

Cleveland State University
Maxine Goodman Levin School of Urban Affairs
Levin College of Public Affairs and Education

UST 302 – Contemporary Urban Issues
3 credit hours

Meeting Times: By appointment via Zoom

Instructor: Leah D. Hudnall

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Textbook Required: All course materials are available at no cost through the Blackboard course. There is no textbook to purchase for this class.

ATTENDANCE

- Class sessions for **Fall 2023** meet in person Room UR-241 this semester on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:00PM to 3:15PM.
- Your attendance is strongly encouraged for you to get the most out of this course. **Please arrive on time.** (Please note that you will not be given course credit for attendance.)
- There will be spontaneous opportunities to earn extra credits points during in-class sessions.

BEST PRACTICES: COMMUNICATION, EMAIL AND EXPECTATIONS

Adapted from Boston University, 'Writing Emails to Professors and TAs,' 2021

As your professor and instructor for the course, my immediate goal is to support you in achieving academic success. I am here to help you. Emailing me (using the email address provided above) is the best method of communication.

Here are a few tips to ensure that our mutual communication is successful:

READ THE SYLLABUS, FIRST

- Before emailing me, please read the syllabus and assignment instructions available via Blackboard
- If you email a question that is clearly outlined in the syllabus or Blackboard, it might seem like you aren't paying attention

BE PATIENT AND RESPECTFUL

- **I will respond to your email within 3 business days; I do not email after 5pm on weekdays or on weekends**
- Please do not email me with the same request or question more than once
- Please email questions as far in advance as possible; expecting an immediate response days or hours before a due date is unreasonable

BE CLEAR

- Please write the course number in the subject line of the email
- Please include a brief greeting and address me as *Professor Hudnall*
- Make sure to clearly state the reason for your email
- Ask politely; do not make demands or unreasonable requests
- Maintain a formal tone. Check your email for spelling errors. Avoid informal language you might use when texting your friends (e.g., “cuz” instead of “because,” etc.).

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This is an upper-level undergraduate course in which we will examine American urban life through the lenses of race, class, and ethnicity and their intersectionality, with emphasis on the African American experience. It is through these lenses that we will consider political, societal, and economic issues as they relate to life in the city.

Given this framework, many topics we discuss will be controversial, with people holding different opinions on respective subjects. Therefore, having respect for others is fundamental to having open, educational discussions.

Here are the objectives of this course:

AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

1. This course will have a focus on the contemporary experience of African Americans and maintain the perspectives, experiences and/or achievements of African Americans themselves as central to the course.
2. This course will provide students with knowledge of how the field of Urban Affairs presents and analyzes the African American experience.
3. This course will provide students with a theoretical and empirical framework for understanding inequality and the distinguishing aspects of the African American experience.

SKILL AREA: CRITICAL THINKING

1. This course requires that at least 15% of the student's grade in the course is based on an evaluation of critical thinking.
2. This course requires students to attain skills beyond lower-level knowledge, thereby requiring skills that involve the use of content knowledge (e.g., finding information to solve a problem).

SKILL AREA: INFORMATION LITERACY

1. Designate that at least 15% of the student's grade in the course is based on an evaluation of information literacy.
2. Require students to evaluate the accuracy, authority, currency, objectivity, and reliability of information sources.
3. Require students to address the ethical and legal uses of information.

WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

1. The course requires students to write between 3,000 and 5,000 words (10-14 pages, double-spaced, in 12-point font, with 1" margins) in writing assignments (which may include drafts).
2. Final versions of at least one assignment should total at least 2,000 words (eight pages).
3. The course teaches students writing-to-learn strategies that foster students' experiences in learning, and writing-to-communicate strategies that foster students' respect of readers' experiences. Whenever possible, planning assignments (e.g., reading logs, prewriting strategies) and peer reviews will be included in class assignments.
4. Students will be assigned writing complex enough to require substantive revision for most students. Students will be given feedback to assist them in preparing subsequent papers or drafts of papers. This feedback will consist of more than mechanical correction of punctuation and grammar.
5. The course provides instruction in discipline-appropriate forms of texts, arguments, evidence, style, audience, and citation. Students will be required to use the American Psychological Association (APA) style format for citations and reference pages. The CSU Library website lists citation guides including links to the **APA style guide**:
<http://www.ulib.csuohio.edu/research/vrd/citations.html>, or go to the APA website, <http://www.apastyle.org/>
6. There will be writing assignments throughout the semester.
7. The course will address the needs of students regarding library competency.
8. In order to receive a C or better in the course, students must write at a satisfactory skill level. If the student's writing is weak, but shows understanding of the course

material, the student may be assigned a D, in which case WAC credit will not be received for the course.

GENERAL EDUCATION STATEMENT

This course is approved as a General Education course meeting the requirements for The African American Experience. It meets the requirements for Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC). Skill areas for this class include Critical Thinking and Information Literacy.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING POLICY

Grades are based on writing assignments (research paper, study question responses, discussions).

Students are expected to:

- Read all textbook chapters and other assigned readings
- Participate actively in discussions and ask clarifying questions. No late discussion submission will be accepted once the discussion board deadline has past;
- Prepare and submit all written assignments. A late assignment will be deducted two points per day it is late;
- Send all discussion postings and written assignments through Blackboard;
- Log on to the course site 2-3 times a week to check for changes and /or additional information.

POLICIES

- Educational access is the provision of classroom accommodations, auxiliary aids, and services to ensure equal educational opportunities for all students regardless of their disability. Any student who feels he or she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office of Disability Services at (216) 687-2015. The Office is located in MC 147. Accommodations need to be requested in advance and will not be granted retroactively. Students should notify the instructor as soon as possible if they have been granted an accommodation through the Office of Disability Services.
- Writing Assistance Students with difficulty writing may contact the Writing Center located in Rhodes Tower 124 for assistance.
- Plagiarism is stealing and/or using the ideas or writings of another in a paper or report and claiming them as one's own. This includes but is not limited to the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. The penalties for plagiarism are found in full in the Student Handbook (Office of Student Life) under The Student Conduct Code.
- Federal law, including Title IX, and University policy require that CSU address discrimination, harassment and sexual violence and enable students affected by these issues to have the same opportunity to succeed as other students. To do this,

the CSU Office for Institutional Equity (OIE) provides information, identifies resources (counseling, medical, advocacy, safety planning), issues academic accommodations (excused absences, extended deadlines, late withdrawals, alternative assignments) and other accommodations (No Contact Directives, religious accommodations, changing living arrangements). Any student affected by discrimination, harassment and/or sexual violence and seeking assistance, should contact the Office for Institutional Equity by calling 216-687-2223, sending an email to r.lutner@csuohio.edu or m.vogelgesang@csuohio.edu, or visiting AC 236.

- Refer to the CSU website for add/drop, withdrawal procedures, etc.
- The entire course and all assignments are open 24/7. Therefore, no time extensions will be granted without prior approval by the instructor. Plan your time accordingly. If you know you are in a wedding, on vacation, out of town on business, etc., for part of the course time, finish and submit your assignments ahead of the due dates.
- The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus.

ASSIGNMENTS

ASSIGNMENT: ANALYSIS OF AN URBAN POLICY OR ISSUE (FIRST DRAFT & FINAL PAPER)

PURPOSE: The research paper assignment is intended to help develop collegiate-level writing skills with emphasis on proper writing style, correct grammar, coherence, and focus.

- Skills: information literacy, critical thinking, analytical writing
- Disciplinary Knowledge: African American and multicultural urban experience, urban policy

INSTRUCTIONS: Your major written assignment will be to present an analysis of a chosen U.S. urban issue (see list on Blackboard). These topics all have an association with race, class, and/or ethnicity; therefore, students must incorporate the role of race, class and/or ethnicity, or an intersection of multiple roles, into their paper.

You will want to narrow the scope of your paper to a particular aspect of the issue. For example, if you were writing about climate change, you may want to narrow your topic by location (e.g., southern US), and by class/race (poorer, African American neighborhoods projected to receive disproportionate damage). This is a research paper, not a case study or an essay about your own personal experiences/opinions. The grading rubric is posted under Assignments in Blackboard.

The body of your draft must be 2-4 pages (typed and double-spaced), follow APA for in-text citations and end-of-paper References, and must include

1. The beginning of your research paper (1-3 pages). This should be in paragraph form so that the instructor can comment on the writing.
2. A short outline or summary of where you are headed with your paper (1/2-1 page).
3. At least one full reference that will be included in your References page at the end of your final paper so the instructor can comment whether it aligns with APA and is a legitimate source.

The body of your final paper should be 8-10 pages with a minimum of 2000 words (excluding references and title page), typed, double-spaced. In addition, this paper should have a cover page and a reference page consisting of no less than 6 different scholarly sources. Of the references cited, only one may come from our required class readings. You should use an assortment of books, book chapters, journal articles, government reports, and/or databases (e.g., data.gov). Only 1 news article is permitted to count toward the minimum of 6 scholarly sources.

Guidelines

- Correct grammar and spelling will be included in determining your essay grade, so be sure to review your work before submitting it.
- You will submit a draft of this essay for comments and ways to improve your essay before submitting your final version. This draft will be returned to you with corrections/guidance for you to revise and resubmit by its final due date. Responding to instructor comments in your final paper does not guarantee that you will obtain full points for the paper, but it increases your chances of a better grade.
- Information literacy skills require that students address the ethical and legal uses of information. Also be sure to attribute credit to an author when paraphrasing information from a source. Paraphrasing is the act of restating the author's words or ideas in your own words. Follow APA guidelines for how to insert direct quotes into your paper.
- You will be required to submit your final paper to the plagiarism detection service, built into our Blackboard course site.
- Format your essay using APA (American Psychological Association) guidelines, including a title page, abstract, parenthetical references and a reference list. If you need more information on how this is done, information is available at the CSU University Library, on page 2 of this syllabus, and on our Blackboard course site.

- Internet sources that are merely web pages constructed by individuals airing their personal views are unacceptable sources for any course assignments. However, using the Web to access academic articles is an appropriate use of the Internet for this assignment (e.g., Google Scholar). For example, it is appropriate to use an article published in the Journal of Urban Affairs that you can download electronically. However, using the writings found on www.josephspeakshismind.com would not be an acceptable reference for this assignment. One way to determine if an Internet article is “legitimate” is to ask yourself, “If the Internet didn’t exist, would I find this source in the University library?” Newspaper or magazine articles are relevant sources for this assignment, provided they are in-depth articles on the issue, rather than editorials or commentaries. WIKIPEDIA is NOT an academic source for citations but is fine as a resource for getting some preliminary information on a topic.
- If you need additional guidance regarding how to construct a research paper, please access online resources such as [Purdue Owl](#) and/or the [CSU Writing Center](#).

These issues, although contemporary, have roots deep into American history and development, and you can incorporate this history into your paper, where appropriate. CSU’s Michael Schwartz Library houses the Cleveland Press collection, the City’s last afternoon daily newspaper, published from 1878 to 1982. For information on this and other special collections, visit the [Cleveland Memory Project](#).

Research Paper Topics: The most current list of paper topics can be found on Blackboard under **Course Information**. Students must choose one of the topics listed; no additional topics will be accepted. Students who do not adhere to this requirement and submit a paper with a subject not from this list will receive a grade of zero for this assignment.

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Each week every student must complete the assigned readings, discussions, and short assignments. The weekly readings, assignments, and deadlines are clearly listed in the Blackboard course site.

Discussions

Purpose: The online discussion board is intended to foster interaction between the students, as well as relating the weekly topics and readings to the students’ lived experiences.

Skills: relating of course materials to personal experiences, professional on-line communication

Disciplinary Knowledge: urban policy, urban studies concepts, and terminology

Instructions: After reading the required assignments for the week, students are required to respond to a question or set of questions that is posted by the Instructor on the Discussion section of Blackboard. Discussions must be delivered by the deadline listed on Blackboard as well as in the syllabus Course Schedule. Entries on the discussion boards that are submitted past the due date will not be accepted.

The minimum standard for participation in online discussions is to:

- Read the Instructor's posting and follow the directions;
- Post an original message related to the instructor's discussion topic/question before posting to other student discussions;
- Read several postings by fellow students;
- Post a substantive response to at least one posting by a fellow student for each weekly discussion.
- Post a unique response; repeating what students wrote previously will not be given full points.

It is imperative that the Instructor's discussion board questions/comments be answered completely in order to obtain full credit for that week's discussion board. For example, if the question asks "what is a smart city?" and "give an example of a smart city initiative", you need to be sure to address both portions of the question for full credit.

WEEKLY REFLECTIONS

Purpose: The prompts and questions for each week's reflection papers are designed to test students' understanding of the material presented.

Skills: critical thinking, concise writing, analytical reasoning, information literacy, synthesis

Disciplinary Knowledge: urban policy, urban studies terminology, urban demography, urban planning, and development

Instructions: After reading and reviewing the required assignments for the week, students are required to respond by answering the questions and prompts found in each weekly assignment folder.

GRADING CSU uses the following letter grades with plusses and minuses. In the School of Urban Affairs, the letter grades follow this numeric scale:

A = 94-100%

A- = 90-93

B+ = 87-89

B = 83-86

B- = 80-82

C+ = 77-79

C = 70-76

D = 60-69

F = 0-59

Grades of "I" and "X"

X – Effective Fall 2016, for undergraduate courses, the grade of "X" can only be administratively assigned by the Office of the University Registrar to indicate a grade has not been assigned by an instructor. For undergraduate students who have stopped attending/participating without notification and have not completed all assignments for reasons that cannot be determined, instructors should assign the earned grade. Any grade of "X" will become a grade of "F" at 11:59 PM the day following the grading deadline.

I - Incomplete. The "I" grade is given when the work in a course has been generally passing, but when some specifically required task has not been completed through no fault of the student. An "I" grade can be assigned by the instructor when all three of the following conditions are met:

1. Student is regularly attending/participating in the class and has the potential to pass the course;
2. Student has not completed all assignments and has stopped attending/participating for reasons deemed justified by the instructor; and
3. Student has notified the instructor prior to the end of the grading period.

Assignment	Points
Draft of Urban Policy or Issue paper	10
Final Urban Issue research paper	25
Weekly Reflections	39 (13x3 points each)
Discussion Board Posts	26 (13x2 points each)
Total Points Possible	100

TECHNOLOGY MANAGMENT

YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGING THE TECHNOLOGY. YOU NEED TO FACTOR THAT INTO YOUR PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION. For example, keep copies of your homework in case they do not download correctly. If your personal computer crashes, you will have to find another way to participate (such as using CSU computers). For those who have permission to do school work at your workplace and plan to do so, please be advised that many workplaces have safeguards in place (e.g., pop-up blockers).

RESERVATIONS

Please note that the instructor reserves the right to make modifications to the course content and course requirements at any time during the semester and will notify students promptly of any changes.

Below are some general comments about the course that should help you navigate your way through a successful experience in UST 302:

- Check the Blackboard course site frequently to post course updates, respond to emails, etc. The Instructor checks the course site frequently (including weekends), although you may not have a response until the following day.
- Please give the Instructor a full week to grade assignments.
- Remember that your relationship with the Instructor is a professional relationship. The Instructor cannot know what is going on in your life as it pertains to the course if you do not communicate with them. Please make every effort to convey your concerns or questions, and the Instructor will make every effort to address these issues in a satisfactory and timely fashion.
- There is really no excuse for missing any weekly assignments. Generally, the whole course is open and available 24/7 until the time anything is due. Therefore, you should be able to plan around your business trip, sister's wedding, etc. Things

happen, but please be aware that any emergency involving a request for a time extension requires a valid written excuse (hospital notice, jury duty notice, etc.), and acceptance of such an excuse is at Instructor's discretion.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The course schedule is outlined in the course site on Blackboard.