The purpose of this course is to understand why metropolitan areas “look” the way they do. You will examine economic, social, and political theories that seek to explain the growth and development of cities and regions. By “look” we mean the characteristics and geographic patterns of the physical landscape, as well as the social and demographic landscape. An understanding of the theories that attempt to tell us “why metro areas look the way they do” is important for developing appropriate public policies in such areas as transportation, economic development, housing, social policy, and environmental regulation. These theories form the basis for modeling—quantitatively or qualitatively—the likely impacts of alternative urban policies at the local, state, and national levels.

This course is largely about economic theory of urban locations and urban structure. “Urban economics and urban planning share an intense interest in many topic areas: the nature of cities, the prosperity of urban economies, the efficient provision of urban services, efficient systems of transportation, and the proper allocation of land between urban and environmental uses” (marketing statement for the textbook, Nancy Brooks, Kieran Donaghy, and Gerrit-Jan Knaap, The Oxford Handbook of Economics and Planning, 2012).

You will be called upon to think critically about urban problems, and you will criticize or defend plans/positions on the basis of both theory and facts. To put this another way, this course aims to teach you to think critically, to use and apply standard analysis tools, and to articulate your arguments. Often, we will find that the problem has more than one possible solution. A successful planning professional applies an understanding of theory, history, and the known facts of the situation to reach a conclusion about the most likely result of different ways of addressing problems or of shaping the urban environment.
Although the experiences of different geographic regions will be covered in this class, Milwaukee, its region, and Wisconsin will frame the “urban laboratory” for some assignments and discussions. Because planning is a place-based profession, it is imperative that students gain hands-on experience working on problems in their local environment.

This class is also a forum for polishing professional skills, including public speaking and writing.

The class modality is in-person and synchronous, but it is subject to change according to policies and guidelines provided to instructors. The class accommodates the students who need to or choose to participate online, but you need to have audio and video access to join the synchronous sessions.

TEXTS AND READINGS

All Readings will be available on the Canvas site as announced.

GRADING

Grades will be based on class participation and two reports.

Class participation and discussion        20
Metro Area Report Part I                   30
Metro Area Report Part II                  50

The two reports will be composed of multi-faceted elements, many of which are researched and discussed through our data assignments. Instructions for preparing each data assignment is given to you at least one week before we discuss it in class, and you need to do all the research before the class. Your discussion of the data assignments will be graded in “class participation and discussion”. After the class, you will summarize the findings for the data assignments and eventually compile them into your metro reports.

Late reports will be marked down, unless students have documentary evidence clearly demonstrating compassionate or compelling circumstances.

Grading criteria

The specific grading criteria for each report will be given with the report assignment. Note that writing always “counts.” In assigning a particular grade, the following guidelines set by the UWM graduate school will be followed:

A: Superior work
B: Satisfactory, but *undistinguished* work

C: Work below the standard expected of graduate students

Here are some general rules for the assignments and metro report:

1. Papers must be typed, **double-spaced**, in 12-point font (preferably Times New Roman or Arial), with 1-inch margins.
2. Pages must be numbered.
3. The paper must comply with any specific requirements of the assignment, such as page limits, organization, etc.
4. **Unless noted otherwise, please submit your report to the appropriate Canvas Assignments AND turn in one hard copy during class.**
5. **Late Reports:** Reports are due at the beginning of the class period in which the report is due. Late reports are NOT accepted unless the student obtains an extension based upon justification such as illness or family/workplace emergency.

**CLASSROOM CONDUCT**

For in-person participants, please turn off and put away all cell phones and audible devices during class. For online participants, please try to turn the camera on and participate in class discussions.

**SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION**

Students with limitations due to disability, including learning disability may request for any reasonable accommodations. Students will be allowed to complete examinations or other requirements that are missed because of a religious observance. In case of special accommodations are needed in order to meet any of the requirements of this course, please contact me as soon as possible.

**ACADEMIC CONDUCT**

The University, as an instrument of learning, is predicated on the existence of an environment of integrity. Faculty have the primary responsibility for establishing and maintaining an atmosphere and attitude of academic integrity such that the enterprise may flourish in an open and honest way. Students share this responsibility for maintaining standards of academic performance and classroom behavior conducive to the learning process. Please review Chapter UWS 14 and Faculty Document No. 1686 at:

[http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm](http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm) for both UWM’s and our expectations of appropriate student academic conduct.

**Original Work and Plagiarism:** All work in this course should be your own. In written work, cite your sources for quotes, facts, and opinions, both in the body of your work and in the bibliography. Do not copy word for word unless you place the words in quotation marks. Any plagiarism will be dealt with as a serious ethical breach. If you have questions about whether you
are crossing an ethical line, ASK ME. Here is a link to Graduate School website with examples of plagiarism and procedures: [https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/academic-misconduct/](https://uwm.edu/graduateschool/academic-misconduct/)

**Other Course Policies:** 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 firearms. For details about these policies, see [http://uwm.edu/secu/wp-content/uploads/sites/122/2016/12/Syllabus-Links.pdf](http://uwm.edu/secu/wp-content/uploads/sites/122/2016/12/Syllabus-Links.pdf) (Links to an external site).

**Work Expectation:** On average, students should spend 48 hours per credit per semester on in-class activities and activities outside of the classroom (i.e., approx. 144 hours for a 3-credit course).

**Anti-racism and DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) Policies:** This course is committed to addressing systemic racism across all of its dimensions in our curriculum. Towards this goal, this course acknowledges the historical roles of urban planning in creating and replicating racial inequities in the built environment. We are committed to developing pedagogical approaches and curricular content to train urban planners on anti-racist planning strategies.

We desire to foster and reinforce an inclusive culture in which democratic principles embrace the richness of our diverse society. This course facilitates and advances respectful dialogues among participants (students, instructors, class project clients, community members, and so on) of diverse backgrounds and experiences.

**COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS**

The schedule below identifies the readings, assignments, and preparations for class discussion that you need to prepare each week. Instructions for written assignments (metro reports I and II) will be posted at least two weeks prior to the due date. This course also has Data Assignments; you need to collect, understand, and analyze data to participate in course discussions. Your discussion of the data assignments will be graded in “class participation and discussion”. The findings of your data assignments will be compiled into your respective metro reports.

Many readings are linked directly from this online version of the syllabus. For readings that are not linked below, go to the Announcements tab on Canvas. Powerpoint presentations will be posted to Canvas, but sometimes not until after class.

**UNIT 1: Introduction**

*Jan 26 (Week 1) Course introduction, thinking critically about how we know what we know*


Readings:


You may read these after class to consolidate the ideas presented in class. All of the examples in the White reading relate to family theory, but are applicable to the kinds of theories that we will be considering this semester.

Feb 2 (Week 2) The City in Theory: Location Theory and Economic Geography

** Hand out Data Assignment 1: Residential Location **

** Hand out Metro Report I assignment **

Readings:


Discussion: How do you think these theories apply in describing and understanding your metro area?

UNIT 2: Location Choices

Feb 9 (Week 3) Residential Location

Readings:


**Discussion for Data Assignment 1:** Describe the residential location characteristics of your metro area. Why might you choose where to live? How might your housing choice be different if you were a different sort of person?

Feb 16 (Week 4) Residential Location II, Employment Location I

** Hand out Data Assignment 2: Employment Location**

**Readings:**


**Discussion:** Do you still see monocentric regions in the U.S.? Is your metro area one? If not, what are the major sub-centers? How do you think the sub-centers affect your metro area?

Feb 23 (Week 5) Employment Locations II

** Hand out Data Assignment 3: Metropolitan Growth Patterns **

**Readings:**


**Discussion for Data Assignment 2:** Describe the employment location characteristics of your metro area. In which industry is your metro area specialized? How does the specialized industry affect the urban structure?
Simulation: Make plans for the central city or the suburbs

Mar 2 (Week 6) Are Cities Dying?

Readings:


Discussion for Data Assignment 3: Is your metro area growing or shrinking in population?

Debate: What factors drive the decline of cities? What factors keep cities prosperous? What is the prescription for shrinking cities?

UNIT 3: Describing Metropolitan Issues

Mar 9 (Week 7) Fiscal and Economic Challenges and Metropolitan Equity Issues online

** Metro Report I DUE **

Readings:


**Discussion:** Look for information related to the following questions: What is the revenue structure of the central city in your metro area? What are the principal revenue sources? Is your central city fiscally strained? If so, what are the factors contributing to that strain? If not, why is your city not strained by fiscal shortages?

**Mar 16 (Week 8) Cities and Their Natural Resource Base (Guest lecturer: Nancy Frank; online)**

- **Hand out Data Assignment 4: Socially Disadvantaged**
- **Hand out Metro Report II Assignment**

**Readings**

European Environment Agency, “Urban Sustainability Issues--What is a Resource-Efficient City?” (Links to an external site.), 2015, pp. 8-12, 16, 23-36. The final section, pp. 37-71 concerns sprawl and promoting compact cities. We will discuss these topics throughout the course. A quick skim of this long final section is not required, but it has a lot of good information. The European context makes it especially interesting from our US perspective.


ADD in 2020: circular urban wood, Minneapolis, https://meetingoftheminds.org/from-waste-to-wealth-developing-and-financing-an-urban-wood-economy-part-1-30407?omhide=true&utm_source=Meeting+of+the+Minds+Newsletter+List&utm_campaign=c5c363e1ae-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_cdb70a5ce7-c5c363e1ae-57862593&mc_cid=c5c363e1ae&mc_eid=bd87fb40db

Milwaukee, Comprehensive Policy Plan, “Natural Resources” (Links to an external site.)

**Case Study for Discussion and Debate: Menomonee Valley: Past, Present, Future**

Menomonee Valley Partners, “Valley History” (Links to an external site.)

Menomonee Valley Partners and Sigma Group (2004), “Sustainable Guidelines for the Menomonee Valley (Links to an external site.)

Public Policy Forum (2014), "Redevelopment in Milwaukee’s River Valley: What Worked and Why?" (Links to an external site.) Pages 3-17 required; remainder of report recommended.

Readings:


David Riemer: Spotlight on Poverty & Opportunity; Wisconsin Examiner; Urban Milwaukee

Case Study Readings for Discussion:


Discussion:

How does Orfield’s description of “metro politics” offer an accurate (or inaccurate) explanation for the debates in the Milwaukee metro area around transit? How do the urban-rural differences play a role? Are these political dynamics still relevant to transit issues today in the Milwaukee metro area?

What do you know (what can you find out with some quick research) about city-suburb conflicts in your metro area?

Is the shift in suburban voting patterns seen in the 2016 and 2018 elections a sign that the political strains between large cities and their suburbs are likely to abate soon? Why or why not? What evidence can you point to?

March 23 SPRING BREAK!

March 30 (Week 9) Socially Disadvantaged

** Hand out Metro Report II Assignment **

** Hand out Data Assignment 5: Globalization **

Readings:


Sampson, Robert J. “Neighbourhood effects and beyond: Explaining the paradoxes of inequality in the changing American metropolis”, *Urban Studies*, 56(1): 3-32, 2019


**Discussion for Data Assignment 4:** Explore indicators of social disadvantage for your metro area using the National Equity Atlas, [http://nationalequityatlas.org/](http://nationalequityatlas.org/).

Which indicators of social disadvantage did you find most useful? Why? How does your metro area compare to the United States as a whole? Which group is particularly disadvantaged in your metro area? Do the indicators correlate (positively or negatively) as you would expect them to? If not, what explanations do you have?

**Apr 6 (Week 10) Regional Planning in Wisconsin: New contexts and new strategies (Guest lecturer: Kevin Muhs and Lynn Nelson; online)**

**Apr 13 (Week 11) Globalization**

**Readings:**


Sparke, Matthew and Owain David Williams, “Neoliberal disease: COVID-19, co-pathogenesis and global health insecurities”, EPA: Economy and Space 2022, Vol. 54(1) 15–32

**Discussion for Data Assignment 5:** Do some research to understand how globalization is affecting your metro area. Overall, from the information you have been able to find, is your metro area a “winner” or “loser” in the globalization process? Does your metro area appear to be (or aspire to be) a global city? What evidence do you see of this? Which industries and which population groups in your metro area are particularly affected by globalization?

**UNIT 4: Solutions**

**Apr 20 (Week 12) Integrated Transportation and Land Use Planning**
**Hand out Data Assignment 6: Smart Growth**

**Readings:**


Discussion: Do you observe/experience a strong connection between transportation and land use? How should we adopt integrated transportation and land use planning?

**Apr 27 (Week 13) Housing Policies, Urban Design, and Smart Growth**

**Readings:**


Charter of the Congress of the New Urbanism (summary), Congress of the New Urbanism

Smart Growth Network,

- “Why Smart Growth?”
- “Smart Growth Principles”

Discussion for Data Assignment 6: Present the case study and discuss your assessment of the case.

**May 4 (Week 14) Economic Policies and Regionalism**

**Readings:**


May 11 (Week 15) Course Summary

May 18 Metro Report II DUE