

**Urban Studies Reading Group**  
*Spring 2009 (CRN 64055)*

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Readings in Urban Studies and Planning  
*URBN 311, Thursdays 10 – 11AM*

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This course is an opportunity for graduate students, faculty, and staff in the Toulon School of Urban Studies and Planning (TSUSP) program to read scholarly papers and engage in discussion about recent developments in the field. While the TSUSP program continues to excel in areas of land use planning, economic and community development, transportation, and environment, recent developments such as the University Transportation Center and the dual masters' program in public health and planning offer a tremendous opportunity to strengthen its foundations while growing into new areas of research, education, and scholarship.

The aim of the course is to provide a forum for graduate students and faculty to discuss timely developments in the field of urban studies and planning. While it will be impossible for this course to address all topics in depth, another aim of this course is to provide exposure to topics outside of each participant's area of research interest. Designed as a one-year sequence, each quarter would address the following themes:

- 1) Fall Quarter -- Debates (or Foundations): Participants will examine recent developments that challenge the organizing principles of urban studies and planning. While some debates may focus on epistemological underpinnings, other may be more empirically based.
- 2) Winter Quarter -- Methods: This term will consist of discussions of methodological developments in urban studies and planning. By exploring a variety of methods, participants will be exposed to the breadth of tools used for research and education in the field.
- 3) Spring Quarter -- Case Studies: **The third term will look at studies of urban phenomena specific to cities and metropolitan areas across the planet. Participants will investigate how topics such as information technology, globalization, and migration affect the structures and processes occurring in urban regions.**

A different faculty member will serve as the primary contact for the course each quarter, and students will facilitate the sessions (following a schedule determined at the first session). Faculty, staff, and students not enrolled in the course will be invited to attend on a drop-in basis.

Facilitating a session will include: (1) selecting a relevant article; (2) distributing the article at least one week prior to discussion; (3) facilitating an hour-long discussion during the class session; and (4) writing a reflective summary of topics discussed in the session. Articles may be selected from peer-reviewed journals or books.

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In the spirit of creating an atmosphere of appreciative inquiry, facilitators will be encouraged to use creative methods to engage participants with each topic. Given varying class sizes and background understanding of the topic, it is up to facilitators to decide what format the class session will take and provide the necessary information to all participants prior to each meeting. The reflective summary will attempt to characterize the major themes emerging in the discussion, and address areas that warrant further exploration.

In addition to their facilitation roles, each student is responsible for reviewing the provided materials prior to each session, and participating in discussions. Prior to the final meeting, each student will summarize, in writing, what they see as unanswered questions and areas of research that could be further explored. The final session will consist of a discussion of these questions and themes -- a reflection on what has been learned during the quarter, and an opportunity to structure the class for following term.