

ETHNIC STUDIES XXX:  
**RACIAL POLITICS AND THE NEOLIBERAL CITY**  
SPRING 20XX MWF 11am – 11:50

**Instructor:** Krys Méndez Ramírez  
**Office Hours:** Wednesday 1 – 3 PM  
Social Sciences Building 103  
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### Course Description

At a historical moment in which most of the world's population now resides in urban areas, there is no question that the 'urban problem' has only grown in economic, cultural, and political significance. As sites for the production and contestation of meaning, value, and identity, neoliberal cities of the twenty-first century have only accelerated the contradictions of racial capitalism: on the one hand, they exemplify new battlespaces for the control of land, power, and resources, while on the other, they continue to situate insurgent lifeworlds, counter-geographies, and transnational solidarities.

In this course, we will be examining the politics of race, gender, class, and human difference in relation to neoliberal urbanism. Through an interdisciplinary engagement of texts in human geography and critical ethnic, gender, and urban studies, this ten-week course will focus on themes such as: social and spatial exclusion; globalization and uneven development; urban marginality and gentrification; urban warfare and security regimes; and contemporary struggles around the 'right to the city' and spatial justice.

**Note:** It must be stressed that this is an ethnic studies course, and accordingly, we will be examining urban issues using a critical racial analysis.

### Statement on Accommodations

As your instructor, I am committed to ensuring you have the tools necessary to succeed in this course. I will try to do everything within my power to actively support a wide range of learning styles and abilities, in accordance with principles of [Universal Design of Instruction](#) (UDI).

If have a **disability, medical condition, or physical or learning needs for which you may require accommodations**, you are responsible for communicating those needs at the beginning of the course, or at the earliest convenient time. Additionally, your ongoing participation and feedback will be instrumental in making this course a more conducive learning environment.

Be aware that, regardless of whether or not you have a *documented* disability or medical condition, you can seek assistance and obtain any required paperwork from the Office for Students with Disabilities (858-534-4382). If you have any questions about this that have not been addressed in class, please feel free to reach me individually, during office hours or via e-mail.

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If you prefer to be called by a **different name** or referred to as a different gender than the one under which you are officially enrolled, please inform me, so that we can adjust accordingly.

Finally, you are all are encouraged to speak with me to discuss your progress in this course, including addressing anything that can be done to maximize your learning potential and participation.

## **Course Assignments & Requirements**

### **Required Readings**

All course readings will be made available as PDFs on TritonEd. If you need adjustments to fully access the readings, please inform me as soon as possible.

### **Grade Distribution**

<b>Attendance &amp; Participation</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Reading Responses</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Midterm</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Final Project - Presentation</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Final Project - Paper</b>	<b>15%</b>

### **Attendance & Participation: 20%**

Consistent attendance and participation are required, and it is expected that students will have thoroughly read the assigned texts corresponding to the dates below. (For grading purposes, and to accommodate different learning and participation styles, participation can include: critical engagement in class conversation; meeting with instructor during office hours; or other forms of participation that showcase an adequate engagement with the relevant materials.)

To allow sufficient time to examine an array of challenging texts, no more than two unexcused absences will be permitted. Each subsequent absence results in a graduated penalty in your final grade.

If you must miss class because of illness or professional obligations you can't re-schedule, you will need to inform me in advance via e-mail.

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**Reading Responses: 20%**

For at least **ten** of the twenty lectures we'll have in this course, you will be expected to write a **1-2 page (12 font, double-spaced) response paper** in which you summarize and reflect on the readings assigned for that day. Response papers for a particular day must be turned in at the beginning of class, and **late papers will not be accepted**.

Moreover, your responses need to engage with the following questions:

- What are some of the central questions each text aims to address? What are the principal objectives, arguments, and discussion points?
- Who are the authors of the assigned texts, and what are their disciplinary backgrounds?
- What are some of the key analytical concepts, frameworks, and theoretical interventions?
- How does the writer disrupt hegemonic or normalized constructions of race and space?
- What kinds of evidence does the author use to support their central claims?
- How convincing are these arguments, how do they measure up to the realities of everyday life?

**Midterm Paper: 30%**

During week 4, I will provide instructions for a midterm paper due two weeks later, by the end of week 6. For the midterm, you will need to submit a **7-page** (doubled-spaced, 12 font) paper that addresses some of the fundamental themes discussed in the first half of the course, where you'll be assessed on your ability to boil down important arguments vis-a-vis race and neoliberal urban life. Your paper grade will be based on your ability to consolidate (relevant) information and compose a persuasive argument using critical conceptual standards used in ethnic studies. While you won't need to conduct original research this time, you'll be asked to draw evidence directly from the first five weeks of readings.

**Final Project**

As part of your final project, you will be asked to work in small groups to conduct original research relevant to a critical study of race, urban geography, and the political economy. The final project will consist of two parts: (A) a *group* presentation, delivered during the last week of the course, and (B) a 5 – 7 page paper each student will need to write and submit *individually*.

**Note:** While the final paper will account for a certain percentage of your final course grade (15% in total), submission is an **absolute requirement** to pass the course. In other words, failure to turn in a final paper will result in failure of the course.

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**(A) Group Presentation: 15%**

Detailed instructions for the group assignment will be provided *after* submission of the mid-term paper by the end of week 6. Before greenlighting the project, groups will be asked to check in with me about initial ideas for a final project. As we analyze different readings from one week to the next, keep in mind some of these broader points and questions you'll be asked to address in the final project:

- Urban research site: Your group will need to choose *one* city (inside or outside the U.S.) on which to conduct research. While the presentation grade will be heavily weighted towards the use of a critical geographical *analysis*, your presentation can nevertheless mention salient features such as the city's geographical context (country, region, etc.) and relevant population demographics. Note: the point is *not* to provide a description you'd commonly find in an encyclopedia entry but to showcase the historical and geographical specificities that converge on neoliberalism.
- Racial analysis: How does race and racism impact local urban dynamics? Through what mechanisms and logics are racialized geographies re-created and reinforced?
- Political economy: What are some of the neoliberal policies and governance structures shaping your city today? When, why, and how were these policies enacted, and by whom? How has the migration of capital and people reshaped local urban processes? Be sure to include information about resource inequalities and differentiated access within the urban environment.
- Historical context: Under racial capitalism and global neoliberalism, all cities bear some relationship to legacies of slavery, colonialism, imperialism, and militarism. Your presentation will be to showcase the continuities between, on the one hand, these urban histories that have been minimized, invisibilized, or erased altogether, and present-day neoliberal dispossession.
- Concepts & Frameworks: What are some useful concepts and theoretical frameworks studied in this course that would help us understand the racial and neoliberal spatial politics of your city? As always, please justify your argument with specific sources.

**(B) Final Paper: 15%**

To pass the course, every student will need to submit a **5 – 7 page final paper** (double spaced, size 12 font) that will complement the group presentation and that synthesizes relevant reading materials. Although it's expected that students who've worked together in the same group will come to similar conclusions and analyses in the research paper, this is emphatically *not* a group paper as the grading objectives are distinct. As the instructor, I'll be looking at how you clearly and succinctly synthesize and articulate information gathered in weeks of group work, as well as how you connect and cite research findings with course readings. Ideally, the individual final paper will have a more specialized focus than the group presentation project, while still addressing the intersections of race, urbanism, and neoliberalism.

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**Unit 1: Race, Place, & Power:  
Critical Human Geography and Spatial Exclusion**

**Week 1: Situating Space, Place & Race**

**1a) The Production of Racialized Geographies**

Lipsitz, George. *How Racism Takes Place*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011.

- “Introduction: Race, Place, and Power,” pp. 1 -21 (20 pp)

Razack, Sherene. 2002. *Race, Space, and the Law: Unmapping a White Settler Society*.

- “Introduction: When Place Becomes Race,” pp. 1-20. (19 pp)

Massey, Doreen. 2005. *For Space*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

- “Opening Propositions” pp. 1 -15 (14 pp)

*Recommended: Thomas Gieryn. 2000. “A Space for Place in Sociology”*

**1b) Capitalist Crises and Urban Development**

Engels, Friedrich. [1845] “[The Great Towns](#).” Ch 2 of *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*. (~ 7pp)

Harvey, David. *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*.

- Chapter 2: “The Urban Roots of Capitalist Crises,” pp. 27 – 66 (39 pp)

Duggan, Lisa. 2014. “Neoliberalism” in Burgett, Bruce and Glenn Hendler. 2014. *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. New York, NY: NYU Press. (3 pp)

**Week 2: Racial Segregation**

**2a) Uneven Development: Race, Space, Power, and Difference**

Soja, Edward. 2010. *Seeking Spatial Justice*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

- Chapter 2: “On The Production of Unjust Geographies,” pp. 31 – 66 (35 pp)

Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. “Fatal Couplings of Power and Difference: Notes on Racism and Geography,” *The Professional Geographer*, 54 (1) 2002: 15–24. (9 pp)

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Florida, Adrian. 2011. "How Segregation Defined San Diego's Neighborhoods." *Voice of San Diego*. <http://www.voiceofsandiego.org/census-2010/how-segregation-defined-san-diegos-neighborhoods/>.

**2b) Historical Overview: Race, Space, and Urban Policy**

Razack, Sherene. 2002. *Race, Space, and the Law: Unmapping a White Settler Society*. Ontario: Between the Lines Press.

- "Colonization and Indigenous Resistance in Eastern Canada," pp. 21 - 46. (25pp)
- "Creating, Regulating, and Remembering the Urban Slum," pp. 211 – 232. (21pp)

Rothstein, Richard. 2018. *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*. New York, NY: Liveright Publishing Corporation.

- Preface (9 pp)
- Chapter 3: "Racial Zoning" (13 pp)

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. 2014. "The Case for Reparations." *The Atlantic*.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>

**Week 3: Environmental Racism**

**3a) Los Angeles: Racial Discrimination and Environmental Inequality**

Morello-Frosch, Rachel A. 2002. "Discrimination and the political economy of environmental inequality." *Environment and Planning C: Government. Policy*. Volume 20, pp. 477-496. (19 pp.)

Pulido, Laura. "Rethinking Environmental Racism: White Privilege and Urban Development in Southern California." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 90, no. 1 (2000): 12 – 40 (28pp.)

**3b) New York: Stigma, Blight, and Environmental Justice**

Sze, Julie. 2007. *Noxious New York: The Racial Politics of Urban Health and Environmental Justice*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

- "Introduction: Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger," pp. 1- 26 (25 pp)
- Chapter 3: "New York City Environmental Justice Campaigns: Stigma, Blight, and the Politics of Race and Pollution." pp. 49 -90. (51 pp)

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**Unit 2: Transnationalism & Global Cities**

**Week 4: Globalization, Urbanization, and Transnationalism**

**4a) Global Cities**

Sassen, Saskia. 2005. "The Global City: Introducing a Concept." *Brown Journal of World Affairs*. Vol 11, Issue 2. pp. 27 – 43. (16 pp)

Mbembe, Achille and Sarah Nuttall. *Johannesburg: The Elusive Metropolis*, Mbembe and Nuttall eds. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2008.

- "Introduction: Afropolis" pp 1 – 33 (32 pp)

**4b) Planetary Urbanization**

Smith, Neil. 2007. *Planet of Slums*. New York, NY: Verso.

- Chapter 1: "The Urban Climacteric," pp. 1 – 19 (18 pp)

Brenner, Neil and Christian Schmit. 2014. "The 'Urban Age' In Question." in *Implosions/Explosions: Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization*. 2014. Brenner, Neil. Ed. Berlin: jovis Verlag GmbH. pp. 313 – 337. (24 pp)

**Week 5: Transnational Urban Spaces**

**5a) Chicago: Immigration and Border Production in Urban Space**

De Genova, Nicholas. 2005. *Working the boundaries: Race, Space, and "Illegality" in Mexican Chicago*.

- Introduction: "Working the Boundaries," p. 1 – 12 (11 pp)
- Chapter 3: "Locating a Mexican Chicago in the Space of the US Nation-State" pp. 95-143 (48 pp)

**5b) New York: The Reinvented City**

Vitale, Alex. 2008. *City of Disorder: How the Quality of Life Campaign Transformed New York Politics*. New York, NY: NYU Press.

- Chapter 5: "Globalization & the Urban Crisis," pp. 93 – 114 (21 pp)

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Manalansan, Martin. "Race, Violence, and Neoliberal Spatial Politics in the Global City" in *Social Text*. Fall-Winter 2005. Vol. 23, Nos. 3-4. 141 – 155 (14 pp)

Dávila, Arlene. 2004. *Barrio Dreams: Puerto Ricans, Latinos, and the Neoliberal City*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

- Introduction: "Barrio Business, Barrio Dreams" pp. 1 – 26 (25 pp)

**Unit 3: Neoliberal Strategies of Urban Control:  
Crime, Containment, Gentrification**

**Week 6: Space, Crime, and Urban 'Disorder'**

**6a) Urban Crime and Policing**

Herbert, Steve & Elizabeth Brown. 2006. "Conceptions of Space and Crime in the Punitive Neoliberal City." *Antipode*. pp. 755 – 777. (22 pp)

Vitale, Alex. 2008. *City of Disorder: How the Quality of Life Campaign Transformed New York Politics*.

- Introduction, pp. 1 – 14 (13 pp)
- Chapter 2: "Defining the Quality-of-Life Paradigm," 29 – 53 (24 pp)

**6b) Urban Violence and Citizen Responses**

Manalansan, Martin. "Race, Violence, and Neoliberal Spatial Politics in the Global City" in *Social Text*. Fall-Winter 2005. Vol. 23, Nos. 3-4. 141 – 155 (14 pp)

Lippert, Randy K and Kevin Walby. Eds. 2013. *Policing Cities: Urban Securitization and Regulation in a Twenty-First Century World*. New York and London: Routledge.

- Introduction: "How The World's Cities Are Policed, Regulated, and Securitized," pp. 1 – 7 (6 pp)
- Chapter 15: "Urban Securitization in Mexico City: A New Public Order?" pp. 231 – 245 (14 pp)

**Week 7: Cities, War, and Terror**

**7a) Disaster Capitalism and Military Urbanism**

Graham, Stephen. 2004. *Cities, War, and Terrorism: Towards an Urban Geopolitics*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

- "Introduction" pp. 1 -25. (21 pp]

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Klein, Naomi. 2007. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. New York, NY: Picador.

- Chapter 20: “Disaster Apartheid: A World of Green Zones and Red Zones,” pp. 513 – 534 (21 pp)

### **7a) The Fortified City**

Wacquant, Loïc. 2008. “The Militarization of Urban Marginality: Lessons from the Brazilian Metropolis.” *International Political Sociology*. Vol 2: 56-74. (18 pp)

Caldeira, Teresa. 2000. *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

- Chapter 7: “Fortified Enclaves: Building Up Walls and Creating a New Private Order,” pp. 256 – 291 (35 pp)

## **Unit 4: Urban Futures & Disruptions**

### **Week 8: Reclaiming the City**

#### **8a) The Right to the City**

Harvey, David. *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*. New York, NY: Verso.

- Preface: “Henri Lefebvre’s Vision,” pp. ix – xviii (9 pp)
- Chapter 1: “The Right to the City,” pp. 3 -25 (22 pp)
- Chapter 5: “Reclaiming the City for Anti-Capitalist Struggle,” pp. 115 – 154 (39 pp)

#### **8b) Seeking Spatial Justice**

Soja, Edward. 2010. *Seeking Spatial Justice*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

- Chapter 4: “Seeking Spatial Justice in Los Angeles,” pp. 111 – 155 (44 pp)

### **Week 9: Revolutionary Movements in Urban Southern California**

#### **9a) Los Angeles: Formation of the Third World Left**

Pulido, Laura. 2006. *Black, Brown, Yellow & Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

- Chapter 4: “Serving the People and Vanguard Politics: The Formation of the Third World Left in Los Angeles.” pp. 89 – 122 (33 pp)

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- Chapter 8: “The Third World Left Today and Contemporary Activism,” pp. 215 – 238 (23 pp)

**9b) San Diego: Rebellion and Repression**

Davis, Mike, Kelly Mayhew & Jim Miller. 2005. *Under the Perfect Sun: The San Diego Tourists Never*. New York, NY: New Press.

- Miller, Jim. “Just Another Day in Paradise? An Episodic History of Rebellion and Repression in America’s Finest City.” pp. 159 - 262. (63 pp)

**Week 10: Final Project Presentations**

Further Instructions for Final Projects will be provided.

**Majoring or Minor in Ethnic Studies at UC San Diego**

Many students take an Ethnic Studies course because the topic is of great interest or because of a need to fulfill a social science, non-contiguous, or other college requirement. Often students have taken three or four classes out of ‘interest’ yet have no information about the major or minor and don’t realize how close they are to a major, a minor, or even a double major. An Ethnic Studies major is excellent preparation for a career in law, public policy, government and politics, journalism, education, public health, social work, international relations, and many other careers. If you would like information about the Ethnic Studies major or minor at UCSD, please contact our Ethnic Studies Undergraduate Advisor.

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