



Geography 262-01: Metropolitan Analysis

Spring 2024

Instructor: Laura Smith (she/her)

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Open office hours: Monday 2:15-3:00 p.m.

Tuesday 10:00-11:00 a.m.

Wednesday 2:15-3:00 p.m.

Thursday 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Or at any other time you propose (in-person or virtual)

Drop-ins welcome too!

Meets: MWF 1:10 – 2:10 p.m.

Carnegie 107

Teaching Assistant: Nicholai Jost-Epp



I. COURSE CONTENT AND GOALS

This course focuses on the foundations of American urban development, from economic development to land use to housing patterns, and examines how and why urban housing markets operate as they do within American metropolitan regions. The course is particularly relevant for students interested in the fields of urban planning and policy.

There are **three major learning goals** for the course. By the end of the course, students should:

- Understand how economic and social processes relate to metropolitan land use
- Be able to apply quantitative methods to analyze metropolitan organization and change, and recognize methodological limitations (this is a Q2 course)
- Be familiar with important data sources used in urban research

In addition, we will engage specifically with our Twin Cities metropolitan area throughout the course, via application of themes and a field study assignment.

The course is **organized by seven themes**:

1. The Metropolitan Economy: How do we model metropolitan economies? How can we tell when an urban economy is healthy?

2. Land Use and Population Patterns within the Metropolis: How do we identify, describe, and explain geographical patterns of land use and populations within cities? How do we measure racial residential segregation?
3. Geography of Urban Housing Supply: How did the American housing inventory evolve under the influence of economic, social, and transportation constraints? What is the geography of the Twin Cities' housing supply, and why?
4. Urban Housing Demand: What social, demographic, and economic forces support housing demand? Why do Americans like to buy more housing than they need? How do housing submarkets operate in the Twin Cities?
5. Geography of Urban Housing Markets: How did American federal housing policy create racial segregation in cities? How did homeownership become an “engine of American inequality”? How do government policies promote and subsidize suburban development?
6. Suburbanization and Land Use: What are the causes and consequences of past suburban growth? Are people really moving back to the urban core?
7. Policy Debates: What are some current policy responses to metropolitan development? What land use controls are available, and how are they being used?



II. READING MATERIALS

There is one required text for the course:

Jacobs, Jane. 1984. *Cities and the Wealth of Nations*. Reprint ed. New York: Random House Vintage Books.

A renowned urbanist and author, Jacobs ponders big ideas about metropolitan economies and urban design in her writings. Various paperback editions of this classic book exist; any are fine. There is also a copy available for checkout from library reserve.

All other required readings will be posted on our Moodle site.



III. STRUCTURE AND EXPECTATIONS

Class format

Class meetings will consist of lectures, in-class discussions, student presentations, and activities. You are expected to have completed all required reading before coming to class and be prepared to discuss it. A productive discussion is one in which participants listen and learn from one another, that focuses on understanding an issue and making connections (to other readings, to real life observations, etc.), and that advances our collective knowledge of a topic.

Your presence in class matters; attendance is important not only for your learning but also for building community with each other. However, I fully recognize that there will be times

when you are not able to or do not feel comfortable attending class, whether because of public health concerns or any other reason. If religious observances create conflicts, please reach out early in the semester so we can plan ahead. Visuals used in class will be posted to Moodle to help you keep up with course material through any absences.

We continue to face challenges in all aspects of life – including teaching and learning – and we will need to demonstrate grace and flexibility in order to be successful. I am committed to being flexible and open to changing our course approach and expectations as we go, and I hope that you will be willing to do the same for me.

Technology guidelines

We will rely heavily on our Moodle page to manage the course. This is where you will find detailed weekly schedules, readings, assignments, videos, links to any Zoom class sessions or office hours, and other information/announcements. You will submit assignments via Moodle dropboxes; this will allow me to provide feedback directly on the digital documents. I will also use the Moodle gradebook feature to post your scores. Please plan to log into the site regularly and pay attention to any “Announcements and News” forum posts.

Within the classroom, you are welcome to use laptops for academic purposes. Please do not use technology in a way that is disruptive to an academic space.

Assessment

Assessment within the course is based upon your ability to demonstrate knowledge of how economic and social processes relate to metropolitan land use in the U.S., and to apply analytical methods to a selected metropolitan area and interpret the results.

Your grade will be based on the following (445 points total):

City Analysis Project #1: Economic health (100 pts)	= 22%
City Analysis Project #2: Racial segregation (135 pts)	= 30%
Take-home Exam #1: The metro economy (50 pts)	= 11%
Take-home Exam #2: Urban housing markets (65 pts)	= 15%
Field Study assignment (in-person or virtual) (40 pts)	= 9%
Group presentation: Urban land use policy (55 pts)	= 12%

Detailed instructions for each assignment will be provided well in advance. For the city analysis projects, you will select a U.S. metropolitan area for which you will obtain data and apply a standard quantitative technique to analyze the economic health (project #1) or racial residential segregation patterns (project #2) of that city. The field study assignment may be completed either in person or virtually (utilizing Google Street View) and may be done with a partner if desired.

Grade cut-off percentages are as follows: A = 93-100%; A- = 90-92.9%; B+ = 87-89.9%; B = 83-86.9%; B- = 80-82.9%; C+ = 77-79.9%; C = 73-76.9%; C- = 70-72.9%; D+ = 67-69.9%; D = 63-66.9%; D- = 60-62.9%; NC = <60%.

Academic honesty

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty in their college work; violations of academic integrity are serious offenses. If you have questions about Macalester's academic integrity policy, please refer to the *Student Handbook* (<https://www.macalester.edu/student-affairs/>) or Academic Programs at <http://www.macalester.edu/academicprograms/academicpolicies/academicintegrity/>).

All sources used in preparing your work must be cited; this includes data sources. APA is the preferred citation style of the Geography Department; see the library's citation guides and resources under the Research Guides menu at <https://libguides.macalester.edu/citation>.



IV. RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Open office hours

Please come visit me during open office hours with any questions, issues, or concerns about the course or the Geography department more broadly. If you are not able to attend regularly scheduled office hours, please let me know and we can find an alternative time to meet (in-person or virtually).

Email is the most efficient way to contact me; I strive to answer all course-related messages as soon as possible (and at most within 24 hours during the week).

Academic accommodations

I recognize that course design may pose barriers to a student's ability to access or demonstrate mastery of course content. I honor academic accommodations as outlined via the Center for Disability Resources and in discussion regarding what is reasonable for this course. Students with long- or short-term disabilities should schedule an appointment through the Disability Resources website at <https://www.macalester.edu/disability-resources/>.

Academic resources

The Macalester Academic Excellence (MAX) Center (<http://www.macalester.edu/max/>), located on the first floor of Kagin Commons, provides numerous academic resources from time management and study strategy workshops to quantitative material and writing assistance.

Health and well-being

Here at Macalester, you are encouraged to make your well-being a priority throughout this semester and your career here. Investing time into taking care of yourself will help you engage more fully in your academic experience. Remember that beyond being a student, you are a human being carrying your own experiences, thoughts, emotions, and identities with you. It is important to acknowledge any stressors you may be facing, which can be mental, emotional, physical, financial, etc., and how they can have an academic impact. If

you are having difficulties maintaining your well-being, please reach out to one of the resources here: <https://www.macalester.edu/current-students/>.

In our classroom, we will adhere to the [Mac Stays Safer Community Commitment](#).

Title IX

Macalester is committed to providing a safe and open learning and living environment for all students, staff, and faculty. Any community member experiencing sexual harassment, sexual violence, relationship violence, or stalking, is encouraged to seek help and support.

Please be aware that as a faculty member, it is my responsibility to report disclosure about sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, relationship violence, and stalking to the Title IX Office. The purpose of this report is to ensure that anyone experiencing harm receives the resources and support they need. I will keep this information *private* and it will not be shared beyond this required report.

You may also contact Macalester's Title IX Coordinator directly (phone: 651-696-6258; e-mail: titleixordinator@macalester.edu); she will provide you with supportive measures, resources, and referrals. Additional information about how to file a report (including anonymously) is available on the [Title IX website](#).



V. READINGS AND REFERENCES

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- Dear, Michael J. and Steven Flusty. 2002. "The Resistible Rise of the L.A. School." In Dear, ed., *From Chicago to L.A.: Making Sense of Urban Theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
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Ch. 3: "Home, Sweet Home: The House and the Yard"
Ch. 11: "Federal Subsidy and the Suburban Dream: How Washington Changed the American Housing Market"
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