

**GEOG 4210 – Urban Geography.** As the world becomes progressively urban, cities serve as primary sites for life and livelihood yet, while being centers of affluence, consumption, fashion and cultural gratification, cities are also ridden with problems of crime, inequality, segregation, poverty, exclusion and alienation to often produce conflicted worlds of pleasure and pain. All of us have lived in cities, or will have some engagement with urban life, it is therefore imperative that we clearly and comprehensively understand our urban worlds by asking and answering questions like: Why is homelessness so common? Why are some Rust Belt cities like Detroit on the decline? Why are some Sun Belt cities like Austin flourishing? Why are cities in the Third World experiencing a growth of slums? How can decaying cities be revived? Given our massive consumption demands, are cities socially and environmentally sustainable? Grappling with such questions will allow us to comprehend our contemporary urban realities clearly and critically. This class explores contemporary urban issues like inner city decay and suburbanization; poverty, crime and terrorism; race, class and segregation; identity and culture; environmental sustainability and greening; ‘Disneyfication’ and consumerism; globalization and the megalopolis; landscape, planning and exclusion. The readings and class discussions grapple with these urban issues from both theoretical and empirical perspectives and from the First World as well as Third World contexts. Students are expected to critically engage with the readings and develop their own perspectives through literature reviews and essays.