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CCSSC 387 Race, Space, and Inequality

Summer 2023

Thursdays, 1:00pm - 4:00pm

Washington Community Scholars' Center

Eastern Mennonite University

Professor: Ryan M. Good, Ph.D (ryan.good@emu.edu)

CCSSC 387 Race, Space, and Inequality

This course is an introduction to urban studies, focused in particular on questions of space and place. Through fieldwork, readings, and discussion, we explore the urban landscape of Washington, DC, seeking to understand the spatial organization of the city, the inequalities it reflects, and the implications for people and communities. What drives racial and economic segregation? How do we make sense of cycles of neighborhood development and disinvestment? This course asks you to consider the breadth of actors and forces that shape the city, and to reflect on what it means to seek justice within this context.

This course fulfills the EMU Core cross cultural experience requirement AND serves as a Writing Intensive (WI) designate. As a WI designate, the course includes 12-15 pages of writing assignments.

Learning outcomes

- 1) Students will be able to describe and evaluate the physical, social, cultural, and economic variation across DC neighborhoods and communities.
- 2) Students will be able to explain how systemic forces—both present and historical—play out in space, with differing implications for local places.
- 3) Students will be able to discuss the spatial dimensions of race and racialization in the United States.
- 4) Students will be able to describe and critique the implications of gentrification and other structural changes for local communities.
- 5) Students will be able to assess and reflect critically on their own spatial and structural positionality.

EMU Intercultural Programs goals for cross cultural learning:

- 1) Cross cultural understanding – Students will develop an openness to new ways of experiencing the world through observing and interacting with people whose values, communication patterns, ways of knowing, and world view have been shaped by different cultures.
- 2) Cultural self-awareness – Students will develop an ability to understand and value their own cultures alongside the cultures of others.
- 3) Global awareness – Students will learn how social systems, structures, and institutions have differentially shaped the lives of people representing other racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and positionalities.
- 4) Religious understanding and formation – Students will reflect on the ways their faith, spirituality, and values differ from and are reflected in the lives of those around them.
- 5) Integration of learning – Students will critically engage the implications of what they are learning for their own lives, direction, life choices, and world view.

EMU Core cross-cultural learning objectives

- 1) Students will develop an awareness of others in relationship to themselves.
- 2) Students will develop an understanding of interconnectedness of social contexts, systems, or institutions between cultures.

Seminar outline

Week	Date	Topic
1	6/8	What is this place? [Orientation week]
2	6/15	Social and economic change in the urban landscape <i>Field exercise: 14th Street corridor</i>
	6/15	<i>Theater performance: Good Bones at Studio Theatre (7:30pm)</i>
3	6/22	Geographies of race and inequality
	6/23	<i>Theater performance: Exclusion at Arena Stage (8:00pm)</i>
4	6/29	Gentrification, development, and displacement <i>Guest speaker: Dominic Moulden, long-time community organizer, ONE DC</i>
5	7/6	Mapping place: Neighborhoods and communities <i>Field exercise: Neighborhood branding and identity</i>
6	7/13	Community organizing <i>Guest speaker: Awad Bilal, Tenant Organizer, Latino Econ. Development Ctr.</i>
7	7/20	Community development <i>Guest speaker: Leah Garrett, VP Dev. and Communications, Community of Hope</i>
8	7/27	Writing workshop
9	8/3	Place identity and claims to space
10	8/10	Final presentations (in the morning)

Course requirements

Note: The points an assignment is worth correspond directly to a percentage of your final grade.

Attendance and participation (25%) – Attendance and active engagement in class—through discussion, field activities, and engagement with guest speakers—is expected of all students. I recognize that different ones of us find it easier to participate in different ways and that active listening is just as important as talking in any discussion. I will do my best to facilitate a variety of types of engagement in every meeting, however one of the goals of these courses is to develop students’ abilities to express their thoughts about the material, and you will be expected to make a diligent effort to engage with guest speakers and to participate in discussion. *Please note that lack of a good faith effort to be present in DC during the WCSC term can compromise your participation grade.*

Reading and response blogging (15%) – You are expected to come to class having read and critically engaged the readings for the week. This includes submitting 5 response blogs during the course (out of 7 opportunities). Each completed response is worth up to 3 points (totaling up to 15% of your grade). For full credit, response blogs should be a minimum of 250 words and demonstrate critical reflection and the mechanics of proper writing. Questions and prompts are listed in the syllabus and on Moodle. A grading rubric is posted on Moodle. Response blogs are due by **11:00am on Thursday mornings**. *Responses submitted after this deadline are eligible for up to half credit.*

Neighborhood case study (50%) – You will be collecting a variety of types of data in order to tell the story of a particular DC neighborhood. Your story will be structured around answering three core questions: *Whose place is this?* (social domain); *How has this place changed over time?* (historical domain); and *How does money move through this place?* (economic domain). This assignment is an invitation to learn as much as you can about a place and in so doing to try to understand how that place has been shaped by the people who live and work there, how being there has shaped *their* lives, and how both the people and the place have been shaped by the forces that structure opportunity and inequality in our society. The assignment involves three submissions:

- 1) Progress report – DUE: 6/29 (Week 4) by 11am (10%)
- 2) Draft case study report – DUE: 7/27 (Week 8) by 11am (10%)
- 3) Final case study report and presentation – DUE: 8/10 (Week 10) by 11am (30%)

A full assignment description with grading rubrics is posted on Moodle. You will make a presentation of your case study during our last class meeting on Thursday, August 10 (in the morning).

Theater performance responses (10%) – We will attend two theatrical performances this summer. *Good Bones* at Studio Theatre on Thursday evening, June 15, and *Exclusion* at Arena Stage on Friday evening, June 23. After each show, you will submit a 300-word response to the play. What was most compelling about the show? What issues did the play engage? What did they do well? What could have been stronger? In what ways did the play intersect with what you have been studying, doing, or thinking about this summer in DC? Your responses are due by 11am on Thursday, the weeks following the performances. Each response is worth 5% of your final grade.

Texts

You will not be required to purchase any texts for this course. All assigned materials will be available through Moodle or in hard copy on loan from the WCSC.

Policies and expectations

Respect for each other

I will do my best to facilitate a space where all voices and perspectives are respected. I expect the same from you. You do not have to agree with other people's opinions, but you do need to practice respectful listening and constructive dialogue. If at any point you feel that you have been disrespected or are uncomfortable with something that happened during seminar, please come and talk to me about it.

Electronics in the classroom

The goal of this class is to be present to and engaged with what (and who!) is going on right around us. Thus, I ask that phones be on silent and put away during our class meetings. Laptops and tablets may be used to refer to readings or notes, but unless I specifically ask you to do so, internet or social media browsing are not allowed. *It goes without saying that all electronic devices are put away when we are with a guest speaker.* I will hold myself similarly accountable.

Academic integrity

I take plagiarism, cheating, and other violations of academic integrity extremely seriously. They will not be tolerated. In accordance with EMU policy, unacknowledged use of AI text generators in the development or completion of written assignments will be considered plagiarism. If you have any questions, review the *EMU Academic Accountability Policy* at <https://emuhelpdesk.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/PP/pages/4577165742/Academic+Accountability>.

Late assignments

Late submissions of all assignments will be penalized 10% per day.

Grading scale

A (93-100); A- (90-92); B+ (87-89); B (83-86); B- (80-82); C+ (77-79); C (73-76); C- (70-72); D+ (67-69); D (60-66); F (59 or below)

Disability accommodations

If you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability that may impact your work in this course, it is your responsibility to contact the Office of Academic Access (<http://www.emu.edu/academics/access/>) on the third floor of the Hartzler library. This office will work with you to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. All information and documentation is treated confidentially.

Title IX

It is important for you to know that all faculty members are required to report known or alleged incidents of sexual violence (including sexual assault, domestic/relationship violence, stalking). That means that I cannot keep information about sexual violence confidential if you share that information with me. For example, if you inform me of an issue of sexual harassment, sexual assault, or discrimination I will keep the information as private as I can, but I am required to bring it to the attention of the institution's Title IX Coordinator. Incidents that have occurred on campus, at a campus event, and/or while a student at EMU require follow up by the Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to talk to the Title IX Coordinator directly, Kimberly Anderson can be reached at 540-432-4849 or titleixcoordinator@emu.edu. Additionally, you can also report incidents or complaints through our online portal at <http://emu.edu/safecampus/>. You may report, confidentially, incidents of sexual violence if you speak to Counseling Services counselors, Campus Ministries pastors, and Health Services personnel providing clinical care. These individuals, as well as the Title IX Coordinator, can provide you with information on both internal and external support resources.

Please refer to the Student Handbook which can be found at <https://emu.edu/studentlife/> for additional policies, information, and resources available to you.

Course schedule

June 8 **Week 1 – What is this place?**

How do you get to know the places you live or visit? What lenses do you use? How do we engage places respectfully as visitors or newcomers?

Listen:

Johnson, J. (2016, May 11). Anacostia Unmapped: The Nacotchank and the First Gentrifiers. *WAMU*.

Read:

Mathuria, S. (2019, March 28). Place & privilege: Telling stories about places that aren't yours. *Progressive City*.

Overly, S., Smith-Barrow, D., O'Donnell, K., & Li, M. (2022, April 15). Washington Was an Icon of Black Political Power. Then Came Gentrification. *POLITICO*.

(Read only pp. 37-41, 44.) Verloo, N. (2020). Urban ethnography and participant observations: Studying the city from within. In N. Verloo & L. Bertolini (Eds.), *Seeing the City: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Study of the Urban* (pp. 37-55). Amsterdam University Press.

June 15 **Week 2 – Social and economic change in the urban landscape**

How and why do places change? Socially? Economically?

Read:

Kashino, M. M. (2018, April 4). The reinvention of 14th Street: A history. *Washingtonian*.

Giambrone, A. (2016, June 2). D.C. No Longer Has a Central Gay Neighborhood. Does That Matter? *Washington City Paper*.

(Read only pp. 724-738.) Zukin, S. (2008). Consuming authenticity: From outposts of difference to means of exclusion. *Cultural Studies*, 22(5), 724–748.

(Read only pp. 196-202.) Smith, N. (1984/2008). A Seesaw Theory of Uneven Development. In *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space*. University of Georgia Press.

Submit by 11am:

1) **Response blog #1:** What drivers of change stand out to you in these accounts? Who is involved? In what ways do people or groups claim or appropriate space? (250 words)

In class:

Field exercise: 14th Street corridor

June 15 **Theater performance: *Good Bones* at Studio Theatre (7:30pm)** (Thurs evening)

June 22

Week 3 – Geographies of race and inequality

We see racial difference reflected in space, but does geography produce racial identities?

Watch:

Housing Segregation and Redlining in America: A Short History. (2018, April 11). *Code Switch from NPR*.

Read:

Butler, S. M. & Grabinsky, J. (2015, March 24). Segregation and concentrated poverty in the nation's capital. *Brookings*.

Rothstein, R. (2015, March 30). Should we force integration on those who don't want it?, and other commonplace questions about race relations. *Economic Policy Institute*.

Delaney, D. (2002). The space that race makes. *The Professional Geographer*, 54(1), 6–14.

Arena Stage study guide for *Exclusion*.

Submit by 11am:

1) **Response blog #2:** Explain how living and working in segregated spaces could shape somebody's understandings of what race means: the significance of their own racial identity as well as the racial identities of others? Delaney and other geographers argue that the spatial organization of our society produces and perpetuates racial privilege and inequality. Do you agree? If so, how does that work? (250 words)

2) **Good Bones response**

June 23
(Fri evening)

Theater performance: *Exclusion* at Arena Stage (8:00pm)

June 29

Week 4 – Gentrification, development, and displacement

What is gentrification and why does it happen? Do you see it as good, bad, or morally neutral? Who benefits and how?

Read:

(Read only pp. 3-13 and pp. 75-104.) Hyra, D. S. (2017). *Race, class, and politics in the cappuccino city*. University of Chicago Press.

Crockett, Jr, S. A. (2012, August 3). The Brixton: It's new, happening and another example of African-American historical "swagger-jacking." *The Washington Post*.

Franke-Ruta, G. (2012, August 10). The Politics of the Urban Comeback: Gentrification and Culture in D.C. *The Atlantic*.

Moulden, D. (2021). Is gentrification a municipal crime? Reflections and strategies on 'Urban Activism: Staking Claims in the 21st Century City'. *Radical Housing Journal*.

Submit by 11am:

1) **Response blog #3:** How does Hyra's idea of "Black branding" compare to what Crockett means by "historical swagger-jacking?" What is Franke-Ruta's argument? Who is committing the crimes that Moulden describes? What parts of these four perspectives do you find most compelling?

2) **Case study Progress Report**

3) **Exclusion response**

In class:

Speaker: Dominic Moulden, long-time community organizer, ONE DC

July 6

Week 5 – Mapping place: Neighborhoods and communities

What neighborhood is this? What makes community? And whose story is that to tell?

Read:

Hwang, J. (2016). The social construction of a gentrifying neighborhood: Reifying and redefining identity and boundaries in inequality. *Urban Affairs Review*, 52(1), 98–128.

Schweitzer, A. (2019, May 30). Some Say ‘East Of The River’ Has A Negative Connotation. Hello, ‘East End’? *WAMU*.

Flock, E. (2011, October 8). NoMa: The neighborhood now has a name, but it’s still searching for its identity. *The Washington Post*.

Submit by 11am:

1) **Response blog #4:** So what if people define a neighborhood in different ways and with different names? Do you think it matters? Why or why not? What significance does Hwang’s research ascribe to place definition of this kind? (250 words)

In class:

Field exercise: Neighborhood branding and identity

July 13

Week 6 – Community organizing

What is power? And how do we increase the power of a group of people?

Read:

Garza, A. (2020). Chapters 3-5: First Lessons, The First Fight, and Unite to Fight. In *The Purpose of Power: How We Come Together When We Fall Apart* (pp. 47-94). One World.

A Primer on Community Power, Place, and Structural Change. (2020). *USC Dornsife Equity Research Institute*.

Submit by 11am:

1) **Response blog #5:** What most resonates with you from Alicia Garza’s story? How does she frame the work of community organizing? In what ways have you been involved in organizing in your life? (250 words)

In class:

Speaker: Awad Bilal, Tenant Organizer, Latino Economic Development Center

July 20

Week 7 – Community development

Read:

Green, G. P., & Haines, A. (2016). A history of community development in America. In *Asset Building & Community Development* (pp. 32-56). Sage.

DiNitto, D., & Johnson, D. (2021). Social welfare policy: Overview. In *Encyclopedia of Social Work*.

Submit by 11am:

1) **Response blog #6:** In your opinion, what characterizes people or communities deserving of society’s help? Who should pay for community development in places with inadequate resources? Who should get to control how that money is spent? (250 words)

In class:

Speaker: Leah Garrett, VP Development and Communications, Community of Hope

July 27

Week 8 – Writing workshop

Submit by 11:00am:

1) *Draft case study report:* Submit on Moodle and bring two hard copies to class.

August 3

Week 9 – Place identity and claims to space

Whose place is this and who belongs here? How do you know?

Read:

Chason, R. (2017, July 21). Field wars: Organized league clashes with pickup players in a gentrifying neighborhood. *The Washington Post*.

Moulden, D., Squires, G. D., & Theresa, A. (2018, Oct. 10). The right to stay put. *Shelterforce*.

Submit by 11am:

1) *Response blog #7:* How do you know who belongs somewhere and who doesn't? What gives somebody the right to stay put—or to keep playing soccer where and how they've been playing? Is it appropriate for a government to take steps to protect long-term residents from the displacing impact of gentrification and rising property values? Why? (250 words)

**August 10
(morning)**

Week 10 – Final presentations

Submit by 9:00am:

1) *Final case study report and presentation slides*