

Ithaca College London Centre

A SOCIOLOGY OF LONDON (331-46300) – SPRING 2007

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Course Outline

This course aims to combine a review of the relationship between the growth of sociology and urban living with a sociological study of London. Drawing extensively on the landscape of the city, it offers you the opportunity to study critical social issues and trends in London. It asks what sort of city is London and how does it compare to other cities? What is the history of the city and how can that history help us understand contemporary issues and trends in London? Who lives and works in London and what is their relationship to each other and the city? Can sociology help us to investigate and understand these and other key social issues and trends such as globalization, intensifying of transnational and translocal dynamics, and the strengthening presence and voice of specific types of social and cultural diversity. This course will help you to better understand your experiences in London

Learning outcomes

At the end of the course, provided you have attended regularly, done the required reading and invested in the assignments for this course, you should be able to:

- Discuss the relationship between the emergence of sociology and the emergence of urban living;
- Critically review trends and issues in contemporary urban living;
- Use sociological theory and methods to examine trends and issues in contemporary urban living;
- Use London as a lens through which to explore a range of issues in contemporary urban living.

Class organisation

A variety of methods are used for teaching and learning on this course, including: discussion of set readings and video documentaries; research exercises using a variety of sources; formal input from tutors, student presentations as well as visits to various places in London

Attendance

Attendance is compulsory. You will fall behind with your marks if you have to miss a session and make up the work.

Reading

There are two key texts for this course:

1. Kivisto, P (2004) *Key Ideas in Sociology Second Edition*. London: Sage. There are some copies of this book in the Library, but you should also aim to purchase a copy of this text of your own for one of the assignments as soon as possible. Copies can be obtained from www.amazon.co.uk and can be dispatched within 1 – 2 days. Usually retails at 17.99 but also available from £14.79.
2. Porter, R (1994) *London a Social History*. London: Penguin Books. This is a good read that will be an accessible point of reference for sociologists and non sociologists. Its social

3. historical approach contextualises many of the contemporary issues we shall be studying. It retails at £10.99 and is generally available from most good bookshops in London, it can also be purchased from www.amazon.co.uk. There are also copies of this book in the ICLC Library but you should aim to purchase a copy of this text to use for assignments for this course.
4. Gottdiener, M and Budd, L (2005) *50 Key Concepts in Urban Studies*. London: Sage. You need not purchase a copy of this text but you will need to consult it. There are copies in the ICLC library and some hand outs from the text will be provided in class.

Assessment

The following model will be used for assessing and evaluating performance and achievement during the course:

1 5 Reflective essays (30%)

Each essay should be no less than 500 and no more than 600 words.

In these essays you should aim to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of London issues and trends, concepts and theories as well as the required readings which will be supplied as handouts. Marks are awarded for evidence of these as well as for the clarity and coherence of your discussion.

These essays often require you to comment on things you will cover in discussion with others and you may collaborate by discussing with others what you will write for these essays. You must indicate in your work, however, where your points have emerged from discussion with others. This should be regarded as acknowledging your sources and making it clear where work or ideas are not entirely your own.

Each essay will be returned with a mark out of 10 that will be averaged to make up 30% of your overall mark for the course.

Due: Tuesday September 12th; Tuesday September 26th, Tuesday October 24th; Tuesday November 14th, Tuesday December 5th

Please Note: Failure to submit a hard copy of any essay on time will result in a zero score out of ten for that essay.

2. Book Review 20%

You will be allocated two chapters of our key texts to review and use as the basis of your discussion in class. The mark will be awarded for the review you write although additional marks will be awarded where the book you review is used particularly effectively in class discussions. Your review should discuss the book's contribution to understanding of issues explored by the course as well as your observations and experiences of living in London.

Due: Tuesday October 31st

3. Poster Essay (30%)

Prepare a poster that uses a sociological perspective to examine a contemporary issue in urban living using London as the focus and examples from London to illustrate points examined. You will be given guidance about putting a poster together and 2 or your reflective essays are intended to help with the development of your poster.

It should be clear from your poster that the subject has been carefully researched and the key points should be presented in a clear, coherent and organised manner. The poster should make use of key terms, defining them where appropriate. It should refer to recommended readings to give the argument you will use to structure your poster,

authority and conviction.

To prepare for your poster, collect and record visual information (photographs, drawings, newspaper cuttings) of your experiences in London. This visual information could relate to people, objects, anything that can inform and illustrate an argument about an issue in contemporary urban living from a London perspective.

Approximately one third of your mark will be awarded for evidence of material having been gathered during the life of the course in an attempt to explore the issue selected rather than visual representation that has been hastily collected just before the posters are due for presentation.

You should aim to be sufficiently familiar with issues that have been discussed in class to anticipate and answer questions that are likely to be posed by other members of the class when posters are displayed.

Due Tuesday December 5th

4. **Final exam (20%)**

This will be an open book test based on required readings and questions posed in the quizzes we will work through in class. In order to get maximum score you will need to keep good notes in good order, you are also advised to mark your readings with cross referencing to questions on the syllabus for each session, ready for use in the exam.

Tuesday December 12th

Course Content

Part 1: Introductions to each other, the course and to London

Session 1
January 18

Introducing our selves to the class – pooling our resources

- Introduction Quiz
- Clarifying key concepts
- How to study for this course
- Assessments for this course

Screening: An American visits London just after World War II
What are the similarities and differences between her experience and yours

Reading:

- Gottdiener, M and Budd, L (2005) *50 Key Concepts in Urban Studies*. London: Sage. 'The Chicago School' and 'The City'. Pages 1-11
- Mills, C. Wright. 1959 [1976] *The Sociological Imagination*. New York: Oxford University. Page 16. Third paragraph.
- Taylor, s (1999) *Sociology: Issues and Debates*. Basingstoke: Palgrave. Chapter 1 'Introduction'. Pages 1-18
- Williams, R (1976) *Keywords*. London: Flamingo. Page 55-57
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Reflective Essay No 1 - Due September 12th

Sum up what you know and understand about sociology and your experiences of urban life. What interests you about urban life and / or sociology? How might you use sociology in general, and the study of issues in contemporary urban living in particular, in your programme of study and / or proposed profession?

Session 2
January 25

Bus Ride London

Meet at 10.30 at the entrance to the Horniman Museum, 100 London Road, London, SE23 3PQ Phone: 020 8699 1872

Travel information

Circle Line to Victoria or District towards Upminster, Dagenham East or Tower Hill then take the Southern train towards London Bridge, get off at Forest Hill then walk up the hill towards the museum which is just past the TESCO petrol station.

We will go to the top of the hill in the museum gardens to look out over the city and then ride bus 176 back to Oxford Circus from where you can take a bus or tube back to ICLC or home.

Part 2: Sociology and Urban Living

Session 3
February 1
Essay No 1 Due

Sociology and the City Quiz

- What is sociology?
- What is the relationship between sociology and urban living?
- How is sociology different from geography, history, anthropology, economics, politics and psychology?

Reading

- Simmel, G. (1971 [orig 1903]) 'The metropolis and mental life' in *Georg Simmel on Individuality and Social Forms*, Levine, D.N.(ed.) Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 324-39.
- Porter, R (1994) *London: A Social History*. London: Penguin Books. Chapter 15 'Swinging London, Dangling Economy: 1945-75. Pages 419-444
- Back, L (1996) *New Ethnicities and Urban Culture*. London: UCL Press. Chapter 2 "White flight": locality, nostalgia and the preservation of privilege' pages 29 – 49 and Chapter 3 "'Neighbourhood nationalism": Youth, race, nation and identity' pages 49 - 73
- *UN Habitat – United Nations Human Settlement* Web Site available at: <http://www.unhabitat.org/programmes/guo/>
- Virdee, D and Williams, T (ed.s) *Focus on London 2003*. Newport: Office of National Statistics. Available online at: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/focuson/london/> and www.go-london.gov.uk/boroughinfo/includes/00%20prelims.pdf

Reflective Essay No 2 - Due Tuesday September 26th

Identify and explore one sociologists approach to the study of urban life. What are the key characteristics of this approach and what is the contemporary relevance of the approach.

Session 4
February 8

Using London as a lens through which to explore an issue in contemporary urban living.

- What sort of city is London?
- Organisation and government of London.
- History of London.
- International perspectives on urban living.

Session 5
February 15
Essay No 2 Due

Visit to Museum of Hackney

Meet at 2.30 at The Museum of Hackney Reading Lane on Mare Street in Hackney, London E8.

Travel Information:

From Gloucester Road take the Piccadilly Line towards Cockfosters or Arnos Grove. Get off at Kings Cross and take Victoria Line Underground towards Walthamstow Central or Seven Sisters. Get off at Highbury & Islington and take the Silverlink Train Services towards Stratford and get off at Hackney Central. Use the map provided to find the museum which is next to the town

hall.

- What do the exhibits here tell us about the development of London?
- What do they tell us about urban living?
- What contemporary issues are represented?
- What do they say about issues in contemporary urban living?

Part 3: Culture and society in the city - Screenings from the Georgian Underworld Series

Session 6
February 22

Making sense of urban diversity

Screening *Queer as 18th Century Folk*

- Modern sociological theory.
- The rise of cultural studies and the concerns of cultural studies.
- Continuing focus on urban living.
- The new status of narrative and ethnographic methods.

Reading

- Back, L (1996) *New Ethnicities and Urban Culture*. London: UCL Press Chapter 1 'The metropolitan paradox'
- Hall, S (ed.) (1997) *Representation*. London: Sage. Chapter 1 'Introduction'
- Parekh, B (2002) *The Future of Multi Ethnic Britain*. London: Profile Books. Chapter 2 'Rethinking the National Story'.
- Taylor, L (2006) 'Deeply disillusioned but not without hope' *The Times Higher*, March 3.

Reflective Essay No 3 - Due October 24th

Introduce the contemporary issue that will be the focus of your poster presentation? Explain why you have selected this issue and what sorts of data / material for your poster exploring an issue in contemporary urban living using London as the lens through which to do this.

NB. You will find it useful in writing this essay to ask yourself:

- Which of the readings you have looked at so far have influenced your thinking about urban living?
- What sociological theory is likely to inform your analysis of the contemporary issue you want to explore?

Session 7
March 1

The impact of urbanisation on women and children in Georgian London

Screening: *The man who saved children*

- Identifying and discussing issues raised in these screenings that are still relevant today.
- Writing your book review.

Book Review Due – October 31st

March 8

Mid Term Break

Session 8
Essay No 3 Due
March 15

Inequality and Poverty Quiz

- Are inequality and poverty the same?
- How unequal is London?
- What are traditional and contemporary causes and consequences of poverty and inequality?
- How are poverty and inequality experienced and addressed in London?

Reading

- Ken Livingstone, Mayor of London (2003) *Tackling Poverty Consultation*.
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London: Greater London Authority. Available at:

http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/economy/docs/tackling_poverty.pdf

- Gottdiener, M and Budd, L (2005) *50 Key Concepts in Urban Studies*. London: Sage. 'Inequality and Poverty'. Pages 65- 75. 'Homelessness' and 'Housing' Pages 49-60
- Porter, R (1994) *London: A Social History*. London: Penguin Books. Chapter 16 'Thatcher's London'. Pages 445-469
- 'Real lives, Real Stories, Real Futures'. *The Big Issue* research report <http://www.bigissue.com/v21execsummary.doc>

Reflective Essay No 4 - Due November 14th

Who are London's poor? Why are they poor? What strategies are being implemented to address the problem of poverty in London? How effective are they likely to be?

Part 4: Inequality and Poverty

Session 9
Book Review Due
March 22

Homelessness – a contemporary urban issue?

- What is it?
- What is the extent of homelessness in London?
- What are the causes of homelessness?
- How is homelessness being addressed in London?

Session 10
March 29

Urban social movements and urban violence

- Screening, extracts from : *Tory, Tory, Tory*
- Urban Movements, Violence and Crime Quiz and discussion

Reading

- Gottdiener, M and Budd, L (2005) *50 Key Concepts in Urban Studies*. London: Sage. 'Urban and Suburban Social Movements', pages 169-172 and 'Urban Violence and Crime', pages 179-183.
- Downes, D (1999) 'Crime and Deviance' in S. Taylor (ed.) *Sociology: Issues and Debates*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Part 5: Theorising contemporary issues/ Working on Poster Presentations

Session 11
April 5
Essay No 4 Due

What are contemporary issues in urban living from a London perspective?

- Analysis of press, radio and television news discourse for this week.
- What are the issues that appeared in London newspapers and broadcast news programmes?
- How can sociological perspectives inform our understanding of these issues?

Reflective Essay No 5 – Due November 28th

What is the argument that your poster will attempt to make through representation.

Session 12
April 12

Making an effective poster

- Guest Speaker: Art, Design and Communication Lecturer - Yewande Okuleye.
- What makes a good poster?
- Representing issues.
- Representing sociological analysis.

Reading

- Bonnett, A (2001) *How to Argue*. Harlow: Prentice Hall. Chapter 4 Arguing Out Loud: Oral Presentations.

Session 13
April 19

Session 14
April 26
Essay No 5 Due

Presentation of posters, discussion and review of learning.

Part 6: Final Exam and Farewell

Session 15 **Final Exam**
May 3 Open Book Test

Visit to City Hall

- Touring the South Bank?

Travel Information

District or Circle Line to Westminster and then Jubilee line towards Stratford or towards North Greenwich and get off at London Bridge. Map of how to find City Hall will be provided in class.

General and additional reading

Urban Sociology

- Abercrombie, N and Warde, N (2000) *Contemporary British Society*. Cambridge: Polity Press
- Back, L (1996) *New Ethnicities and Urban Culture*. London: UCL Press
- Baker, P and Eversley, J (2000) *Multilingual Capital*. London: Battlebridge Publications.
- Booth, C (1902-3) *Life and Labour of the People of London*. First Series: Poverty. London: Macmillan and Co
- Christensen, P and O'Brien, M (eds.) (2002) *Children in the City*. London Routledge
- Gottdiener, M and Budd, L (2005) *Key Concepts in Urban Studies*. London: Sage
- Frankenberg, R (1966) *Communities in Britain*. Harmondsworth : Penguin
- King, A.D (1991) *Global cities : post-imperialism and the internationalisation of London*. London: Routledge
- Halsey A.H. (ed.) 2000 *Twentieth-century British social trends*. Basingstoke : Macmillan
- Halsey A.H. (1986) *Change in British society*. Oxford : Oxford University Press
- Pahl, R. E., Flynn, R and Buck N.H. (1983) *Structures and processes of urban life*. London : Longman
- Payne, G (ed) (2000) *Social divisions*. Basingstoke : Macmillan
- Porter, R (1997) *London: A Social History*: Harvard University Press
- Saunders, P (1990) *A nation of home owners*. London : Unwin Hyman
- Savage, M [et al.] (1992) *Property, bureaucracy and culture : middle-class formation in contemporary Britain*. London : Routledge
- Savage, M and Warde, A (1993) *Urban sociology, capitalism and modernity*. Basingstoke : Macmillan,
- Susser, I (ed.) (2001) *The Castells Reader on Cities and Social Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers
- Wilmot, P and Young, M (1957) *Family And Kinship In East London*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul
- UN-HABITAT (2004) *State of the World's Cities 2004/5: Globalization and Urban Culture*. London: Earthscan. Available online at: <http://www.unhabitat.org/mediacentre/sowckit.asp> [Accessed 23/05/05]

London

Ackroyd, P (2000) *London: The Biography*. London : Chatto & Windus
Halsey, A.H., Jowell, R and Taylor, B (1995) *The Quality of Life in London*. Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing
Inwood, S (2000) *A History of London*. London : Papermac, 2000
Palmer, A (2000) *The East End: Four Centuries of London Life*. London : Murray

Historical Background

Marwick, A (2003) *British society since 1945*. London : Penguin
Mumford, L (1966) *The city in history: its origins, its transformations, and its prospects*
Harmondsworth : Penguin
Obelkevich, J and Catterall, P (ed.) (1994) *Understanding post-war British society*. London : Routledge,

Journals

New Internationalist - online at www.newint.org
New Statesman - online at <http://www.newstatesman.com/>
The Economist – online at <http://www.economist.com/>

Online Resources

British Broadcasting Corporation – www.bbc.co.uk
British Sociological Association – www.britisoc.co.uk/new_site/index.php
Commission for Racial Equality - www.cre.gov.uk/
Corporation of London - www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/Corporation
Greater London Authority - www.london.gov.uk/
Institute for Public Policy Research - www.ippr.org.uk/
Institute of Race Relations – www.irr.org.uk
Metropolitan Police Authority - www.mpa.gov.uk/default.htm
National Statistics - www.statistics.gov.uk/

Please Note: No bibliography is ever complete and you may come across useful texts in your research for assignments that I know nothing about. Please bring these to the attention of the class. It will be much appreciated and there will be an impact on your scores for the reflective essays and book reviews where this done in a way that indicates careful research and critical thinking.