

GPHY 227 – Cities: Geography, Planning and Urban Life (Distance)

Course Instructor	Dr. Dan Cohen	Email: dan.cohen@queensu.ca
Office	Mackintosh-Corry Hall, Room E302	
Contact Time	Three live sessions during the term. Weekly office hours via Zoom.	
Format	Online course. Pre-recorded lectures and online activities based on key texts, case studies, and active learning assignments.	
Class Assessment	Introductory Post	1%
	Weekly Check-Ins	14%
	Discussion Activities	20%
	Understanding an Urban Problem	20%
	Understanding an Urban Policy Solution	20%
	Final Exam (Take Home)	25%

COURSE OVERVIEW

The course is an introduction to the city from a social science and humanities perspective, with particular insights on how urban geographers have approached the city. Most people around the world now live and work in cities and this course serves as an introductory class for how to understand the city and its place in the modern, globalizing world. GPHY227 gives students the opportunity to learn about the city in the abstract and apply concepts to specific case studies on topics such as gentrification, the digital city, urban sustainability, and city branding. The course focuses mostly on North American cities but draws on examples from around the world.

The course is a required course for students in human geography and a foundation course for students pursuing a degree in urban planning and urban studies. The course is also designed as an elective course for students from a variety of backgrounds and programs, including General Arts and Science, Commerce and Engineering.

The unique feature of this course lies in its inter-disciplinary approach to understanding the city.

The course material comes from a variety of book chapters, articles and webcasts. The textbook is Jonas et al. (2015) *Urban Geography: A critical introduction* (Wiley).

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Articulate the rationale for several approaches to urban geography and how it is possible to gain urban insights from each.
- Define the concepts of space, place, scale, urbanization, urbanism and planning and understand how they help us study cities from a geographical perspective.
- Describe current urbanization trends and projects for countries around the world, with a particular knowledge of the post WWII and contemporary Canadian urban context.
- Compare various approaches to land use, housing, and transportation issues.
- Demonstrate the integral role that space plays in shaping how urban residents express their social and cultural values.
- Analyze how cities are governed and how they could be more sustainable in the future.
- Demonstrate active listening skills to consider peers' perspectives and to articulate effective communication with peers.

COURSE TOPICS

The course is an introduction to urban geography. It covers key concepts like urbanization, urbanism, planning, space, place, and scale. It draws on examples from North America and around the world. Themes covered include the process of urbanization, theories and approaches of urban geography; race and colonialism; urban economies; the built environment; inequality; social identity and urban space; urban nature; the digital city; urban politics; and urban futures.

COURSE TEXTS (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Jonas, A. E.G., E. McCann and M. Thomas (2015) *Urban Geography: a critical introduction*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell.