with a mortgage?" Lisa Herzog  
"What (if anything) can justify zoning?" Brian Kogelmann

**Segregation & containment**

- 4/2  
Selections from *The Imperative of Integration*, Elizabeth Anderson  
“Integration, inequality, and imperatives of justice,” Tommie Shelby  
“Justice, deviance, and the dark ghetto,” Tommie Shelby

**Gentrification & local control**

- 4/9  
“Gentrification and integration,” Jamie Draper  
“Living with gentrification,” Quill Kukla  
“The aesthetic homogenization of cities,” C Thi Nguyen
- 4/16  
“Gentrification and everyday democracy,” Jamie Draper  
“Local diversity and polycentric democracy,” Ryan Muldoon

**Rights to the city**

- 4/23  
“The right to the city,” Henri Lefebvre  
“The right to the city,” David Harvey  
“Spatial agency, territory, and the right to the city,” Quill Kukla

## The fine print

### Students with Disabilities Policy

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. **The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS)** is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at [osas.usc.edu](https://osas.usc.edu). You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at [osasfrontdesk@usc.edu](mailto:osasfrontdesk@usc.edu).

### Statement on Academic Integrity

The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct is in contrast to the university's mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form). This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the **USC Student Handbook**. All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity. Other violations of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage. The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university. For more information about academic integrity see the student handbook or the **Office of Academic Integrity's website**, and university policies on **Research and Scholarship Misconduct**.

### Late Assignments

I will deduct 10 points from your assignment's score if it does not reach me by the time it is due, and 5 additional points for each 24-hour period that the assignment is late after that (including Saturdays and Sundays). For example, if the assignment is due at 9:00 am on Wednesday and it is received after that time, but before 9:00 am on Thursday, then it will receive a 10 point deduction. If it is received after 9:00 am on Thursday, but before 9:00 am on Friday, then it will receive an additional 5 point deduction. And so on.

### Incompletes

Professors may assign a mark of Incomplete (IN) if a student submits documentation of illness or emergency that occurs after the withdrawal deadline. If a mark of IN is assigned as the student's grade, the professor will specify to the student all work remaining to be done, the procedures for its completion, the grade in the course to date, and the weight to be assigned to the missing work when computing the final grade. A student must complete the IN by completing only the work that was not finished because of illness or emergency. Students may not submit previously graded work. Students cannot complete an IN by re-registering for the course, as this will result in tuition charges to the student. Students must complete an IN within one year. If not completed within the specified time limit by the professor, the IN automatically becomes a mark of IX (expired Incomplete) and computes in the grade point average of as 0 points.

### Grading

I will grade each assignment on a 100-point scale. At the end of the term, I will calculate a numerical *course score* on a 100-point scale for each student, using the weights for each assignment described above. A *course letter grade* will be then be assigned using the scale below. **I will not round your grade down for no reason; similarly, I will not round your grade up for no reason.**

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
100-93	92-90	89-87	86-83	82-80	79-77	76-73	72-70	69-67	66-63	62-60	<60

### Emergency Preparedness

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. See the university's site on **Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness**.

### Learning Objectives

Students will become competent, informed deliberators about methodological and moral problems regarding the city.