

Neighborhood Revitalization: Community Response to Urban Gentrification

UP474, Fall 2015

Mon 4:30-7:20, Room 223

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No on-campus office or office hours. Please contact via email or phone to set up Skype or Google Hangout meetings.

The Course

Neighborhood Revitalization examines the theory and process for community-based planning and resistance to gentrification, using the Albany Park neighborhood, on the north side of Chicago, and the Centro Autonomo, a community center in Albany Park, as models. Albany Park is one of the most ethnically diverse urban neighborhoods in the US, with a majority Latino population and at least 50 spoken languages. Founded in the early 1900s around the final stop on the Brown line of the CTA, this working class neighborhood has been an initial landing spot for successive ethnic groups including Italians, Jews, Koreans, Middle Eastern and south Asian populations, and Latinos. A process of gentrification that began in the early 2000s is continuing today. Students in this course will trace the history of Albany Park, the theoretical and practical aspects of gentrification, and community-based resistance and planning models. Your professor is the founder and Executive Director of the Centro Autonomo, and has more than 30 years of experience in community-based organizing.

Course Activities & Projects

This course is discussion-based. Its success depends on prepared and interested students who read assigned texts carefully and prepare discussion questions that serve as the foundation for most classes. Lectures by the professor will be few and far between. The intention is to utilize a modified popular education pedagogy in which the intellectual quality of the course depends on active participation by every member in the class.

- Each student will facilitate one or two classes during the semester. Assigned students are expected to carefully read texts, conduct supplementary research on the topic at hand, and prepare a set of questions/discussion points that will serve as the foundation for class discussion. 10 points
- One to two-page (250 to 500 words) reflections are due each week on assigned texts. Reflections are NOT a summary of the texts. Rather, students are encouraged to enter into dialogue with the authors. You may agree with the basic arguments of the author while adding new insight, disagree while supporting your reasoning, or extend the author's arguments by adding new information or lines of thinking. Each student may miss one reflection without affecting their final grade. 30 points
- Two site visits to Albany Park. The first will include a walking tour of Albany Park and a visit to the Centro Autonomo. The second will involve students in a door-knocking campaign designed to organize tenants and/or homeowners who are in danger of losing their homes. Students write and present a four to five page paper (1000 to 1250 words) analyzing the visits to Albany Park. 10 points for each paper
- A five to seven page (1250 to 1750 word) paper is due at the end of the semester. The subject matter will be determined in consultation with your instructor. Either individual or group papers are acceptable. 20 points
- Active class participation is key to the success of this class. Students should come to each class prepared with questions and discussion points. 20 points

I do not accept late homework for any reason. However, you may skip one weekly reflection without penalty.

Grading

A 100-94 pts

A- 93-90

B+ 89-87

B 86-84

B- 83-80

C+ 79-77

C 76-74

C- 73-70

D+ 69-67

D 66-64

D- 63-60

F 59-0

Course Expectations

Students should be open to learning new approaches and looking at new areas of research/literature, and willing to complete tasks that may be unfamiliar to them.

Most course related problems can be resolved if they are jointly addressed by instructor and student early in the semester. Students with special needs - factors that might interfere/conflict with the successful completion of the course - should tell me at the outset of the course.

Attendance

No absences are allowed except in the case of medical or family emergencies. After the first absence I will deduct 1 point for each absence and ½ point for being tardy. The emergency dean must verify excused absences. I will make every effort to stick to the course schedule, but variations are inevitable (including assignment deadlines and requirements). If you miss class, it is your responsibility to find out what happened. Since I'm not located on campus, I would encourage students to exchange email addresses on the first day of class and keep in touch with each other about the content of missed classes.

Late Assignments

I do not accept late assignments for any reason (that means I will not grade late assignments). However, special arrangements (without penalty) may be warranted under certain, very limited circumstances. You must make arrangements ahead of time, and not after the fact. You may send me e-mail, but that does not constitute consultation, nor does a note from the nurse by itself give permission to make up missed work due to illness.

Academic Dishonesty

Please be aware of the university guidelines regarding academic integrity in the Student Code (<http://admin.illinois.edu/policy/code/>). Academic dishonesty includes such things as cheating, inappropriate use of university equipment/materials, fabrication of information, plagiarism (presenting someone else's work from any source as your own), submitting work that was prepared for another class, and so on. All forms of academic dishonesty will be considered a serious offense of university policy. Students committing any form of academic dishonesty will be reported to their home

department, the College of Fine and Applied Arts, and the Senate Committee on Student Discipline. Any student who violates the university academic integrity policy will receive a failing grade for this course.

Required Reading

All required readings are available on the Compass site. For your convenience, the texts can be found in pdf or Word format as part of the course syllabus.

Course Schedule, subject to change

Dates, MONDAY, 4:30-6:50

Excursions to Albany Park, Chicago, SATURDAY , Oct 3 and Oct 31

1 Mon, Aug 24 (UIUC): Introductions and class overview. Students should carefully read the syllabus in preparation for the first class. Each student will have five minutes for an oral presentation including the following information:

- What is your educational and social background?
- How do you identify socially?
- Why are you taking this course?
- What special skills and/or interests do you bring to the course?
- What is your ideological orientation?
- Are you or have you been involved in community organizing?

No written reflection due the week of Aug 24

2 Mon, Aug 31 (UIUC): Urban theory

- Logan and Molotch, *Urban Fortunes*, Ch. 1, 2, 3, 4: The book explains how social actors in capitalist societies alter the functioning of markets, how prices are set, how lives are affected by these dynamics, and how opposition mobilizes at the community level. Chapter 1 outlines social contradictions inherent in the maximization of use versus exchange values, and contrasts this approach with the Chicago school of human ecology (space is determined via the market for “highest and best” uses) and the traditional, narrowly read Marxist approach (urban space as a direct reflection of class struggles and accumulation processes). The author’s arguments emphasize human agency in structuring urban spaces. Ch 2 outlines the peculiarities of space/place as a commodity and the symbiotic relation between markets and regulation. The authors outline various levels of urban “growth machines” populated by different kinds of rentiers, entrepreneurs, and capitalists, as well as community organizations that often stand in opposition. Urban areas are socially and hierarchically constructed. Ch 3 outlines the city as a growth machine which, under the ideology of value-free development, explains why the real estate financing and property development sectors are so politically powerful in urban areas. Ch 4 outlines the role of neighborhoods in the daily lives of residents.

Questions to guide your reading:

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the human ecology approach from the Chicago school of urban development?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the traditional Marxist approach to understanding urban settings?
- What do the authors mean by “use” and “exchange” values? How do these concepts become the foundation of a new urban analytical framework?
- What makes land (physical space) different from other commodities?
- What is an “urban growth machine”? Who are the players?
- What do the authors mean by “value free development”?
- What are “neighborhood use values”?

One to two page (250 to 500 words) written reflection on the assigned texts. Reflections are NOT a summary of the texts. Rather, students are encouraged to enter into dialogue with the authors. You may agree with the basic arguments of the author while adding new insight, disagree while supporting your reasoning, or extend the author’s arguments by adding new information or lines of thinking. Each student may miss one reflection without affecting their final grade. Reflection is due Saturday, Aug 29 by midnight. Please remember to attach your reflection in Word 2010 or text format before hitting the “submit” button.

3 Mon, Sep 14 (UIUC): Urban theory and community interests

Harvey, David, “The Right to the City”: Harvey outlines the fundamental contradiction inherent in capitalism - the simultaneous existence of surplus capital and unemployment – and the neoliberal, postmodernist and consumerist phase of capitalist absorption in which we live. He explains the role of urban development in consuming the surplus, which leads to incredible advances in infrastructure while simultaneously setting the stage for the next economic crisis. He laments the class-driven fragmentation of society, the urban-suburban divide, and the increasing commodification of life spaces. He introduces the concept “accumulation by dispossession” to help explain gentrification. For Harvey, the solution is democratic control over surplus value, particularly in relation to urban development.

Sassen, Saskia, “Globalization and its discontents,” in *The Blackwell City Reader*, p. 161-170: Sassen discusses the global city as both a center for globalization and increasingly centralized corporate power, but also a space for the life-world of social actors who are the foundation of a new transnational political economy – workers, immigrants, women, etc. Centralized control and management of increasingly dispersed production/consumption processes requires physical infrastructure that is located in global city centers. Global cities tend to mark out a new geography of centrality and marginality. Global cities are also characterized by the transnationalization of labor and identities, which define potential sites of collective opposition.

Questions to guide your reading:

- Is Chicago a global city? Which corporations characterize the “global” nature of Chicago?
- What kinds of jobs and physical infrastructure are necessary for “global economics” to function?
- Can the analysis of Sassen and Harvey help to explain the structure and functions of Chicago neighborhoods? Explain.
- Explain the crisis created by excess surplus and high unemployment.
- What is accumulation by dispossession?

- What does Sassen mean by the “transnationalization of labor?”

One to two page (250 to 500 words) written reflection on the assigned texts. Reflections are NOT a summary of the texts. Rather, students are encouraged to enter into dialogue with the authors. You may agree with the basic arguments of the author while adding new insight, disagree while supporting your reasoning, or extend the author’s arguments by adding new information or lines of thinking. Each student may miss one reflection without affecting their final grade. Reflection due Saturday, Sept 12 by midnight. Please remember to attach your reflection in Word 2010 or text format before hitting the “submit” button.

4 Mon, Sep 21 (UIUC): History and context of Albany Park

Community Development in Chicago: From Harold Washington to Richard M. Daley, Author(s): John J. Betancur and Douglas C. Gills Source: *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 594, Race, Politics, and Community Development in U.S. Cities (Jul., 2004), pp. 92-108: The authors analyze the pro-community, pro-poor policies of Mayor Harold Washington and the machine politics of his predecessor, Mayor Richard M Daley.

Theodore, Nik and Nina Martin, 2007, “Migrant civil society: New voices in the struggle over community development,” *Journal of Urban Affairs*: The authors discuss gentrification in the “port of entry” immigrant community of Albany Park, with particular emphasis on two community-based organizing efforts.

Conquerwood, Dwight and Taggart Siegel, 1990, “The heart broken in half”: A movie focused on gangs in Albany Park.

Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=np7WkGxYHy4>

Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iTdk2cLM6qw>

Part 3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ushwD3dSUZM>

Part 4: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KsS2FfGglbk>

Part 5: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6bOjZ8bMSE>

Part 6: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5EtKU4anv5A>

Supplemental texts:

Conquergood, Dwight, *Life in Big Red*, in “Structuring Diversity,” Ed. Louise Lamphere: Conquerwood describes a slum apartment in which he lived in Albany Park in the 80s and 90s. The building has since been torn down and replaced by condominiums.

Reflection due Saturday, Sept 19 by midnight.

Student reflections this week are dedicated to independent research on the history and context of Albany Park. Student reflections should introduce new information about Albany Park that is not contained in the assigned readings. There is a good deal of information available on the internet, including “Community Health Status” reports, CAPS reports, the Chicago Housing Authority reports, and much, much more. Be creative. Bring something new and interesting to the class discussion.

5 Sat, Sep 26 (CHICAGO): Visit to Albany Park, 10am to 5pm in Chicago

Jacobs, Allan. "Clues" and "Seeing Change" from *Looking at Cities* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985): 30-83, 99-107.

The visit begins at 10am with a tour of the Centro Autonomo and an orientation to the neighborhood with long-term residents. After lunch at the Centro, students will divide into four groups, each with a particular focus. We begin with the following suggestions (though this may change based on student suggestions and interests): housing, labor, education, health care. Each group will research one of these themes by walking around the neighborhood, observing the infrastructure, and talking to residents.

No reflection due the week of Sept 28.

6 Mon, Oct 5 (UIUC): Student reports describing Albany Park

Site visit report due Saturday, Oct 3 by midnight.

Four to five page paper (1000 to 1250 words) on observations and conclusions drawn from your visit to Albany Park. Groups will be assigned at the beginning of the site visit and will consist of 3 to 5 students per group. Each group produces one paper. The papers might include an analysis of the current state of housing, an evaluation of health care options for residents, a description of labor conditions in the barrio, a series of interviews with students and/or teachers (since the visit is on a Saturday, it will be more difficult to identify teachers), or some other aspect of your visit that your group found interesting. Class on Oct 5 is dedicated to report presentations. Each group has 15 minutes to present followed by 20 minutes of class discussion.

7 Mon, Oct 12 (UIUC): Gentrification

Bentacur, John, "Gentrification and Community Fabric in Chicago": Bentacur analyses the impacts of gentrification in five Latino neighborhoods in Chicago, with particular emphasis on neighborhood-based fabrics of supports and advancements.

Mumm, Jesse, 2008, "Redoing Chicago: Gentrification, Race and Intimate Segregation": Mumm describes the "intimate segregation" that occurs in gentrifying neighborhoods.

Slater, Tom, 2006, "The Eviction of Critical Perspectives from Gentrification Research": Author offers an overview of recent debates around gentrification. Several responses to Slater are available in academic journals.

Supplementary readings:

Rose, Damarus, 1984, Rethinking gentrification: Beyond the uneven development of Marxist urban theory.

Kennedy, Maureen and Paul Leonard, 2001, Dealing with neighborhood change: A primer on gentrification and policy choices.

Questions to guide your reading:

- Explain the “fabric of supports” in your neighborhood?
- What does Mumm mean by “intimate segregation?” Have you experienced examples of this phenomena?
- What does Slater mean by the “demise of displacement?”
- What is your perspective on gentrification – generally good, generally bad, or mixed? Defend your position.
- How are “social mix” theories used to defend gentrification? How do these theories relate to Mumm’s “intimate segregation”?

Reflection due Saturday, Oct 10 by midnight.

One to two page (250 to 500 words) written reflection on the assigned texts. Reflections are NOT a summary of the texts. Rather, students are encouraged to enter into dialogue with the authors. You may agree with the basic arguments of the author while adding new insight, disagree while supporting your reasoning, or extend the author’s arguments by adding new information or lines of thinking. Each student may miss one reflection without affecting their final grade. Please remember to attach your reflection in Word 2010 or text format before hitting the “submit” button.

8 Oct 19 (UIUC): Housing crisis and community-based struggles

Centro Autonomo, 2013, “The Housing Crisis and the Working Poor: Problems and Solutions from the Community Level”: The Centro Autonomo produced this report based on four years of work defending homeowners from foreclosure and, more recently, tenants from eviction. The report documents the context and content of community based housing struggles in Albany Park, and recommends an innovative, radical approach to developing community based housing alternatives that are not linked to the commodification of housing.

Questions to guide your reading:

- What are the causes behind gentrification in Albany Park?
- Explain the logic behind banks donating properties to community groups. What are the challenges and benefits to this approach?

Reflection due Saturday, Oct 17 by midnight.

One to two page (250 to 500 words) written reflection on the assigned texts. Reflections are NOT a summary of the texts. Rather, students are encouraged to enter into dialogue with the authors. You may agree with the basic arguments of the author while adding new insight, disagree while supporting your reasoning, or extend the author’s arguments by adding new information or lines of thinking. Each student may miss one reflection without affecting their final grade. Please remember to attach your reflection in Word 2010 or text format before hitting the “submit” button.

9 Mon, Oct 26 (UIUC): Community organizing and urban development

Stoecker, Randy, 1997, "The CDC model of urban redevelopment: A critique and an alternative": Stoecker critiques the Community Development Corporation model for lack of resources, lack of democratic control, and social movement cooptation. He offers an alternative model based on community organizing and community-controlled planning.

Fisher, Robert, Yuseph Katiya, Christopher Reid, and Eric Shragge, 2013, "'We are radical': The Right to the City Alliance and the future of community organizing": The authors outline the foundation of the Right to the City Alliance and how it differs from other nationally oriented community organizing efforts.

Delgado, Gary, 2009, "Reflections on movement building and community organizing": Delgado describes the work of Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN). Before a series of scandals between 2008 and 2010, ACORN was the largest and most powerful community-based organization in the US. Delgado analyzes the strengths, weaknesses and accomplishments of ACORN.

Questions to guide your reading:

- What is "Fordism?"
- What is neoliberalism?
- What are the four "fault lines" outlined by Mayer during the era of neoliberal crisis?
- How do non-governmental organizations (NGOs) influence community-based movements?
- Why did ACORN fall apart (this will require research beyond the assigned readings)?
- What are ACORN's strengths and weaknesses?
- Explain the strategic orientation of "combining the demands of the oppressed with the aspirations of the alienated."
- Why is the city seen as the site of oppositional struggle in the 21st century?
- Compare the structure, function and politics of the Right to the City Alliance with ACORN.
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of CDC-style urban development?

Reflection due Saturday, Oct 24 by midnight.

One to two page (250 to 500 words) written reflection on the assigned texts. Reflections are NOT a summary of the texts. Rather, students are encouraged to enter into dialogue with the authors. You may agree with the basic arguments of the author while adding new insight, disagree while supporting your reasoning, or extend the author's arguments by adding new information or lines of thinking. Each student may miss one reflection without affecting their final grade. Please remember to attach your reflection in Word 2010 or text format before hitting the "submit" button.

10 Mon, Nov 2 (UIUC): Community organizing: door-knocking strategies

<http://organizinggame.org/toolkitE/Framework.swf>: a cartoon-based primer for door-knocking.

Lawyer's Committee for Better Housing, 2015, "Renter's rights and responsibilities in Chicago" This powerpoint presentation is used to orient renters, homeowners and organizers around housing rights and responsibilities.

A housing organizer from the Centro Autonomo will lead this class. Class will include training in housing rights, and small group breakouts to practice door-knocking and one-on-one interviews.

Reflection due Saturday, Oct 31 by midnight.

The reflection this week focuses on your expectations/fears/concerns as part of a neighborhood door-knocking campaign. What kind of information will you need to be an effective door-knocker? What kinds of challenges do you expect to face? What is your greatest fear/concern in approaching door-knocking?

11 Sat, Nov 7 (CHICAGO): Visit to Albany Park, door-knocking campaign, 10am to 5pm in Chicago

To familiarize yourself with some of the current issues in Albany Park:

- Check out this web site: <http://www.neiulandgrab.com/>
- Recent police report: <http://crime.chicagotribune.com/chicago/community/albany-park>
- AP schools: <https://www.google.com/maps/search/albany+park+schools/@41.9685214,-87.7213815,14z/data=!3m1!4b1>
- School spending cuts: <http://www.dnainfo.com/chicago/20130812/albany-park/cps-budget-cuts-tif-dollars-targeted-as-albany-park-schools-lose-6m>

Site visit report due Wednesday, Nov 15 by midnight.

Four to five page paper (1000 to 1250 words) on observations and conclusions drawn from your door-knocking experience in Albany Park. Groups will be assigned at the beginning of the site visit and will consist of 2 to 3 students per group. Each group produces one paper. The papers might include an analysis of the interactions with folks in the barrio, an evaluation of the effectiveness of door-knocking as a community-building strategy, an evaluation of the housing challenges faced by people in the barrio, or a constructive critique of this assignment as a learning experience.

12 Mon, Nov 16 (UIUC): TIF zones and institutional urban planning

Metzger, John T, 2000, "Planned abandonment: The neighborhood life cycle theory and national urban policy": Metzger outlines the history of neighborhood life-cycle theory and describes its racist implications for national urban policy.

Video on TIFs by Civic Lab: <http://www.civiclab.us/tif-101/>

Questions to guide your reading:

- What is a TIF and how is it used in urban development?
- What are the most significant ways in which TIFs are abused by developers and government officials?
- How is neighborhood life-cycle theory mobilized to depopulate areas characterized by urban unrest?
- What is “planned abandonment” and how does it work?
- What is Metzger’s idea of community development?

Reflection due Saturday, Nov 14 by midnight.

One to two page (250 to 500 words) written reflection on the assigned texts. Reflections are NOT a summary of the texts. Rather, students are encouraged to enter into dialogue with the authors. You may agree with the basic arguments of the author while adding new insight, disagree while supporting your reasoning, or extend the author’s arguments by adding new information or lines of thinking. Each student may miss one reflection without affecting their final grade. Please remember to attach your reflection in Word 2010 or text format before hitting the “submit” button.

13 Mon, Nov 30 (UIUC): Community-based alternatives to gentrification

Austen, Ben, 2013, “The death and life of Chicago,” New York Times: Austen tells the story of the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign and Chicago’s housing crisis.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/02/magazine/how-chicagos-housing-crisis-ignited-a-new-form-of-activism.html>

Sites, William, 2012, “God from the machine? Urban movements meet machine politics in neoliberal Chicago”: Sites analyzes Chicago’s particular brand of politics in the neoliberal era in relation to two community-based movements with important impacts on urban development: immigrant rights and the anti-Walmart campaign.

Causa Justa, “Development without displacement: Resisting gentrification in the Bay area”: The paper outlines policy demands and community-based strategies to resist gentrification.

Questions to guide your reading:

- What are the similarities and differences among the various strategies used by Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign and Causa Justa in San Francisco?
- In your opinion, which strategies would be most effective?
- What’s the difference between policy work and direct action strategies? Which do you find more appealing in making social change?

Reflection due Saturday, Dec 5 by midnight.

One to two page (250 to 500 words) written reflection on the assigned texts. Reflections are NOT a summary of the texts. Rather, students are encouraged to enter into dialogue with the authors. You may agree with the basic arguments of the author while adding new insight, disagree while supporting

your reasoning, or extend the author's arguments by adding new information or lines of thinking. Each student may miss one reflection without affecting their final grade. Please remember to attach your reflection in Word 2010 or text format before hitting the "submit" button.

Mon, Dec 7 (UIUC): Presentation of final paper

Final paper is due Saturday, Dec 12 by midnight.

The final paper is five to seven pages (1250 to 1750 words) on a subject to be decided in consultation with your professor. Each student will have ten minutes in class to present their paper, followed by ten minutes of discussion.

Additional texts of interest:

Taylor, D. Garth, and Sylvia Puente. "Immigration, gentrification and Chicago race/ethnic relations in the new global Era." *The Conference on Chicago Research and Public Policy: The Changing Face of Metropolitan Chicago*. Chicago, IL. Vol. 200. 2004.

Hudspeth, Nancy, and Janet Smith. "The effects of gentrification in Chicago: Displacement and disparity." *Unpublished Manuscript, Presented at the Annual Conference of the Urban Affairs Association, Washington, DC*. 2004.

Wyly, Elvin, and Daniel Hammel. "Gentrification, housing policy, and the new context of urban redevelopment." *Critical perspectives on urban redevelopment* 6 (2001): 211-276.

Neil Smith, economic explanation of gentrification

David Ley, cultural explanation of gentrification

Hunt, D Bradford, 2013, *Planning Chicago*, Chapter 2, Chicago's planning context: a good overview of standard urban planning and the various players involved in Chicago.