

Urban Futures

GEG 6112

Module Outline

2011



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Module Aims and Outline

Module Outline

Both the form of, and processes shaping, cities have changed very significantly over the past 30 years or so. For some, these changes are so profound they signal the emergence of the 'post-metropolis'; a term meant to capture key differences between the modern and the 'post-modern' city. Such differences are evident across three dimensions: in the processes shaping cities (globalisation and economic restructuring); in new social divisions and urban forms (rising inequalities, and the emergence of 'mega cities', 'edge cities', hyper segregation, and gentrification); and in new responses to these changing conditions (heightened securitization, but also of 'theming', mediation and simulation).

Such changes are, perhaps, nowhere more evident than in Los Angeles. Indeed, for Ed Soja, Los Angeles should be considered 'paradigmatic': That is, as capturing (even if in a rather extreme form) changes now evident in many cities across the world (including London), or at least as offering a glimpse of possible urban futures. This module explores the concept of the post-metropolis through a detailed study of the Los Angeles region (and nearby Las Vegas) – posing the question, to what extent can LA be considered a 'paradigmatic city'?

Whilst framed by the concept of the post-metropolis, the module itself is structured around an examination of different parts of Los Angeles and different communities within the region – enabling us to consider how the changes outlined in the concept of the post-metropolis are impacting upon real people and places. As befits the post-metropolis framework, attention is drawn throughout to the ways in which changes to Los Angeles emerge out of the complex interweaving of social, cultural, economic and political processes.

Learning Outcomes

Knowledge

- A knowledge and understanding of the key dimensions of the 'post metropolis'
- A thorough knowledge of the main writings by geographers on the Los Angeles and Las Vegas regions, and an understanding of the complex social and cultural geographies of Los Angeles and Las Vegas, their development and contemporary form
- An understanding of the extent to which the past (both 'real' and 'imagined') continues to shape the development of the contemporary Los Angeles region
- an understanding of the way in which social, cultural, economic and political processes work together to shape the development of Los Angeles and Las Vegas
- An understanding of how the coming together of processes operating at a variety of scales (from the local to the global) help shape very different experiences of life in Los Angeles for different residents
- An understanding of the complex intersections of power and identity, and of the cross-cutting of identity politics (of race and class, for example) in contemporary American urban life

- the ability to adjudicate the extent to which Los Angeles might be considered paradigmatic of contemporary western urbanism more generally

Skills

- the ability to critically evaluate a range of theoretical approaches, and deploy a variety of source materials, to as to synthesise and communicate an understanding of urban politics through both written and oral means
- a range of subject specific and transferable skills, including: specialist field techniques and research methods; organisational, communication and presentational skills
- the ability to work both independently and in groups, and confidence to interrogate the ideas of others through independent research and reflection.

Module Structure

The module is organised in two parts. In the first part, weekly seminars enable a close engagement with a wide-ranging literature. Seminars follow the pattern of a reading/discussion group (with both general discussion and individual groups reporting back on specific readings), interspersed by outline lectures and videos. Attendance at seminars is compulsory and is monitored by means of continuous assessment in the form of a *Student Learning Log* (see **Assessment and Feedback**). The second part of the module consists of a residential field class through Week 12 of the spring semester and the first week of the Easter vacation.

Seminar Format

Seminars follow the pattern of a reading group/class discussion, interspersed by outline lectures and videos. Though I will help, specific groups will be expected to lead the class discussion each week, using the questions posed in the handbook as a basis for that discussion. When a lead group please report back on any reading in as much detail as possible (offering examples, figures, names of author's etc.). At the end of each seminar the lead group(s) will deposit a record of their reading and any notes they have used with me for photocopying and distribution to the rest of the class the following week.

Reading (and Watching) and Further Materials

As a general guide, everyone is expected to read between 3 and 4 articles/book chapters a week (see Assessment and Feedback). In those weeks where you are a member of a lead group you should add at least 2 further readings to this list.

This handbook contains the recommended reading for each week, divided in to core and supplementary reading. These are pieces that I have found especially useful in developing an understanding of the issues under consideration. They are best understood as providing you with a framework around which you can develop your thinking, rather than as (necessarily) providing the most up-to-date information (facts and figures, examples) of these issues.

Because academic papers/books take a long time to get on to the shelves, the best source of up-to-the-minute facts and figures are reports published on the www. These can be found very easily through Google, with some listed here. It is expected that you will **UPDATE the materials listed here yourself as necessary – starting with the recommended readings, and then finding your own materials to furnish you with the most up-to-date facts and figures/examples to flesh out your ideas.**

The reading includes details of where each reference is available. The vast majority can be found either in the QMUL Main Library or on-line. Most of the core readings have been placed in the Library's Teaching Collection to enable better access, but it is still important to look ahead so as to ensure you can access references which may be in high demand. Those not accessible via the library are available on Blackboard. A few will require you to use Senate House Library. I also hold copies of many of the readings, which I am happy to lend you.

Key Texts

There is no one set text for this course. But we will be making significant use of:

Soja, E. (2001) *Postmetropolis*. Blackwell, Oxford. HT119 SOJ

The following also offer excellent introductions to Los Angeles and to a number of the issues we will be considering:

Scott, A. & Soja. E. (eds) (1996) *The City: Los Angeles and Urban Theory at the end of the twentieth century*. Los Angeles, University of California Press.
ELECTRONIC RESOURCE

Waldinger, R. & Bozorgmehr, M. (eds) (1996) *Ethnic Los Angeles*. London, Sage.
HN80.L6 ETH

Travelogues and Guides

One of the best ways for getting a feel for the region is to read some of the excellent travelogues' about LA. Though old, David Rieff's book still offers the best introduction to the region and its issues I have found:

Rieff, D. (1993) *Los Angeles: capital of the third world*. London, Pheonix Paperbacks. HN80.L6 RIE

You should also buy a **Rough Guide** or **Lonely Planet** for either California/Nevada (which will include Las Vegas) or one of the excellent city guides to Los Angeles itself.

Films

One of the issues stressed on this module is the importance of representations in shaping our understandings of the city. You are therefore

strongly advised to try and watch as many films about/set in Los Angeles (and Las Vegas) as you can over the course of the module; in the past, students have enjoyed forming 'film groups', meeting up to watch a different film each week from the list provided below.

To supplement this list I have also provided a list of essays/film criticisms which will help you get more from your viewing. Finally, you might also want to check out some of the locations that film makers often use in Los Angeles itself – you may be able to visit some whilst you're there: see <http://www.movie-locations.com/films.html>

As a minimum, you will be expected to have viewed the 6 films (divided in to two sets of three) that form the basis for class discussion in Week 8.

Films for Class Discussion (Week 8)

Set 1: *Boyz N the Hood* (1991); *Bread and Roses* (2000); *Magnolia* (2000)

Set 2: *Falling Down* (1993), *Crash* (2005), *What's Cookin?* (2004)

Additional Recommended Films (and essays)

LA Past

Chinatown (1974) *L.A. Confidential* (1997), *Devil in a Blue Dress* (1995),

LA Present:

Black Los Angeles: *Boyz N the Hood* (1991) *Menace to Society* (1993)

Latino Los Angeles: *Colors* (1988), *Stand and Deliver* (1987) *Mi Vida Loca* (1993), *Mi Familia* (1995) *Bread and Roses* (2000),), *Quinceanera* (2006)

White Los Angeles: *LA Story* (1991), *Short Cuts* (1994), *Clueless* (1995), *Get Shorty* (1995), *Magnolia* (2000) *Dogtown and Z-boys* (2001) *Boardwalk Poets* (2007)

Multicultural (?) Los Angeles (Dystopic?): *Blade Runner* (1981) *Alien Nation* (1989), *Falling Down* (1993), *Training Day* (2001) *Lake View Terrace* (2008) *Crossing Over* (2009)

Multicultural (?) Los Angeles (Utopic?): *Grand Canyon* (1991), *What's Cookin?* (2004)

Las Vegas: *Casino*, *Ocean's Eleven*, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, *Leaving Las Vegas*

For a more comprehensive list of films set in or 'about' Los Angeles and Las Vegas see: See:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_movies_set_in_Los_Angeles

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_films_set_in_Las_Vegas

And (filmic) reading:

Use Web of Knowledge to search for further reading in *Camera Obscura*, *Sight and Sound*, *American Cinematographer* and *Screen*

Benton, L. (1995) 'Will the real/reel Los Angeles please stand up', *Urban Geography* 16 (2): 144-166 (Contrasting *LA Story*, *Boyz n the Hood* and *Grand Canyon*) Blackboard

Bruno, G. (1990) 'Ramble city: postmodernism and Blade Runner', in Kuhn, A. (ed) *Alien Zone*. London, Verso.

Costas, M. (2000) 'Genre and Place: the noir Los Angeles', in *Cities in Motion*. Unpublished PhD thesis. University of Sussex. Available from me. See also her chapter in Blunt, A. et al (eds) (2003) *Practising Cultural Geography*. Arnold, London

Cresswell, T. (1999) 'Falling down: resistance as diagnostic', in Sharp, J. et al; (eds) *Entanglements of Power: geographies of domination/resistance*. London, Routledge. Pp256-268

Davies, J. (1995) 'Gender, ethnicity and cultural crisis in Falling Down and Groundhog Day', *Screen* 36 (3):214-232

Davis, M (1990) *City of Quartz*. Verso, London.

Dipiero, J. (1992) 'White Men Can't Jump, Grand Canyon and white masculinity', *Camera Obscura* 30:113-137

Eaton, M. (1998) *Chinatown*. London, British Film Institute.

Farred, G. (1995) 'No way out of the menaced society', *Camera Obscura* 35:6-23

Fregoso, R. (1993) *The Bronze Screen*. Minneota, University of Minnesota Press.

Gabriel, J. (1996) 'What do you do when minority means you: Falling Down and the construction of whiteness', *Screen* 37 (2): 129-151

Harvey, D. (1989) *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Oxford, Blackwell. Chapter 18.

Katz, W and Hoggis, P. (2006) 'Crash: film noir in post modern LA', *New Labour Forum* 15 (1): 121-5 Blackboard

Mahoney, E. (1997) 'The people in parentheses: space under pressure in the postmodern city', in Clarke, D. (ed) *The Cinematic City*. London, Routledge.

Massood, P. (1996) 'Mapping the hood: the genealogy of city space in Boyz n the Hood and Menace II Society', *Cinema Journal* 35(2):85-97 Blackboard

Wald, G. (1999) 'Clueless in the neocolonial world order', *Camera Obscura* 42:51-70

Novels

There are also many novels either about or set in Los Angeles and Las Vegas. For those who would like to follow this further, look out for the work of Raymond Chandler or James Ellroy, Charles Bukowski or Brett Easton Ellis in particular (and see the essays on the noir tradition and LA fiction in Davis, M. (1990) *City of Quartz*). For a useful review of Los Angeles literature see Fine, D. (1984) *Los Angeles in Fiction*. Albuquerque, University of New Mexico. On Las Vegas, you could read Hunter S Thompson's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*.

A classic novel about life in contemporary Los Angeles which is especially worth reading is:

Boyle, T.C. (1995) *Tortilla Curtain*. London, Bloomsbury. (Explores the intersecting lives of a young white family in a Los Angeles gated community and of a Mexican family who have entered California illegally). PS3552.O9 BOY

Seminar programme

| | |
|----------|---|
| Week 1: | Introduction to the Module and to the Postmetropolis |
| Week 2: | An introduction to the geo-history of Los Angeles |
| Week 3: | Invisible people? Latino (and Korean) LA |
| Week 4: | Geographies of the Ghetto: African-American LA |
| Week 5: | Exploring the 'Exopolis' |
| Week 6: | Carceral Archipelagos: It All Comes Together in (Downtown) LA? |
| Week 7: | READING WEEK |
| Week 8: | LA on Film, and Alternative renderings of the Public: counter-cultural Los Angeles and the politics of the beach |
| Week 9: | Learning from Las Vegas |
| Week 10: | Class Debate - Paradigmatic Cities? |

Field class programme

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|-------------------------------|---|
| Saturday 26th March | Arrive LA |
| Sunday 27 th March | Orientation Day: a tour of the Los Angeles region |
| Monday 28 th March | Exploring Segregation: group work in Korea Town |
| Tuesday 29th March | Exploring Activism: A visit to the Watts Labor Community Action Committee, and National Day Laborer Organising Network |

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|---------------------------------|--|
| Wednesday 30th March | Exploring the Exopolis: A visit to Wonderware software company, and Rancho Santa Margarita, Orange County |
| Thursday 31 st March | DAY OFF |
| Friday 1 st April | Carceral Archipelagos: Downtown Walking Tour |
| Saturday 2 nd April | Alternative Renderings of the Public: gentrification and beach culture in Venice |
| Sunday 3 rd April | Drive to Las Vegas: Ethnographies of The Strip |
| Monday 4th April | Ethnographies of The Strip |
| Tuesday 5 th April | Drive to Los Angeles, evening flight home |
| Wednesday 6 th April | Arrive Home. |

Week 1: Introduction to the Module and to the Post-metropolis

An introduction to the module and framing concepts (the 'post-metropolis').

Arrangements for the module – seminars, group work, reading, assessment and feedback.

Preliminary arrangements for and information on the field class.

Seminar Format:

Outline lecture

Arrangements for the module – seminar groups

Field Class Arrangements

Seminar Groups

Through the first part of the module you will be working in 5 groups – each split in to two or three further subgroups – which will be responsible for leading discussion in different weeks. The topics to be discussed by each group are:

- **Group 1** (Week 3, 6 people) – Latino LA - the garment industry, domestic workers, day laborers, and political struggles
- **Group 2** (Week 4, 5 people) – African American LA – employment, unemployment, income and poverty, segregation; socio-spatial exclusion; the black middle class and political representation
- **Group 3** (Week 5, 5 people) - Orange County – edge cities, master planned and gated communities, Rancho Santa Margarita
- **Group 4** (Week 6, 4 people) – Downtown – homelessness, street clearance and the redevelopment of Skid Row
- **Group 5** (Week 9, 4 people) – Las Vegas – Las Vegas city and economy, employment and labor relations in the casino industry

Core Reading

Soja, E. (2001) 'Exploring the postmetropolis', in Minca, C. (ed) *Postmodern Geography: Theory and Praxis*. Oxford, Blackwell. GF33 POS

Week 2: An introduction to the geo-history of Los Angeles

This week you will be introduced to the basic history and geography of the Los Angeles region by way of context for your work on the rest of the module. For members of the 'Los Angeles School', the history of Los Angeles is best told through the lens of political-economy: in which the form that different cities take reflects the underlying structure of particular 'regimes of accumulation'. Others stress instead the history of land speculation, the role of different political interests, or of image manipulation in the shaping of the region and the selling of LA. In other words, some authors give emphasis to social and economic processes, others to cultural and political ones. In-line with the arguments set out in *The Post-metropolis* it is, presumably, important that we consider both. By the end of the lecture you should be familiar with the basic economic, social and political geography of the Los Angeles region: its areas of heavy manufacturing, de-industrialization and re-industrialization, high technology, financial services and 'sweated' industries; patterns of population change and residential segregation, and its (somewhat confusing) political geography.

Seminar Format:

Outline lecture and Video (HN16 UND)

Circulation of advance reading for Week 4 ('*You wouldn't wish it on a dog*').

Core Reading:

Boone, C. (1998) 'Real estate promotion and the shaping of Los Angeles', *Cities* 15 (3): 155-163 Online

Klein, N. (1997) *The History of Forgetting: Los Angeles and the erasure of memory*. London, Verso. Chapter 1: Booster Myths, Urban Erasure. HN80.L6 KLE

Krim, A. (1992) 'Los Angeles and the anti-tradition of the suburban city', *Journal of Historical Geography* 18 (1):121-38 Online

Soja, E. (2000) *Postmetropolis: critical studies of cities and regions*. Blackwell, Oxford. Chapter 5 'An introduction to the conurbation of Greater Los Angeles'. Pp.117-144. HT119 SOJ

Supplementary Reading:

Banham, R. (1971) *Los Angeles: the architecture of four ecologies*. Harmondsworth, Penguin. NA735.L6 BAN

Davis, M. (1991) *City of Quartz*. London, Verso. See entries on the 'LA School' HN80.L6 DAV

Modarres, A. (1998) 'Putting Los Angeles in its place', *Cities* 15 (3): 135-147 Online

Weinstein, R. (1996) 'The first American city', in Scott, A. & Soja, E. (eds) *The City*. Los Angeles, University of California Press. Pp. 22-46 ELECTRONIC RESOURCE

Week 3: Invisible people? Latino (and Korean) LA

For David Rieff, LA's Latino population made up an 'Alien Nation' of 'Invisible People'. As the scale of the reading list outlined below makes plain, It is no longer possible to consider Los Angeles's Latino population invisible. In 2000 Latino's made up the single largest ethnic group in the City of Los Angeles (the second largest, after White Anglos, in Greater Los Angeles), and are expected to emerge as the majority population in the 2010 census. The majority of LA's Latino population were born in Los Angeles. But very significant numbers of people continue to make their way to LA from Mexico, El Salvador and Guatemala especially – fuelling on-going and sporadic moral panics around immigration and 'illegals'. Many of these more recent migrants end up working as day laborers (in horticulture and construction), nannies and domestics. Latino's are also heavily concentrated in the garment industry, but also in retail and commerce, and high tech manufacturing. Indeed, it is clear that the Los Angeles economy would struggle to function without its Latino labour force. Latino's remain amongst the poorest of LA's ethnic groups (forming a very extensive 'working poor') though with significant differences between different national groups (Mexicans and Guatemalans, for example) and between 1st, 2nd and 3rd generation migrants. Despite (or perhaps because of) continued exploitation and poverty, as LA's Latino population has grown the community has also become increasingly politically powerful. Whilst Latino workers have stood at the heart of some of the most innovative (and successful) forms of labor mobilization in recent years, LA's Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa (now serving his second term of office) was born in East LA.

In stark contrast, Koreans are one of the region's wealthiest communities, with very high levels of professional and managerial employment. By contrast to Latinos, who are highly integrated (albeit in specific niches) within the wider regional economy, the Korean community's wealth is largely based upon the 'ethnic economy' model, in this case centred upon Korea Town itself. Though the majority of Koreans no longer live in Korea Town, the majority of Korea Town's population are Korean. More importantly, perhaps, a very significant proportion of the Korean community work, or own businesses, within Korea Town – drawing upon financial resources from, and providing goods and services to, the Korean community. Korea Town sits on the borders of Downtown and South Central Los Angeles, and provides something of a 'buffer zone' between South Central and West LA. The neighbourhood has become increasingly diverse in recent years, and is now dominated by wealthy Korean households, and much poorer Guatemalans. Many of those working in the (mainly Korean owned) offices and shops of Korea Town are Latino. As such, as well as illustrating the diversity of labour market outcomes for different migrant groups in Los Angeles, Korea Town itself offers a stark example of the residential and labour market segregation/segmentation that characterises LA. We will be visiting Korea Town when in Los Angeles.

Seminar Format:

Outline Lecture (a brief introduction to Latino LA)

Class Discussion led by Group 1

Outline lecture (Korea Town)

Group 1 – Latino LA:

Working in pairs, come prepared to feed back on your reading and to lead a discussion on the following (each pair will have 20 minutes each):

- 1A) Characteristics, location and working conditions in LA's garment industry (and sweat shops), paying particular attention to the role of Latino workers and differences and conflicts between different (legal/illegal, national) groups; characteristics and working conditions of LA's Latino nannies and domestics. Use the www for latest figures and reports
- 1B) Los Angeles's Day Laborer system: mode of operation, role of informal (and formal) labour exchanges, pay and conditions, type of work, place of employment, characteristics of (Latino) workers
- 1C) Political struggle and representation of Latino LA: new forms of labor/community organising; key struggles and successes (bus riders union, justice for janitors), organising day labourers (pay particular attention to the work of National Day Laborer Organizing Network - <http://www.ndlon.org/> - who will be visiting in LA), and mainstream political representation

Core Reading:

Allen, J. P. (2002) 'The Tortilla-Mercedez divide in Los Angeles', *Political Geography* 21 (5): 701-9 Online

Lee, D. O. (1995) 'Responses to urban transformation: Korean business experience in Los Angeles', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 19 (1) 40-53 Online

Rieff, D. (1993) *Los Angeles: capital of the Third World*. London, Pheonix Books. (Part II, but especially 'Modern Times' and 'Alien Nation'). HN80.L6 RIE

Rocco, R. (1996) 'Latino Los Angeles: reframing boundaries/borders', in Scott, A. & Soja, E. (eds) *The City: Los Angeles and urban theory at the end of the twentieth century*. Berkeley, University of California Press. Pp. 365-389
ELECTRONIC RESOURCE

Supplementary Reading (Latino LA)

An excellent summary of research on day laborers - <http://www.ndlon.org/resources/DayLaborerStudiesCompiled.pdf>

A survey of day laborers in LA - http://www.daylabor.org/research_1.htm

Armenta, A (2009) 'Creating community? Latino nannies in a West Los Angeles park', *Qualitative Sociology* 32 (3): 279-92

Also available as a draft at:

http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/1/0/4/6/6/pages104667/p104667-1.php

Davis, M. (2001) *Magical Urbanism: Latinos reinvent the US city*. London, Verso E184.S75 DAV

Ehrenreich, B. and Hochschild, A.R. (eds) (2002) *Global Women: Nannies, maids and sex workers in the new economy*. London, Granta Books. HD6072 GLO

Ellis, M., Wright, R. and Parks, V. (2004) 'Work together, live together? Geographies of racial and ethnic segregation at home and work', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 94 (3): 620-37 Online

Gill, A. & Long, S. (1989) 'Is there an immigration status wage differential between legal and undocumented workers - evidence from Los Angeles's garment industry', *Social Science Quarterly* 70 (1) 164-73 Online

Hochschild, A. (2003) *The Commercialization of Intimate Life: Notes from home and work*, Los Angeles, University of California Press. HD6072 HOC

Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. (2001) *Domestica: Immigrant workers cleaning and caring in the shadows of affluence*. Berkeley, CA, University of California Press.

Lopez, D. et al. (1996) 'Central Americans: at the bottom, struggling to get ahead', in Waldinger, R. & Bozorgmehr, M. (eds) *Ethnic Los Angeles*. New York, Russell Sage. pp. 279-304. Dip in to for Figures. HN80.L6 ETH

Marcelli, E. & Heer, D. (1997) 'Unauthorized Mexican workers in the 1990s Los Angeles County labor force', *International Migration Review* 35 (1):59-83 Online

Menjivar, C. (1999) 'The intersection of work and gender - Central American immigrant women and employment in California', *American Behavioural Scientist* 4: 601-627

Milkman, R. (2000) 'Immigrant organising and the new labour movement in Los Angeles', *Critical Sociology* 26: 59-81 Online

Ngin, C. (1998) 'Community of fate – A racialized metropolis between past and future', *Cities*, 15 (3): 165-71 Online

Ochoa, E. and Ochoa, G. (eds) (2005) *Latino Los Angeles: Transformations, communities and activism*. University of Arizona Press, Arizona. F869.L8 LAT

Ong, P. & Blumenberg, E. (1996) 'Income and racial inequality in Los Angeles', in Scott, A. & Soja, E. (eds) *The City: Los Angeles and urban theory at the end of the twentieth century*. Berkeley, University of California Press. Pp. 311-335 ELECTRONIC RESOURCE

Ortiz, V. (1996) 'The Mexican-Origin population: permanent working class or emerging middle class?', in Waldinger, R. & Bozorgmehr, M. (eds) *Ethnic Los Angeles*. New York, Russell Sage. pp.247-278 HN80.L6 ETH

Popkin_E (1999) 'Guatemalan Mayan migration to Los Angeles: constructing transnational linkages in the context of the settlement process', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22 (2): 267-289 Online

Ramirez, H. and Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. (2009) 'Mexican immigrant gardeners: Entrepreneurs or exploited workers?', *Social Problems* 56 (1): 70-88 Senate House

Soja, E. (2010) *Seeking Spatial Justice*. University of Minnesota Press, Minnesota. HM671 SOJ

Soldatenko_M. (1999) 'Made in the USA: Latinas/os? Garment work and ethnic conflict in Los Angeles' sweat shops', *Cultural Studies* 13 (2): 319-334 Online

Sullivan, R. and Lee, K. (2008) 'Organizing immigrant women in America's sweatshops: Lessons from Los Angeles garment worker center', *Signs* 33 (3): 527-532 Online

Varsanyi, M.W. (2005) 'The paradox of contemporary immigrant political mobilization: Organized labour, undocumented migrants, and the electoral participation in Los Angeles', *Antipode* 37 (4): 775-795 Online

Waldinger, M. and Lichter, M. I. (2003) *How the other half works: Immigration and the social organization of labor*. Berkeley: University of California Press. HD8081 WAL

Waldinger, R. & Bozorgmehr, M. (1996) 'The making of a multi-cultural metropolis', in Waldinger, R. & Bozorgmehr, M. (eds) *Ethnic Los Angeles*. New York, Russell Sage. pp. 3-38 HN80.L6 ETH

Valenzuela, A. (2003) "Day Labor Work," *Annual Review of Sociology* 29: 307-333. Online

Supplementary Reading (Korea Town and Asian LA)

Cheng, L. & Yang, P. (1996) 'Asians: the 'model minority' deconstructed', in Waldinger, R. & Bozorgmehr, M. (eds) *Ethnic Los Angeles*. New York, Russell Sage. pp. 305-344 HD8081 WAL

Choi, H. (2010) 'Religious institutions and ethnic entrepreneurship: The Korean ethnic church as a small business incubator', *Economic Development Quarterly* 24 (4): 372-383 Online

Kin, S. (2010) 'Shifting boundaries within second-generation Korean-American churches', *Sociology of Religion* 71 (1): 98-122 Online

Park, K. and Kim, J. (2008) 'The contested nexus of Los Angeles Koreatown: Capital restructuring, gentrification and displacement', *Amerasia Journal* 34 (3): 127 Blackboard. -

Week 4: Geographies of the Ghetto: African-American LA

This week we turn our attention to the experiences of Los Angeles's African-American community. LA's black community began to grow in the 1930s and expanded rapidly in the post-war years, when African-Americans from the South came to work in the booming heavy manufacturing plants of South-Central Los Angeles. By the late 1950s many of these industries were in decline. As more affluent (white) workers left South-Central Los Angeles, the area deteriorated, the most vivid expression of this deterioration being the Watt's Riots of 1965. Since then the Watts district and adjacent neighbourhoods like Compton have become synonymous with urban decline and the (re)emergence of the 'black ghetto'. Conditions in South Central worsened very significantly in the 1980s, a period that also saw high levels of gang activity (based largely around the selling of crack cocaine) and increasingly repressive policing. In 1992 South-Central (and South and East LA more widely) was again the scene of rioting – sparked, initially at least, by the Rodney King verdict. Since then, however, the area has undergone some marked changes. Significant state sponsored (e.g. the Metro system) and private (corporate) inward investment has seen jobs and commerce moving back in to (selected) areas of South Central Los Angeles, whilst demographically the area is now predominately Latino rather than African-American, with black households concentrated in to an ever smaller number of neighbourhoods.

Not-with-standing such changes, the African-American community remains one of LA's poorest. Levels of unemployment are very high indeed (amongst black men especially – who often stand at the bottom of the 'hiring queue'), as too levels of drug abuse. Indeed, for a number of academics (and right wing policy makers) Los Angeles' black community continues to represent the most vivid articulation of a (morally bankrupt, and dangerous) American 'underclass'. Others point instead to the increasing bifurcation of LA's African-American community – with recent years seeing worsening levels of unemployment and poverty for the majority, and the rapid growth of a small but successful black middle class (many of them public sector professionals) which has been important to improving civil and political rights amongst African American Angelenos.

Seminar Format:

Outline Lecture (a brief history of LA's black community and of South-Central Los Angeles)

Class Discussion led by Group 2

Group 2 – Los Angeles' Black Community:

Working in pairs, come prepared to feed back on your reading and to lead a discussion on the following (each pair will have 20 minutes each):

- 2A) Employment, unemployment, income and poverty amongst LA's African American community; residential settlement and segregation. Use the www for latest figures and reports

- 2B) Other indicators of social and spatial exclusion: environmental racism, financial (and service) exclusion, housing conditions, drug addiction, gangs, policing and incarceration. Use the www for latest figures and reports
- 2C) Income bifurcation, the black middle class and political representation/struggles (including community organisations). Pay particular attention to, and bring examples of, the work of the Watts Labour Community Action Committee (WLCAC) <http://www.wlcac.org/> – who will be visiting in LA.

Core Reading:

Anderson, S. (1996) 'A city called Heaven: black enchantment and despair in Los Angeles', in Scott, A. & Soja, E. (eds) *The City: Los Angeles and urban theory at the end of the twentieth century*. Berkeley, University of California Press. Pp. 336-364 ELECTRONIC RESOURCE

Deener, A. (2010) 'The black section' of the neighbourhood: Collective visibility and collective invisibility as sources of place identity', *Ethnography* 11(1): 45-67 Online

Grant, D. et al. (1996) 'African Americans: social and economic bifurcation', in Waldinger, R. & Bozorgmehr, M. (eds) *Ethnic Los Angeles*. New York, Russell Sage. pp. 379-412 HN80.L6 ETH

Johnston, R., Poulson, M. and Forrest, J. (2006) 'Modern and postmodern cities and ethnic residential segregation: Is Los Angeles different?', *Geoforum* 37: 318-330 Online

Shih, J. (2002) 'Yeah, I could hire this one, but I know it's gonna be a problem': how race, nativity, and gender affect employers perceptions of the manageability of job seekers', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 25(1): 99-119 Online

For an overview of the history and geography of South Central - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Los_Angeles

For very different views of South Central see and compare:

<http://www.angelfire.com/nv2/laneighbourhoods/>

http://www.streetgangs.com/maps/southla_turf.html

<http://www.damianbipkins.com/scla/scla1.htm>

Supplementary Reading:

Alonso, A. (2004) 'Racialised identities and the formation of black gangs in Los Angeles', *Urban Geography* 25 (7): 658-74 Blackboard

Davis, M. (1990) 'Between the hammer and the rock', Davis, M. *City of Quartz*. London, Verso. HN80.L6 DAV

Johnson, J.H. et al (1993) 'Seeds of the Los Angeles rebellion of 1992', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 17 (2):115-119 Online

Kaplan, B (2006) *Catching Hell in the City of Angels: Life and meanings of blackness in South Central Los Angeles*. University of Minnesota Press, Minnesota. F869.L8 VAR

Larson, T. (1998) 'An economic view of South Central Los Angeles' *Cities* 15 (3): 193-208 Online

Lyne, M. (2006) 'Dancing between two worlds: A portrait of the life of a black male teacher in South Central LA', *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 19 (2): 221-42 Blackboard

Pastor, M. (1993) 'Economic inequality, Latino poverty and the civil unrest in Los Angeles', *Economic Development Quarterly* 9 (3):238-58 Online

Pollard, J. (1996) 'Banking at the margins: a geography of financial exclusion in Los Angeles', *Environment and Planning A*:28:1209-32 Online

Sonenshein, R. (1996) 'The battle over liquor stores in South Central Los Angeles: the management of an inter-minority conflict', *Urban Affairs Review* 31 (6):710-37 Online

Zamudio, M.M. and Lichter, M.I. (2008) 'Bad attitudes and good soldiers: Soft skills as a code of tractability in the hiring of immigrant Latina/os over native blacks in the hotel industry', *Social Problems* 55 (4): 573-589 Senate House

Zilberstein, G and Larson, T. (1998) 'An economic view of South Central Los Angeles', *Cities* 15 (3): 193-208 Online

Week 5: Exploring the 'Exopolis'

This week we turn our attention to the emergence and growth of Los Angeles's High Tech sector and associated 'Edge Cities', focusing on developments in Orange County. In the outline lecture I will introduce you to the changing economic geographies that underlie recent residential developments in Orange County, and which will provide important context to a visit to a major software manufacturer in Orange County itself. But the majority of the lecture, and of subsequent group presentations and class discussion, will be given over to a consideration of the new urban forms springing up in places like Orange County – the so-called Edge Cities, that together form what Soja has called the 'Exopolis'. We will consider what challenges such developments might hold for the way we think about 'cities', but also the particular cultural politics they articulate. We will focus in on the emergence of one particular such development – the Master Planned City of Rancho Santa Margarita, which we will also be visiting when in Orange County.

Seminar Format:

Outline Lecture (a brief introduction to Orange County: its economy and urban forms)

Class Discussion led by Group 3

Group 3 – Edge Cities, Gated Communities and Rancho Santa Margarita:

Working in pairs, come prepared to feed back on your reading and to lead a discussion on the following (each pair will have 20 minutes each):

- 3A) Edge Cities: their history, definitions, different forms, challenge to traditional models of urbanism.
- 3B) Master Planned and Gated Communities: the rise of and key features of neo-traditionalism and master planning; the anti/idealised urban imaginary underlying such developments (withdrawal from the public sphere/space and collective responsibility), social (racial, gender, and class) inclusion/exclusion, life behind the gates. Focus mainly (but not exclusively) on the US. Illustrate your discussion with cultural texts e.g. T.C. Boyle's *Tortilla Curtain*.
- 3C) Introduce the class to Rancho Santa Margarita: its history and development (including its invented traditions), and facts and figures about the city (population size, employment base, house prices, ethnic mix etc.). To illustrate your presentation visit as many Rancho Santa Margarita web sites as possible. Try to visit one's put out by local residents and – if possible – e-mail residents to get their views of life in the city. (<http://www.cityofrsm.org/> - see also http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rancho_Santa_Margarita):

Core Reading:

McCarthy, C. et al (1997) 'Danger in the safety zone: notes on race, resentment and the discourse of crime, violence and suburban security', *Cultural Studies* 11 (2):274-95 Online

Phelps, N.A., Wood, A.M. and Valler, D.C. (2010) 'A postsuburban world? An outline of a research agenda', *Environment and Planning A* 42 (2): 366-383 Online

Soja, E. (2000) *Postmetropolis*. Oxford, Blackwell. Chapter 8: 'Exopolis: the restructuring of urban form' , pp. 233-259 HT119 SOJ

Till, K. (1993) 'Neotraditional towns and urban villages: the cultural production of a geography of otherness', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 11:709-32 Online

Supplementary Reading:

Atkinson, R. and Flint, J. (2004) 'Fortress UK? Gated communities, the spatial revolt of elites and time-space trajectories of segregation', *Housing Studies* 19 (6): 875-892 Online

Fotsch, P.M. (1999) 'Contesting urban freeway stories: Racial politics and the OJ Simpson chase', *Cultural Studies* 13 (1): 110-137 Blackboard

Greene, R.P. (2008) 'Urban peripheries as organizers of what remains of the center: Examining the evidence from Los Angeles and Chicago', *Urban Geography* 29 (2): 138-153 Blackboard

Kling, R, Olin, S. & Poster, M. (1991) *Postsuburban California: the transformation of Orange County*. University of California Press, Berkeley California. (See the Introduction, and dip in for examples and themes). HN79.C3 POS

Low, S. (2001) 'The edge and the center: Gated communities and the discourse of urban fear', *American Anthropologist* 103(1): 45-58 Online

Low, S. (2003) *Behind the Gates: Life, security, and the pursuit of happiness in frontier America*. London, Routledge.

McCrorry, J. (2010) *The Edge City Fallacy: New urban forms or same old megalopolis?* <http://johnmccrorry.com/selected-writings/the-edge-city-fallacy/>

Renaud Le Goix, R. and Webster, C.J. (2008) 'Gated Communities', *Geography Compass* 2/4 (2008): 1189–1214, 10.1111/j.1749-8198.2008.00118.x Online

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orange_County,_California

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edge_city

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rancho_Santa_Margarita,_California

Week 6: Carceral Archipelagos: It All Comes Together in (Downtown) LA?

This week we turn our attention to the Downtown district. For Soja it 'all comes together in LA', and certainly many of the key features of the post-metropolis are evident in Downtown Los Angeles, whether globalisation (in the form of both financial capital and money transfer services, new populations, goods and culture); economic restructuring (the financial services economy, but also sweatshops and a 'downgraded' manufacturing sector); increasing social divisions and associated urban forms (gentrification); securitization (this is the home of the infamous 'bum proof' bus seat) but also mediation and simulation (the Downtown district will be familiar to you from countless tv shows and films, from *Dragnet* to *Training Day*). Our main focus, however, will be tracing the history of the initial development and subsequent redevelopment of Downtown in the early and late twentieth centuries. Whilst the early part of the twentieth century saw an attempt to develop what Soja calls 'Citadel LA' - with the aim of securing the conditions for urban growth based around labour controls and urban boosterism - the latter twentieth/early twenty first century has seen the (re)development of a new financial district and, more recently, associated gentrification of the surrounding Theatre and Fashion Districts. Whilst the latter can be understood as an attempt to secure Los Angeles' position in the Global City hierarchy, to attract international investment it has, of course, also been necessary to secure 'safe streets', and the areas around the financial core and on the edges of nearby Skid Row are one of the clearest examples of the increasing 'militarization' of urban public space that can be found in US cities. The outline lecture will introduce you to this early history (as well as to some of the forgotten histories of Downtown LA), the more recent redevelopment of the financial core, and the implications of both for how we might understand the politics of public space. Group discussion will focus on the implications of such developments for homeless Angelenos.

Seminar Format:

Outline Lecture

Class Discussion led by Group 4

Recap and Revision

Group 4 – the geographies of homelessness and skid row

Working in pairs, come prepared to feed back on your reading and to lead a discussion on the following (each pair will have 20 minutes each):

- 4A) Homelessness in Los Angeles: its causes, characteristics (who is homeless), forms (hidden/visible), and the wider geographies of homelessness across the region (not all homelessness is concentrated in Skid Row); the emergence of Skid Row (demographics and services) and its role as a space of resource for homeless people, homeless people's own support networks and survival tactics.
- 4B) The purification of public space and redevelopment of Skid Row: the redevelopment and securitization of adjacent areas (Fashion, Toy,

and Theatre Districts), gentrification, Business Improvement Districts and policing, containment and clearance; negotiations and resistance (is homeless space really 'collapsing', and/or do homeless people find ways to resist? how do (different) homeless people negotiate different policing regimes in different parts of LA?).

Core Reading

Davis, M. (1987) 'Chinatown, part two? the 'internationalisation' of downtown Los Angeles', *New Left Review* 164:65-86 Online

Davis, M. (1990) 'Fortress LA', in his *The City of Quartz* OR Davis, M. (1992) 'Fortress Los Angeles: the militarisation of urban space', in Sorkin, M. (ed) *Variations on a Theme Park*. Noonday. pp154-80 HT123 VAR

Parson, D. (1992) 'The search for the centre: the recomposition of race, class and space in Los Angeles', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 17 (2):232-40 Online

Soja, E. (1996) *ThirdSpace: journeys to Los Angeles and other real and imagined communities*. Blackwell, Oxford. 'Citadel-LA'. Pp. 204-211 HN80.L6 SOJ

Soja, E. (2000) *Postmetropolis*. Blackwell, Oxford. 'The carceral archipelago'. Pp.298-317 HT119 SOJ

Supplementary Reading

DeVerteuil, G. (2006) 'The local state and homeless shelters: Beyond revanchism?', *Cities* 23 (2): 109-120 Online

DeVerteuil, G., Marr, M. and Snow, D. (2009) 'Any space left? Homeless resistance by place-type in Los Angeles County', *Urban Geography* 30 (6): 633-651 Available at: http://eprints.soton.ac.uk/68738/1/URBAN_30n06_633-651-DeVerteuil.pdf

DeVerteuil, G. May, J., and Von Mahs, J. (2009) 'Complexity not collapse: reframing the geographies of homelessness in a 'punitive age', *Progress in Human Geography* 33 (5): 646-666 Online

Flusty, S. (2000) 'Thrashing downtown: play as resistance in the spatial and representational regulation of Los Angeles', *Cities* 17 (2): 149-58 Online

Klein, N. (1997) *The History of Forgetting: Los Angeles and the erasure of memory*. London, Verso. Dip in to find material on the re-development of Bunker Hill and Union Street Station. HN80.L6 KLE

Marr, M.D., DeVerteuil, G. and Snow, D. (2009) 'Towards a contextual approach to the place-homeless survival nexus: An exploratory case study of Los Angeles County', *Cities* 26 (6): 307-317 Online

Mitchell, D. (1997) 'The annihilation of space by law: the roots and implications of anti-homeless laws in the United States', *Antipode* 29 (3): 303-336 Online

Mitchell, D. (2001) 'Postmodern geographical praxis? The postmodern impulse and the war against homeless people in the 'post-justice' city', in Minca, C. (ed) *Postmodern Geography: Theory and Praxis*. Blackwell, Oxford, pp. 57-92. GF33 POS

Mitchell, D. and Heynen, N. (2009) 'The geography of survival and the right to the city: Speculations on surveillance, legal innovation and the criminalization of intervention', *Urban Geography* 30 (6): 611-632 Available at: <http://nheyne.myweb.uqa.edu/pdf/ug2>

Reese, E., Deverteuil, G. and Thach, L. (2010) "'Weak center' gentrification and the contradictions of containment: Deconcentrating poverty in downtown Los Angeles', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 34 (2) 310-327 Online

Ruddick, S. (1996) *Young and Homeless in Hollywood: mapping social identities*. Routledge, London. (See especially chapter 3, where Ruddick outlines changes in the geographies of Downtown's Skid Row and the place of the homeless in the 'post-industrial' city). HV4506.L3 RUD

Rowe, S. & Wolch, J. (1990) 'Social networks in time and space: homeless women in Skid Row, Los Angeles', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 80:184-204. Online

Wolch, J. (1996) 'From global to local: the rise of homelessness in Los Angeles during the 1980s', in Scott, A. & Soja, E. (eds) *The City*. University of California Press, California. ELECTRONIC RESOURCE

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Downtown_Los_Angeles

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bunker_Hill,_Los_Angeles,_California

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skid_Row#Los_Angeles

On homelessness in LA - http://www.bringlahome.org/docs/HomelessReportCard_v7.pdf

For very different views on the redevelopment of Skid Row and the 'Safer City' programme - http://www.city-journal.org/html/17_4_skid_row.html

<http://newstandardnews.net/content/index.cfm/items/4672>

<http://www.lahomelessblog.org/2008/09/homeless-numbers-increasing-in-las-skid.html>

<http://homeless.cartifact.com> – an amazing site which shows the changing concentration of homeless people across the downtown/skid row area over the last year or so. An animated sequence shows how these concentrations change through clearance programmes etc on a week by week **baWeek 8:**

Week 8: LA on Film, and Alternative renderings of the Public: counter-cultural Los Angeles and the politics of the beach

This week we will try to draw our work over the previous four or five weeks to a close with a class discussion of attempts to represent the inequalities and divisions evident in LA on film.

Having done so we will turn our attention to a part of Los Angeles that has for some time prided itself on offering a more inclusive space, built around an alternative or 'counter-cultural' scene; Venice. For Raynar Banham, the Venice district – or what he calls 'Surfurbia' – is the rarest of spaces in Los Angeles, a place where "all men (sic) are equal". First laid out in 1905 by the property developer Abbot Kinney, Venice was originally designed as an up-market beach resort for the Los Angeles middle classes centred upon a boardwalk, beach and in-land canals. The neighbourhood has since moved through numerous periods of disinvestment, reinvestment and reinvention. But throughout, the alternative status of Venice has lived on, not least in the streets immediately surrounding and on the beach itself. For Rob Shields, the beach has always been a 'place on the margins', a space where behaviour not tolerated elsewhere flourishes. In Venice, the alternative status of the boardwalk and beach takes a number of forms – from Californian body culture, through to New Age healing to evangelical free speech. Whilst in LA, you will undertake participant observation in around the canals and boardwalk in Venice unpacking the cultural politics of this 'alternative' public space.

Seminar Format:

Class discussion – (Re)presenting LA

Outline lecture.

Class discussion – marginality and public/civic space

Class Discussion – (Re)presenting LA

Make sure you have watched the following films; Set 1 - *Boyz n the Hood* (1991), *Bread and Roses* (2000), *Magnolia* (2000); Set 2 - *Falling Down* (1993), *Crash*, (2005) *What's Cookin?* (2004). Each film presents a different view of Los Angeles. The first 3 (*Boyz n the Hood*, *Bread and Roses*, *Magnolia*) are centred upon the experience of a particular community. *Falling Down* and *Crash* have a wider remit but still portray a vision of Los Angeles as highly if not irrevocably segregated. Only *What's Cookin?* offers an obviously different picture of the city. Comparing these representations what are your views on the following? (See the suggested reading on p5 and 6 for supporting material):

- What are the main axes of segregation in these films (race, class, gender or some combination of these)?
- How convincing are the main characters in these films? Which aspects of these characters identities are highlighted? Which given less attention?
- How much attention do these films pay to the processes driving inequality and segregation in Los Angeles? Which processes are highlighted which given less attention?

- How separate are the worlds portrayed in these films? What divides them? What connects them?
- What kind of vision of Los Angeles do these films offer? How might such a vision shape your own and other people's (including Angeleno's) understanding of and actions in Los Angeles?

Class Discussion – Marginality and Public/Civic Space

The second part of this week's session will be given over to a lecture outlining the history of Venice in preparation for your fieldwork. To frame the talk we will, however, have a class discussion around the issues laid out below. Come prepared to discuss the following:

- Notions of marginality and the carnivalesque outlined by Shields, and their relationship with public space (moments of transgression or a safety valve?). Why is it, for Shields, that the seaside resort and beach often emerge as sites of the carnivalesque?
- The more detailed 'mapping' of the beach provided by Fiske.
- The place of Venice as a space apart from the rest of Los Angeles described by Banham and the significance of such a district in a region apparently lacking in 'civic' (if not 'public') space.

Core Reading:

Banham, R. (1971) *Los Angeles: the architecture of four ecologies*. Harmondsworth, Penguin. (Chapter 2: Surfurbia). NA735.L6 BAN

Fiske, J. (1989) *Reading the Popular*. Unwin Hyman, London. (His essay on the beach). HM621 FIS

Shields, R (1991) *Places on the Margin*. Routledge, London. (Introduction and the chapter on Brighton). GF95 SHI

Supplementary reading:

Rycroft, S. (1996) 'Changing Lanes: Textuality Off and On the Road', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, Vol 21, pp.425-428 (includes a section on Venice in the 1950s) Online

Rycroft, S. (1996) 'Global Undergrounds: the Cultural Politics of Sound and Light in Los Angeles 1965-1975' in Leshon, A., Mattless, D. & Revill, G. (eds) *The Place of Music: Music, Space and the Production of Place*, Longmans, London. ML3795 PLA

Week 9: Learning from Las Vegas

Ever since Robert Venturi published his seminal *Learning From Las Vegas* in 1972, Las Vegas has been taken as emblematic of wider developments in architecture and urban form. For Venturi, there was much to learn from Las Vegas. Not least, its radically populist architecture was heralded as the shape of things to come – ushering in a new ‘postmodern’ vernacular. More recent commentators have also looked to Las Vegas as offering the ‘ultimate’ in postmodern urbanism, though their accounts have tended to be somewhat more hard edged.

Our main task this week is to delineate what it is about Vegas that for these commentators suggests it might speak of much broader developments in contemporary urban life. We could do this by looking at how Las Vegas fits with a number of the dimensions of the ‘post-metropolis’. For example, suggesting that Vegas too might offer a good example of the development of a new post-metropolitan urban form, Las Vegas is currently the United State’s fastest growing metropolitan area with much of this growth in the form of Master Planned suburban communities aimed at wealthy retirees. Underwritten by revenues from the casinos, the Las Vegas economy is also booming with the rapid expansion of the FIRE industries, whilst Nevada more generally is proving an increasingly popular site for the location of back office service employment, high technology manufacturing (much of it tied to the military testing sites in the Nevada desert) and basic processing functions (Ocean Spray have located their processing plant just outside of LV). Both the FIRE industries and the casinos themselves have the polarised occupational and income structures common to larger ‘global cities’, and a familiar ethnic division of labour.

The most obvious connection between Las Vegas and the post-metropolis, however, is its significance as a city of simulation – the last of the characteristics Soja outlines for the post-metropolis – and it is this on which we will concentrate most both in class and when in Las Vegas itself.

Seminar Format:

Video

Outline Lecture

Class Discussion led by Group 5

Group 5 – the other Las Vegas

Working in pairs, come prepared to feed back on your reading and to lead a discussion on the following (each pair will have 20 minutes each):

- 5A) The recent growth of Las Vegas as city and economy - the growth of the suburbs and gated communities, economic growth and patterns of employment, poverty and ethnic segregation in Las Vegas
- 5B) Working conditions and labour relations in the casinos

Core Reading:

Gottschalk, S. (1995) 'Ethnographic fragments in postmodern spaces', *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 24 (2):195-228 Online

Nealon, J. (2002) 'Empire of the intensities: a random walk down Las Vegas boulevard', *Parallax* 8 (1): 78-91 Online

Newcott, W. (1996) 'Believing Las Vegas: amid the dazzle, America's fastest growing metro area in on a roll', *National Geographic*, December 1996:58-81 (An excellent overview of the development of both the casinos and LV more generally) Blackboard

Supplementary Reading:

Benz, D. (2004) 'Labor's ace in the hole: Casino organizing in Las Vegas', Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of American Political Scientists; Available at: http://www.allacademic.com//meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/0/6/1/0/0/pa_ges61001/p61001-1.php

Borchard, K. (2010) 'Between poverty and a lifestyle: The leisure activities of homeless people in Las Vegas', *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 39 (4): 441-466 Blackboard.

Blumenberg, E. and Ehrenfeucht, R. (2008) 'Civil liberties and the regulation of public space: The case of sidewalks in Las Vegas', *Environment and Planning A* 40 (2): 303-322 Online

Crang, P. (1994) 'It's showtime!', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 12: 675-704 Online

Goss, J. (1993) 'The magic of the mall: an analysis of form, function and meaning in the contemporary retail built environment', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 83:18-47 Online

Hannigan, J. (2007) 'Casino cities', *Geography Compass* 1 (4): 959-975 Online

Knight, C. (2003) 'Beyond the neon billboard: sidewalk spectacle and public art in Las Vegas', *Journal of American and Comparative Culture* 25 (1-2): 9-13 Blackboard

Littlejohn, D. (ed) (1999) *The Real Las Vegas: life beyond The Strip*. Oxford, Oxford University Press. (Dip in) HN80.L3 REA

McKenzie, E. (2005) 'Constructing the Pomerium in Las Vegas: a case study of emerging trends in American gated communities', *Housing Studies* 20 (2): 187-203 Online

Parker, R.F & Feagin, J.R. (1991) 'Military spending in free enterprize cities: the military-industrial complex in Houston and Las Vegas', Kirby, A. (ed) *The Pentagon and the Cities*. Sage, London. pp100-25. HT123 PEN

Rothman, H. and Davis, M. (eds) (2002) *The Grit Beneath the Glitter: Tales from the Real Las Vegas*. California, University of California Press. (Dip in) HN80.L3 GRI

Rothman, H (2003) *Neon Metropolis: How Las Vegas Started the twenty first century*. London, Routledge, chapters 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. HN80.L3 ROT

Schull, N.D. (2001) 'Oasis/mirage: fantasies of nature in Las Vegas', *Critical Studies* 377-402 Blackboard

Zukin, S. et al. (1998) 'From Coney Island to Las Vegas in the urban imaginary: Discursive practices of growth and decline', *Urban Affairs Review* 33 (5): 627-654 Blackboard

<http://www.city-data.com/us-cities/The-West/Las-Vegas-Economy.html>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Las_Vegas,_Nevada

Week 10: Class Debate - Paradigmatic Cities?

Before leaving for Los Angeles we will have a class debate.

Seminar Format:

Class Discussion and Debate

Field class arrangements, paperwork, ticketing and travel arrangements

Class Debate:

Come prepared to debate the following question:

To what extent should Los Angeles be considered paradigmatic of contemporary western urbanism?

To facilitate the debate the class will be divided in to 2 groups: those who consider Los Angeles a paradigmatic city and those who do not. The debate will begin by drawing up the 'teams'.

Core Reading:

Beauregard, R. (2003) 'City of superlatives', *City and Community* 2 (3): 183-99 Online

Brenner, N. (2004) 'Stereotypes, Archetypes and Prototypes: Three Uses of Superlatives in Contemporary Urban Studies' *City & Community*, 3: 205-218.(Available at: <http://sociology.fas.nyu.edu/object/neilbrenner.html>)

Nijman, J. (2000) 'The paradigmatic city', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 90 (1): 135-45 Online

Supplementary Reading:

Curry, J. & Kenney, M. (1999) 'The paradigmatic city: post-industrial illusion and the Los Angeles school', *Antipode* 31 (1): 1-29 Online

Dear, M., (2002) 'Los Angeles and the Chicago School: Invitation to a debate', *City and Community* 1: 5-32 Online

Dear, M. (2003) 'The Los Angeles School of Urbanism: an intellectual history', *Urban Geography* 24 (6): 493-509. Available at: http://college.usc.edu/la_school/key_articles/key_precepts.html

Dear, M. & Flusty, S. (1997) 'The iron lotus: Los Angeles as postmodern urbanism', *Annals of the Academy of Political and Social Science* 55(1):151-63 Online

Dear, M., and Flusty, S. (2001) 'The resistable rise of the LA School', in Dear, M. (ed) *From Chicago to LA: Making Sense of Urban Theory*. Thousand Oaks, Sage. Pp5-16

Dear, M. and Dahmann, N. (2008) 'Urban politics and the Los Angeles school of urbanism', *Urban Affairs Review* 44 (2): 266-279 Online

Gordon, P. and Richardson, H. (1999) 'Review essay: Los Angeles, city of angels? No, city of angles', *Urban Studies* 36 (3): 575-591 Online

Horvath, R. (2004) 'The particularity of global places: place making practices in Los Angeles and Sydney', *Urban Geography* 25(2): 92-119 Blackboard

Johnson, R., Poulsen, M. and Forrest, B. (2006) 'Modern and post-modern cities and ethnic residential segregation: Is Los Angeles different?', *Geoforum* 37: 318-330 Online

Kloosterman, R. (2007) 'The case of Los Angeles and, by inference, other cities?', *City and Community* 6 (3): 237-239 Online

Shearmur, R. (2006) 'Chicago and LA: A clash of epistemologies', *Urban Geography* 29 (2): 167-176 Blackboard

Soja, E. (2001) 'Exploring the postmetropolis', in Minca, C. (ed) *Postmodern Geography: theory and praxis*. Oxford, Blackwell. GF33 POS

Urban Futures

GEG 6112

2011

Assessment and Feedback



Convenor: Professor Jon May, Room 122, e-mail: j.may@qmul.ac.uk

Urban Futures carries **3** modes of assessment and feedback:

- Student Learning Log (20%)
- 3000 word Course Work Essay (30%)
- c3000 word Field Class Diary (50%)

Details as to the form of each piece of assessment, marking criteria and feedback mechanisms are outlined below. Each piece of work should be fronted with the School Cover Sheet bearing your Candidate Number.

Submission Dates:

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Student Learning Log (1 copy) | Hard copy, School Office, 4pm Wednesday 23rd March 2011 |
| Course Essay (2 copies) | Hard copy in School Course Work Box, AND electronic copy via Web CT, 4pm Tuesday 3rd May 2011 |
| Field Class Diary (1 copy) | Hard copy, School Office, 4pm Tuesday 3 rd May 2011 |

Student Learning Log

The Student Learning Log contributes 20% to the total assessment.

The Log itself represents a week by week record of your reading and learning through the first part of the module (the seminar programme). It should show evidence of reading and reflection (class notes) for each week's meetings. Physically it should take the form of an A4 folder, divided in to weekly sections.

In more detail the Log should consist of the following:

- i) A weekly record of reading to consist of hand written or typed notes for each reference read *together with the notes taken during each seminar*. **Note:** no credit will be given for simply including photocopies of readings. The School recommends 4 hours private study for every 1 hour of class contact each week. This module involves 2 hours class contact per week, equating to 8 hours of private study a week. **As a guide you should therefore be reading 3-4 journal articles or book chapters a week in preparation for seminars.** It is expected that each reading will generate c 2 sides + (A4) of notes. It is expected that each seminar will generate a further 2-3 sides of notes. Marks for reading will be awarded according to the amount of reading undertaken and the quality of notes from reading and class discussions.

Feedback: Your Learning Log should benefit from the feedback provided in the form of class discussion each week. Additional feedback will be provided in the form of written comments and a provisional grade. Feedback sheets will be available for collection from me on Tuesday 3rd May 2011.

Course Work Essay

The course work essay should be maximum 3000 words long. It contributes 30% towards the final assessment. Essays will be marked according to the standard Level 6 School Course Work Marking Criteria (attached).

For the course work essay use the title below – only this title will be accepted.

To what extent should Los Angeles be considered paradigmatic of contemporary western urbanism?

NOTE: Whilst you are encouraged to draw upon your own observations and experiences of Los Angeles gathered during the field class for the course work essay, any material used must be referenced in the standard way. Rather than simply cite your own experiences of Los Angeles, you are therefore strongly advised to seek secondary (published) material that you can cite to in order to make the point(s) inspired by these observations. It is further anticipated that you will seek to illustrate your arguments with some comparative material - that is, referencing developments in cities other than Los Angeles so as to be better able to assess LA's 'paradigmatic' qualities. Any such material must likewise be properly cited in the usual way.

Feedback: The course work essay constitutes a piece of summative assessment. Feedback, in the form of written comments and a provisional grade, will therefore be provided in the usual way for such assessments: for collection from your tutor in the following academic year.

Field Class Diary

Notes for your Field Class Diary should be completed each evening whilst in Los Angeles and Las Vegas, with a final version of the diary completed on return from the United States. The Field Class Diary constitutes 50% of the total marks awarded for the module.

Diaries are a common research tool, especially (but not only) amongst ethnographers. A research diary is used to record the progress of research – noting when, where and how you undertook a particular piece of work. They are also used to record issues that raise themselves during the 'doing' of research and that you will need to come back to in the course of writing-up: for example, to make a note of the circumstances surrounding an interview which may shape the subsequent interpretation of that interview. Often a researcher will use their diary to look back at how the direction of their research changed over the period of research, and why - issues that tend to get 'flattened out' when you come to write-up the research.

Your Field Class Diary should offer evidence of your observations whilst in Los Angeles and Las Vegas and your reflection on the issues raised by those observations. Entries may be typed or hand written and include **each day** we are in America. You may illustrate your diary with photographs, maps, and figures. Because some days will 'grab' you more than others, it is

expected that the length of individual entries may differ. But as a guide the minimum word limit is 3000 words: if you want to write more, feel free to exceed it.

The diary must be more than a simple record of events. Hence, entries must do more than the following example:

8 April

"Breakfast at Denny's (eggs and pancakes) and bus to Downtown, via Wilshire. Took ages. Went to Bunker Hill (lots of marble, a bit like London - don't know what all the fuss is about), Tokyo Plaza, Chinatown, City Hall, Skid Row. Great market where I had lunch and then got lost. Met up with the others at the Bonaventure Hotel about 4.00pm - big glass building next to Bunker Hill, very postmodern! - and then back to the hotel. Not a bad day, but too much walking. Brilliant club on Sunset. Writing this (very late) in bed, can't wait until tomorrow - Venice Beach!"

Rather, you should use the diary to reflect more deeply upon what you have seen and done that day. EVERY ENTRY should include reflections on EACH of the following, with marks awarded according to the quality of your reflections around each:

- a detailed record of observations (what you have seen that day)
- an account of the processes shaping the things seen (for example: an account of the processes of de-industrialisation/re-industrialisation evident in the landscape of South-Central Los Angeles)
- an awareness of the places encountered as products of the interweaving of economic, social, cultural and political processes (for example: the extent to which the residential developments in Orange County need to be understood as rooted in both economic processes – the rise of the high technology sector – and cultural processes, the desire of middle class, white Angelenos to escape the ‘chaos’ of minority/majority Los Angeles)
- an awareness of the connections between the places and processes encountered that day and the places and processes encountered on previous days (for example: how does having visited South-Central shape your observations and understandings of residential developments in Orange County?)
- reflection, driven by your own observations, on the academic accounts of those places and processes (for example: are academic accounts of South-Central – which describe South-Central as a predominantly black area suffering the effects of de-industrialisation - still accurate?)

On some days you may also want to demonstrate an awareness of positionality - ie. to what extent are your observations and understandings the

product of your own age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality and so on (for example: do you feel more comfortable in South-Central or Orange County? Why?)

Feedback: Your Field Work Diary should benefit from the discussion of each day's activities provided in evening feedback sessions held each day in America. Since the final Diary itself constitutes a piece of summative assessment, written feedback (in the form of written comments and a provisional grade) will be provided in the usual way for such assessments: for collection from your tutor in the following academic year.