Urban and Environmental Policy 101: Society and Environment
Spring 2020

Tuesday and Thursday, 10:05-11:30am
Mosher Hall 3

Professor Madeline Wander
wanderm@oxy.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday, 12:00 – 1:30pm in UEPI 103 or by appointment (including phone)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to issues at the intersection of urban and environment. It is for those interested in learning more about these concepts and the path forward toward creating more just and equitable environments and cities. This course introduces students to the political, economic, and social aspects of the environment with a focus on the role of government, policy, and social change. This course explores the relationships between race, poverty, and inequity in the environment and introduces ways in which issues of race, class, gender, and workers’ rights interact with the natural and built environments.

The course is designed for students considering a UEP major and provides foundational concepts to be explored in more depth through other UEP courses. The course is also intended for non-UEP majors who are interested in these topics and examining the urban and environmental linkages to other disciplines. The course is an opportunity for students to interact with others interested in asking and answering complex questions about our cities, the natural world, and our global context and exploring solutions for critical urban and environmental challenges.

COURSE GOALS

The goals of this course relate to the examination of the idea of “environment” and how it relates to the urban context. Through readings, films, class exercises, assignments, exams, and discussions, students will:

- Gain insights and develop critical thinking about urban and environmental issues as well as understand the role of policy, organizing, and social movements in addressing problems and developing and implementing solutions.

- Develop analytic skills to make connections between the economic, political, social, and spatial aspects of cities and the environment, particularly related to health, jobs, community and economic development, housing, transportation, waste, food, and neighborhood and regional planning processes.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- **Participation (25%)**: You are expected to do all of the course readings by the date they are assigned and keep up to date. This is a reading intensive seminar where class discussions are key. As such attendance and preparation is required. You may only miss class *once* without prior approval. And you may miss *once* with approval. Any additional absences will result in an automatic decrease by one grade (a B will become a B-, for example).

Your participation in class will also be evaluated based on your ability to contribute productively to the class discussions and class exercises. Be mindful of your own contribution but also the overall classroom dynamic. Recognize when to “raise up” your own voice but also when to help “raise up” the voices of others by creating space and listening; this is critical so all class members can participate meaningfully. Focus on quality over quantity when participating in class.

- **Neighborhood Observation Reflection Papers (15%)**: There are two paper assignments based on the two observation exercises in Highland Park / Eagle Rock. Paper prompts will be passed out in class. Paper #1 is due *in class Tuesday, February 18*. Paper #2 is due *in class Thursday, April 16*.

- **Midterm Exam (20%)**: You will have a take home mid-term exam to cover materials covered through Thursday, March 5. The prompt will be passed out and discussed in class on Tuesday, March 17 and the midterm must be posted on Moodle by 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 24.

- **Reflection Paper (10%)**: You are to attend an event, talk, exhibit, meeting, or similar activity on or off campus that focuses on topics we cover in the course. A list of possible events will be posted to Moodle. Within a week of participating in the activity, you will write a 3-5 page Reflection Paper based on how the activity relates to the materials and discussions we have covered in class to date. Reflection papers are to be written as a formal piece of writing with a clear focus and integration of specific examples of class readings, discussions, speakers, and exercises. Post your papers to Moodle and turn in your hard copy (during class or to the UEP department). **Papers are due within one week of the event; this can be anytime during the semester but the latest by 5:00pm on Thursday, April 23.** A prompt is posted to Moodle.

- **Final Paper (30%)**: Final papers are **due during Finals week, date TBD**. You must submit a hard copy to the UEP department, as well as upload to Moodle. Papers should be between 8-10 pages. A paper prompt will be passed out and discussed in class.
### SUMMARY OF COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND DUE DATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Observation Reflection Paper #1: Highland Park/Eagle Rock Observation Exercise</td>
<td>Tuesday, February 18: Turn in hard copy in class; post to Moodle before class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take-home Midterm: covers material up to March 5</td>
<td>Tuesday, March 24 by 5:00 pm: Drop off hard copy at UEPI; post to Moodle.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Observation Reflection Paper #2: Highland Park/Eagle Rock Observation Exercise</td>
<td>Thursday, April 16: Turn in hard copy in class; post to Moodle before class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflection Paper: Campus/Off-campus talk/activity</td>
<td>Anytime during the semester but by Thursday, April 23 by 5:00pm: post to Moodle.</td>
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<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>Finals week, date/time TBD: Drop off hard copy at UEPI; post to Moodle.</td>
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### COURSE GRADING RUBRIC

The goal of the class is for you to become thoughtful, curious, and critical thinkers about the urban environment. The perspectives and skills you gain in the class in the long term matter more than any grade you receive. Grades however, are important indicators of your grasp of the course material. The following is a rubric for understanding what it takes to do well in the class.

**Grade: A:** Sophisticated and thoughtful reflections on course material; excellent depth of critical analysis; accurate and creative interpretation of course readings; well-constructed arguments; cogent, clear, and persuasive speaking and writing.

Participation: Student participates frequently; demonstrates thorough preparation and a firm grounding in the course material; demonstrates an ability to analyze readings and to clearly articulate their analysis, an ability to understand the subtle logic of a range of positions, and an ability to synthesize course material throughout the semester. Student goes well beyond the requirements of the course.
**Grade B:** Good to Very Good reflection, analysis, and engagement with course ideas; accurate and creative interpretation of course readings; well-constructed arguments; solid speaking and writing skills.

Participation: Student participates regularly; demonstrates a good deal of preparation and a good handle on the course material; frequently offers interesting insights and intriguing interpretations of our sources; demonstrates an ability to connect readings/ideas throughout the semester. Student meets requirements of the course competently.

**Grade C:** Satisfactory; student can summarize course material and has made fair attempts at analysis; analysis and critique may require further development or coherence, thinking may still be a bit un-nuanced, and/or ideas may be difficult to understand due to issues of speaking and writing.

Participation: Student participates regularly; demonstrates a good deal of preparation and a good handle on the course material; student can adequately summarize readings, but might not offer well-formed analysis and critique; every so often offers interesting insights.

**Grade D:** Unsatisfactory; student reads course material but does not understand it at a satisfactory level; student completes course assignments but they do not evidence adequate understanding, analysis, or preparation. Student often misses assignments and class discussions.

Participation: Student participates occasionally, though student demonstrates inadequate preparation, makes comments that are not based in readings, and/or offers ideas with scant support. Student makes some effort to meet minimum requirements.

**Grade F:** Student fails to meet the minimum requirements of the course.

Participation: Little to no participation.
## COURSE SCHEDULE, TOPICS, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Tuesday, January 21</th>
<th>Introduction to the Course and Each Other</th>
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<td><strong>Thursday, January 23</strong></td>
<td><strong>Environmental Overview and Context</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Tuesday, January 28</strong></td>
<td><strong>Environmental Understandings</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Thursday, January 30</strong></td>
<td><strong>Urban Framing</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Tuesday, February 4</strong></td>
<td><strong>Urbanization and Growth</strong></td>
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**Urban and Environmental Policy 101 Syllabus: Wander**

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<tr>
<th>Thursday, February 6</th>
<th>Reading the Urban and Environmental Landscape</th>
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<th>Tuesday, February 11</th>
<th>The Oxy Environment: Highland Park and Eagle Rock</th>
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<tr>
<td>Walking observation exercise #1: MEET IN CLASS FIRST, then refer to the prompt for the exercise and the associated Observation Reflection Paper #1 (due Tuesday, February 18).</td>
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<th>Thursday, February 13</th>
<th>Inequality and the Environment</th>
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<th>Tuesday, February 18</th>
<th>Race and the Environment</th>
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<td><strong>Reflection Paper #1: Highland Park/Eagle Rock Observation DUE</strong></td>
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<th>Thursday, February 20</th>
<th>Gender and the Environment</th>
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**Tuesday, February 25  
Workers and the Environment**

Guest Speaker: Jihan Gearon (sponsored by the Core Program and the Antoinette and Vince M. Dungan Lectureship on Energy and the Environment)


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**Thursday, February 27  
Housing and Where We Live**


- Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University. 2019. “The State of the Nation’s Housing 2019.” (NOTE: Read the Executive Summary [pp. 1-7], skim the rest.)

- California Housing Partnership. 2019. “Los Angeles County’s Housing Emergency Update.”

- Marcuse, Peter. 2008. “The Housing Change We Need” *Shelterforce*, December 22, [https://shelterforce.org/2008/12/22/the_housing_change_we_need/](https://shelterforce.org/2008/12/22/the_housing_change_we_need/).

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**Tuesday, March 3  
Transportation and Mobility**


### Thursday, March 5  
**Gentrification and Displacement**


### Tuesday, March 10  
**NO CLASS – Spring Break**

### Thursday, March 12  
**NO CLASS – Spring Break**
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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| Tuesday, March 17 | Environmental Health and Toxics | Pass out and post Midterm prompt *(due Tuesday, March 24 by 5pm)*  
| Thursday, March 19 | Water and the Environment | Guest Speaker: Caroline Farrell, Center on Race, Poverty, and the Environment (CRPE) *(sponsored by the Remsen Bird Fund)*  
| Tuesday, March 24 | NO CLASS | ** Midterm Exam due by 5pm on Moodle ** |
| Thursday, March 26 | Global Trade and the Environment | Guest Speaker: Candice Kim, Moving Forward Network  
- DePillis, Lydia. 2015. “Ports are the new power plants — at least in terms of pollution,” *Washington Post*, November 24, |


**Tuesday, March 31** Waste and the Environment

Guest Speaker: Veronica Padilla-Campos, Pacoima Beautiful (sponsored by the Remsen Bird Fund)


**Thursday, April 2** Food Systems and the Environment

Guest Speakers: Sharon Cech and Rosa Romero, UEPI


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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>References</th>
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Thursday, April 16  
Energy and the Environment

** Reflection Paper #2: Highland Park/Eagle Rock Observation DUE**

Pass out and post Final Exam Prompt (*due Final Week, date TBD*)


Tuesday, April 21  
NO CLASS – Founder’s Day

Thursday, April 23  
Climate Solutions

** Reflection Paper: Campus/Off-campus talk/activity DUE (last day to submit)**

Guest Speaker: Natalie Hernandez, ClimateResolve (sponsored by the Remsen Bird Fund)


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<th>Tuesday, April 28</th>
<th>Course Wrap Up and Summary</th>
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<td>Finals Week</td>
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<td>** Final Paper DUE, date TBD **</td>
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**COURSE POLICIES**

**Note:** This syllabus is subject to change throughout the semester, including readings. Students will be notified if the syllabus changes; check Moodle for the latest reading assignments.

**Plagiarism Policy**

Plagiarism consists of any form of passing off, or attempting to pass off, the knowledge or work of others as your own. It is a form of cheating. Examples of plagiarism include: unattributed quotations from a book, magazine, or article; copying from the notes or essays of others; the submission of work actually written or dictated by others; and unattributed use of other peoples’ ideas. Remember, plagiarism includes information from books, newspapers, journals and the Internet. Plagiarism is grounds for failing the course and possible expulsion from the college. Students should consult Occidental’s student handbook for information on academic misconduct policy at the college: [https://www.oxy.edu/student-handbook/academic-ethics/academic-misconduct](https://www.oxy.edu/student-handbook/academic-ethics/academic-misconduct).

**Classroom Community**

This course is intended to provoke discussion and new understandings of the urban environment in which we live. Toward this end, the course will grapple with discussions about inequity, power, race, class, and gender. We expect our classroom to be a productive space for open, honest, and thoughtful discussion that recognizes and respects differences and acknowledges the broad range of knowledge we bring to the classroom and discussion. Please remember that our focus in this course is the issues, texts, course materials, and presentations themselves, and not the personalities, identities, or opinions of other participants in the discussion.
The professor and students share the responsibility of creating the space and stimulating enthusiasm for learning. The professor is responsible for structuring and facilitating a space for learning and achieving course goals. Students are responsible for attending and participating in class, completing assignments in a timely manner, being prepared to discuss readings and material in class, and contributing to a robust learning environment and community. Toward this goal, students are also responsible for engaging in respectful, open, and thoughtful discussion with each other and the professor.

**Laptops and Cellphones**

Electronic devices in the classroom limit full participation in class. In order for you to pay attention and engage in learning and minimize distractions to others, laptops are not allowed unless they are necessary for note-taking. Cell phones and all other electronic devices are to be turned off or put on silent. Students who are not paying attention in class will be marked as absent.

**Course Readings** will be posted on Moodle. Please complete readings for the day they are assigned. Readings will largely follow the syllabus but are subject to some changes. Please pay attention to the Moodle site for any changes to the schedule and/or the readings.

**Support Services**

The college provides a set of resources to students to support them in learning. The Writing Center provides writing assistance to students to develop ideas, draft, and revise papers.

Students with documented disabilities who are registered with Disability Services are required to present their accommodation letter to the professor at the beginning of each semester or as soon as possible thereafter. Any student who experiences significant physical or mental impairments may contact Disability Services at (323) 259-2969 to learn about available services and support. More information is available at https://www.oxy.edu/offices-services/disability-services.

The Emmons Wellness Center also provides important support services and can help you address issues of stress, medical and mental health, and overall well-being. For more information, see its website at https://www.oxy.edu/student-life/resources-support/emmons-wellness-center.