

Northwestern University
Sociology 376-Topics
Fall, 2005

SUBURBIA

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This course will be treated primarily as a seminar emphasizing readings and discussion. Each week I will give a brief lecture to introduce the topic and then we will discuss the readings and have oral presentations of additional materials. The focus of the course is primarily on the US and on the contemporary scene (though some comparative and historical material will be included). Topics covered include, history of suburbanization, the metropolitan context, politics and governance, jobs and housing, transportation, inequality and uneven development, suburban sprawl, and land-use planning.

Texts:

J. John Palen - Suburbs. New York: McGraw Hill. 1995.

Kenneth Jackson - Crabgrass Frontier. NY: Oxford University Press. 1985

James Duncan & Nancy Duncan - Landscapes of Privilege.
NY: Routledge. 2004.

Bruce Haynes - Red Lines, Black Spaces. New Haven: Yale University Press. 2001.

Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, Jeff Speck, – Suburban Nation.
NY: North Point Press. 2000.

Grades:

There are no exams in the course. Grades are based on three types of tasks.

First, each class meeting you will prepare and hand in a one page typed set of notes on the day's readings. You will identify key points of the reading, and conclude with a few questions to pose for class discussion.

Second, after consultation with me, each of you will read and write up in 3-4 pages and present orally in class a review of a current article from an academic journal or a book on a topic related to suburbia.

Third, each of you will define a research project in consultation me on some aspect of suburbia in Chicagoland. You will be expected to write up this final research project, and present it briefly in class. The paper should include some primary data, incorporate course material, and rely on additional literature that is appropriate.

1 page weekly notes & participation ..20%
a report on current article/book30%
final paper.....50%

Readings:

Week 1 Why are Suburbs Important?

9/21 Palen Chapter 1 – Suburban Ascendancy

Week 2 Setting the Scene

9/28 Palen Chapter 2 – Definitions & Paradigms
Chapter 3 – Rural-Urban Ideals
Jackson Chapters- Intro and 1 thru 8

Week 3 The Urban Big Bang: The Political-Economy of Growth

10/5 Palen Chapter 4 – The Way Were
Chapter 5 – The Exodus
Jackson Chapters – 9 thru 16

Week 4 Suburban Culture: Critics and Champions

10/12 Palen Chapter 6 – Myths, Ideology & Imagery
Duncan Chapters – 1 thru 5

Week 5 Some Are and Some Aren't: Distinctions and Boundaries

10/19 Palen Chapter 7 – Suburban Variation
Duncan Chapters – 6 thru 9

Week 6 Opening up the Suburbs

10/26 Palen Chapter 8 - Minorities in Suburbia
Haynes Chapters – Intro and 1 thru 4

Week 7 For the Sake of the Children, and a Woman's Place

11/2 Palen Chapter 9 – Women & Family
Haynes Chapters – 5 thru 8

Week 8 Crabgrass, Broken Windows, and Shattered Dreams

11/9 Palen Chapter 10 – Issues & Problems
Duany Chapters – 1 thru 6

Week 9 Paving Paradise

11/16 Palen Chapter 11 – Outer Cities & Mallings
Duany Chapters 7 thru 11

Week 10 The Fate and Future of Best Laid Plans

11/23 Palen Chapter 12 – Planned Utopias
Chapter 12 – Quo Vadis?

Present Final Paper

Week 11 Reading Week

Present Final Paper

11/30

Week 12 Final Papers Due Monday Dec. 5th by 5pm at 1812 Chicago Ave. Rm. 201