

SOCIAL JUSTICE, URBAN PLANNING and
URBAN AMERICA

Professor: Kirk E. Harris, M.P.A., J.D., Ph.D., Esq.
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
School: Architecture and Urban Planning,
Department: Urban Planning
Course Number: Urban Planning URBPLAN 350
Credits: 3
Day and Time: Tuesday, 2:30pm-5:10pm
Semester: FALL 2024
Room: AUP 343

OFFICE: AUP 322
OFFICE PHONE: (708) 955-3015
E-Mail: keharris@uwm.edu

Office Hours: Thursday 5pm to 6:00pm. Students can also meet with me by appointment by contacting me via email.

Course Description and Objectives:

Too often, urban centers are the focal point of poverty, economic decline, and neglect. Over eighty percent of America's population resides in urban areas. More than half of this number lives in metropolitan areas possessing more than one million people. Major structural changes to the American economy have taken place within the last few decades with devastating economic outcomes for urban America and the most vulnerable communities in those urban centers. Once major industrial centers, America's post-industrial cities are now mandated to operate in the context of a global economy, which has had a tremendous influence on patterns of urban growth and decline. These changes coupled with historic and structural patterns of inequity have given rise to palpable tensions related to race and class within our urban regions. Planners, architects, community builders, and others seeking to navigate the realities of urban space must recognize that long-standing historical, sociological, economic, and political relationships define a complex political economy that contours, if not limits an array of opportunities available to low-income vulnerable urban communities.

The planning discipline has a tradition of progressive engagement within communities in which issues of social justice and equity play an integral role in defining the questions that planners ask and the solutions that they pursue. That said, planners have also been implicated in the racialization and segregation of urban space, which has worsened growing racial and economic inequality. The democratization of urban space, the inclusion of community voices, and the contemplation of racial and economic equality are all central values that planning practice must advance and uphold. While progressive planning practice recognizes the enormous potential of communities, it is also cognizant of the inherent inequalities generated by a democratic capitalist system in which the economic fortunes of the few exacerbate the growing gap between the haves and have-nots. The COVID-19 Pandemic has only magnified these inequalities in the most grotesque ways.

America continues to struggle to reach its democratic ideals while navigating the paradoxical existence that defines the American experience. America is a cabal of challenges and contradictions on the one hand steeped in a shameful past and present that includes for example: 1) the dispossession of Native Americans of their lands and the genocide of Native American people; 2) 350 years of chattel slavery and its legacy whereby men and women of African-descent were counted as three-fifths of a human-being and brutally subordinated through acts of violence and coercion even to this day; 3) the patriarchal control of women over many decades; and 4) voter suppression practices targeting low-income communities and vulnerable communities of color.

On the other hand, America is a nation that can episodically remind itself of its own democratic ideals, electing Barack H. Obama as the first African American President of the United States. On the 2020 Presidential ticket with then candidate Joseph Biden was a Black woman Vice-Presidential candidate, Kamala Harris, who is now running as President. That said, we must remain vigilant and understand that the symbols of progress must have a substantive grounding in the structural opportunities that are manifested in demonstrations of greater levels of equity and social justice within urban communities and for the low-income groups and families and groups and families of color that live therein. The police and/or vigilante killings of Trayvon Martin, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Jacob Blake, and the incessant killing of legions of other Black people before them at the hands of the police and vigilantes have begun to capture the attention of the average American. These are all too frequent examples of the racialized systemic violence that has sparked local, national and international protest that causes us to not forget that racism is deeply woven into American institutions and culture and is an ever-present element in the American way of life.

Our task in this course will be to gain a familiarity with the history, the policies, the practices, as well as to better understand the socio-political and economic pressures, as well as the movements and struggles that shape the new urban political economy. Additionally, time will be spent exploring from an urban planning perspective the intricate set of issues that contour the urban landscape. As we examine an array of issues impacting urban communities, we will seek to advance a couple of educational objectives. One objective is to have students begin to construct a social justice framework within which they can assess and evaluate complex urban problems. Secondly, this course will provide students with a historical and conceptual understanding of the political economy of race and class in urban America and inspire students to invoke concepts of social justice and equity in their day-to-day lives and in their emerging practice as aspiring professionals.

Required Texts, Articles, and Materials:

Desmond Mathew. *Poverty by America*. New York: Penguin Random House, 2024

Leah Rothstein and Richard Rothstein. **Just Action: How to Challenge Segregation Enacted Under The Color of Law**. First edition. New York; London: Liveright Publishing Corporation, a division of W.W. Norton & Company, 2023.

Rothstein, Richard. **The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America**. First edition. New York; London: Liveright Publishing Corporation, a division of W.W. Norton & Company, 2017.

Goldsmith, William & Blakely, Edward. **Separate Societies: Poverty and Inequality in U.S. Cities** (Foreword by Former Pres. Bill Clinton) Temple University Press, 2010.

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uwm/detail.action?docID=547382>

Course Schedule:

Class # 1 & 2- September 3rd and September 10th

Introductions

Review of Course Requirements

Review of Course Content and Expectations

A Discourse about Race

During the 2008 presidential campaign, I served on the national committee, called the Metropolitan and Urban Policy Committee, for now, President Barack Obama. The committee's role was to develop various policy papers in support of the campaign's urban policy agenda/platform. During the course of the campaign, the issue of race emerged prominent, given the prospect of the first African American President. Then-candidate Barack Obama delivered a speech entitled "A More Perfect Union." This speech delivered by Barack Obama sought to articulate for the American public his views on race and the historic and social-political context from which his opinions are drawn. Please view the speech in its entirety by clicking on the following link: [A MORE PERFECT UNION & TRANSCRIPT AND AUDIO ONLY](#).

The Construction of Race in America

➤ **Dr. John Powell, The Invention of Whiteness,**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOYzr3mupbk&feature=youtu.be>

- **Dr. Robin DiAngelo, Deconstructing White Privilege**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DwIx3KQer54>
- **Dr. Robin DiAngelo, White Fragility**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvIO2GU8yTU&feature=youtu.be>

DISCOURSE ABOUT RACE EXERCISE WRITE-UP DUE September 17th
 See: A Discourse about Race Exercise on 8 of the Syllabus

Class # 3-September 17th

The History of Racial Inequality

- **Peonage: Slavery by Another Name**
<https://www.pbs.org/video/slavery-another-name-slavery-video/>
- **The Infographic on African Slavery and its Misappropriation of Wealth**
<https://www.yesmagazine.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/74/74-JTF-8.5x11.pdf>

READINGS

- Color of Law, Chapters 1 - 2
- Separate Societies, Chapters 1-2
- Poverty by America, Chapters 1-2
- Just Action, Chapters 1-2

DISCOURSE ABOUT RACE EXERCISE WRITE-UP DUE-SEPTEMBER 17th !!!!!!!!!

Class # 4 & 5 – September 24th and October 1st

The Persistent Legacy of Racism by Design

<https://www.segregatedbydesign.com/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGUwcs9qJXY>

READINGS

- Color of Law, Chapters 3 - 4
- Separate Societies, Chapters 3-4
- Poverty by America, Chapters 3-4
- Just Action, Chapters 3-4

PROJECT STATEMENT DUE-September 24th

Class # 6 –October 8th

The Segregated City and Struggles for Community Justice

- **How did Milwaukee become the most segregated city in the U.S.?**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-xjaacc8TQo>

FIRST DRAFT OF PROJECT RESEARCH OUTLINE-October 8th

READINGS

- Color of Law, Chapters 5 - 6
- Separate Societies, Chapters 5
- Poverty by America, Chapters 5-6
- Just Action, Chapters, 5-6

Class # 7 & 8– October 15th and October 22nd

Overview Class and Economic Inequality

- **The Making of Class Inequality**

<http://www.businessinsider.com/15-charts-about-wealth-and-inequality-in-america-2010-4#if-you-arent-in-the-top-1-then-youre-getting-a-bum-deal-15#ixzz1F8xzSWHH>

- **Brookings Institute Study On Economic Inequality**

<http://csweb.brookings.edu/content/research/essays/2014/saving-horatio-alger.html>

➤ **Two American Families and the Myth of the Modern Middle Class**

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/two-american-families/>

READINGS

- Color of Law, Chapters 7-8
- Poverty by America, Chapters 7-8
- Just Action, Chapters 7-8

SECOND DRAFT OF PROJECT RESEARCH OUTLINE-October 22nd

Class # 9 – October 29th

Ethics, Equity and Social Justice Roles and Implications of Planners

- **Application and Practice: APA Video on Equity and Social Justice in Planning**
<https://youtu.be/YXVtkdQfZDM>
- **Planner's Role**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ka5eDMv0W4g&list=UUvqWCr2888S3boRqcOCc0HA>

READINGS

- Color of Law, Chapters 9-10
- Poverty in America, Chapters 9-10
- Just Action, Chapters 9-10

Class # 10 & 11 – November 5th and November 12th

Institutional Forms of Racial Segregation

- **A Brief History Of How Racism Shaped Interstate Highways**
 - Trevor Noah on Highways (Start at 2:03)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvDjgFpROVM>
 - Deborah Archer NYU law school Highways on NPR
 - <https://www.npr.org/2021/04/07/984784455/a-brief-history-of-how-racism-shaped-interstate-highways>

READINGS

- Color of Law, Chapters 11-12
- Just Action, Chapters 11-12

<i>FINAL DRAFT OF PROJECT RESEARCH OUTLINE-November 7th</i>

Class # 12 & 13– November 19th and November 26th

READINGS

Community Struggles for Safety, Power and Place

- Gentrification
 - California Housing Video
 - Gentrification Debate Video
- Community Development Struggle and Models for Change
 - The Garden Video
 - Holding Ground Video
- Black Lives Matter: The Beginnings of the Movement
 - History of BLM
<https://youtu.be/YG8GjILbbvs>
 -
 - Is “Defund the Police” Dead
 - <https://blacklivesmatter.com/video/its-still-defund-the-police/#foobox-1/0/MZ-U0jfpLUc>
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=haMgNlt_fvs

Thanksgiving Break November 27th to December 1st

Class # 13 –December 3rd

RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

Class # 14 –December 10th

RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

*****Final Paper Due: December 17th*****

STUDENT EVALUATION:

Students will be evaluated based on their performance on the following:

1) A Discourse about Race Exercise

Once you have listened to the speech, I would like you to ask yourself two questions.

- 1) What were the key elements of the framing of race in American society as identified by Obama in his speech?
- 2) How do the ideas presented by then Presidential candidate Obama in his speech compare and/or contrast with the ideas presented by Dr. John Powell and Dr. Robin DiAngelo?

Once you have pondered these questions, please write a short one-page essay for each of the questions and be prepared to present your responses to the class.

2) Student Groups will be required to prepare presentations on selected readings from the required texts and lead a discussion on their selected readings utilizing a PowerPoint presentation.

As a part of this process, the student group members will regularly meet and discuss their assigned readings. Group discussion and consensus related to the reading should be the basis upon which the group identifies and then presents the main ideas emerging from the readings. The student group will also be required to pose at least two questions to the class that stimulates discussion related to the readings after their presentation. The reading presentation will be submitted to the Professor in the form of a PowerPoint presentation including the two questions in advance of the group presentation. The week the reading is scheduled in the syllabus is the week the group will present the reading presentation to the class. These presentations should not only be a summary of the author's main points but also identify themes related to class discussions. After the presentation, the presenting group will have an opportunity to respond to questions or comments from their student colleagues about the readings in their presentation.

3) Group Project Statement: Each group will select a topic related to the issue of race, class, or social justice and prepare a paragraph describing the topic they are interested in researching and explain their rationale for picking the topic and why it is salient as it relates to social justice. Each group will perform research on that topic for the purpose of preparing a formal **PowerPoint presentation. The instructor must approve the topic chosen by the group.**

4) **Final Outline of Group Research Project**: Each group will provide to the Professor a detailed outline of their research project that will include bibliographical references/sources (at least 15-20) from which they will be drawing for their research. Before the final outline and bibliography of the research project are submitted two drafts of the outline and bibliography under development will be submitted. The due dates for the draft outlines and bibliographies and the final outline and bibliography are listed in the syllabus.

5) **Research Project Presentation and Project Paper Write-Up**: Each group will prepare a PowerPoint Presentation of their Research Project. The PowerPoint Presentation will have the following components

- A. The rationale for identifying the topic and why it is important
- B. How the topic intersects with social justice or equity issues
- C. Overview of the key issues researched and reviewed related to the topic
- D. Key findings emerging from your research
- E. Conclusions emerging from research findings
- F. Recommendations, actions, or policies that have been surmised as strategic responses to the matters at hand.

The group will prepare a typed, double-spaced, 15-page research paper that translates the information presented in the PowerPoint into a formal paper with citations or develop an instructor-approved alternative to the paper.

6) **Grading**

- 15% - Discourse about Race Exercise
- 20% - Reading Presentation
- 10% - Research Outline
- 20% - Research Project PowerPoint Presentation
- 25% - Research Project Paper Write-Up
- 10% - Participation and Active Engagement

GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENT STATEMENT

This course satisfies the cultural diversity requirement of UWM's general education requirement because it focuses in on issues related to social justice and equity issues in urban America. Specifically, the course familiarizes students with the dynamics of race and class within the context of America's urban political economy. Students will explore through the readings and course materials how public policy, urban planning, and institutional forms of power and privilege shape the course of outcomes within urban space. Through this course students will be made to be more aware

and perceptive about how race, class and power shape urban life. Students will have a greater understanding of how these phenomena significantly impact the life chances and opportunity structures of urban communities. This course will help students gain insight into how to appreciate the challenges and opportunities, as well as the struggle and triumphs of communities that may not be their own.

STUDENTS IN NEED

Any student who faces challenges securing their food, housing, or technology, or is struggling with mental, physical, or emotional health, and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students (dos@uwm.edu) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable doing so. This will enable them to provide any resources that they may have and can connect you to the Dean of Students as well.

STUDENT WORKLOAD EXPECTATION

This class meets once weekly for 2 hours and 30 minutes, for a total of 37.3 hours of required lecture time. Students should expect to have at least 42 hours' worth of readings from various sources over the course of the semester. There are also group assignments which you should expect to require at least 50 hours of your time over the course of the semester. In the aggregate, this class is likely to take 129.3 hours of a student's time.

COURSE POLICIES

Changes to syllabus: Students are responsible for any changes in this syllabus which are announced.

Academic Misconduct: Any students found guilty of academic misconduct (e.g. cheating, plagiarism) will be given a grade of "0" on the relevant assignment and disciplined according to the UWM Student Academic Disciplinary Procedures. Please see additional guidance and expectations related to academic conduct at: <https://uwm.edu/deanofstudents/academic-misconduct/>.

COVID-19 SYLLABUS STATEMENTS

Panther Community Health and Safety Standards: UWM has implemented reasonable health and safety protocols, taking into account recommendations by local, state and national public health authorities, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a member of our campus community, you are expected to abide by the Panther [Interim COVID-Related Health & Safety Rules](#), which were developed in accordance with public health guidelines. These standards apply to anyone who is physically present on campus, UWM grounds, or participating in a UWM-sponsored activity:

- You should check daily for COVID-19 symptoms and not come to campus if you are feeling sick.

Additional details about student and staff expectations can be found on the [UWM COVID-19 webpage](#).

UNIVERSITY POLICIES REGARDING COURSES & INSTRUCTION

This course adheres to campus policies regarding students with disabilities, religious observances, active military service, incompletes, discriminatory conduct, academic misconduct, complaints about the course, grade appeals and course credit & time spent requirements.

1. Students with disabilities. Notice to these students should appear prominently in the syllabus so that special accommodations are provided in a timely manner. <http://uwm.edu/arc/>
2. Religious observances. Accommodations for absences due to religious observance should be noted. <https://apps.uwm.edu/secu-policies/storage/other/SAAP%201-2.%20Accommodation%20of%20Religious%20Beliefs.pdf>
3. Students called to active military duty. Accommodations for absences due to call-up of reserves to active military duty should be noted. Students: <http://uwm.edu/active-duty-military/>
Employees: <https://www.wisconsin.edu/ohrwd/download/policies/ops/bn9.pdf>
4. Incompletes. A notation of "incomplete" may be given in lieu of a final grade to a student who has carried a subject successfully until the end of a semester but who, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond the student's control, has been unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of term work. <https://apps.uwm.edu/secu-policies/storage/other/SAAP%201-13.%20Incomplete%20Grades.pdf>
5. Discriminatory conduct. Discriminatory conduct will not be tolerated by the University. It poisons the work and learning environment of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience, and well-being of students, faculty, and staff. <https://apps.uwm.edu/secu-policies/storage/other/SAAP%205-1.%20Discriminatory%20Conduct%20Policy.pdf>
6. Title IX/Sexual Violence. Title IX is a federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in education program or activities, and UWM policy prohibits such conduct (see Discriminatory Conduct, above). This includes sexual violence, which may include sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, and/or stalking in all educational programs and education-related areas. UWM strongly encourages its students to report any instance of sex discrimination to UWM's Title IX Coordinator (titleix@uwm.edu). Whether or not a student wishes to report an incident of sexual violence, the Title IX Coordinator can connect students to resources at UWM and/or in the community including, but not limited to, victim advocacy, medical and counseling

services, and/or law enforcement. For more information, please visit: <https://uwm.edu/sexual-assault/>.

7. Academic misconduct. Cheating on exams or plagiarism are violations of the academic honor code and carry severe sanctions, including failing a course or even suspension or dismissal from the University. <https://uwm.edu/deanofstudents/academic-misconduct/>
8. Complaint procedures. Students may direct complaints to the head of the academic unit or department in which the complaint occurs. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the head of the department or academic unit in which the complaint occurred or to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy. <https://apps.uwm.edu/secu-policies/storage/other/SAAP%205-1.%20Discriminatory%20Conduct%20Policy.pdf>
9. Grade appeal procedures. A student may appeal a grade on the grounds that it is based on a capricious or arbitrary decision of the course instructor. Such an appeal shall follow the established procedures adopted by the department, college, or school in which the course resides or in the case of graduate students, the Graduate School. These procedures are available in writing from the respective department chairperson or the Academic Dean of the College/School. <https://apps.uwm.edu/secu-policies/storage/other/SAAP%201-10.%20Grade%20Appeals%20by%20Students.pdf>
10. LGBT+ resources. Faculty and staff can find resources to support inclusivity of students who identify as LGBT+ in the learning environment. <http://uwm.edu/lgbtrc/>
12. Smoke and Tobacco-Free campus. UWM prohibits smoking and the use of tobacco on all campus property. <https://apps.uwm.edu/secu-policies/storage/other/SAAP%2010-8.%20Smoke%20and%20Tobacco-Free%20Campus%20Policy.pdf>
13. Final Examinations. Information about the final exam requirement, the final exam date requirement, and make-up examinations. <https://apps.uwm.edu/secu-policies/storage/other/SAAP%201-9.%20Final%20Examinations.pdf>