The Evolution of Human Settlements, UST606

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Fall Semester, 2015

Course Overview: This course is about the evolution of human settlements. It is motivated by an interest in understanding today’s densely-populated urban socio-technical settlements in which increasing complexity is frequently a source of difficulty. The primary goal is to provide the student with sufficient conceptual and theoretical background together with substantive knowledge about various human settlements, and about complex social systems, to begin to understand and apply relevant theories, concepts, and ideas in consideration of plans, policies and decisions that affect the governance and future of these systems.

The course is premised upon the assumption that the great progress that has occurred over the past centuries has been nothing less than astounding in terms of the material dimensions of our lives, of the things we have, at least for many of us. But it has not necessarily brought an increase in happiness, and certainly does not enable any of us to look to the future and feel a sense of confident serenity that generations of our children yet to come will live in the sort of world we would hope and prefer for them. One has only to look at any good current newspaper to find loud contradictions of this hope in poverty and deprivation, war, genocide, crime, famine, epidemic, ecological catastrophe, weapons of mass destruction, malnutrition, and attacks on the liberties we hold dear. Moreover, experience suggests that when it comes to making collective efforts at ameliorating social and environmental problems of enormous complexity and seriousness such as these, the state of the art is dismal. Typically, such efforts amount to little more than collective action taken on the basis of partially formulated images or representations of poorly understood situations. When rendered and entered into political processes, such representations eventually evolve into collective actions that, while perhaps intended to have ameliorative affects, nevertheless tend instead to be partially successful at best and at worst, to bring disastrous unanticipated consequences. For example, during the twentieth century, Marxism-Leninism, National Socialism and the Great Leap Forward were all put forth as solutions to what were then perceived to be the major social problems of the time, as if they were based upon definitive social postulates. But rather than leading to social renewal, as they had promised, they instead undermined self-determination and led to wholesale decline of reason.

Accordingly, the course is designed to help answer two fundamental questions. First, how have we gotten to this point? Second, what if any steps can be taken now to offer significant possibilities for solving or ameliorating the major urban, social and environmental problems we face today, and improving the state of civil societies in the future?
Several distinct kinds of problem are part of a consideration of the evolution of human settlements. Any such settlement can be understood as a socio-technical system located in an ecosystem, at a particular time and place, with a particular endowment of resources, knowledge, and technology. One kind of problem refers to recognizing and properly understanding the substantive aspects of such systems and their locations. This involves; (a) identifying the elements of the situations and the relations applicable among those elements, and (b) assimilating that knowledge into a broad perspective from which to understand the conditions that govern and constrain the choice set of options for human action within that situation. The second kind of problem is one of developing a shared understanding among people who have different perspectives and values and who are in one way or another a part of the situations—whether they are engaged in studying them, changing them, or simply being influenced by them. A third kind of problem is how to locate such understanding as can be developed into the stream of history in an informed, organized, effective way, preserving whatever relevant knowledge and insight is available. A fourth kind of problem, which is embedded in the third, but which deserves special recognition because of its impact, is to use this understanding to improve plans, policies, and decisions that exert influence on the future of society. Personal values play a major role in this area, but mastery of the relevant knowledge and understanding can influence greatly the way in which values are exercised. This course aims primarily at the first three of these problems, in the belief that contributions to them will indirectly benefit the fourth.

Conventional ways of coping with complexity in human settlements today are not satisfactory. Much of the difficulty comes about because hubris, population growth and technological advancement interact in a vicious cycle. The course will cover these factors, at least to a first approximation. Much also comes about because the rate of change in many human societies is now faster than the rate at which individuals and groups of people can effectively assimilate and respond to day-to-day circumstances. This is true not only in terms of the cognitive frameworks with which individuals and groups deliberate and take action at an individual level, but also in terms of the institutional frameworks around which societies are organized. It is probably not possible to attach meaningful measures to these two rates, but it is at least possible to consider ways in which they may be made more compatible. For instance, it may be possible to influence the rate at which people can effectively assimilate the changes they encounter into their own individual knowledge and understanding. In turn, the proposals for action they put forth based upon this enhanced knowledge and understanding may help make possible an extended form of democracy and bring about improvements in the decision-making processes which influence the experiences of individuals living within human settlements now and in the future.

The course has two primary components. The first is comprised of presentations and discussions during class-meetings. The format of the class-meetings will be of a mixed lecture-seminar type. That is, in each meeting, a presentation will be made, and this will be followed by a discussion. Students are expected to: prepare for and attend all classes, prepare for and participate actively in discussions, ask clarifying questions, and generally contribute to the discussion. The second is comprised of homework done individually by
participants in the course. This will consist of reading the assigned course material, preparing for discussions and, as necessary, writing papers.

Learning objectives:

1. Obtain an overview of the natural and social histories of diverse human settlements throughout the world, with special emphasis upon the environmental and geographical factors that have come to characterize them through time
2. Begin to know and understand the component principles and characteristics of the dynamics of evolving social systems and how they apply within the context of human settlements
3. Come to know salient characterizing elements of human settlements at various times and places recorded in natural and written history, including those in the Neolithic, ancient, medieval, industrial, and information ages
4. Understand the theory and assess the empirical evidence used to establish the validity of evolutionary explanations of change in human settlements
5. Obtain insight into how evolutionary processes have determined the state of human settlements around the world today
6. Extend the substantive knowledge of past human settlements together with principles of evolutionary and systems theory to anticipate possible future outcomes, and contemplate policy proposals that might influence these outcomes
7. Obtain insights into individual and collective human thought and behavior which are essential for participants and reformers to improve the success with which they solve problems within complex urban social systems today
8. Become familiar with salient dimensions of the state of human settlements around the world today, and the threats to their sustainability
9. Stimulate questions, discussion, and critical thinking, on an informed basis, and with an open mind, about current urban policies and practices

Sources of class readings:


*State of the World’s Cities 2012 – 2013: Prosperity of Cities*


**Tentative Schedule of Topics and Readings**

Prior to the first class meeting, read:


**Foundations: The Origins, Fates and States of Human Settlements**

**August 24: The Evolution of Human Settlements: Some Basic Terms and Concepts**

Readings for next class meeting:

Johnson and Earle Chapter 1

Mumford Chapter 1

*State of the World’s Cities 2012 – 2013: Prosperity of Cities*

Introduction (page v)

Overview and Key Findings (pages x – xx)

Chapter 1.1: Conceptualizing Urban Prosperity

**August 31: The Evolution of Prosperity**

Readings for next week’s class meeting:


September 7: Labor Day. No class meeting.

September 14: Human Settlements: Physical, Biological, Social and Intellectual Dimensions

Urban Colloquium 1

Readings for next week’s class meeting:

Dunstan Chapters 1 and 2

Mumford Chapters 2 – 4

Johnson and Earle Chapters 2 – 4

A Selected Long-Term History of Human Settlements

September 21: Settlements of Pre-Classical Antiquity

Urban Colloquium 2

Readings for next week’s class meeting:

Mumford Chapters 5 - 8

Johnson and Earle Chapters 5 - 6
September 28: Classical Settlements of Greece and Rome

Urban Colloquium 3

Readings for next week’s class meeting:

Mumford Chapters 9 – 12

Johnson and Earle Chapters 7 - 8

October 5: European Settlements of the Middle-Ages

Urban Colloquium 4

Paper #1 due

Readings for next week’s class meeting:

Mumford Chapters 13 and 14

More: Introduction and Chapters 1 and 8

Johnson and Earle Chapters 9 – 11


October 12: Columbus Day. No class meeting.

October 19: The Industrial Revolution and the Rise of Capitalism

Readings for next week’s class meeting:

Mumford Chapters 15 – 18

Johnson and Earle Chapters 12 - 14

October 26: The Evolution of Urban America

Urban Colloquium 5

Readings for next week’s class meeting:


**Contemporary Human Settlements**

**November 2: The New American City**

Urban Colloquium 6

**Readings for next week’s class meeting:**

Selections from Brenner and Keil

C6: World City Formation: An Agenda for Research and Action
C7: The World City Hypothesis
C9: Cities and Communities in the Global Economy
C10: Locating Cities on Global Circuits
C13: Inequality in Global City-regions


**November 9: Today’s Global-Scale Settlement Systems**

Urban Colloquium 7
Readings for next week’s class meeting:

*State of the World’s Cities 2012 – 2013: Prosperity of Cities*
Chapter 2.5 Environmental Sustainability and the Prosperity of Cities

http://nca2014.globalchange.gov/highlights#section-5682


November 16: Climate Change and Its Threat to Sustainable Settlement Systems

Readings for next week’s class meeting:

The Economist. For Richer or for Poorer. October 2012

*State of the World’s Cities 2012 – 2013: Prosperity of Cities*
Chapter 2.3 Quality of Life and Urban Prosperity
Chapter 2.4: Equity and the Prosperity of Cities

November 23: Inequality Within and Between Human Settlements

Final exam distributed

Paper #2 due

Readings for next week’s class meeting:

*State of the World’s Cities 2012 – 2013: Prosperity of Cities*
Part III: Policies for Prosperous Cities

November 30: Decision-making and the Governance of Complex, Large-scale Human Settlement Systems

Student presentations

December 7: Final Class Meeting

Student presentations

Final exam due
Class Policies and Practices

Grades: A final exam will be given and will account for 30% of the course grade. It will consist of several essay questions. The primary purpose of the exam will be to test your knowledge and comprehension of the information, concepts and ideas contained in the lectures and readings.

Each student will write two short papers, each approximately 5-7 pages in length, and will make one formal presentation to the class. The first paper will comprise 25% of your overall course grade, the second 25%, and the final presentation 10%.

In the first paper you will take a position on the proposition, articulated throughout the Johnson and Earle text, that a basic rule in the evolution of human settlements is that every expansion of the economy upon which a human settlement subsists, while solving problems in the subsistence economy, comes with a corresponding opportunity for control, enabling leadership, and ultimately, self-aggrandizing elites. The paper might, for instance, answer some or all of the following questions. In your view, how and in what degree do the processes by which human settlements evolve lead inevitably to increased inequality and social stratification? What does your view on this imply about collectively-based political control of market behavior today? What if anything does it imply about the prevention of environmental destruction resulting from population increase? Must centralized, governmental restrictions be placed upon on the freedoms of individuals to exploit common resources? Must the number and severity of these restrictions increase as the population grows relative to the resource base? If so then what restrictions would you personally approve of, and what are their implications?

The second paper will also be a position paper. But in this one you will first state a proposition about “progress” that has (or has not) occurred over time in human settlements, and second take a position one way or the other regarding this proposition. You might consider progress in a general sense, such as in consideration of moral and spiritual progress, linguistic progress, improved happiness, or progress in the overall quality of life available for people to enjoy. Or you might consider a more particular sort of progress, such as human health, material wellbeing, institutions, or security. For instance, in answer to the question, “have humans made genuine progress the development and application of language used to communicate with one another about our settlements over time?” your answer might be “yes”. If so then in what ways have we done so? What evidence is available to substantiate your claim about this? If not, what evidence would otherwise be necessary to substantiate a claim that such progress had occurred (i.e. what is the counterfactual)?

The presentation will involve posing and defending a hypothesis about “The State of ______ in Human Settlement Systems.” You may fill in the blank with any aspect of these systems you choose. You might, for example, want to consider knowledge, morality, language, tribalism, planning, energy or whatever. The objective will be to describe, using empirical data and information, the salient characterizing elements of the
state of whatever aspect of human settlement systems you chose to consider. Your presentation should raise important questions and issues and bring up current facts about your topic, analyze key questions and problems clearly and precisely, recognize key questionable assumptions in popular views, clarify key concepts effectively as needed, use language in keeping with educated usage, identify relevant competing points of view, and demonstrate a commitment to reason carefully from clearly stated premises on the topic as well as marked sensitivity to important implications and consequences.

In each case, which is to say for each paper (as well as the presentation), an “A” assignment will be one that clearly and accurately presents a coherent thesis, argument or point-of-view, which (in the case of the papers) is free of grammatical and syntactical errors, and which in the instructor’s judgment provides convincing evidence of a deep, long, logical chain of reasoning from explicit assumptions and evidence about the relevant topic.

A “B” assignment will be one that does not meet this standard but that nevertheless demonstrates that you have a clear grasp of the relevant evidence and principles regarding the topic, contains no more than a few minor grammatical and syntactical errors, and/or suggests the possibility that a sound and well-reasoned thesis, argument, or point-of-view along the lines contained in the paper (and/or presentation) could be constructed with additional work.

A “C” assignment will be one that does not meet the standard for a “B” assignment, but that nevertheless contains the rough outline of a thesis, argument or point-of-view. Evidence and/or logic may be lacking, or the paper may be written in substandard English.

Papers and/or presentations that do not meet the standard for a “C” assignment will be graded accordingly.

The remaining 10% of the course grade will be determined by your participation. Half of this will be made up of your regular attendance, and half will be made up by submitting critically-oriented discussion-provocative questions and to participating in an informed and thoughtful manner in class discussion.

The course is set up in part in a seminar format, so each student’s thorough preparation and attendance at each class-meeting is a key to a successful outcome. Accordingly, not later than midnight on Sunday of each week of class, prior to the class meeting, each student is to upload to Blackboard a file containing two or three discussion questions that (a) draw on the readings for that week, and (b) have the potential to evoke thoughtful, critical and relevant discussion in class. These are to be thoughtful, relevant, well-reasoned questions designed to help to form and shape the thoughts of class members and to improve the quality of the thinking of the members of the class by enabling us to collectively analyze, assess, and reconstruct the assertions and arguments of the author(s). For questions on critical thinking see the website of the critical thinking community at:
http://www.criticalthinking.org/
Extra Credit: There is no “extra credit” in this class. No extra homework, reports, exam re-writes, or any such “bail me out at the end of the semester so I can get the grade I want” opportunities.

Late assignments and incompletes: Unless extenuating circumstances require otherwise and the instructor agrees beforehand to accept a late assignment, late work will not be accepted for full credit. Late papers will be penalized by ½ of a letter grade per working day. Unless arranged in advance, you must be present in class to hand in your homework.

A grade of “Incomplete” will not, as a rule, be assigned at the end of class, unless the conditions stipulated in university’s definition are met.

Expectations for written work: Spell-check and proofread everything you hand in (these are not the same things). Critically evaluate all work handed in for correctness, completeness, and clarity. Only work that is error free in all three of these categories will earn a grade of ‘A’ in this course.

All work must be handed in both as a “hard copy” at the beginning of the relevant class period as well as electronically through Blackboard.

Cell phones, text messages and online chatting, and other classroom interruptions: This course has a no-cell-phone policy. Please respect the class by making sure to turn your cell phone off before entering the classroom. No text messaging or chatting online is allowed in class: it is disruptive and disrespectful. Also, please be sure to notify the instructor if you must leave class in the middle of the period. Each violation of these three rules will cost up to ten percent of the available points on the next paper or test.

Attendance: Attendance is expected. It is strongly recommended that you attend every class in its entirety.

University Policies

University Deadlines:
- For the current semester, the deadline for dropping a course is September 4, 2015
- The last day to withdraw from the course is October 30, 2015
- The final examination week is December 7 -12, 2015
**Academic Misconduct:** Any form of academic misconduct will potentially earn an immediate grade of F for the course. In addition, your name will likely be forwarded to the Academic Misconduct Review Committee, for a hearing concerning your suspension from the University. You should familiarize yourself with the various forms of academic misconduct in section 3.1.2 of the CSU Student Handbook, available at

http://www.csuohio.edu/compliance/student-code-conduct

The most common academic misconduct infraction arises out of a failure to reference your information sources. When you use a piece of information in your writing that you learned from another source then that source must be cited. Information taken verbatim must be quoted to give the original author credit: information that is paraphrased must be referenced.

Plagiarism is stealing and/or using the ideas or writings of another in a paper or report and claiming them as one’s own. This includes but is not limited to the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. The penalties for plagiarism are found in full in the CSU Student Handbook https://www.csuohio.edu/writing-center/plagiarism

When writing material to submit in class, students at times find it difficult to distinguish between “helping out” a fellow student, or “working together” on a project and academic misconduct. These guidelines may be helpful:

- **Never share any of your written or electronic materials with another student.** This includes your homework, data, tables, files, etc. This is academic misconduct.
- **Work only at your own computer.** Do not sit in front of a classmate’s computer and “take control” by using the mouse, typing on the keyboard, etc. By doing so, you are actually doing the work that your classmate will hand in and take credit for.
- **Write independently.** When assignments are graded, sentences that are duplicated, or even highly similar, in more than one assignment are blatantly obvious. Writing up your answers without consultation avoids this situation. Handing in an assignment containing verbatim passages from another student’s work is academic misconduct.
- **Reference your information sources.** When you use a piece of information in your write up that you learned from another source (for example, your textbook), that source must be referenced. Information taken verbatim must be quoted (to give the original author credit) and information that is paraphrased must be referenced. Failing to reference your sources is academic misconduct.

All the work that you hand in must represent your own independent and unique work. It should be distinct from that of every other student in the class. If you have questions about this, please ask – it is best to resolve these issues in advance.
**The Grade of “Incomplete”:** In accordance with university policy: The grade of Incomplete (I) is given when the work in a course has been generally passing, but when some specifically required task has not been completed through no fault of the student.

To be clear, an Incomplete is not a way of avoiding a bad grade on your record, or lightening your academic workload after having missed the last drop date. An Incomplete will be granted only in those cases that fit all three of the following guidelines.

1. Student is regularly attending/participating in the class and has the potential to pass the course.
2. Student has not completed all assignments and has stopped attending/participating for reasons deemed justified by the instructor.
3. Student has notified the instructor prior to the end of the grading period.

**Important Registration Information:** Check with the Urban College’s Student Services office (687-3884) to see how dropping a course might impact your financial aid, assistantship, or scholarship.

**Cancellation of Class Due to Weather:** Class will not be cancelled due to weather unless the university is closed. CSU determines if evening classes will be held by 2pm daily. Check the CSU website (http://www.csuohio.edu) for the most up-to-date information. If CSU is open, class will proceed as scheduled, including any exams or deadlines that are scheduled for that class.

**Students with Special Needs:** Educational access includes the provision of classroom accommodations, auxiliary aids and services to ensure equal educational opportunities for all students regardless of their disability. Any student who feels he or she may need an accommodation based upon the impact of a disability should immediately contact the Office of Disability Services at 216-687-2015. The office is located in MC147. Accommodations need to be requested in advance and will not be granted retroactively. Students should notify the instructor as soon as possible if they have been granted an accommodation through the Office of Disability Services.

**Institutional Equity:** Cleveland State University is committed to social justice: the university makes its best effort not to discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color or national origin. The instructor fully concurs with that commitment and expects to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Personal attacks of any form will not be tolerated.

**Supplementary Readings:**


