Gentrification (SOAN 220)

Instructor: Colin McLaughlin-Alcock
Email: cmclaughlin@carleton.edu
Office Hours: After class or by appointment.
Request extensions: https://forms.gle/jwxMbUZbbx9HVLmk7.

Introduction and Goals:
Gentrification, a process of neighborhood-level class displacement, whereby devalued urban areas are redeveloped into trendy hubs, is one of the predominant modes of urban change in the twenty-first century. In this class, we will first develop a general understanding of how gentrification works. Then we will direct ethnographic attention to explore how gentrification takes place in specific contexts around the globe. We will examine how social boundaries, power relationships, and identities are reorganized through gentrification; how class and racial disparity are produced and enforced; how the social meaning of place impacts neighborhood change; and how communities have resisted gentrification.

Student Outcomes:
By the end of this class, students will be able to

1. Explain the process of gentrification and evaluate discrete instances of neighborhood change against this ideal type.
2. Analyze the role of social disparity in gentrification and particularly the ways that relationships of race and class are mobilized and impacted by gentrifying contexts.
3. Explain how instances of gentrification fit within global processes of change.
4. Analyze the importance of place based histories, meanings, and relationships in gentrifying contexts, with attention to how these may lend particularity to what is often perceived as a universal process.

Prerequisites:
The department strongly recommends that Sociology/Anthropology 110 or 111 be taken prior to enrolling in courses numbered 200 or above.

Assignments:

Readings: This class is built on active reading, which means it is important to not just read the assigned texts, but to engage with them carefully. Take notes, ask questions, and work to draw connections between different readings and topics.
Syllabus: Gentrification
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Meeting: TU, TH 3:10-4:55pm, Leighton 305

Reading notes/reflections: Documentation of your engagement with the reading is due prior to the start of each class. These can be messy or neat, focused or sprawling, and can take whatever form is most useful for you, provided they can be shared.

Reading forum: Once a week, you are required to post to the class’s reading forum, highlighting a point of engagement with the reading that you would like to develop further. This can be a question, an exciting quotation, something you didn’t understand, something that surprised you, a point where you disagree, a connection that you see to other material in the course, and so on. At least 2 times over the course of the term, you are encouraged to post your response as a meme. Also twice per week, you are expected to provide a constructive response to another student’s post. (Constructive responses do more than just acknowledge the initial post, but build on it in some way, adding to the conversation which another student has started). Posts are due the night before the relevant class, in order to allow time for responses. Responses are due by classtime. [Total Expectation: At least 3 forum engagements per week: 1 post, and 2 responses].

Blog Posts: Two blog posts are due over the course of the term, each in response to a separate section of the course. Blog posts should be 200-400 words in length and should develop a concept that excited you from the material covered in that section. While you are encouraged to use a personal voice for these, they should show intellectual work. Blog posts are due within a week of the end of the section that they discuss.

The reading notes and forum assignments are graded on the basis of completion, meaning if you complete the assignment per instructions, you will get full credit. For the blog posts, there is an expectation of clarity, and the student should show a thoughtful engagement with the material, including some intellectual work or analysis, in order to receive full credit.

Critical paper (midterm): For this assignment, students will write a critical evaluation of a portrayal of gentrification that they find in popular media (including tv, film, news, music, etc.). Students will evaluate this portrayal against the frameworks for understanding gentrification developed in class, and will explore what the representation does well, what it misses, and how effectively it contributes to our understanding of gentrification. Due at the end of week 5.

Final Research Paper: This final paper can take a variety of forms but requires that the student conducts research and analysis that builds on class themes. Potential topics include examination of a particular gentrifying context, comparison between two or more sites of gentrification with the aim of exploring a particular theme, etc. The paper should present a compelling analysis that builds on class material, demonstrating a thorough understanding of that material while also putting it into conversation with the student’s research.

Grades will be calculated as follows:
Attendance and Participation: 10%
Reading Notes: 10%
Forum Participation: 15%
Blog Posts: 15%
Critical Paper: 20%
Final Paper: 30%
How to Succeed in This Class:

1. Practice engaged reading: This means you should read assignments carefully, take notes, and take the time to reflect upon what you have read. Reading responses, forum posts, and blog posts present opportunities to practice articulating your own ideas about the readings. This will prepare you for class discussion and also help you build the analytical skills needed in the two major writing assignments.

2. Ask questions and be willing to ask for help: Accepting help and learning when to ask questions is an important academic skill. It is okay to be confused or to struggle with an assignment. Part of learning is figuring out how to work through these blockages, and I am happy to help with this, but I can only help if you ask.

3. Start early on your major assignments and solicit feedback on your ideas: Good writing is an iterative process that benefits from feedback and reflection. Give yourself time to process and polish your ideas.

If you follow this advice, you will be well positioned to succeed in this class.

Campus Resources:

College can be difficult personally, socially and intellectually, and it is easy to feel overwhelmed. Many students struggle with depression or other personal issues at some point in their college careers. It is important to seek help if you need it.

   Academic Support Center: 507-222-5560
   Student Counseling Services: 507-222-4080
   Emergency counseling (on call) : 855-705-2479
   CAASHA (sexual harassment/assault): https://www.carleton.edu/student/orgs/caasha/
   Other support resources are also available.

Please do not hesitate to seek help.

Readings and Course Outline:
Students are responsible for obtaining the following books. Electronic copies of many of these books are available through the library. All other readings will be provided:

   Krase, Jerome, ed. “Gentrification Around the World Vol. 1” (2020)
   Moskowitz, Peter. “How to Kill a City” (2017)
   Llyod, Richard “NeoBohemia” (2010)

Introduction, Provocations, and Background
Mar 29  Introduction and Welcome


Judith DeSena and Jerome Krase “Brooklyn Revisited” From “Gentrification Around the World Vol. 1”

How Gentrification Works


Apr 7  Moskowitz, Peter. “Introduction” and Ch. 1 “Hanging on.” From “How to Kill a City.”


Apr 12  Moskowitz, Peter. Chs. 2 and 3 “How Gentrification Works.” And “Destroy to Rebuild.” From How to Kill a City


Gibbons, Andrea. “Battle on Skid Row” City of Segregation


https://theappeal.org/the-role-of-police-igentrification-breonna-taylor/

Apr 19  Gibbons, Andrea. “Beating Back the Onslaught” and “Neoliberalism Found.” City of Segregation

Selected Short Readings on Boyle Heights Activism:

“Boyle Heights activists say white art elites are ruining the neighborhood” -LA Times

“Hope everyone pukes on your artisanal treats” -The Guardian

“An arts nonprofit closes shop after 'constant attacks’” -LA Times

**Apr 21** Movie: Vampires Vs. The Bronx (2020), Available on Netflix

Song: “We Could Be Gone” by Rebel Diaz and Tef Poe
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhraf-CmUl0)


**Modes of Displacement (Green Gentrification, Heritage Gentrification, Art Gentrification)**

**Apr 26** Harvey, David. The Art of Rent. from Rebel Cities 183-208

Salamandra, Christa. “Old Damascus Commodified.” Chapter 3 from “A New Old Damascus”


**May 3** Checker, Melissa. “Wiped out by the Greenwave: Environmental Gentrification and the Paradoxical Politics of Urban Sustainability.” *City and Society.*

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May 5 Peterson, Marina “Sounding the City” and “Centrifugal City” from “Sound, Space, and the City.”


May 10 Totah Faedah. Tourism Gentrification of the Old City of Damascus. from Gentrification Around the World vol. 1


Film: Third Ward, TX : https://carleton.kanopy.com/video/third-ward-tx

Social Change in Gentrifying Contexts


Lloyd, Richard. “Introduction” and “Grit as Glamour” FromNeoBohemia 1-23, 75-101

May 19 Lloyd, Richard. “Living Like an Artist” from NeoBohemia 101-126


May 24 Denmead, Tyler. “‘Is This Really What White People Do’ in the Creative Capital?” From The Creative Underclass: Youth, Race and the Gentrifying City. Pp133-154

Mumm, Jesse “Report: Redoing Chicago: Gentrification, Race, and Intimate Segregation.”

McLaughlin-Alcock, Colin “Artistic Topologies.”

Lloyd, Richard. “Making the Scene” from NeoBohemia


**Policies:**

**Academic Honesty:** I am required to report plagiarism and other forms of cheating to the school. This can result in discipline, including potentially a zero for the class and other sanctions from the school. Please do your own work.

**Absences:** Attendance and participation is a key part of this class. However, I recognize that things come up where you may not be able to attend. If you are ill, please stay home (you may call in to class if you wish). For up to two absences, no explanation is required, although you are still responsible for the class material and any work that was due on that day. Additional absences will require consultation with me to be excused and may result in makeup work or points taken off the grade. Your best bet is to contact me as early as possible if you will be absent for more than 2 classes.

**Lateness:** To request an extension, please use this link: [https://forms.gle/jwxMbUZbbx9HVLmk7](https://forms.gle/jwxMbUZbbx9HVLmk7). It is my general policy to grant short extensions when they are requested. However, please recognize that the deadlines in this class are important, both for keeping you from falling behind, and for making sure that you are prepared to participate in class. (Classwork often builds off assignments). If you are behind on multiple assignments or request an extension of more than 2 days, you must communicate with me. We will agree on an appropriate new deadline and, at times, I may ask you for a more detailed plan explaining how you expect to get caught up. Students who are struggling to keep up with the pace of the class are encouraged to request a meeting with me to discuss appropriate supports which would enable them to succeed in the class (including potentially extensions/waived deadlines). Per school policy, all assignments except for the final assignment must be submitted by 5pm on the last day of classes, and I do not have the leeway to grant an extension on this.

**Regrades:** If you believe that your grade on a particular assignment or in the course was in error, you may contact me with a letter explaining why you believe that the grade should be changed. You should be prepared to meet with me to discuss your request further. All regrade requests must be made before the end of the semester, and within ten days of the grade being assigned.
Behavioral Expectations: I look forward to getting to know all of you and to having engaging discussions in the classroom. In order to maintain an open classroom, it is important that you treat one another with respect. Threatening or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated and may result in you being dropped from the class.

Academic Accommodations: For students who need accommodation, I am happy to work with you to make sure that you have the support that you need. Please communicate with Disability Services to formalize accommodation requests. If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, autism spectrum disorders, chronic health, traumatic brain injury and concussions, vision, hearing, mobility, or speech impairments), please contact disability@carleton.edu or call Sam Thayer (‘10), Accessibility Specialist (x4464), to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.