Cleveland State University
Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs (MGLCUA)
Department of Urban Studies

UST 302 – Contemporary Urban Issues, 4 credit hours
Online Course, Summer 2009

Instructor: Amber Donovan
Office: Urban Building
Phone: 440-250-0988: between 9am-8pm
Email: Use Blackboard email; a.l.donovan@csuohio.edu or adonovan@lorainccc.edu
Office Hours: By appointment only

Textbook Required:

Blackboard Student Tutorial: http://urban.csuohio.edu/courses/help.shtml

Course Objectives:
This is an upper-level undergraduate course in which we will examine American urban life through the lenses of race, class, and ethnicity, with emphasis on the African American experience. It is through these lenses that we will consider political, societal, and economic issues as they relate to life in the city. Given this framework, many topics we discuss will be controversial, with people holding different opinions on respective subjects. Therefore,
having respect for others is fundamental to having open, educational discussions. Here are the objectives of this course:

**African-American Experience**

1. This course will have a focus on the contemporary experience of African Americans and maintain the perspectives, experiences and/or achievements of African Americans themselves as central to the course.
2. This course will provide students with knowledge of how the field of urban studies presents and analyzes the African-American experience.
3. This course will provide students with a framework for understanding inequality and the distinguishing aspects of the African-American experience.

**Skill Area: Critical Thinking**

1. Inspire critical thinking using multi-disciplinary approaches and exercises.
2. Develop higher-order thinking (analysis, synthesis, evaluation) to address complex urban problems.

**Skill Area: Information Literacy**

1. This course will require students to evaluate the accuracy, authority, currency, objectivity, and reliability of information sources.
2. This course will require students to address the ethical and legal uses of information.

**Additional Skills:**

1. Encourage time management through multiple assignments.
2. Develop technology management and exploration skills.

**Writing Across the Curriculum**

This course also fulfills the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) requirement by meeting the following objectives:

1. The course will require students to write between 3,000 and 5,000 words in writing assignments, including drafts, and online discussions.
2. The final version of an assignment will total at least 2,000 words (eight pages).
3. The course will teach students writing-to-learn strategies that foster students’ experiences.
4. In learning and writing-to-communicate strategies that foster students’ respect of readers’ experiences.
5. The assignments will be challenging and may require revision. Students will be provided substantive feedback to assist in preparing subsequent papers or drafts.
6. Students will be required to use the American Psychological Association (APA) style. You will find a link to APA citation guides on the Homepage.
7. The course will address the needs of students regarding library competency.

**General Education Statement**

This course meets the criteria for the African American Experience General Education requirement with the skill areas of critical thinking and information literacy.

We will be using www.ohiolink.edu so please have an up to date Viking card.
Course Method
The course will be conducted on-line in CSU’s Blackboard platform. You will need to be familiar with how to use Blackboard and technology questions will need to be directed to the Center for eLearning.

This course is 6 weeks in length and we will be squeezing in a lot of material (16 weeks worth to be exact) in a short period of time. It will be very intense, but is designed to be very interactive and interesting as well.

We will use a textbook, but we will also have ECR (Electronic Course Reserve) articles that will supplement your text reading each week. There will also be WEB LINKS with short articles or videos to watch each week. Videos will also be viewed each week through www.ohiolink.edu or www.frontline.org websites. You may need to turn off pop up blockers while viewing these videos. You will also need real player on your computer to view the ohiolink.edu videos. It is free to download the real player at realplayer.com.

Instructions on how to watch Ohiolink videos:
1. www.ohiolink.edu
2. On the left click on “Digital Media Center”
3. On the page second paragraph down look for “Educational Videos and Documentaries”
4. You will have authenticate if you are watching from home. You will type in your college, and you will have to use your Viking card with your student number. You will have to create a password the first time you go through the process.
5. After you are authenticated, you will type in the title of the video from the syllabus and you will be able to watch the video. If you have an older version of Internet Explorer (5 or 6) you might have trouble. You can download Mozilla Firefox for free or update your IE and you should be fine. You may also have to turn off pop up blockers while you watch the video. You will also need real player (see above). Do not wait until the last minute to log on. It can be complicated the first time, but after that it will be simple.
6. When the video appears, there will be two choices “View Video” or “Download Video”—DO NOT DOWNLOAD it, just click “VIEW VIDEO”.

Course Requirements and Grading Policy
Grades are based on writing assignments (essays, discussions, critical thinking exercises). Students are expected to
- Read all textbook chapters and other assigned readings before beginning the respective on-line sessions;
- Participate actively in discussions and ask clarifying questions;
- Prepare and submit all written assignments. A late assignment will be deducted ten points per day it is late and will not be accepted after two days;
- Send all discussion postings and written assignments through Blackboard;
- Log on to the Course site daily to check for changes and/or additional information.

Policies
- Educational access is 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 on the impact of a disability should contact the Office of Disability Services at (216)687-2015. The
Office is located in MC 147. Accommodations need to be requested in advance and will not be granted retroactively.

- Refer to the CSU Bulletin for add/drop, withdrawal procedures, S/U, incomplete grading.
- For class cancellations due to weather, call CSU information (687-2000) before class, or access the Cleveland State University home page at www.csuohio.edu.
- Academic misconduct: plagiarism or cheating will result in an “F” for the assignment and possibly an “F” for the course.
- Time extensions on assignments are at the discretion of the instructor and require valid written documentation (for example, written doctor’s excuse).
- The Instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus.

Weekly Activities
Each week every student must complete the assigned readings and a discussion. In addition, most weeks will have another written assignment due whether it is a paper or a critical thinking exercise. The weekly readings, assignments, and due dates are clearly listed in the Course Schedule of this syllabus.

Assignment Due Dates
All assignments are due by the date specified in the syllabus Course Schedule. Also, each assignment and discussion has the due date listed next to it in Blackboard. In addition, the Instructor sends out weekly Announcements in Blackboard reminding students what is due that week and if there are any changes to the syllabus.

All assignments are due by the date specified in the Course Schedule at the end of this syllabus/listed in Blackboard. Late assignments will be deducted ten points per day.

All assignments are due by 11pm on Sunday of the week they are assigned. Grading rubrics will be provided for written assignments.

FOR YOUR POLICY/ISSUE PAPER, YOU ARE REQUIRED TO NAME THE HOMEWORK FILES WITH YOUR NAME (E.G. J_SMITH_POLICY_PAPER.DOC) AND PUT YOUR NAME ON THE DOCUMENT OR YOU WILL LOSE POINTS OFF OF YOUR GRADE.

ALL OTHER ASSIGNMENTS, DISCUSSION AND CRITICAL THINKING ANSWERS WILL BE PLACED UNDER THE DISCUSSION TAB UNDER THE CORRECT TOPIC THREAD.

ADDITIONAL READINGS
In addition to the textbook articles assigned throughout the course, there are additional readings assigned that supplement the text readings or provide a different viewpoint from another scholar in the field of urban studies. Additional readings are on Electronic Course Reserve (ECR) through the University Library. You will be able to access these readings on-line.

ASSIGNMENT: THE HISTORY OF AN URBAN POLICY OR ISSUE
Many of the issues we discuss in class will be perennial and as such, support for or against these issues ebbs and flows with time. Therefore, your written assignment will be to
present the history of a particular issue affecting life in American cities, from its inception up to the present.

You will want to narrow the scope of your paper to a particular aspect of the issue. For example, if you are writing on racial profiling, you would want to narrow your topic to racial profiling of a particular group (e.g., African Americans), and by other characteristics (e.g., in the criminal justice system, in the public education system).

For this assignment, you may select one topic of interest from either the Course Schedule or from the Kellogg text. Your topic must be submitted in the Assignments section in Blackboard. The body of your paper should be 8-10 pages with a minimum of 2,000 words, typed, double-spaced. In addition, this paper should have a cover page and a reference page consisting of no less than six (6) different scholarly sources. Of the references cited, only two may come from our required class readings. You should use an assortment of books, book chapters, journal articles, reports, and/or databases (e.g., the U.S. Census).

Guidelines
The essay assignment is a “writing-to-communicate” exercise, which emphasizes proper writing style, grammatical correctness, coherence, and focus. It is intended to help develop collegiate-level writing skills. This is not to be written in a conversational tone. We are not having a dialogue, you are presenting the topic from the point of an expert. You are to write from the point of view of the expert, educating your reader about the topic of your choice.

- Correct grammar and spelling will be included in determining your essay grade, so be sure to review your work before submitting it.
- You can submit a draft of this essay for comments and ways to improve your essay before submitting your final version. This draft will be returned to you with corrections/guidance for you to revise and resubmit by its final due date. My revisions do not guarantee that you will obtain full points for the paper, but they may serve to guide you if you are encountering problems.
- Information literacy skills require that students address the ethical and legal uses of information. When using quotations in your writing, always set them off with quotation marks and appropriately cite the author. Also be sure to attribute credit to an author when paraphrasing information from a source. Paraphrasing is the act of restating the author’s words or ideas in your own words. CSU writing center will help you with specifics.
- Format your essay using APA (American Psychological Association) guidelines, including a title page, abstract, parenthetical references and a reference list; If you need more information on how this is done, information is available at the CSU University Library.
- Internet sources that are merely web pages constructed by individuals airing their personal views are unacceptable sources. However, using the Web to access academic articles is an appropriate use of the Internet for this assignment. For example, it is appropriate to use an article published in the Journal of Urban Affairs that you can download electronically. However, using the writings found on www.lydiaspeakshermind.com would probably not be an acceptable reference for this assignment. One way to determine if an Internet article is “legitimate” is to ask yourself, “If the Internet didn’t exist, would I find this source in the University library?” Newspaper or magazine articles are relevant sources for this assignment, provided they are in-depth articles on the issue, rather than editorials or commentaries. WIKIPEDIA is NOT an academic source for citations.
- If you need additional guidance regarding how to construct a research paper, please access the resources provided below under Optional Readings and/or contact the CSU Writing Center. A link is provided on the Homepage.

Critical Thinking Assignment: A CLEVELAND-AREA ISSUE
Each week we will focus on a different urban issue. Each week you will be required to research how each Urban Issue we discuss is relevant to Cleveland. Many of the articles under Web Links in Blackboard are specific to the issues each week. You will then be required to examine critically how the issue of the week relates to Cleveland. You will present what you find and you will share it in a Discussion Posting for the week. You will use references and you will also have to present at least ONE SOLUTION to the issue you present to get full credit for the assignment. (EACH WEEK: worth 10 points RUBRIC: 5 points content; 5 points written communication skills)

DISCUSSIONS
After reading the required assignments for the week, students are required to respond to a question or set of questions that is posted by the instructor on the Discussion section of Blackboard. Each discussion is worth 5 points. The online discussion board is an exercise in "writing-to-learn." It is intended to foster a deeper understanding of the course materials than mere rote memorization or recitation. Discussions must be delivered by the due date listed on Blackboard as well as in the syllabus Course Schedule. The discussion boards will be locked once the due date has passed and late entries will not be accepted.

The minimum standard for participation in online discussions is to:
• Read the Instructor’s posting and follow the directions carefully;
• Post an original message related to the instructor’s discussion topic/question before posting to other student discussions;
• Read several postings by fellow students;
• Post a response to two different messages posted by fellow students for each discussion topic. The minimum number of response postings is listed in the directions for each discussion.
• Post a unique response; repeating what students wrote previously will not be given full points. It is imperative that the Instructor’s discussion board questions/comments be answered completely in order to obtain full credit for that week’s discussion board. For example, if the question asks why is environmental justice important and to give an example of a unique environmental justice issue that you are aware of, you need to be sure to address both portions of the question for full credit.

GRADING RUBRIC: 3 POINTS CONTENT, 2 POINTS WRITTEN COMMUNICATION FOR EACH ANSWER EACH WEEK. 2 REPLIES WORTH 5 POINTS EACH WEEK (2.5 EACH).  

GRADING SCALE
A: 94-100 A-: 90-93 B+: 87-89 B: 83-86 B-: 80-82 C+: 77-79 C: 70-76 D: 60-69 F: <60

Assignment: Points:
Draft of History of a Policy paper (optional) 0
History of a Policy paper 100
Critical Thinking Assignment each week 10 (60)
Three Discussion Postings each week (15) 20 (120)
and two replies per week (5)

Total Points Possible 280

TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT
YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGING THE TECHNOLOGY. YOU NEED TO FACTOR THAT INTO YOUR PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION. For example, keep copies of your homework in case they do not download correctly. If your personal computer crashes, you will have to find another way to participate such as using CSU computers. **NB If you are still using a dial-up connection, it is recommended that you either upgrade to a faster Internet connection, use the computers on campus, or withdraw from the course.** There are course materials (i.e., video) you will not be able to access with dial-up. For those who have permission to do school work at your workplace and plan to do so, please be advised that many workplaces have safeguards in place that may prevent you from doing so (e.g., pop-blockers).

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs):**

Q. When are assignments due?
A. See Course Schedule in Syllabus. Also remember to check the Announcements for weekly reminders and/or changes.

Q. How do I check my grades?
A. Click on My Grade. You will find it along the left hand column menu on the Blackboard course site.

Q. Can I email you my assignments?
A. Please submit all assignments under the appropriate section in Blackboard.

Q. I can not find someone’s email address on the list in the course. What should I do?
A. Go to the bottom right of the screen and click on the little green arrow. You will get a dropdown menu. Click on ALL and then click on the green arrow again. Your screen will refresh and you will get the whole roster of names for the course. This little green arrow also shows up on other pages in Blackboard such as under the Announcements section when the list of weekly announcements grows long.

Below are some general comments about the course that should help you navigate your way through a successful experience in UST 302 on-line:

- Check the Blackboard course site frequently to post course updates, respond to emails, etc. The Instructor checks the course site frequently (including weekends), although you may not hear from her until the following Monday.
- Please give the Instructor or Teaching Assistant a full week to grade the shorter assignments, and two weeks to grade your long paper. I will send out an Announcement or an Email in Blackboard stating that the respective grades have been posted.

Remember that your relationship with the instructor is an Internet relationship. She cannot know what is going on in your life as it pertains to the course if you do not communicate with me. Please make every effort to convey your concerns or questions to the Instructor, and she will make every effort to address these issues in a satisfactory and timely fashion.

- There is really no excuse for missing any weekly assignments. Once something is made available, it is open 24-7 until the time it is due. Therefore, you should be able to plan around your business trip, sister’s wedding, birth of your child (hopefully), etc. Things happen, but please be aware that any emergency involving a request for a time extension requires a valid written excuse (hospital notice, jury duty notice, etc.), and acceptance of such an excuse is up to the discretion of the Instructor.
COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: Class, Poverty and Race in the City

*Introduction to course material and to Blackboard.*

**Kellogg text:** Introduction: Challenges and Opportunities (vi-xi); Chapter 2: Disentangling Poverty and Race (Johnson, 29-44), Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril among Black Middle Class (Pattillo-McCoy, 45-61)

**Web links:**
- Slavic Village struggles as it changes from ethnic enclave to urban mix.
- Poverty and shrinking cities pose powerful problems in Ohio.
- Regionalism as a civil rights issue.
- KIVA video clips (two of them)

**ECR:** How the media compound urban problems (Dreier)

**VIDEO:** Racial Stereotyping in Media (2008) [www.Ohiolink.edu](http://www.Ohiolink.edu)

**Discussion Postings and Critical Thinking Questions due on Sunday, July 12th by 11pm**

Must reply to at least TWO classmates to receive full credit for homework

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Week 2: Race and Immigration in America

**Kellogg text:** Chapter 3: Immigrants, Blacks and Cities (Jones-Correa; 83-102); Racial Profiling: Driving while black in Cleveland (Dunn; 102-111); A cross-cultural framework for understanding Gangs (Vigil and Yun; 111-121)
**ECR:** Why don’t American cities burn very often? (Katz)

**Web links:**
- Online Article: 40 Years after the Kerner Commission Report: [http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/03282008/profile.html](http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/03282008/profile.html)
- Can Immigrants save Cleveland? (short video)
- Why is immigration coverage so negative? (Miller-McCune)

**VIDEO:** America’s Immigration Debate (2004); 24 minutes [www.ohiolink.edu](http://www.ohiolink.edu)
Racial Profiling and Law Enforcement (1998); 41 minutes [www.ohiolink.edu](http://www.ohiolink.edu)

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**Discussion Postings and Critical Thinking Questions due on Sunday, July 19th, by 11pm**

Must reply to at least TWO classmates to receive full credit for homework

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**Week 3: Education and Cities**

**Kellogg text:** Chapter 4: 50 years after Brown vs. Board of Education: the Promise and Challenge of Multicultural Education (Zirkel and Cantor, 125-136); Hip-Hop Generation vs. Civil Rights Generation: The Challenge of Afrocentric Reform (Ginwright, 136-144); Native American Education in Chicago: Teach them Truth (Beck, 144-157)

**ECR:**
- How Cincinnati Turned Its Schools Around
- Dropout Nation
- If They’ll Listen to us about Life, we’ll listen to them about school: seeing city students’ ideas about ‘quality’ teachers
- Two Guys and a Dream
- Social Class in Public Schools

**Web links:**
- Kipp School videos
- What would you do for your kids
- Bill Gates: How I am trying to change the world

**VIDEO:**
Expect the Best, 2004, 2 hours [www.ohiolink.edu](http://www.ohiolink.edu)
Unequal Education, 1992, 40 minutes [www.ohiolink.edu](http://www.ohiolink.edu)

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Turn in your rough draft for your paper by Sunday if you want me to check it. This is turned in as a document file under assignments.

**Discussion Postings and Critical Thinking Questions due on Sunday, July 26th, by 11pm**

Must reply to at least TWO classmates to receive full credit for homework

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**Week 4: Neighborhoods and Crimes**
**Kellogg text:** Chapter 1: Chapter Introduction, *Ethnic Enclaves and Cultural Diversity* (G Kwong); Chapter 5: *Cities as Mosaics of Risk and Protection* (Fitzpatrick and LaGory); Chapter 3: A cross-cultural framework for understanding Gangs (Vigil and Yun: 111-121)

**ECR:**
- Broken Windows
- Broken Windows on Crime
- Graffiti and litter lead to more street crime
- Preparing for prison: The criminalization of school discipline
- Perceptions of disorder: Contributions of neighborhood characteristics

**Web links:** *The Slumming of Suburbia*

**VIDEO:**
*Housing America: Demographics and Development, 2002; 64 minutes*
[www.ohiolink.edu](http://www.ohiolink.edu)

**Discussion Postings and Critical Thinking Questions due on Sunday, Aug. 2nd, by 11pm**
Must reply to at least TWO classmates to receive full credit for homework

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**Week 5: Risk, Health Care and the City**

**Kellogg Text:** Chapter 5: "My children need Medicine" *Health Care and Illnesses* (Fixico: 175-187); *Environmental Justice and Information Technologies: Overcoming the Information-Access Paradox in Urban Communities* (Kellogg and Mathur; 187-203)

**Web link:**
- Racism’s Hidden Toll

**VIDEO:**
*Sick around America, 2008, [www.frontline.org](http://www.frontline.org)*
*Poisoned Waters, 2008, [www.frontline.org](http://www.frontline.org)*

**FINAL PAPER IS DUE BY SUNDAY 9th at 11pm attached to the assignment folder.**

**Discussion Postings and Critical Thinking Questions due on Sunday, Aug. 9th, by 11pm**
Must reply to at least TWO classmates to receive full credit for homework

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Week 6: Land Use, Technology and Social Opportunities in the City

**Kellogg text:** Chapter 6: Chapter Introduction and Pulling Apart (Swanstrom, Casey, et al.); Telecommunications and the Future of Cities: Debunking the Myths (Graham)

**ECR:**
- Race, Place and Information Technology
- Going Online without easy access: a tale of three cities
- Privileged Places: Race, Uneven Development and the Geography of Opportunity in Urban America

**Web Link:** Cleveland lost nearly 10% of its population this decade, census data shows—article

**VIDEO:**
Growing up online, [www.frontline.org](http://www.frontline.org)
Understanding Urban Sprawl, 1998 47 minutes: [www.ohiolink.edu](http://www.ohiolink.edu)

**Discussion Postings and Critical Thinking Questions due on Sunday, Aug. 9th, by 11pm**
Must reply to at least TWO classmates to receive full credit for homework

If you have problems or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at my email on Blackboard or through my university email: a.l.donovan@csuohio.edu
Or my other work email adonovan@lorainccc.edu

I can also be contacted at my home number between the hours of 8am-8pm if it is urgent 440-250-0988.