URBS 100: INTRODUCTION TO THE CITY
SPRING 2007

Instructor: Professor David Laverny-Rafter
Office: Urban and Regional Studies Institute, Office-Morris 106,
Telephone: (507)389-1540, Email: rafter@mnsu.edu
Office Hours: Mon, 4-6 & Wed. 9-2  (other times by appointment)

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
The goals of the course are to examine the following questions:
• What is a city and how have cities evolved over time from small villages to major metropolitan areas?
• What makes cities livable and enjoyable?
• How are cities responding to population growth and change, creating jobs suitable for a 21st Century economy, addressing race, class and gender issues, and providing affordable housing?
• What professions can be pursued with a major or minor in urban studies?
• What are the future of our cities and metropolitan areas?
These are just a few of the questions that we will explore in this course. The primary goal of the course, therefore, is to challenge you to think about the cities (and suburbs) and to explore possible ways that will make them more livable and sustainable in the future.

The specific objectives of the course are to provide an opportunity for you to:
• Understand how different social science disciplines contribute to our knowledge of American cities;
• Understand the physical and cultural evolution of cities;
• Be familiar with the challenges facing American cities today including issues of race and gender, poverty and inequality, immigration, governance, technological change, economic development, environmental deterioration, etc;
• Gain an appreciation for the importance of field research to understand cities and solving urban problems;
• Learn how to use the Web to access information on urban topics; and
• Practice report writing, oral communication of findings, team work and other analytical and communication skills.
**Instructional Methodology and Teaching Strategies**
A variety of techniques will be employed in teaching the course including lectures, group activities, on-the-street field exercises, Web exercises, video exercises and in-class discussions. For the course to work and to obtain maximum credits possible, you will need to read the textbook, attend each class, complete assignments by the due dates and, most importantly, experience and think about cities.

**Grading and Assignments**
The course assignments will be:

1. **Readings:** Read the assigned textbook chapters before class in order to best understand the content of lectures and exercises.
2. **Tests:** Four objective tests will be administered covering readings, lectures, and class discussions (25 points possible per exam).
3. **Field Projects:** Three field projects will be assigned requiring students to submit short (2 page single-spaced) field project memos (using memo format). See individual assignment sheets for each project. (10 points possible per project).
4. **Extra credit:** Students can earn extra credit by attending class and participating in in-class exercises and submitting these exercises at end of each class.
5. **Grading:** The course will involve a **total of 130 points** which will be distributed as follows:
   - **4 Tests = 100 points** (or 25 points for each tests)
   - **3 Field projects = 30 points** (or 10 points each)
   - Extra credit Projects=up to 24 points can be earned by submitting in-class exercises (2 points per exercise). This extra credit can make up for missed points on exams and field projects.

**WARNING:** All tests and projects are due on the assigned date. **No extensions or make-ups are allowed.** As university students, you should be aware that plagiarism is a serious ethical violation and will result in a failing grade in the courses. All work submitted must be your own.

**DISABILITY:** Every attempt will be made to accommodate qualified students with disabilities. If you are a student with a documented disability, please see the instructor as early in the semester as possible to discuss the necessary accommodations, and or contact the Disability Services office at 389-2825 (V) or 1-800-627-3529 (MRS/TTV).
# URBS 100 Syllabus (p. 3)

## Course Schedule and Assignment Due Dates-Spring, 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings*</th>
<th>Assignments Due**</th>
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<tr>
<td>1/22</td>
<td>Introduction to the Course</td>
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<td>1/29</td>
<td>The City Evolves (Pt. 1)</td>
<td>Chs. 1, 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/5</td>
<td>The City Evolves (Pt. 2)</td>
<td>Ch. 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>Governing the City (Pt. 1)</td>
<td>Ch. 4</td>
<td>Project #1 Due-Best and Worst Cities</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/19</td>
<td>Governing the City (Pt. 2) TEST #1</td>
<td>Ch. 5</td>
<td>TEST #1 on Chs. 1,2,3 &amp; 4</td>
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<td>2/26 &amp;3/5</td>
<td>Planning the City</td>
<td>Ch. 8</td>
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<td>3/12</td>
<td>NO CLASS-Spring Break</td>
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<td>3/19</td>
<td>Poverty and Race Issues in the City</td>
<td>Chs. 11, 13</td>
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<td>3/26</td>
<td>The Creative Class TEST #2</td>
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<td>TEST #2- Chs. 5, 8, 11, 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/2</td>
<td>Designing the Legible City-MSU Campus Field Walk</td>
<td>Ch. 9</td>
<td>Campus Field Walk</td>
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<td>4/9</td>
<td>Housing in the City</td>
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<td>Project #2 Due-Campus Design Analysis</td>
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<td>4/16</td>
<td>Neighborhood Development</td>
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<td>4/23</td>
<td>TEST #3 Downtown Mankato Field Walk</td>
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<td>TEST #3-Chs. 9,10,14 Mankato Field Walk</td>
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<td>4/30</td>
<td>Sustainable Cities Future of the Cities</td>
<td>Ch. 12, 15, 16</td>
<td>Project #3 Due-Downtown Mankato Design Analysis</td>
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<td>5/7</td>
<td>TEST #4</td>
<td></td>
<td>TEST #4-Chs. 12, 15, 16</td>
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**Note:** *=All readings are from course textbook titled *Urban America Processes and Problems* by John Levy available at MSU Bookstore.<br>**Note:** **= Project Assignments will be described in a separate handout.
Purpose
In this final project, you are to use the Web in researching information of major metropolitan areas and analyze their ranking to decide which you consider to be the best and worst cities (or “orchids and onions”)

The Assignment
In this project, you will use the Web’s “Best Places” site (www.bestplaces.net) to review the research of Bert Sperling classifying the livability of major metropolitan areas (areas with population over 1 million) based on date related to a variety of indicators (e.g. crime, housing, transportation). After reviewing this data, you will write a paper presenting what you consider to be the best and worst metropolitan area.

Urban Best Places Research
In order to obtain data on metropolitan areas, you should follow these steps:
1. Go to www.bestplaces.net
2. Review structure of this Web site (e.g. types of classifications, type of information provided)
3. Click on “Find Your Best Place Quiz” and then answer all questions about your preferences related to each factor (Climate, Economy, Housing, etc.). After answering questions related to each factor topic hit “next” at bottom of page. When you are finished, Web site will present a table ranking all metropolitan areas based on your preferences.
4. Print copy of table.

Written Report
Write a 2 page single-spaced report following the “memo” format that analyzes the best and worst metropolitan areas according to your preferences. In the paper, be sure to respond to following points:
1. Background: Explain purpose of paper and use of bestplaces.net as a source.
2. Best and Worst Places Findings: Identify your top 5 and bottom 5 metropolitan areas and WHY the ranking resulted in this outcome – what do you think were the characteristics that influenced the ranking the most?
3. Analysis: Do you agree? Would you like to live in one of top 5 metro areas? Why or Why not? What other areas on the list appeal to you the most? WHY?
4. Conclusion: What does this exercise say about metropolitan areas that will grow the fastest in the future? What does it say about your personal preferences?

Appendix
Submit your written report with the final ranking table that you printed out as an “Appendix A”
URBS 100: INTRODUCTION TO THE CITY (Prof. Laverny-Rafter)
Field Project #2: MSU Campus Urban Design Analysis

Purpose
The design features of a city determine the extent to which it is a “legible” place. The extent to which the city makes it easy to find an address, to meet a friend, and to enjoy “hanging out” is related to how well the urban spaces are designed. This project will allow you to examine the extent to which urban design concepts are reflected illustrated in the MSU campus.

The Assignment
Explore the MSU campus with fresh eyes by taking a field walk through the campus and take notes on its design characteristics. Upon completion of the field walk, produce a written report presenting your description and analysis of the campus.

Field Walk Observations
Using the attached map, walk through the entire campus and take notes on the design characteristics. The boundaries of the campus field study area are shown on the attached map and include Val Imm Drive/Birchwood Street to Stadium Road and Warren Street to West Road/Bluffs. Specifically, your notes should identify examples of Kevin Lynch’s design concepts discussed in class which include:

1. Nodes: concentration points of people and traffic
2. Edges: natural and built boundaries that separate one district from another
3. Pathways: the routes people take
4. Landmarks: the significant structures that give the campus meaning
5. Districts: the areas of campus that reflect different activities

Written Report: Analysis of Design of MSU Campus
Upon completion of your campus field walk, write a 2 page single spaced paper analyzing the campus that addresses each of the following issues:

1. Background/Study Area: Present purpose of paper and briefly describe area that you observed in your field walk.
2. Design Characteristics: Explain what you discovered - where are the nodes, edges, districts, pathways, and landmarks on campus. How well do these function to make the campus legible (e.g. are there conflicts?) What is missing?
3. Recommendations: If you were advising the campus planner, what improvements would you recommend be made on the campus to make it a more legible, enjoyable, efficient place to live and study?

Report Appendix
Attach an Appendix A to your report containing your field notes.
Purpose: One way to explain urban sustainability is the idea of an ecological footprint. A footprint is a measure of the physical space that a person uses to stand on the earth. A ecological footprint is a measure of the amount of space a person uses in the ecosystem. Imagine living in a sealed glass dome that covers you and some land around you. If the dome is too small, you would quickly run out of air to breathe. If the dome is a little larger you would have enough air but might run out of water or food. If you include in the dome enough space on earth to supply all your needs—your energy for heat, electricity and transportation, housing material, food clothing, etc. as well as enough land to assimilate all the waste that you generate and to convert all the carbon dioxide to oxygen—the result would be your ecological footprint. The size of your ecological footprint depends on the amount of resources you consume. Someone who commutes on foot or by bicycle has a smaller footprint than someone who commutes by car. A person whose car gets 35 miles to the gallon of gas has a smaller footprint than a person whose car gets only 15 miles to the gallon. A person who lives in a small, well-insulated house has a smaller footprint than someone in a large, poorly-insulated house.

It is estimated that the average American’s ecological footprint is over 13 acres. However, given the existing population on the earth and the amount of productive land, there are less than 4 acres available per person on the whole earth. If everyone on earth consumed as much as the average American, we would need two more earths! Clearly, this level of consumption would not be sustainable if everyone on earth was doing it. Developing sustainable cities requires developing life styles that use less natural resources and services and do not degrade or destroy the ability of the ecosystem to continue to provide needed resources and services. SOURCE: Maureen Hart. A GUIDE TO SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY INDICATORS, 2nd ed. FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE: Mathis Wackernagel and William Rees. OUR ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT.

The Assignment: One way to appreciate the application of the ecological footprint concept is to calculate your personal ecological footprint. The ecological footprint quiz is an online tool whereby you answer the questions on your consumption practices and the quiz will calculate your “footprint.” To access the quiz go to the website at www.myfootprint.org and complete the quiz.

The Written Report: Write a 2-page, single-spaced report following the “memo” format that explains your results and give three reasons why you think you obtained these results. What should you be doing differently to reduce your footprint. [If you have problems with the website cited above, you can also try www.everyday.net/footprint/info which contains the same quiz.]

Appendix: Submit your report with the print out of your footprint description from the Web and label “Appendix A”