URBAN POLITICS

COURSE OUTLINE
“This survey course focuses upon the following six topics: the evolution of urban politics since the mid-nineteenth century; the urban fiscal crisis; federal/urban relationships; the ‘new’ ethnic politics; urban power structure and leadership; and selected contemporary policy issues such as downtown redevelopment, poverty, and race” (UCSD Catalog, 2010-2011). There is a significant amount of reading to be done for this course (nearly 90 pages per lecture). Success in this course will require you to be an active learner, reading assigned materials on time so that you can integrate the information given in both course texts and lectures. Active learning means that rather than looking at each separate piece of information as a CNN-style factoid, you will use both analysis and synthesis to find the interconnections binding this course and the larger world together. Those who derive the most benefit from this course will notice that the many bytes of information gathered from daily life will start to fit in with this course rather than seeming like random bits of landscape passing them by on the freeway.

COURSE THEMES
Although Jefferson’s yeoman farmer is the archetype envisioned in American political philosophy, the United States is very much a nation of cities. Despite the U.S.’s urbanization, Americans idealize country life. Suburban dwellers actively seek pastoral settings, endure traffic, and pay premium prices to reside in areas with primarily single-family dwellings. Southern California’s present traffic patterns are the result of an active resistance to the Frostbelt’s ‘big city’ paradigm of high urban density and congestion. This region’s urban spaces demonstrate our collective schizophrenia, as urban planners struggle to deal with the anti-urban values of our increasingly urban American society.

At the same time as the United States is a nation of cities, it is comprised of cities of nations. The urban areas of the U.S. are vast polyglots of multicultural diversity. In Los Angeles, there is probably greater diversity in linguistic, cultural, religious, racial, ethnic, national, social, and economic terms than ever compressed in one place before. L.A. is the second largest concentration of Spanish-speaking people in the world (Mexico City is the first). This hyper-diversity is driving fears of Balkanization—the concern that one country and culture cannot accommodate such heterogeneity. Fear of pluralization is part of America’s Janus-faced perspective on cities—that continues to favor residence in a metropolis, yet yearns for the simple life of Thornton Wilder’s *Our Town*.

This course will look at the U.S.’s experience with the forces of immigration and migration, urbanization and suburbanization, industrialization and post-industrialization. It will also treat the growing internationalization of economics, which runs counter to the greater localization of politics. This is indeed the paradox of our times. At the same time as the barriers to international trade have come down, and greater networks of transportation and communication have been constructed, parochial forces have gained greater salience. In terms of economics, globalization has featured the rise and expansion through mergers of multi- and transnational corporations, as well as the creation of such institutions as the EU, including within its membership regions.
chronically at war for many centuries. In terms of politics, such primordial forces as religion, ethnicity and culture now carry increased salience. New conflicts continually arise from the clash of these persistent identities that social scientists once termed obsolete.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**
Your course grade will be based on in-class and take-home midterms, a term paper, and a non-cumulative take-home final examination. The take-home midterm will consist of an essay. I will hand out the essay question and the IDs study guide for the in-class portion of the midterm one week before the midterm is due. Students will also complete an argumentative term paper for the class. The study guide for the final will be handed out at least one week prior to the exam.

You are permitted to form groups to assist you in preparing for examinations, but neither your term paper nor your exams should be anyone’s work but your own. Be sure to carefully review the UCSD’s policies on integrity of scholarship; these are included in the General Catalog and posted on the internet. If a student submits work that closely resembling that of colleagues, or work that uses sources without proper citation, he or she may be faced with charges of academic dishonesty. Please ask for clarification if you do not understand. There is NO extra credit with which to compensate for poor performance; course grades are calculated as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPONENT</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>PORTION OF COURSE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-Class Midterm</td>
<td>February 9, 2011</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take-Home Midterm</td>
<td>February 16, 2011</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term Paper</td>
<td>March 4, 2011</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>March 14, 2011</td>
<td>25%</td>
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The dates for the take-home midterm, term paper and final exam are given in this syllabus, and are not negotiable. If you can’t make these deadlines, please don’t take the class. Exceptions are invidious and make the course unfair for other students. Late work will be penalized accordingly if the student is unable to provide documentation acceptable to the instructor and UCSD.

**Required Texts**


**SCHEDULE--LECTURES, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS**

January 3  
Broad Overview of Course and Concepts;  
The City’s Place in Human History  
No readings assigned before the first day of lecture.

January 5  
The Mercantile City in Antebellum United States.  
J&S, Chapter 1; J&K, Chapter 1.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Chapter(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>January 10</td>
<td>The Death and Life of Political Machines.</td>
<td>Riordon, all.</td>
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<td>January 19</td>
<td>Federal Urban Policy from FDR to Obama</td>
<td>J&amp;S, Chapters 4-5.</td>
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<td>January 28</td>
<td>Secession and ‘NIMBYism’—the other side of 'community.'</td>
<td>J&amp;S, Chapter 11; J&amp;K, Chapter 6.</td>
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<td>January 31</td>
<td>The Limitless City and its Growth Imperative.</td>
<td>J&amp;K, Chapter 7;</td>
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<td>February 4</td>
<td>City Charters and Developmental Reform.</td>
<td>Continue Erie.</td>
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<td>February 7</td>
<td>Water and Power and the Metropolitan Water District’s Origins.</td>
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<td>February 9</td>
<td>IN-CLASS MIDTERM EXAMINATION.</td>
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<td>February 14</td>
<td>California’s Water Problem: The Need for a Water Czar.</td>
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<td>February 16</td>
<td>After <em>Chinatown</em>: Erie Explodes the Chinatown Myth.</td>
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<td>February 25</td>
<td>Rustbelt Race Relations: Philly, the Big Apple and the Windy City.</td>
<td>Browning, Chapters 3-5.</td>
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<td>February 28</td>
<td>Paths to Political Incorporation in the Golden State: <em>The Fire This Time</em>.</td>
<td>Browning, Chapters 1-2 and 6.</td>
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<td>March 2</td>
<td><em>The Fire This Time</em>, Pt. 2</td>
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<td>March 4</td>
<td>The Other Side of the Fire: <em>Sa-i-gu.</em></td>
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<td>March 11</td>
<td>Urban Dystopia: From <em>Bladerunner</em> to <em>Dark City</em></td>
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March 14

FINAL EXAMINATION, Monday, 8:00 AM – 10:59 AM.

United States Popular Culture: the Anti-Urban Ethos
Please read the following lyrics, drawn from songs within the soft jazz and country-western genres, respectively:

**Island Life**
Written by Michael Franks & Rob Mounsey

“Keep believing you soon will earn your turn to flash in the pan
It’s deceiving ‘cause nothing kills like this metropolis can
Everywhere there’s blind ambition
Dog eat dog and screw you
You do unto others and they do unto you

Everyday you fight taxicabs and traffic, permanent frowns
Lay awake at night wondering if you hear burglary sounds
Think it’s time to make my exit
Kiss all this goodbye and
Catch the next flight south connecting to my island life

Look at me I’m a refugee from the island life
I belong where the shade is palm and the mango’s ripe
I’ll do all my swinging in some hammock by a turquoise sea
For free

Guess it must be clear I do not belong in this cityscape
I am not from here and I do intend to make my escape
Take me back to waterfalls in volcanic canyons
Where coconuts and orchids are my sole companions

Look at me I’m a refugee from the island life
I belong where the shade is palm and the mango’s ripe
How inviting it would make always killing time if you Came too

Can’t you see we’re just refugees from the island life
We belong where the shade is palm and the mango’s ripe
We’ll do all our swinging in some hammock by a turquoise sea
For free.”

**Where the Green Grass Grows**
Written by Jess Leary & Craig Wiseman

“Six Lanes, tail lights
Red ants marching into the night
They disappear to the left and right again

Another supper, from the sack
A ninety-nine cent heart attack
I’ve got a pounding head and an achin’ back
My Camels buried in a big straw stack

Chorus:
I’m gonna live where the green grass grows
Watch my corn pop up in rows
Every night be tucked in close to you
Raise our kids where the good Lord’s blessed
Point our rocking chairs towards the west
And plan our dreams where the peaceful river flows
Where the green grass grows

Well I’m from, a map dot
A stop sign, on a black top
I caught the first bus I could hop from there
But all of this glitter is getting dark
There’s concrete growing in the city park
I don’t know who my neighbors are
And there’s bars on the corner
And bars on my heart
(Repeat chorus twice)”