

Introduction: Making “Urban Anthropology” a more sustainability-oriented course

This is a template for a modified course syllabus for Anth 252, Urban Anthropology, that will newly incorporate sustainability principles during its next Fall 2003 offering. The two units in particular that will be modified are focused on (1) economic development and housing issues in the Global South, and (2) uneven urban development in contemporary post-industrial cities of the North, such as Boston. In each unit, students will study the nature and applicability of sustainability principles to the cases at hand, and use these principles to assess outcomes, future development, and meaningful interventions in these urban problem areas. What follows is a brief schematic of the syllabus units related to sustainability

University of Massachusetts at Boston
Department of Anthropology

Course Outline: Anthropology 252
Urban Anthropology

MWF 10:30

M-1-207

Schedule No. 162706

A comparative study of the form and quality of urban life in the contemporary United States and in selected non-western cultures. Through an examination of selected case studies, the course assesses the varying theories, methodological strategies, and research techniques that have been employed in anthropological analyses of cities and considers their significance in the broader field of urban studies. Urban Anthropology is a very diverse, pluralistic "field" of study. We will compare and contrast the sometimes dramatically varying sorts of Urban Anthropology that have been practiced by American anthropologists in recent decades. We will also consider the cultural evolutionary processes leading to the origin and spread of cities and urbanized society in both the ancient and modern worlds. The course examines contemporary U.S. "inner city" problems, rapidly urbanizing cities in the developing world, and trends in today's emerging "global cities." This semester, we will also include coverage of principles of sustainable development, and apply them to critical assessment of urban development alternatives both in the USA and in the Global South.

In addition to playing a role in the **Anthropology** program, this course fulfills requirements in the intercollegiate **Latino Studies Program**; a strong emphasis in case materials will thus be both on Latino and Latin American examples. The course also fulfills requirements in the intercollegiate program in **Criminal Justice**, and we will pay serious attention throughout to issues of urban crime. The course also fulfills a requirement in the **Public Policy Program**; our main policy foci will be on issues of housing, policing, and poverty.

Instructor: **TIM SIEBER**
Dept. of Anthropology

Unit II. Urbanization and Sustainable Development in the Global South: Ciudad Guayana, Venezuela, and other Locations

Objectives: The class will apply “Sustainable Development” principles as another framework for critical assessment and analysis of a particular development case (economic and social development in a the “new” city of Ciudad Guayana, Venezuela). This case demonstrates many failures to promote sustainable development, which we will diagnose through examination of a local low-income barrio that is profiled in the ethnographic study we read. Later the class will consider some more successful, alternative models for community-based sustainable development. Finally, the class will be asked to write a 3-page analytic essay as part of the midterm assessing the case in terms of principles related to sustainable development planning.

1. Sustainability: Principal Elements of an Alternative Model for Development

Reading: Earth First, “What are Sustainable National Development Strategies?”

Erickson, Paul A., “The Social Environment,” from A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Reid, Paul. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: AN INTRODUCTORY GUIDE (excerpts)

2. Introduction to the Setting: the Rapid Transformation and Urbanization of Developing Areas

Reading: Peattie, *THE VIEW FROM THE BARRIO*, Chapters 1-3 (pp. 1-30)

3. **Economics, Employment, and the Informal Economy**

Reading: Peattie, Chapters 4 (pp. 31-42)

4. **Adaptation through Family, Kinship and Community Networks**

Reading: Peattie, Chapters 5 (43-53)

Recomm: Keefe, "The Myth of the Declining Family," (pp. 308-322 in G&Z); Gmelch and Zenner, "Small Groups in the Large City," pp. 11-12 in G&Z

5. **Community Development and Internal Factional Conflict**

Reading: Peattie, Chapter 6 (pp. 54-70)

6. **Potable Water, the Sewer Controversy, and Environmental Justice: forms of Public Protest**

Reading: Peattie, Chapter 7 (pp. 71-90)

7. **Economic Development and Urbanization as Processes of Sociocultural Change**

Reading: Peattie, Chapters 10-11 (pp. 118-144)

8. **Pathways to Sustainable Development: Alternative Models**

Reading: Hans Van Willigen, "The Vicos Project," from APPLIED ANTHROPOLOGY

Jenks & Burgess, COMPACT CITIES: SUSTAINABLE URBAN FORMS FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (excerpts)

UNIT III. The Faces & Locales of Globalization, Part 1: Poverty, Uneven Development, Inequality, and Sustainable Alternatives in Contemporary City & Society

Objectives: The class will apply “Sustainable Development” principles as another framework for critical assessment and analysis of common processes of community change, especially gentrification, characterizing Boston and other contemporary US cities. The analyses result in better understanding of the roots of the present crisis in housing affordability, especially in cities with strong post-industrial, service-oriented economies such as Boston. The stress in this unit is not only on critical analysis of social impacts on urban residents, but also to assess outcomes of alternative practices for sustainable community development that are being advanced by a variety of grass-roots organizations and national-level planning reform groups. In the final take-home exam, one essay of 3 pages will be written to assess the utility of sustainability principles in social critique and planning.

1. Introduction: Sustainability, Cities and Neighborhoods

Reading: Baily et al, SOCIALLY SUSTAINABLE CITIES
The Conservation Economy, THE PATTERNS OF A
CONSERVATION ECONOMY: webpages on “Community,” “Social Equity,”
“Shelter for All,” “Cultural Preservation”

2. Poverty Studies in Social Science: The “Culture of Poverty”

Reading: Lewis, "The Culture of Poverty"

3. Adaptationist Vs. Deprivationist Models of the Urban Poor

Reading: Goode, "How Urban Ethnography Counters Myths about the Poor"

4. Urban Gentrification: Causes & Consequences

Reading: Sieber, "Urban Gentrification: Ideology & Practice in Middle Class Civic Activity"; Sieber, "Waterfront revitalization in post-industrial port cities of N. America"

5. Contemporary Local Manifestations of Gentrification: the Housing Affordability Crisis in Boston

Reading: Sieber, "Growing Income and Housing Inequalities in Boston," from www.symphonyofacity.org; Boston Tenant Coalition, TURNING NEW GROWTH INTO AFFORDABLE HOUSING: A PLAN TO CREATE 10,000 AFFORDABLE HOMES IN BOSTON BY 2005, April 2000 (excerpts)

6. Struggling for Alternative, Sustainable Solutions: Community Resistance to Gentrification, and the Work of City Life/Vida Urbana

Reading: 1) Packet of materials from City Life/Vida Urbana, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, 2000-2001; from City Life, Portland, Oregon
2) Policy Link, BEYOND GENTRIFICATION TOOLKIT