URBDP 561/ PUBPOL 561: Urban Economics and Public Policy  
SPRING 2021

Lecture: Tuesday | 6:00 - 8:50 pm | Online via Zoom  
Instructor: Qing Shen, Professor | gs@uw.edu

Course Description

This course introduces students to the fundamentals of urban economics and offers students an opportunity to explore current urban planning and policy issues by applying the concepts and tools of urban economics. The first half of the course consists of theoretical and empirical examinations of: (1) the location decisions of firms and households and how these decisions cause the development of cities, (2) land rent and the spatial distribution of economic activities and population groups within cities, and (3) the spatial aspects of urban poverty. These topics are essential for understanding the role of market forces in the formation and evolution of cities. They also provide an intellectual basis for defining the role of planning and policy in shaping the urban future. The second half of the course explores economic approaches to selected urban planning and policy problems. It addresses issues related to urban transportation, smart growth, and future cities. In addition, it explores emerging challenges and opportunities for urban planning and policy.

Requirements and Grading

Students will be required to complete two problem sets, a mid-term exam, and a term paper. Final grades will be weighted as follows:

- Problem Sets: 25%
- Mid-term Exam: 30%
- Term Paper: 35%
- Class Participation: 10%

Assignments and term paper must be submitted by their due dates (Digital copy only, submitted to Canvas).

Mid-term exam will be during the regular class time.

Prerequisite

Successful completion of an introductory microeconomics course, or permission of the instructor.

Required Text


https://www.mheducation.com/highered/product/urban-economics-o-sullivan/M9780078021787.html
A large portion of the required readings for the course will be from this textbook. Copies of this book are available for purchase or rental online.

### Course Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Assignment (due in class)</th>
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| T, 3/30 | **Introduction**  
• Course Overview  
• Concepts of City, Urban Area, and Metropolitan Area  
• Why Do Cities Exist? |                            |
| T, 4/6  | **Firm Location Decisions**  
• Where Do Cities Develop?  
• Why Do Firms Cluster?    | Assignment #1 distributed  |
| T, 4/13 | **Urban Growth**  
• The System of Cities  
• Urban Economic Growth  |                            |
| T, 4/20 | **Land Rent and Urban Land Use**  
• Land Rent and Land Use  
• Land Use in the Monocentric City | Assignment #1 due  
Assignment #2 distributed |
| T, 4/27 | **Spatial Aspects of Urban Poverty**  
• Neighborhood Choice, Sorting, and Segregation  
• Suburbanization and Industrial Transformation  
• Spatial Mismatch? | Term paper assigned |
| T, 5/4  | **Urban Transportation**  
• Autos  
• Public Transit | Assignment #2 due |
| T, 5/11 | **Mid-term Exam** (during class) | Please do not miss it! |
| T, 5/18 | **Integrating Transportation and Land Use**  
• Land Use-Transportation Connection  
• Restructuring Urban Space through Planning and Policy | Abstract of term paper due |
| T, 5/25 | **Debriefing on Term Papers**  
• Every student briefly talks about her/his term paper  
• 3 minutes each | 1-3 pages of PPT slides due by noon  
Brief presentation of term paper ideas |
| T, 6/1  | **Shaping Urban Future**  
• Forces that will reshape cities |                            |
Implications for urban planning and policy

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T, 6/8</td>
<td><strong>No Class</strong> – Final Examination Week</td>
<td>Work on term paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Th, 6/10</td>
<td><strong>End of Class</strong></td>
<td>Term paper due by 5PM</td>
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Readings

Readings that are journal articles can be located through the University’s E-journals. Other required readings will be available in the course pages on Canvas. Supplementary readings may be provided later in the spring quarter.

(Note: Readings marked by ** are required.)

**Introduction**

** O'Sullivan, chapters 1-4

** O’Sullivan, 8th edition, appendix (for students who need to review microeconomics)


http://www.economist.com/node/9070726/

Glaeser, E. and W. Kerr. 2008 Industrial Agglomeration and Entrepreneurship. VoxEU

https://voxeu.org/article/industrial-agglomeration-and-entrepreneurship


**Firm Location Decisions**

** O’Sullivan, chapters 5-6


** Urban Growth **

O’Sullivan, chapters 7-8


** Land Rent and Urban Land Use **

O’Sullivan, chapters 10-12


** Spatial Aspects of Urban Poverty

** O’Sullivan, chapters 13 & 15


** Urban Transportation

** O’Sullivan, chapters 18-19


https://www.psrc.org/our-work/rtp


**Mid-term Exam**
Review previous readings to prepare for the exam

**Integrating Transportation and Land Use**


Shaping Urban Futures


https://escholarship.org/content/qt82w2z91j/qt82w2z91j.pdf


https://www.nature.com/articles/s41893-020-00678-z


https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X15613591


https://doi.org/10.1111/jors.12445


Academic Integrity

Students are expected to practice high standards of academic and professional honesty and integrity as required by the Student Conduct Code of the University of Washington. Visit

**Student Safety**

Students should follow University of Washington guidelines to ensure safety on campus. For more information, go to http://www.washington.edu/safecampus