

Cities, Schools, and Space

Amherst College, Spring Semester 2011

Time: Tuesday 2:00 – 5:00

Location: Earth Sciences and Natural History 004, “The GIS Lab”

Web Site: <https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/departments/courses/1011S/COLO/COLO-32-1011S>

Instructors:	Prof. Hilary Moss	Dr. Andy Anderson
Offices:	Cooper House 109	Seeley Mudd 109
Office Hours:	Thursday 10:00 – 12:00	Thursday 2:00 – 5:00 (in ESNH 004)
Email:	hmoss@amherst.edu	aanderson@amherst.edu

Course Description and Objectives

In America, a child’s address, more than any other factor, often determines what kind of public education he or she will receive. A complex set of historical forces including local and federal housing policies, mortgage lending practices, highway construction, and school districting have channeled particular economic, racial, ethnic, and linguistic groups into particular neighborhoods, where many remain today. And because public schools are funded by local property taxes and influenced by neighborhood boundaries, they often reproduce a narrative of inequality. Yet recent Supreme Court rulings have severely circumscribed the strategies communities might employ to disrupt the linkage between residence and educational opportunity.

This research seminar blends urban history with educational policy to explore how spatial relationships have shaped educational opportunity since World War II. It will investigate a range of historical, legal, and contemporary issues relevant to both the segregation and desegregation of American cities and their public schools in the twentieth century. Class meetings will alternate between seminar-style discussion and an intensive, hands-on study of one particular community – Cambridge, Massachusetts – noteworthy for the innovative strategies it has utilized to desegregate its public schools.

This course also involves a significant research component designed to expose students to a range of methods including archival analysis and oral interviews. In particular, students will learn to utilize geographic information systems (GIS) to visualize the spatial evolution of inequality in urban communities like Cambridge and to analyze past, present, and future strategies to equalize educational opportunity in American cities.

Course Readings

Copies of all books will be available for purchase at Amherst Books and placed on 2-hour reserve at Frost Library. In addition, a number of shorter documents will be available through the course web site. They will be marked with an asterisk on the syllabus.

Colin Gordon, *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City* (Penn, 2008)

Richard D. Kahlenberg, *All Together Now: Creating Middle-Class Schools through Public School Choice* (Brookings, 2001) [Available as an E-book]

J. Anthony Lukas, *Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families* (Vintage, 1986)

Margaret Pugh O’Mara, *Cities of Knowledge: Cold War Science and the Search for the Next Silicon Valley* (Princeton, 2005)

Thomas J. Sugrue and Kevin Kruse, eds. *The New Suburban History* (Chicago, 2006)

Course Expectations and Requirements

Attendance:

All absences must be requested and approved by the instructors **in advance**. Approval will be given only in extraordinary circumstances: illness, family emergency, etc. Failure to obtain prior permission will result in a zero for class participation for that day. **Students with excessive absences (missing 4 or more classes) will receive a zero for class participation.**

Academic Honesty:

It is a rare research paper that is not built upon the work of others, whether it's their data, their writings, their ideas, and even their advice. It is standard academic practice to recognize all such contributions to your work via quotations of literal text (where that is the best representation of the points you wish to make), bibliographic references, and other acknowledgements. In this class you will also be working with other students to collect and process data, and you should be careful to delineate any such contributions by the others.

Please be advised that we consider any act of academic dishonesty to be a grave offense. The college's policy regarding plagiarism and cheating is outlined in your student handbook and on this web site: <https://www.amherst.edu/campuslife/deanstudents/acadhonesty>. We are obliged to report all suspected instances of dishonesty to the Dean's Office.

Special Needs:

If you are a student with a documented disability please see the instructors immediately so that all possible accommodations can be made; no accommodations will be made retroactively.

Course Assessment Will Be Based on:

Participation:

Because this is a seminar, both regular attendance and *prepared and thoughtful* participation are expected at each class. Students who are uncomfortable speaking in class should talk with the instructors to coordinate alternate arrangements. In-class participation will account for 50% of students' class participation grade.

To facilitate engaging exchanges, **every Monday evening by 6 p.m.** students will compose detailed response papers to the weekly reading and post them on the discussion board.

These response pages should be thoughtfully conceived and constructed and should address the following issues:

- 1) What is the central argument of the reading?
- 2) How does the author support those claims?
- 3) How does this author's point of view intersect with other readings we have encountered throughout the course?
- 4) Please propose and elaborate on one issue raised by the reading you believe should be included in our class discussion.

Students are allowed to miss one (1) weekly posting at their discretion without penalty. Alternatively, they are free to complete all response pages and drop their lowest grade.

These electronic "conversations" are considered part of the weekly reading and will account for the other 50% of students' class participation grade.

Because discussion (in-class and electronic) is vital to the success of this course, participation and response papers will count for a significant portion of students' overall grade, **30%**.

All assignments, with the exception of Monday evening responses, are due at the beginning of class. No extensions will be given for conflicts with other courses, heavy workload, computer problems, etc. Late papers will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade a day. Papers

submitted more than one week late without the instructors' prior approval will receive a failing grade. Students must submit all assignments to receive credit for the course.

Research Assignments:

In most of the classes you will learn some aspect of making maps, statistical analysis, archival research, etc. On most days you will be given a short assignment based on these activities, which will be due at the beginning of the next class. These will count for **20%** of the final grade.

Final Project:

Later in the course you will choose a research question/hypothesis regarding some aspect of inequality in the city of Cambridge and its schools. You will make use of both the historical content and research methods you have learned throughout the semester to investigate your hypothesis. To assist in your research, there will be a field trip to Cambridge to visit relevant archives. Your proposal and bibliography will count for **20%** of your final grade.

Your write-up of your research and a short presentation thereon will count for **30%** of the final grade.

Schedule of Class Meetings and Assignments

* indicates readings available on E-reserve.

Part One: Cities

Week One: (1/25) Introduction to GIS; Defining Terms

Reading:

Gerald Frug, "The Legal Technology of Exclusion in Metropolitan America," in *The New Suburban History*, 205-219.

* Edward B. Fisk, "Controlled Choice in Cambridge, Massachusetts," in *Divided We Fail: Coming Together through Public School Choice* (Century Foundation Press, 2002).

In-class: Introduction to GIS: Using and Symbolizing Map Data, Sharing Maps

Assignment: Symbolize Black and Hispanic fractions of Massachusetts towns, answer simple questions: most, least, clustering.

Week Two: (2/1) The Origins of the Urban Crisis

Reading:

Colin Gordon, *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City*

* David O'Sullivan and David J. Unwin, "The Elements of Statistics", in *Geographic Information Analysis* (2003), 384-411.

In-class: Mapping Named Data: Working with 2000 Census Data for Cambridge; Minnesota National Historical GIS

Basic statistics; using Excel to calculate some characteristics.

Assignment: Download 1990 data from U.S. Census, earlier data from NHGIS, symbolize race, ethnicity, and poverty in Cambridge census tracts; answer questions about correlations.

Week Three: (2/8) The Federal Role in Spatial Inequality (Housing)

Reading:

David M. P. Freund, "Marketing the Free Market: State Intervention and the Politics of Prosperity in Metropolitan America," in *The New Suburban History* (2002), 11-32.

- * David O'Sullivan and David J. Unwin, "The Pitfalls and Potentials of Spatial Data", in *Geographic Information Analysis* (2003), 26-49.
- * Amy Hillier, "Redlining in Philadelphia," in Anne Kelly Knowles, *Past Time, Past Place: GIS for History* (ESRI Press, 2002), 79-92.
- * Amy Hillier, "Redlining and the Home Owners' Loan Corporation," *Journal of Urban History* (May 2003), 394-420.

In-class: Skype conversation with Professor Hillier
 Mapping Coordinates: Georeferencing and Editing HOLC Residential Security Map for Cambridge

Assignment: Georeference another Cambridge map, e.g. Inner Belt map.

Week Four: (2/15) The Federal Role in Spatial Inequality, continued (Highways)

Reading:

- * "Planned Destruction: The Interstates and Central City Housing," in John F. Bauman, Roger Biles, and Kristin Szylvian eds., *From Tenements to the Taylor Homes: In Search of Urban Housing Policy in Twentieth Century America* (University Park, 2000), 226-45.
 - * Matthew D. Lassiter, "De Jure/De Facto Segregation: The Long Shadow of a National Myth," in *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism* (Oxford, 2010), 25-48.
- Docs on the Inner Belt in Cambridge
- * David O'Sullivan and David J. Unwin, "Fundamentals: Maps as Outcomes of Processes", in *Geographic Information Analysis* (2003), 51-66, 71, 73-75.

In-class: Editing Map Data, viz. extracting proposed Inner Belt Highway path; connecting parcels with full census data.

Assignment: Extract the rest of the Inner Belt path; search for specific census information.

Week Five: (2/22) Why do some cities.... fail? (Urban Renewal)

Reading:

- * Andrew R. Highsmith, "Demolition Means Progress: Urban Renewal, Local Politics, and State-Sanctioned Ghetto Formation in Flint, Michigan," *Journal of Urban History* 35, no. 3 (March 2009), 348-368.
- * David O'Sullivan and David J. Unwin, "Area Objects and Spatial Autocorrelation", in *Geographic Information Analysis* (2003), 180-203.
- * Amy Hillier, Amy Hillier, "Residential Security Maps and Neighborhood Appraisals: The Home Owners' Loan Corporation and the Case of Philadelphia," *Social Science History* 29, no. 2 (2005), 207-233.

In-class: Using ArcGIS to calculate some statistical characteristics.

Assignment: Analyze clustering of race, ethnicity, poverty in Cambridge.

Week Six: (3/1) while other cities thrive? (Private Institutions)

Reading:

Margaret Pugh O'Mara, *Cities of Knowledge*

Part Two: Schools

Week Seven: (3/8): Spatial Inequality and Schools

Reading:

Matthew D. Lassiter, "Socioeconomic Integration" in the Suburbs: From Reactionary Populism to Class Fairness in Metropolitan Charlotte, in *The New Suburban History*, 120-143.

* Ansley T. Erickson, "Building Inequality: The Spatial Organization of Schooling in Nashville, Tennessee after *Brown*," *Journal of Urban History*, forthcoming.

* Karen Benjamin, "Suburbanizing Jim Crow: The Impact of School Policy on Residential Segregation," *Journal of Urban history*, forthcoming.

In-class: Skype conversations with Professors Erickson and Benjamin.

Week Eight: (3/15) No Class – Spring Break

Reading: *Common Ground* (Week Nine) is long. We suggest getting a head start!

Week Nine: (3/22) Court-ordered desegregation; backlash against busing

Reading:

J. Anthony Lukas, *Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families*

Research proposal and bibliography due.

Week Ten: (3/29): Road Trip

Class field trip to Cambridge

Week Eleven: (4/5) Replacing Race with Socio-Economic Considerations

Reading:

Richard D. Kahlenberg, *All Together Now: Creating Middle-Class Schools through Public School Choice*.

In-class: Skype conversation with Richard Kahlenberg
Research time.

Week Twelve: (4/12) Mapping Educational Opportunity and School Choice

Reading:

* Christopher Lubienski and Jack Dougherty, "Mapping Educational Opportunity: Spatial Analysis and School Choices," *American Journal of Education*, vol. 115, no. 4 (August 2009), 495-491.

* Courtney Bell, "Geography in Parental Choice," *American Journal of Education*, vol. 115, no. 4 (August 2009), 493-521.

* Jack Dougherty et.al, "School Choice in Suburbia: Test Scores, Race, and Housing Markets," *American Journal of Education*, vol. 115, no. 4 (August 2009), 523-548.

* Deenesh Sohoni and Salvatore Saporito, "Mapping School Segregation: Using GIS to explore Racial Segregation between Schools and their Corresponding Attendance Areas," *American Journal of Education*, vol. 115, no. 4 (August 2009), 569-600.

Week Thirteen: (4/19) The Supreme Court Reversal

Reading:

* *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1* (2007).

* Docs on Cambridge's switch to socio-economic desegregation and current re-evaluation of controlled choice.

In-class: Research time

Week Fourteen: (4/26) Final Project Work

First draft of final project due

In-class: Research time

Week Fifteen: (5/3) Presentations and Celebrations

In-class: Presentations

Final Projects Due: TBA