



The mission of the Grand Valley State University General Education Program is to provide a broad-based liberal education experience that fosters lifelong learning and informed citizenship. The program prepares students for intelligent participation in public dialogues that consider the issues of humane living and responsible action in local, national, and global communities.

SOC 351 Urban Sociology  
Issues – Sustainability

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Explain how complementary and competing perspectives contribute to the ongoing discussion about sustainability.
2. Collaboration - work together and share the workload equitably to progress toward shared objectives learned through structured activities that occur over a significant period of time.

Students will:

- Use knowledge of group dynamics to select appropriate roles.
  - Use knowledge of group management to create effective plans.
  - Successfully follow the group's plan.
  - Assess their contribution and the contribution of others.
3. Integration – synthesize and apply knowledge, experiences, and multiple perspectives to new, complex situations. Students will:
    - Connect academic theories with personal experiences to illuminate both.
    - Draw conclusions connecting examples, facts, and/or theories from more than one field of study.
    - Generalize skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies for solving problems in new contexts.
  4. Problem Solving – design and evaluate strategies to answer open-ended questions. Students will:
    - Construct clear and insightful problem statements that prioritize relevant contextual factors.
    - Identify multiple approaches for solving the problem within the given context.
    - Design and fully explain solutions that demonstrate comprehension of the problem.
    - Evaluate the feasibility of solutions considering the context and impact of potential solutions (e.g., historical, ethical, legal, practical).

*Grand Valley State University educates students to shape their lives, their professions, and their societies.*

## **SOC 351 01 Urban Sociology**

Fall 2018

Tues./Thurs. 2:30-3:45 PM

Lake Ontario Hall 178

Prerequisites: SOC 101 and Junior Standing; the deadline for dropping this course is October 27.

Prof. Joel Stillerman

124 Honors

616-331-3219

[stillejo@gvsu.edu](mailto:stillejo@gvsu.edu)

<http://sites.google.com/site/joelstillerman>

Office Hours:

Tues./Thurs, 4-5:30 PM or by appointment.

**Course Description:** This course is designed to acquaint students with the history of cities, the theories used to study them, their dynamics of growth and decline, key urban social problems, patterns of urban planning, and discussions of the future of cities. Readings will explore theoretical approaches to studying cities, the evolution of U.S. cities, suburbanization, race relations, redevelopment, urban politics and planning, and international comparisons. **A cross-cutting theme in the class is the issue of *sustainability* – the extent to which cities and metro areas are economically viable, socially cohesive, and minimize harm to human health and the natural environment.** We read, a series of essays on urban public space, a comparative study of environmental justice issues in different cities, an analysis the evolution of lesbian and gay communities in cities, and a study of housing insecurity in Milwaukee. A group project based on field research in the Grand Rapids area and multi-media materials will broaden students' experience. Students should leave the course with an appreciation of the key ways cities have been studied, how they have evolved, and contemporary challenges they face.

### **Course Objectives:**

Students will:

- 1) Contrast key theoretical paradigms and methodological approaches in urban sociology.
- 2) Explain the causes and consequences of suburban growth, residential segregation, gentrification, and environmental contamination.
- 3) Demonstrate written, analytical, and critical thinking skills.
- 4) Contrast distinct perspectives on urban policy as they relate to effects on the natural environment.

This course teaches the General Education learning objectives that correspond to the Sustainability Issue, as well as collaboration, problem-solving, and integration, as outlined in the GE handbook.

**This course fulfills one SWS class requirement.**

Mandatory  
SWS  
Paragraph

**Supplemental Writing Skills (SWS):** This course is designated SWS. Completion of WRT 150 with a grade of C or better (not C-) is a prerequisite. SWS credit will not be given to a student who completes this course before completing the prerequisite. SWS courses adhere to certain guidelines. Students turn in a total of at least 3000 words of writing. Part of that total may be essay exams, but a substantial amount of it is made up of essays, reports, or research papers. The instructor works with the students on revising drafts of papers, rather than simply grading the finished piece of writing. At least four hours of class time will be devoted to writing instruction. At least one third of the final grade in the course is based on the writing assignments.

Mandatory  
Writing  
Support  
Paragraph

**Writing Support:** The Fred Meijer Center for Writing, with locations at the Allendale and Pew/Downtown Grand Rapids campuses, is available to assist you with writing for any of your classes. Writing consultants, who are fellow GVSU students, are trained to help you with all stages of your writing process, from brainstorming to organizing to editing your papers. Simply bring a draft of your paper, the assignment sheet, and your questions/concerns to any of the Center's locations. Also, through your Gmail account, you have access to online consultations through Google Docs. The Center's services are free and you can drop in and work with a consultant or make an appointment, either through our website or by calling the Center (331-2922). For more information about our services and locations, please visit our website: <http://www.gvsu.edu/wc/>

Required  
description of  
types of writing  
instruction  
offered.  
Syllabus also  
makes clear  
how much time  
is devoted to  
each.

**Writing Instruction:** This class will include at least 4 hours of in-class writing instruction. Topics may include: reading and taking notes on complex texts (**15 minutes**); writing an effective thesis statement (**15 minutes**); writing an effective problem statement (**30 minutes**); writing a strong introduction (**15 minutes**); identifying an author's argument, who they disagree with, and writing about both (**30 minutes**); providing effective peer feedback (**30 minutes**); essay organization (**15 minutes**); description of each essay assignment, including the research required and grading rubric applied (**30 minutes per discussion; 60 minutes total**); feedback for whole class on areas for improvement for drafts and final essays (**15 minutes per assignment; 30 minutes total**).

Describes peer  
response work,  
revisions, and  
amount and type  
of instructor  
response.

**Writing feedback:** The instructor will provide students with written marginal notes, use a grading rubric, offer final comments on each draft to assist with revision, and provide comments on each essay to help support improvement on upcoming assignments. He will meet with students outside class as needed to work through writing challenges and encourages students to use the writing center (for info on writing center hours, locations, and handouts, see <http://www.gvsu.edu/wc/>). Each student will provide feedback on the first drafts of each paper using a worksheet distributed by the instructor.

Required Texts (available for purchase in the University Bookstore and on reserve at the Allendale campus library):

Orum, Anthony M. and Zachary P. Neal, eds. 2010. *Common Ground? Readings and Reflections on Public Space*. New York: Routledge. (O)

Anguelovski, Isabelle. 2014. *Neighborhood as Refuge: Community Reconstruction, Place Remaking, and Environmental Justice in the City*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (A)

Ghaziani, Amin. 2014. *There Goes the Gayborhood?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (G)

Desmond, Matthew. 2016. *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*. New York: Broadway Books. (D)

**Course Outline:**

**Aug. 28: Introduction**

**Aug. 30: Background on Urban Sociology – no readings**

**Bring your weekly schedule to class for group assignments; sign up for presentations.**

**Sep. 4: NO CLASS – LABOR DAY HOLIDAY**

**Sep. 6: Public Space I**

Readings: O, pp. 1-12, 18-39

**Assignment of groups, set baseline rules and select top choices for research topics Sep. 7**

**Sep. 11: Public Space II/ Interview methods**

Readings: O, pp. 49-76, Fontana and Frey, pp. 52-60, 67-9 (E)

**Sep. 13: Library Research demo**

**Class Meets in Lab 02 in Allendale Library**

**Sep. 18: Public Space III/ Observation methods**

Readings: O, pp. 83-117, Adler and Adler, pp. 79-89 (E)

- Sep. 20-25: Environmental Justice I**  
Readings: A, Chs. 1-3  
**ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE IN CLASS Sep. 27**
- Sep. 27-Oct. 2: Environmental Justice II**  
Readings: A, Chs. 4-5
- Oct. 4: Environmental Justice III**  
Readings: A, Ch. 6
- Oct. 9: EXAM REVIEW – NO READINGS**
- Oct. 11: MIDTERM EXAM – NO READINGS**
- Oct. 16-18: Changing LGBT Communities I**  
Readings: G, pp. 1-80
- Oct. 23-25: Changing LGBT Communities II**  
Readings: G, pp. 81-165  
**PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF FIELD DATA DUE IN CLASS OCT. 25**
- Oct. 30-Nov 1: Changing LGBT Communities III**  
Readings: G, p. 166-259
- Nov. 6-8: Housing I**  
Readings: D: Prologue-Ch. 7  
**FIRST DRAFT OF PAPER DUE IN CLASS NOV. 8**
- Nov. 13-15: Housing II**  
Readings: D, Chs. 8-15
- Nov. 20: Housing III**  
Readings: D, Chs. 16-20

- Nov. 22:** NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING
- Nov. 27:** Housing IV  
Readings: D, Chs. 21-24, pp. 300-13
- Nov. 29, Dec. 4-6:** GROUP PRESENTATIONS / Exam Review  
**FINAL PAPERS DUE IN CLASS DEC 6**  
**FINAL EXAM, Tues., Dec. 11, 4-5:50 PM**

**Course Requirements:**

*A general comment on my expectations: Much like a sports coach or a personal trainer, I ask students to complete work they may believe is beyond their abilities. As with the sports analogy, you **can** complete challenging work, but need to be willing to accept the challenge. While this process may make you anxious, once you have completed demanding work, you will feel a great sense of accomplishment. My commitment in this context is to direct and mentor you so that you can indeed satisfy the demands of this course. I will work with you every step of the way, but my support will only be effective if you take the time to meet with me and put in the extra effort.*

- 1) **Attendance:** You are expected to attend all classes having read and thought about the reading materials as well as prepared any out-of-class activities. You should expect to spend approximately 10 hours per week outside of class reading, thinking, conducting research, and preparing written assignments. **You will not master the material without reading it carefully, taking detailed written notes, and thinking about it. You will also be incredibly bored and lost in class if you come unprepared. Finally, if you have not done the reading, the quality of class discussions as a whole declines. Although lectures will not cover all of the reading, you will be responsible for having mastered it on the exams.**
  - a) **Students with more than two absences will receive a lower final grade for the course. If you arrive late to class or leave early, you will be marked absent. For each absence over two, you will lose 3 % off of your final grade in the class, e.g. three absences = 3 % off; four absences = 6 % off, etc. Students with perfect attendance will receive an additional 2% on their final grade for the course. If you face an emergency (health or family) that requires you to be away for more than two classes, you must provide me with documentation explaining your absence upon your return to class, and you may request to do additional written work to make up for your absence – it is up to you to solicit makeup work if you do not want to lose credit for absences.**

b) **Students who miss class are responsible for getting lecture notes from other students. Class will begin on time and a sign in sheet will be circulated at the beginning of class. If you arrive too late to sign the sheet or leave early, you will be considered absent for that class. I suggest that you plan ahead so that you will have no competing time commitments during class time.**

- 2) **Participation (6 %)** I expect each student in this class to be an active learner. Each class period will include opportunities for discussion and each week, time will be dedicated to structured group activities, films, or guest speakers. **During each class, I will record who has spoken. Your grade will be based on the percentage of classes in which you spoke. Your participation will make class much more fun and interesting for everyone.**
- 3) **Reading memos (1 % each; 11 % total)** Beginning the second week of classes, each week during which readings are discussed you will be required to post on the bb discussion board before class on Tuesday, a text of 100-150 words that identifies key issues for Tuesday's readings, asks questions, and offers reactions. **The first memo will be due before class Tues. Sep. 11.** The memos must reflect careful and thorough reading of course texts and will be graded for their degree of thoroughness.
- 4) **Quizzes (1% each; 10 % total):** Students will complete a short online quiz on bb for each Thursday's readings to verify that they have read and gained a basic understanding of the readings. The quiz will be available at the beginning of each week of classes. **The first quiz will be due before class Thurs. Sep. 6**
- 5) **Presentation of news article (3 %)** During each class, one or two students will give a brief 5-10 minute oral presentation on a news article or radio story related to the day's readings. The presentation will both summarize the story and connect it to the day's readings.
- 6) **Group Project/Paper (40 %):** In the second week of class, students will be assigned to groups, each of which will engage in a research project resulting in a powerpoint presentation given by all members, and a 2500-3000 word paper written by each group member. The project will entail data gathering in Grand Rapids, library research, analysis of one of the class texts, and a personal reflection on the research exercise. Each student will conduct library research on a distinct theme so that students may teach one another and come to a common analysis of the issue. *Each student's grade will be divided into four equal components, each worth 10 % of the final grade: a) peer evaluation of individual contributions to the group plus quality of presentation (group grade), b) quality of annotated bibliography and preliminary data analyses (field data and printed/web data), c) quality of sociological analysis, writing, and reflective component of first draft, d) quality of analysis, writing, and reflective component of final draft.* Specific guidelines will be distributed early in the semester, and we will take class time at least once per week to allow groups to work together on the project.

Major writing assignments described in detail. Includes overall grade percentage and word count for assignments.

- 7) **Peer reviews: (2 %)** Each student will write a peer review of one of her/his/their classmate's first drafts of the essay and one of her/his/their group members performance on the group presentation based on scoring sheets provided by the instructor.
- 8) **Midterm and final exams (14 % each, 28 % total)** exams will be in-class, cover all readings and lecture materials, and include both objective and two essay questions (250 words each, 500 words total).
- 9) **Extra Credit:** Students will have the opportunity to do up to two extra credit assignments which will be short essay responses written after attendance of campus events identified by the instructor. Guidelines for the essays and a list of eligible events will be distributed in class. For each assignment that is effectively completed, the student will earn two (2) additional points on their lowest exam score.

**Weighting of Assignments:**

<b>Participation:</b>	<b>6 %</b>
<b>Memos:</b>	<b>11 %</b>
<b>Quizzes:</b>	<b>10 %</b>
<b>News presentation:</b>	<b>3 %</b>
<b>Group Project/ Paper:</b>	<b>40 % (divided into four components)</b>
<b>Peer evaluation:</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Midterm and Final Exams:</b>	<b>28 % (14 % each)</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100 points</b>

**Grading scale:**

<b>A:</b>	<b>94-100 %</b>
<b>A-:</b>	<b>90-93 %</b>
<b>B+:</b>	<b>87-89 %</b>
<b>B:</b>	<b>83-86 %</b>
<b>B-:</b>	<b>80-82 %</b>
<b>C+:</b>	<b>77-79 %</b>
<b>C:</b>	<b>73-76 %</b>
<b>C-:</b>	<b>70-72 %</b>
<b>D+:</b>	<b>66-69 %</b>
<b>D:</b>	<b>60-65 %</b>
<b>F:</b>	<b>below 60%</b>

- 10) **Disabilities Support Resources --** Any student who requires accommodation because of a physical or learning disability must contact Disability Support Resources (<http://www.gvsu.edu/dsr>) at [616-331-2490](tel:616-331-2490) as soon as possible. After you have documented your disability, please make an appointment or see me to discuss your specific needs.



- 11) **Basic Needs Statement** -- Some students face challenges that make it difficult for them to succeed in class. These might include not having enough money for groceries, having difficulty securing safe and appropriate housing, or needing mental health support. If you need these or other services, please click on the “wellness” link on this page: <https://www.gvsu.edu/student-services/student-resources-29.htm> or visit the Student Services Office at 202 Student Services Building. Additionally, if you feel comfortable doing so, I am happy to discuss any challenges you are facing and to direct you to appropriate services on campus.
- 12) **Appropriate Classroom Decorum** – Students are expected to behave in a respectful manner toward their peers and the instructor. This means the following: a) arriving on time and not leaving before class has ended, b) **avoiding** the following disruptive activities (reading the newspaper, reading course texts during class, doing work for other courses, holding personal conversations, sleeping, leaving on cell phones or other electronic accessories when not part of a class assignment), c) speaking respectfully to your peers and the instructor, **even if you strongly disagree with what is said**. If I determine that your behavior is inappropriate, I will either offer you a warning or ask you to leave the classroom at my discretion.
- 13) **LAPTOP POLICY – PLEASE BRING LAPTOPS TO CLASS ON GROUP PROJECT DAYS (NORMALLY THURSDAYS). ON ALL OTHER DAYS/TIMES (Lecture/discussion) PLEASE DO NOT BRING (OR TURN ON) electronic devices (laptop computers, cell phones, mp3 players). This rule is in effect because these devices distract students from focusing on the class when they are not used for SPECIFIC IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS.**
- 14) **Plagiarism and Cheating:** Any student found to plagiarize (representing someone else’s written work as one’s own – see below) will receive an F in the class. Any student caught cheating on an exam will receive an “F” on the exam. These classroom policies conform with university policies on academic dishonesty. *See Student Code, Section 223.01.*

***GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS (more specific guidelines will be distributed with individual assignments)***

Written assignments must be turned in on time: no late work will be accepted without instructor's prior consent. **Essays and journals must be submitted electronically via the Safe Assign function on the course blackboard site and in hard copy in class. Use of this site will be explained in the beginning of the semester.** Essays must be typed, double-spaced, with 1” margins on all four sides with a 12 point font. Papers with large fonts or margins will receive a reduced grade.

An excellent paper must demonstrate knowledge of the material, construct a logical argument regarding the research problem, demonstrate sociological thinking, make judicious use of evidence, be clearly written, make appropriate references to the

text(s) discussed, and show independent thinking. The essay should have a beginning, middle, and end that fit together to make a cohesive whole.

When you copy **two or more words** from any written source, provide quotation marks and a page reference at the end of the sentence (see below). When you paraphrase or summarize a section of text, cite the author and page number after or within the sentence. This is also known as **ASA citation style** or the short scientific form. For example: “A subjective awareness that a social problem exists usually emerges before the objective reality of the problem is acknowledged” (Kendall 2001: 5); or: Kendall (2001: 5) argues that individuals perceive social problems subjectively before they have evidence of the real existence of these problems. **If you do not use direct quotes you still need to provide page references at the end of each paragraph where you summarize a text.**

Here is some guidance on how to paraphrase correctly:

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/using\\_research/quoting\\_paraphrasing\\_and\\_summarizing/paraphrasing.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/using_research/quoting_paraphrasing_and_summarizing/paraphrasing.html)

Please read the full description of ASA citation format that appears here:

[http://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/quick\\_tips\\_for\\_asa\\_style.pdf](http://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/quick_tips_for_asa_style.pdf)

**DO NOT PLAGIARIZE.** Never copy or paraphrase text without crediting the author. I am grading you on your understanding of texts and data and ability to express that understanding **in your own words**. If you think the author stated an idea particularly well, then place the author’s writing inside quotation marks and cite the author and page number. **A paper that merely strings together quotes is not acceptable. The majority of any essay or paper MUST be in your own words and you are REQUIRED to provide references/citation for ALL quoted and paraphrased material.**

Examples of plagiarism appear in italics below the regular text:

Example 1: Copying material directly without placing it inside quotation marks or acknowledging the source:

Social problems are perceived through different stages. *A subjective awareness that a social problem exists usually emerges before the objective reality of the problem is acknowledged.*

Example 2: Copying the material without changing the text substantially:

Social problems are perceived through different stages. *A subjective perception that a social problem exists usually occurs before its objective reality is acknowledged* (Kendall 2001: 5).

Example 3: Using an idea from a text without acknowledging its source.

People usually perceive social problems subjectively before there is objective evidence of their existence.

Supply a complete **reference list/works cited page** at the end of your essay. Use the following style:

Books:

Last Name, First Name. Year. *Title*. City of Publication: Publisher.

Articles:

Last Name, First Name. Year. "Title." *Magazine, Journal or Newspaper Title*. Volume, Number: page numbers.

Book Chapters:

Last Name, First Name. Year. "Title of Chapter." Pp. x-y in *Book Title*, edited by J. Smith and B. Jones. City of Publication: Publisher.

Web-based materials:

Last Name, First Name. "Title." Web address (Date accessed).