The city is a land of awe – both awesome and awful. This course is designed to explore the city from a sociological perspective with a focus on the central question of community in modern urban life. We will discuss various theories and research on cities, local communities, and neighborhoods. Class will be lecture and discussion of readings. Evanston and Chicagoland will often be our class research and reference sites. You will have the opportunity to pursue your own topic of interest in consultation with me and report your results in a final term paper.


Harvey Warren Zorbaugh – The Gold Coast and the Slum (Chicago 1929/1976)

Scientific American Sept 2011 – Special Issue Cities: Smarter, Greener, Better

Other Readings- Articles On Reserve/Blackboard

Grades: Two Exams 60% (2x30%) 1st on Tue 2/5 2nd on Thur 3/7

Final Paper 40% (8-10 pages) due Mon 3/18

Topics & Readings:

Week 1 – Pre-Amble (Around the City)

1/8-10 Lyon – Chapter One – The Concept of Community

Zorbaugh – Introductions

Chapter I – The Shadow of the Skyscraper

Reading – Wirth – Urbanism as a Way of Life

Week 2 – Perspectives on the City

1/15-17 Lyon – Chapter Two – The Typological Approach

Chapter Fourteen – Field Research & Holistic Studies

Zorbaugh – Chapter II – An Area in Transition

Reading - Melvin – Neighborhood Definition

Ross - Neighborhood Stability & Well-Bein
Week 3 – Physical City

1/22-24   Lyon – Chapter Three – The Ecological Approach
            Zorbaugh – Chapter XI – The City and the Community
            Reading- Immergluck – Local Working
            Elliott & Sims – Ghettos, Barrios & Jobs
            Canache – Looking Out My Back Door

Week 4 – Race, and Class

1/29-31   Lyon – Chapter Five – The Conflict Approach
            Zorbaugh – Chapter VII – The Slum
            Chapter VIII – Little Hell
            Reading- Harrris – Property Values & Blacks
            Pattillo – Sweet Mothers & Gangbangers

Week 5 – Personal Problems – Family and Friends

2/5-7   ** First Exam Tuesday 2/5
            Lyon- Chapter Seven – The Loss & Quest for Community
            Zorbaugh – Chapter IV – World of Furnished Rooms
            Chapter VI – Rialto of the Half World
            Reading- Molotch & Duneier – Interaction Vandalism
            Logan – Family Neighbors

Week 6 – Parochial Community

2/12-14   Lyon- Chapter Four – The Community as a Social System
            Chapter Six – The Multiple Approaches to Community
            Zorbaugh- Chapter V - Towertown
            Reading- Wellman – Community & Networks
            South – Marital Transition
            Hunter – Loss of Community
Week 7 - Perimeter of the City

2/19-21 Lyon – Chapter Eight – Community Development
Zorbaugh – Chapter III – The Gold Coast
Reading- Logan – Minorities & Suburbs
Meredith – Sprawl & New Urbanism

Week 8 - Politics of the City

2/26-28 Lyon- Chapter Twelve – Community Power
Chapter Thirteen – Measuring Community Power
Zorbaugh- Chapter IX – Community Institutions, Social Agency
Chapter X- The Lower North Community Council
Reading- Crenson – Networks & Politics
Marschall – Citizen Co-Participation

Week 9 – Planning and the City

3/5-7 ** Thursday 3/7 In Class Second Exam
Lyon- Chapter Nine – Planned Communities
Chapter Fifteen – Quality of Life, Quality of Communities
Zorbaugh- Chapter XII – Reform, Realism, and City Life
Reading Perry – Planning & Neighborhood
Goering – Neighborhood Policy
Silver – Obama Urban Policy

Week 10 – Reading Week

3/12-14 Available for Consultation on Final Papers

Week 11 – Exam Week

3/18** Final Paper Due Monday 3/18 by 5 pm. at 1812 Chicago Ave., rm 203.