

**SII 199Y**  
**METROMARXISM:CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON URBAN STUDIES**  
**Winter 2016**  
**Wednesday 10-12 am**

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**Email Policy:** Emails will be answered in 48 hours during the weekdays. Emails received in the weekends will be answered at the beginning of the coming week.

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***COURSE DESCRIPTION***

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Cities highlight the best and worst aspects of modern life and they reveal the starkest contradictions of our time. Cities, for example, produce the majority of the world's wealth and are engines of the global economy yet they also give rise to extreme forms of poverty and inequality. They are hubs of creativity, innovation, and ingenuity as well as social disorder, dysfunction, and environmental degradation. Cities foster transnational connections, diverse communities, and rich public lives but they also breed alienation, exclusion, and antagonism. They promise liberty, progress, and prosperity for all at the same time that they institutionalize systems of control, authoritarianism and violence. How do we make sense of this complex and ambivalent picture?

The course looks to the writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels and to the materialist method of analysis they pioneered in order to understand these contradictions as inherent aspects of urban life under capitalism. In the first half of the course, you used the writings of Marx and Engels (as well as thinkers such Henri Lefebvre, Guy Debord, Manuel Castells and David Harvey) in order to develop a conceptual framework for thinking about capitalist social and spatial relations. You then used this framework to trace the origin, growth, and development of the contemporary city and to clarify the relationships between urban economic functions, spatial structures, political configurations and socio-cultural "ways of life". In the second half of the course, we delve more deeply into the workings of the 21<sup>st</sup> century cities through a series of critical interventions. Each session will consider a different aspect of urban studies (colonialism, neoliberalism, nature, gender, creativity, militarization, and struggle) as an important window onto the city. These various perspectives will be explored drawing on empirical examples from around the world. Overall, the course considers the city as a crucial setting of social change as well as a key site of social theorizing. Throughout the class, we will consider the extent to which Marxism can help us to understand the forces that shape urban environments, provide us with critical tools to address urban problems, and enable us to build an alternative, more socially just forms of life.

## ***OBJECTIVES:***

The objectives for student learning in this course can be roughly categorized into two main categories: knowledge and skills. At the end of the year, you should:

- Be familiar with some fundamental concepts in Marxist urban studies including capital, class, value, commodities, dialectics, uneven development, everyday life and the Right to the City.
- Have a through understanding of some of the main theoretical debates in Marxist urban studies and be familiar with empirical examples that manifest these debates.
- Have a better understanding of your own embeddedness within urban relations and your capacities for individual and collective action.
- Be able to critically read texts and analyze complex arguments about the social world.
- Be able to formulate compelling arguments and structure evidence in a logical fashion.
- Be able to effectively communicate ideas both verbally and in writing.

## ***REQUIREMENTS***

### ***Participation (10%)***

Attendance and participation is required. The class places significant emphasis upon the discussion of readings and debate. You should show evidence of reading and careful consideration of readings in your class participation. Before arriving at the classes you should prepare “reaction papers” (500 words, except the first and last week of classes) for at least 5 classes you choose. During the classes, I will randomly select students to introduce the set readings and initiate debate using their prepared questions.

Reaction papers along with attendance will comprise your participation mark. Each reaction paper will count as 2% of your participation mark. The reaction papers will count as participation mark only if the student attends the class and they will be collected at the end of each class.

The reaction papers should include:

- **The author and the title** of the pieces you are reacting to.
- **The topic or subject of the piece:** Tell what the piece is about in one or two sentences.
- **The author’s purpose or motive for writing the piece:** Tell whom the author writing this piece for, the authors s/he is engaging in the article.
- **The author’s thesis statement.**

- **The author's primary supporting ideas.**
- **The strengths and weaknesses of the piece:** Tell what the author does well or what s/he doesn't do so well.
- **Your personal reaction:** Tell how the article speaks to your personal experience.

***Student Presentations 5% (April 6<sup>th</sup>)***

At the end of the course you will make a presentation of your research projects. Details of the presentation will be discussed in the class and will be announced through blackboard.

***Research Paper Proposal 5% (Deadline: Feb 10<sup>th</sup>)***

Write a proposal for the paper that includes an introductory paragraph with your thesis statement, an outline of your argument and a bibliography. Five of these sources must be annotated.

***Research Paper 30% (Deadline Apr 6<sup>th</sup>)***

You have two options for the final research paper (3500-5000 words, Times New Roman, font size: 12, double-spaced):

- Choose a city you lived or you have been to and pick a theme (colonialism, neoliberalism, nature, gender, creativity, militarization, and struggle) from the course syllabus. You will need to come up with a research question that addresses one of these issues in this city. You can use media sources, personal observation, maps, city plans, policy documents, and visual materials as your data sources. You will also need to engage with the academic literature on this topic more deeply. You will be asked to cover 10 academic sources (5 of them can be from the course syllabus.)
- Choose two cities you lived or you have been to and compare and contrast them based on the theme (colonialism, neoliberalism, nature, gender, creativity, militarization, and struggle) you choose from the course syllabus. You will need to come up with a research question that addresses one of these issues in this city. You can use media sources, personal observation, maps, city plans, policy documents, and visual materials as your data sources. You will also need to engage with the academic literature on this topic more deeply. You will be asked to cover 10 academic sources (5 of them can be from the course syllabus.)

## **ACADEMIC POLICY**

### ***Academic Integrity***

Academic integrity is fundamental to learning achieving and achieving course goals. The assignments in this course are designed to give you an opportunity to learn important skills and concepts over the course of your degree by making honest attempts through your own thinking, writing and hard work. I am strongly committed to assigning grades based on my students' honest efforts to demonstrate learning in this course. Academic dishonesty in any form will thus not be tolerated.

Acts of academic dishonesty include:

- Copying material word-for-word and not acknowledging the source by placing the text within quotation marks, even with a citation
- Submitting work produced by someone else as though it was your own (a friend's paper, work purchased from a custom essay site)
- Submitting the same work, in part or in whole, for multiple courses.
- "Editing" that results in a paper which is no longer entirely your own work.

For a complete list of offences, see section B of the Code of Behavior on Academic Matters (<http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/The-rules/code/the-code-of-behaviour-on-academic-matters>).

### ***Use of Mobile Devices During Class***

As research on learning shows, unexpected noises and movement automatically divert and capture people's attention, which means you are affecting everyone's learning experience if your cell phone, pager, laptop, etc. makes noise or is visually distracting during class. For this reason, I ask you to turn off your mobile devices and close your laptops during class.

### ***Important Dates and Deadlines***

All deadlines are firm. Late submissions of any assignment will be penalized 5% for each 24 hours after the deadline. If you have extenuating circumstances that are affecting your ability to meet deadlines, please speak with me in office hours as soon as you can.

## **ACCESSIBILITY**

I am invested in forming an accessible learning process and want to make sure that every student feels welcomed in the classroom. Please make sure that you visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility> in case you have accessibility concerns.

## **WRITING**

The most important part of writing is knowing the techniques and being able to apply them in your writing processes. There are many helpful resources and tools to aid you in academic writing. I strongly believe that that you familiarize yourself with the workshops, tutoring services and advice guides provided at Please check <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca> to learn about the workshops, tutoring services and advice guides they provide and also check <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell>. to get informed about the English Language Learning program (ELL) is available at

## **LIBRARIES**

The UofT library system is an extraordinary resource for accessing information, conducting research and enhancing your learning. I especially encourage students to consult with librarians for assistance on their research projects: <https://onesearch.library.utoronto.ca/robarts-reference-and-research-services>. For the information on citation you can visit: <http://guides.library.utoronto.ca/citing>

## **READINGS**

### **January 13**

Introduction.  
Movie Ecumenopolis.

### ***Critical Urban Theory***

### **January 20**

Neil Brenner (2009) "What is critical urban theory?" *City* 13 (2-3): 198-207  
Peter Marcuse (2009) "From critical urban theory to the right to the city." *City* 13 (2-3): 185-197.  
Kanishka Goonedwardena (2009) "Urban Studies, Critical Theory, Radical Politics. Eight theses for Peter Marcuse." *City* 13 (2-3): 208-218.

### ***The (Post) colonial City***

### **January 27**

Ananya Roy (2009) "The 21st century metropolis: New Geographies of Theory." *Regional Studies* 43 (6): 819-830.

Brenda S. A. Yeoh (2001) "Postcolonial Cities." *Progress in Human Geography* 25 (3): 456-468.

Nausheen H. Anwar (2014) "The Postcolonial City in South Asia". *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 35: 22-38.

### ***The Neoliberal City***

#### **February 3**

Doreen Massey (2013) "Vocabularies of the Economy." *Soundings: A Journal of Politics and Culture* 54: 9-22.

Neil Smith (2002) "New Globalism, New Urbanism: Gentrification as Global Urban Strategy." *Antipode* 34 (3): 427-450.

Sayoni Bose (2015) "Universities and the Redevelopment Politics of the Neoliberal City." *Urban Studies* 52 (14): 2616-2632.

#### **February 10**

Louis Moreno (2014) "The Urban Process Under Financialized Capitalism" *City* 18 (3): 244-268.

David Harvey (1989) "From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism," *Geografiska Annaler, Series B, Human Geography* 71 (1): 3-17.

***Research Project Proposal to be turned in at the start of class.***

#### **February 17: Reading Week: No Classes**

### ***The Natural City***

#### **February 24**

Erik Swyngedouw and Nikolas Heynen (2003) "Urban Political Ecology, Justice and the Politics of Scale," *Antipode* 35(5): 898-918.

Stefan Kipfer, Franz Hartmann and Sara Marino (1996) "Cities, Nature and Socialism: Towards an Urban Agenda for Action and Research." *CNS* 7 (2): 5-19.

Nate Gabriel. (2011) "The work that parks do: Towards an Urban Environmentality," *Social & Cultural Geography* 12(2): 123-141.

## ***The Gendered City***

### **March 2**

Ruth Fincher (1990) "Women in the city: Feminist analyses of urban geography." *Australian Geographical Studies* 28 (1): 29-37.

Melissa W. Wright (2014) "Gentrification, assassination and forgetting in Mexico: A feminist Marxist tale." *Gender, Place and Culture* 21(1): 1-16.

J. Miguel Kanai (2014) "Whither queer world cities? Homo-entrepreneurialism and beyond". *Geoforum* 56: 1-5.

## ***The Creative City***

### **March 9**

Jamie Peck (2005) "Struggling with the creative class," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29 (4): 740 - 770

Heather McLean (2014) "Digging into the creative city: A feminist critique. *Antipode* 46 (3): 669-690.

Deborah Leslie and John Paul Catungal (2012) "Social Justice and the Creative City: Class, Gender and Racial Inequalities." *Geography Compass* 6 (3): 111-122.

## ***The Militarized City***

### **March 16**

Loïc Wacquant. 2008. "The militarization of urban marginality: Lessons from the brazilian metropolis." *International Political Sociology* 1-2: 56-74.

Stephen Graham (2009) "Cities as battlespace: The new military urbanism." *City* 13(4): 383-402.

Nir Gazit and Robert Latham (2014) "Spatial alternatives and counter-sovereignties in Israel/Palestine." *International Political Sociology* 8: 63-81.

## ***The Global City***

### **March 23**

Saskia Sassen (1996) "Cities and communities in the global economy: Rethinking our concepts." *American Behavioral Scientist* 39(5): 629-639.

Jennifer Robinson (2002) "Global and world cities: A view from off the map." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 26 (3): 531-54.

Neil Brenner (1998) "Global cities, 'glocal states': Global-city formation and state territorial restructuring in contemporary Europe." *Review of International Political Economy* 5 (1): 1-37.

## ***The Rebel City***

### **March 30**

Asef Bayat (2000) "From dangerous classes to quiet rebels: Politics of the urban subaltern in the global south." *International Sociology* 15(3): 533-557.

Saskia Sassen (2011) "The global street: Making the political," *Globalizations* 8 (5): 573-579.

Ozan Kahraman (2014) "Resisting urban renewal in Istanbul." *Urban Geography* 35 (2): 290-310.

### **April 6**

Student Presentations of Final Papers.