

**THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG**  
**Department of Sociology**  
**SOCI 2208 Urban Sociology**  
**Second Term 2025-26**

Instructor: Dr. LI Hang 李鏗  
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Office: Sino Building 432  
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Time: 9:30am-11:15am (Friday)  
Venue: FYB LT4  
Course website:  
<https://blackboard.cuhk.edu.hk/>

Teaching assistants:  
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### ***Course Description***

Sociology has always had an intimate relationship with cities. Urbanization — the increase of the share of the population living in cities — was one of the developments that early sociologists sought to study and explain. Since then, the global urban population has only continued to increase. Today, over half of humanity lives in cities and towns, making urban society as essential to understand now as it was in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Urban sociology has many sides, but in this course, students will learn about four main topics: 1) Early theories and classic statements on urban life, 2) the distinctive social character of the “urban experience,” 3) understanding urban space through the political economy approach, and 4) examining urban spatial processes within and beyond Hong Kong, including affordable housing, gentrification, the creative class, and minorities in the city.

### ***Learning Outcomes***

After completing this course, students should be able to:

1. Describe the distinctive social character of the urban experience
2. Examine urban development patterns through both physical infrastructure and social dimensions with attention to local and global contexts
3. Analyze urban phenomena through multiple theoretical frameworks and across different international contexts

### ***Course Syllabus***

1. Introduction
2. Early Theories
  - Classic Statements on City and Urban Life
  - The Chicago School of Urban Sociology
  - Urbanism as a Way of Life
3. The Urban Experience
  - *Gemeinschaft* in City?
  - Urban Ethnography
4. Contextualizing Urban Spatial Process
  - Do we have Gentrification in Hong Kong?
  - Do we have Ghettos in Hong Kong?

5. Political Economy Approach
  - Critical Urban Theory
  - Urban Growth Machine
  - Hong Kong as a Case Study
6. Global Cities and the Creative Class

### ***Course Components***

The lecturer will conduct all lectures in person, as scheduled below. Students will also meet with the teaching assistant for tutorials approximately every two weeks. **Students should reserve two time slots for tutorials, in addition to their lecture times.** The teaching assistant will schedule tutorial times at the beginning of the term.

A 3-unit course typically includes about 39 hours of classroom time and 78-107 hours of self-study. With 2-3 hours for assessment, students should expect to spend a total of 117-146 hours on a 3-unit course.

<b>Teaching Modes and Learning Activities</b>	
<b>On-site face-to-face</b>	<b>Percentage of time</b>
<i>Lectures</i>	18%
<i>Tutorials</i>	9%
<i>Assessments and Self-Study Hours</i>	73%

### ***Course Schedule***

Week	Date	Topic
1	Jan 9	Introduction
2	Jan 16	Classic Statements on City and Urban Life
3	Jan 23	The Chicago School of Urban Sociology
4	Jan 30	Urbanism as a Way of Life
5	Feb 6	<i>Gemeinschaft</i> in City?
6	Feb 13	Urban Ethnography
No class	Feb 20	<i>Public Holiday</i>
7	Feb 27	Do we have Gentrification in Hong Kong?
No class	Mar 6	<i>Reading Week</i>
8	Mar 13	Do we have Ghettos in Hong Kong?
9	Mar 20	Political Economy Approach (I)
10	Mar 27	Political Economy Approach (II)
No class	Apr 3	<i>Public Holiday</i>
11	Apr 10	Political Economy Approach: HK as a Case Study
12	Apr 17	Global Cities and the Creative Class

### ***Assessment Type and Percentage***

(I) Mini Urban Ethnography 40%

(II) Mid-Term Paper 35%

(III) Tutorial Participation 25%

### ***Assessment Rubrics***

#### ***Grade Descriptors (Course Level)***

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Grade Descriptors (aligned to LO1-LO3)</b>
A	Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes. · <u>LO1</u> : Demonstrates a comprehensive, nuanced account of the distinctive social character of urban life; explains how space, place, and power shape everyday practices with precise use of urban sociological terminology. · <u>LO2</u> : Analyzes urban development through physical infrastructures and social dimensions with exceptional clarity; situates Hong Kong cases within the global context; draws on high-quality, well-cited evidence. · <u>LO3</u> : Deploys multiple theoretical frameworks in a synthetic way; evaluates limits and assumptions, addresses counter-arguments, and articulates why some theories fit certain contexts better than others.
A-	Generally outstanding performance on most learning outcomes. · <u>LO1</u> : Rich and precise description of urban social life with minor gaps in integration across levels of analysis. · <u>LO2</u> : Strong discussion of infrastructures and social processes across local and global contexts; minor omissions in evidence or scope. · <u>LO3</u> : Very strong application and comparison of multiple theories; synthesis is clear; some limits or counter-positions are less fully developed.
B+ / B / B-	Substantial performance overall, or high performance in some outcomes, compensating for weaker areas. · <u>LO1</u> : Solid identification of key features of urban experience; analysis occasionally descriptive or uneven across cases. · <u>LO2</u> : Appropriate discussion of development patterns; causal reasoning present but not always sustained; evidence relevant but sometimes limited. · <u>LO3</u> : Uses more than one framework with generally accurate comparisons; integration and critique are present but may lack depth.
C+ / C / C-	Satisfactory performance on the majority of outcomes, with notable weaknesses. · <u>LO1</u> : Basic description of urban life; tends toward generic claims. · <u>LO2</u> : Mentions infrastructures and social dimensions but with limited contextualization beyond the immediate case; evidence is minimal. · <u>LO3</u> : Applies a single theory or multiple theories descriptively; limited comparison or critical evaluation; conceptual misalignments appear.
D+ / D	Barely satisfactory performance on a number of outcomes. · <u>LO1</u> : Fragmentary grasp of urban social character; key concepts misused. · <u>LO2</u> : Weak linkage between physical and social dimensions; little sense of local–global dynamics; claims largely unsupported. · <u>LO3</u> : Misapplication or perfunctory use of theory; comparisons inaccurate or missing; counter-arguments not addressed.