SES 5374: Community Development: History, Theory, and Imaginative Practice

Harvard GSD—Spring 2019
Tuesdays 10-1pm, Gund 505

INSTRUCTOR
Lily Song, Ph.D.
lsong@gsd.harvard.edu
Office hours on Wednesdays 1-3pm or by appointment (in 42 Kirkland 1F)

Course Teaching Assistant
Malika Leiper (mleiper@gsd.harvard.edu)

COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

Community development is a heterogeneous and contested field of planning thought and practice. The profession has generally prioritized people and places that are disproportionately burdened by capitalist urbanization and development. In the US, the dominant focus has been on personal or group development and widening access to opportunities, with a growing reliance on market incentives to deliver housing options and spur economic development. Yet for many communities at the margins, development has rather connoted practices of freedom—freedom from oppression and deprivation; freedom to enjoy one’s time, make choices, and experience life as abundance and possibility. Thus conceived, community development is less a question of remedial policy than acts of resistance, claiming rights and power, and strengthening collective ownership and governance capacity over productive infrastructures and resources.

The course begins with an examination of evolving patterns, drivers, and explanations of urban inequality and poverty and corresponding urban policy and planning responses—with a primary focus on the US but in comparative world-historical perspective. We trace the evolution of community development from the Progressive Era to the contemporary period, where global trends such as urban-based economic growth and the new urban agenda are pushing community development practice beyond the neighborhood scale to local, metropolitan, and even supranational scales. In critically analyzing community development concepts and strategies, the course pays close attention to the dilemma of race that has continued to define capitalism, politics, and spatial production in America as well as divided working class and progressive movements, including those defining the field of community development. We also draw insights from historic movements that have sought to change race relations in America in connection with global assaults on capitalism, empire, and patriarchy.

For students to further develop their own community development agendas and skills, the course is built around a speaker series and discussion sessions focused on applied practices and cases. Notwithstanding significant advancements in affordable housing development, social service delivery, and placemaking—the traditional mainstay of community development—the course focuses on emerging community development
approaches such as transformative economic projects built on community-labor partnerships, anchor-based strategies, and cooperative ownership and wealth creation. It also surveys innovative sectoral practices focused on renewable energy, mobility and access, food justice and sovereignty, and art, culture, and fashion. Guest speakers will moreover include political organizers and leaders working to build intersectional movements that inform progressive urban policy and planning agendas and community development goals.

Course evaluations will be based on three assignments (blog entry or comic strip, semi-structured interview, and applied research project) and class participation. It has no prerequisites and is open to graduate students across different disciplines.

CLASS POLICIES

- Preparatory reading, punctual attendance, and active participation required for each class.
- Course work must be handed in by the assigned deadline.
- No use of phones, laptops, tablets, and other gadgets capable of connecting to the internet or phone system during lectures and discussions.
- Students needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability must present their Faculty Letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO) and speak with instructor by the end of the second week of the term. All discussions will remain confidential, although faculty members are invited to contact AEO to discuss appropriate implementation.

GRADING CRITERIA

Grading will be assessed in accordance with Harvard GSD grading scales (i.e. Distinction & High Pass, Pass, Low Pass, Satisfactory, Fail) and adhere to the following weighting:

1. Class Participation (25%). As this is a largely discussion-based, rather than lecture-based, course, students should be well prepared to participate actively in class discussions.

2. Blog Entry/Comic Strip (15%). Students will each compose a blog essay (length 500-750 words, double-spaced, 12-point font) or illustrated narrative akin to a comic strip – reflecting on the meaning and significance of community development (Due 9am, Feb. 19, 2019).

3. Semi-structured Interview (20%). Students will interview a community development practitioner or expert about underlying values, goals, and premises of practice and summarize findings (Due March 26, 2019).

4. Final Project (40%). Students—working in groups or independently—will analyze a pressing community development issue and pose planning and policy alternatives. Each team will make a 15-minute in-class presentation (on Apr. 30, 2019) and submit a final paper (by May 7, 2019) — 15-20 pages in length, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font exclusive of the cover, graphs and bibliography sheets.
## COURSE STRUCTURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 29</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Part 1: Unraveling</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 5</td>
<td>Systems of supremacy: Statistics, paradigms, and reckonings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 12</td>
<td><strong>il/logics of urban spatial production and the affordability crisis</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Part 2: Revisiting</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 19</td>
<td>Origins and evolution of the community development field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 26</td>
<td>Black freedom struggles and radical traditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Part 3: Praxis</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 5</td>
<td>Digital activism and transformative politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 12</td>
<td>Just mobility and access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 19</td>
<td><strong>NO CLASS— SPRING BREAK</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 26</td>
<td>Community power: Renewables and efficiency retrofits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 2</td>
<td>Community wealth creation: Anchors, organized labor, and cooperative economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 9</td>
<td>Food justice and sovereignty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 16</td>
<td>Counter hegemonic fashion and inclusive value chains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 23</td>
<td>Place-based art, cultural commons, and reparative spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 30</td>
<td>Final presentations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## COURSE SCHEDULE
*Reading assignments may change from time to time, partly based on what students find interesting and are able to digest, though with advance notice from the instructor. Please consult Canvas for up-to-date reading list and download weekly readings from the appropriate folder.*

**January 29) Introduction**
1. Course overview
2. Foundational concepts—Development, underdevelopment, scarcity, abundance, community, place
**Assigned reading:**

- Littler, Jo (2018). "Inequality is under attack - but what should equality really look like?" *The Guardian*.

**Further reading:**


**Part 1: Unraveling**

(February 5) **Systems of supremacy: Statistics, paradigms, and reckonings**

1. Explanations of urban poverty and inequality—patterns, impacts, and drivers
2. Systems of hierarchy and domination
3. Racecraft and the racial debt: The Case for Reparations

**Assigned reading:**

- Read or Listen to—MLK Jr. "The Drum Major Instinct,” Final sermon, delivered at Ebenezer Baptist Church (4 February 1968).

**Further reading:**


(February 12) il/logics of urban spatial production and the affordability crisis

1. Urban-based economic development, gentrification, and displacement
2. Climate change, new urban agenda, green new deal
3. Geopolitical and bipartisan conflict

**Assigned reading:**


• Moretti, E. (2012). The new geography of jobs—Ch. 5, “The Inequality of Mobility and Cost of Living.”

• Walker, Alissa, "Mansplaining the city: Why are men driving the conversation about the future of our neighborhoods?" *Curbed*, August 16, 2017.


• Leilani Farha, "How the real estate financial model is harming us," TEDxQueensU, April 17, 2018.

**Further reading:**


Part 2: Revisiting

(February 19) Origins and evolution of the community development field
1. Critical overview of evolving policy and planning responses to urban poverty and inequality in the US.
2. Interrogate underlying ideologies about society, development, and state-market relations
3. Consider alternative approaches to social housing and infrastructure in UK, Nordic Countries, Central and Eastern Europe, and SE Asia

Assigned reading:

Further reading:

(February 26) Black freedom struggles and radical traditions

1. Black Radicalism
2. Radical Feminism
3. Rainbow Coalitions

Assigned reading:
• "The Rainbow Coalition – A Time to Fear"
• Thomas Abbott et al. (2018). Embrace abolitionist planning to fight Trumpism.
• Deshonay Dozier (2018). A Response to Abolitionist Planning: There is No Room for ‘Planners’ in the Movement for Abolition.

Further reading:
• Marable, M. (1996). *Why Black Americans are not Socialists* (ch. 22) in *Speaking Truth to Power*.
• Harney, S. and F. Moten. (2013). *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*.

**Part 3: Praxis**

(March 5) Digital activism and transformative politics
Guest speakers: Aditi Mehta, University of Toronto; Ayushi Roy, The Move

Assigned reading:
• Freelon, Deen, Charlton McIlwain, and Meredith Clark. "Beyond the hashtags:# Ferguson,# Blacklivesmatter, and the online struggle for offline justice." (2016).

Further Reading:
• Pew Research Center, "Activism in the Social Media Age,"

(March 12) Just mobility and access
Guest speakers: TBA

Assigned reading:
• Watch “Ovarian Psychos” by Joanna Sokolowski and Kate Trumbull (2016).
• Sheller, M. (2018). “What is Mobility Justice?” & “Conclusion: Claiming the Mobile Commons” In Mobility Justice. VERSO.

Further reading:
• The Untokening. (2016). Untokening 1.0: Principles for Mobility Justice.
• Song, L., Paulsson, A, and Davis, D. “Sustainability vs. Equity? Regional Transport Investment and Spatial Development in Los Angeles and Stockholm.”
• Lily Song, Diane Davis, and Hannah Herzig. In progress. “‘Actually Existing’ Accessibility: Integrated Transport, Land Use, and Housing Development in Vienna.”

(March 19) SPRING BREAK

(March 26) Community power: Renewables and efficiency retrofits
Guest speaker(s): Maria Belen Power, GreenRoots (Chelsea, MA); Lindsay McClusky, Community Labor United; Enet Mukurazita, Coop Power Boston Meteoeast

Assigned Reading:

(April 2) Community wealth creation: Anchors, organized labor, and cooperative economics
Guest speakers: Katherine Mella, Bronx Cooperative Development Initiative/MIT CoLab
Assigned Reading:

Further Reading:

(April 9) Food justice and sovereignty
Guest speakers: Cassandra Campbell, Fresh Food Generation; Bing Broderick, Haley House; Katie Gourley, GSD

Assigned reading:
- Broderick, B. (2016) "Food With Purpose: Dudley Dough and Haley House Bakery Café."
- Excerpt from Gourley thesis

(April 16) Counter-hegemonic fashion and inclusive value chains
Guest speaker(s): Ngozi Okaro, Custom Collaborative

Assigned reading:
- Watch “The True Cost” (2015), documentary film exploring the impact of fashion on people and the planet.

http://www.yinkashonibaremb.com/


Further reading:


https://www.vogue.co.uk/article/t-shirt-cult-culture-subversion-fashion-textile-museum


(April 23) Place-based art, cultural commons, and reparative spaces

Guest speaker(s): Jenn Erickson, MAPC; Chandra Rouse, GSD

Assigned reading:


MAPC Arts and Planning Toolkit—Artist Residencies, Creative Community Engagement, Creative Placemaking, Cultural Asset Mapping, Cultural Planning, Tactical Urbanism.

Excerpt from Rouse thesis

Excerpt from Nazam research on artists in residency

(April 30) Final project presentations