

Environmental Policy UPA 679
Spring 2024
Course Syllabus
School of Urban and Public Affairs
University of Louisville

Instructor: Dr. John Hans Gilderbloom, PhD

Phone: (502) 852-8557 cell 502-608-7567 Draft October 31, 2023

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This course outline will be posted to Blackboard and check out my personal website:
<http://www.sunlouisville.org>

Class Meeting:

We will meet every Wednesday in classroom 117. 5:30 p.m. to 8:15 p.m.

In case we have to teach by Zoom because of snow, the pandemic, or travel, the connection is: 867-5409-7312 or all the numbers without dashes: 86754097312 and the password is 589281

Office Hours:

Office Hours are on Wednesdays at 8:15 p.m. or by appointment

We meet in Room 117 after class. Please call to schedule appointments in advance or approach the professor immediately following class to set a time to meet.

The Course

Course Description:

Urban Environmental Policy will explore urban issues from a variety of perspectives: sociological, psychological, economic, political, historical, design, and planning. Environmental Policy issues are best understood from a multi-disciplinary approach.

Course Learning Outcomes - Methods for Reducing Climate change:

CL01 Learn how multi-modal transportation systems reduce greenhouse gases;

CL02 Articulate orally and in writing how social and political factors structure neighborhoods and cities that become environmentally friendly;

CL03 Describe the impact of federal, state, and local environmental programs on neighborhoods and cities;

CL04 Describe how elected leaders can impact housing, health, safety, sustainability and prosperity;

CL05 Learn how to conduct quantitative and qualitative environmental research;

CL06 Learn how to locate secondary data sources that can provide data (EPA, CDC, HUD, PVA, Traffic, Police) to manage the climate crisis;

CL07 Describe the role of neighborhood beauty as a symbol of self, pride, and esteem in sustainability;

CL08 Describe how preservation practices reduce the threat of climate change;

CL09 Describe the processes of how pollution reduces life chances;

CL10 Describe how toxic pollution increases COVID-19; and

CL11 Describe how pollution reduces cognitive ability.

A note about the Professor:

I was lucky to grow up six miles south of the San Francisco City limits and about 12 miles from the heart of San Francisco's North Beach, Chinatown, Little Italy, Beats, and Fisherman's Wharf. My home was on the edge of a large nature preserve called Crystal Springs Lake. Unlike so many urban areas where drinking water comes from rivers and lakes filled with human waste, farm chemicals, and industrial waste, our water supply came from the Sierra Nevada. You don't really appreciate these things until you live in places like Green Bay, Houston, New Jersey, Havana, or Louisville. My backyard had acres of dense bushes, trees (bay, pine, and eucalyptus), springs, creeks, caves, large boulders, and lots of mystery. How did a 1934 sedan find its way into the creek bed? There I would spend some of my happiest days exploring and imagining: following deer trails; looking for old Indian artifacts; collecting rocks, snakes, banana slugs, lizards, and rabbits; or tracking a deer. There was danger too: the attack of swarming bees and multiple spider bites which could have caused me to have an allergic reaction or get sick. Richard Louv's award winning book, *Last Child in the Woods*, argues that most modern children are taken away from nature and spend too much time in their homes playing video games. The consequences of children not being connected to nature can have major negative impacts with regards to mental health. As Louv notes with some irony, our mothers always knew best when they exhorted, "Go out and play."

Two miles down the road was a train station (Burlingame) where my Grandfather Lauder helped build an early new urbanist community of dense eight-story apartments and nearby businesses. It was idyllic, calm, and sublime. Besides nature being right outside in my backyard, San Francisco was there as well, which is one of the densely populated cities in America and in many ways the most "European like city" in the USA. San Francisco made city living attractive: a walkable historic city with great architecture and preservation. It was a great model for a "green" city with commuter trains, subways, carpooling, and dense living. San Francisco was a magnet for what Richard Florida called the "creative class" of talent, technology, and tolerance, which led to the boom in economic wealth.

While in high school, I participated in the first national environmental awareness day in the spring of 1970. Also, during my high school years Mark Dowie was a frequent Sunday dinner guest. Dowie was a founder of Mother Jones Magazine (later I was appointed a fellow there) and wrote several important environmental books while teaching at MIT and working as a consultant on 60 Minutes. Several years later I went to the University of California Santa Barbara where they had an active environmental movement that led to protection of beaches, pollution controls, and limits on oil drilling. As a graduate student, I worked as a research and teaching assistant with Harvey Molotch, who co-founded Environmental Sociology. Molotch wrote an extensive analysis of the Santa Barbara oil spill just a few years before I joined him as a research assistant. Many believe that the “hinge of the environmental movement” started with the oil spill in Santa Barbara. I also worked with Dr. Richard Appelbaum who, along with Harvey Molotch, did research on the impact of growth on communities and ended up writing several award-winning books. The data from this research was used for my dissertation and later my book with Professor Appelbaum entitled *Rethinking Rental Housing* and several other books and articles with him.

During the Clinton administration, I received numerous federal grants to renew an abandoned neighborhood in West Louisville. These programs were met with enough success that I was invited to Washington, D.C. to do consulting with the Clinton administration. I was asked to participate in several meetings on environmental issues at the White House.

Since 1995, I have run the Center for Sustainable Urban Neighborhoods (SUN) at U of L (www.louisville.edu/org/sun), which is a program of the Kentucky Institute for the Environment and Sustainable Development (KIESD). My university/community partnership work in West Louisville resulted in a Sierra Club Award. I am currently an associate editor of Sustain, and I have edited a special edition of the journal which is given to each of my students as part of this course. I should add that directing SUN has resulted in a major shift in my paradigm from supply and demand to green urbanism. Many of the guest speakers and books have played a major role in my embrace of green thinking.

While my research has concentrated on community development, housing, and comparative urbanism, I see these themes as having strong connections with environmentalism. Moreover, my research on Holland provides an environmental model of how cities should make policy. **I want to put the “urban” back into environmental policy.** Please also understand that this is not an “Al Gore love fest.” We will develop a critical analysis of the portion of his recommended policy which focuses on technological solutions instead of changes in how we live and where we live. We will also cover the views of other great political leaders such as Ronald Reagan and George Bush Sr., which should prove to be a lively debate.

My work has impacted the U.S. Department of Justice on understanding the urban riots in Louisville during the COVID-19 pandemic and murder of Breonna Taylor. My research has also influenced the recent EPA decision to reduce the amount of harmful toxins coming out of Louisville’s 44 chemical companies. My work has also influenced saving the imbedded energy of nearly 1,000 housing units from being demolished and turned into housing. This year I am completing a new book, *Climate Chaos: Killing people and places & what to do about it*. You will get an opportunity to read the draft manuscript. The book includes 15 student co-authors

from my classes over the past 10 years. Three-time Emmy Award winner Chris Nolan is developing a documentary based on my book. The working title of the documentary is Climate of Hope: Challenges and Champions. Students in this course will get an opportunity to do research on finding workable policies to reverse climate chaos.

Goals and Objectives:

This graduate seminar includes lots of reading, discussion, debate, and experiential learning. The class focuses on West Louisville. The course will be run as a seminar, so class discussion is encouraged. We will also draw on my experience with developers, city councils, legislatures, and community organizations. As instructors, we reserve the right to make changes in the organization of the course; this allows the class to be flexible and responsive to the needs of the students and the professors.

Etiquette:

As a courtesy to the instructors and other members of the class, please do not smoke. Spouses and significant others are invited to go on walking tours provided they “go along with the program” (i.e., no yawning while the professor is talking). As instructors, we reserve the right to make changes in the organization of the course in consultation with class members; this allows the class to be flexible and responsive to the needs of the students. Often speakers, events and conferences suddenly appear, and we want to have the flexibility to seize these opportunities. Please turn off beepers and cell phones during class sessions.

Grading:

The three areas below are of equal weight and will be averaged out with a letter grade assigned to each area. The assignments will each be assigned a letter grade and a weighted average (using the weights listed below) will be used to calculate a final grade. The letter grades will be translated into numerical equivalents for the purposes of calculating the final grade: A+ = 4.3, A = 4.0, A- = 3.7, B+ = 3.3, B = 3.0, B- = 2.7, etc.

The three areas below are of equal weight and will be averaged out for a final letter grade:

Class Participation (33%):

Since the course is designed as an advanced urban experiential seminar, it is expected that students come prepared to discuss the assigned readings of the week and, if possible, introduce relevant current events into class discussion. The first part of class will generally be in a lecture format, followed by a class discussion during the second half of class. We want you to attend all classes. All classes are interesting, important, and thought provoking. If you are sick, have a family emergency, or have a boss that is making you work on a Wednesday night, it’s okay to miss one session. This grade will be based on: **(1)** Attendance and ACTIVE PARTICIPATION (questions and comments that reflect the readings, etc.), **(2)** Two PowerPoint presentations of recommended books on my list (except for the books I wrote) at the time these subjects are discussed, **(3)** Credit for attending bonus sessions of conferences here in Louisville and

elsewhere, (4) Solo trips to neighborhoods; (5) Self-Evaluation—we ask that you provide a grade for your work in this class: a fair and balanced assessment covering class participation, book reviews, project, and final exam. It's your chance to be the teacher and tell me what you think you deserve. You might also list bonus activities and the number of classes you have missed.

Midterm (33%):

You must choose two books and write two short critical essays reviewing the book. Also, you can also do a third bonus review by writing an essay about a movie or documentary related to this class like *Dark Waters* or *Erin Brokovich*. We are looking for approximately 800 words—13 paragraphs or so. The essays are due on the day we discuss the book. If you want to write extra essays that is fine too, especially if you miss a class! The book reports are due on the following weeks: **the first report is due February 14 and the second report is due April 3**. You will undertake a project focusing on an area of your choice related neighborhood dynamics that looks at health, housing, learning, safety, or sustainability. Great freedom is given in the choice of topic, which must be submitted to the professor for preapproval by March 15th. This project can be completed individually or jointly with another student. You will also be asked to give a presentation to the class pertaining to your project.

Project Paper (33%):

You will undertake a project focusing on environmental policy which must be submitted to the Professor for pre- approval by March 15th. This project can be completed individually or jointly with another student by April 24. Choose a city which provides best practices for reversing climate change. You will also be asked to give a presentation to the class pertaining to your project.

Books and Related Materials

In this course, you will read some of the best books on environmental policy. I am only asking you **to read and comment on two of the books from the list below**, with bonus points given if you read more. There is still time to get many of these books used via Amazon or e-versions through Kindle. I urge you to use Amazon for their great discounts. For further reading recommendations, check Blackboard. I will also be posting on Blackboard my lectures based on my seven books and two forthcoming ones.

I will be lecturing on all these classic and cutting-edge books on urban thinking. You may choose four books from this list:

1. *Silent Spring Revolution* by Douglas Brinkley
2. *Cities Alive* by Michael Mehaffy
3. *Merchants of Doubt* by Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway
4. *Making Healthy Places, Second Edition: Designing and Building for Well Being. Equity and Sustainability* by Andrew Dannenberg, Howard Frumkin, Disha Botchwey Second Edition

5. *Suburban Nation* by Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Jeff Speck. New York, NY: North Pointe Press, 2001. ISBN 0865476063
6. *The Rise of the Creative Class: and How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life* by Richard Florida, 2002. Basic Books. ISBN 0465024777
7. *Happy Cities* by Charles Montgomery. Farrar, Straus, Giroux. ISBN 978037416823-0
8. *Walkable City: How Downtown Can Save America, One Step at a Time* by Jeff Speck
New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux
9. *The Integration Debate: Competing Futures for American Cities* by C. Hartman and G. Squires. Routledge press. ISBN 0415994608
10. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* by Jane Jacobs. New York: Random House
11. *Blue Zones of Happiness: Lessons from the World's Happiest People* by Dan Buettner
12. *Green Urbanism: Learning from European Cities* by Timothy Beatley. Washington D.C.: Island Press.
13. *Walkable City Rules: 101 Steps to Making Better Places* by Jeffrey Speck
14. *Urban Fix* by Doug Kelbaugh
15. *The Heat Will Kill You First* by Jeff Goodall
16. *An Inconvenient Truth* by Al Gore

Course Outline

* The instructor reserves the right to make changes in the syllabus when necessary to meet learning objectives, compensate for missed classes, or for other legitimate reasons.

January 10

Introduction to the course, discuss assigned readings, presentations, review syllabus, questions

Required reading from *Climate Chaos*:

Chapter X - Climate Chaos: The Battle Between Science and the Corporate Merchants of Doubt

January 17

An Inconvenient Truth by Al Gore plus the movie

Required reading from *Climate Chaos*:

Chapter 1 - The Missing Link of Air Pollution: A Closer Look at the Association Between Place and Life Expectancy in 146 Mid-Sized Cities

January 24

Required reading from *Climate Chaos*:

Chapter 2 - What Cities are Most Dangerous to your Life Expectancy? Toward a Methodology of Livability

Best Practices: How to create livable neighborhoods

Videos of Dick Jackson and Mayor of Bristol England.

A brief discussion on writing and why it's important to get published

Methods and Statistics in Urban Studies

January 31

Required reading from *Climate Chaos*:

Chapter 3 - Pollution and the Pandemic: Explaining Differences in COVID-19 Rates across 146 U.S. Communities

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=467DocgXrJw>

February 7

Required reading from *Climate Chaos*:

Chapter 4 - Automobile Addiction Kills the Earth: The Need for Multimodality

Active Transportation: Save your neighborhoods by walking and biking

Required reading from Ten Habits of Livable Places (book will be provided in pdf format):

Good Habit II: Sustainable Neighborhoods Have Calm Two-Way Streets: Collisions, Crimes, and Cleaner Air

Good Habit III: Share the Road with Walkers, Skaters, and

Good Habit IV: Biking is the Best Transportation Choice for Health, Safety, and Zero Emissions

Howard Frumkin Montreal talk: National never walk campaign

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oMsy0G3jiqU>

Jeff Speck *Walkable City Rules: 101 Steps to Making Better Places*

February 14

First Book Review Due - Each student will do a presentation on the book they reviewed

Required reading from *Climate Chaos*:

Chapter 5 – Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Guest Speaker: Ted Smith and Christy Brown Envirome Institute—read their websites: Center for Healthy Air, Water and Soil.

February 21

Required reading from *Climate Chaos*:

Chapter 6 - Environmental Justice in West Louisville, Kentucky

Lectures:

Ten Habits of Livable Places: I: How West Louisville Fell Victim to Despair and Abandonment

Recent op-eds in national newspapers:

<https://www.courier-journal.com/story/opinion/2020/06/25/louisville-pollution-dirty-air-black-neighborhoods-systemic-racism/3223469001/>

“Gregory D. Squires, John Hans Gilderbloom, and Wesley Meares. “Pollution, Place, and the Unnecessary Tragedy of Premature Death: Lessons for Covid-19,” *Planetizen* June 20, 2020,

LEO weekly: this is longer version: https://www.leoweekly.com/leo_author/gregory-d-squires-john-hans-gilderbloom-wesley-l-meares/

<https://www.planetizen.com/features/109556-pollution-place-and-unnecessary-tragedy-premature-death-lessons-covid-19>

John Hans Gilderbloom and Gregory D. Squires 2020. “The Health Emergency That’s Coming to West Louisville,” *CityLab* April 22.

<https://www.citylab.com/perspective/2020/04/air-pollution-covid-19-health-environmental-justice-poverty/610366/>

<https://insideclimatenews.org/news/20062020/louisville-kentucky-black-lives-matter-rubbertown-environmental-justice>

Two good videos one – done by Dwan Turner and the other by James Bruggers:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vvacxkfyNSQ&t=118s>

https://insideclimatenews.org/news/23062020/video-kentucky-primary-environmental-justice-rubbertown-charles-booker-amy-mcgrath?fbclid=IwAR0qICzyrsMJ-5mQsZW_pw_pSqFtkXOEv0dpv05b2sNUd-p3Q_e4T4f2vv8

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GvfzPupklrc>

Trailer for “Rubbertown” documentary that features John Hans Gilderbloom available on Amazon.com: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_HrMldXh08I

Presentation: Dark Waters

February 28

Required reading from *Climate Chaos*:

Chapter 7 - “Mama, I can’t breathe.” Louisville’s Dirty Air Has Steep Medical and Economic Costs

Watch the movie Erin Brockovich to discuss in class

March 6

Required reading from *Climate Chaos*:

Chapter 8 - Pollution, Place, and Premature Death: Evidence from a Mid-Sized City Flow (a movie by Gill Holland) - see the movie on Amazon to discuss in class

Spring Break – March 10 to 17

March 20

Required reading from *Climate Chaos*:

Chapter 9 – How Brownfield Sites in Neighborhoods Kill Places and People: An Examination of Neighborhood Housing Values, Foreclosures, Crime and Lifespan

Required reading from *Ten Habits of Livable Places*:

Good Habit V: Regenerate Black Neighborhoods: Renewal Without Displacement

Regeneration of Neighborhoods/New Urbanism

Lectures:

The Death and Life of Great American Cities by Jane Jacobs

Suburban Nation by Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Jeff Speck. New York, NY: North Pointe Press, 2001. ISBN 0865476063

Suggested solo walking trip to Norton Commons, Original Highlands

March 27

Required reading from *Climate Chaos*:

Chapter 10 - How to Make Our Schools Perform Better

April 3

Second Book Report Due - Each student will do a presentation on the book they reviewed

Required reading from *Climate Chaos*:

Chapter 11 - Will Planting Eight Billion More Trees Solve Climate Chaos? No!

April 10

Required reading from *Climate Chaos*:

Chapter 12 - Does Walkability Matter? Exploring the Relationship Between Walkability and Housing, Foreclosure, Health, and Reducing Greenhouse Gases

Readings:

Ten Habits of Livable Places: Good Habit XI - How to Regenerate a Failing Neighborhood: Chromatic Colors, Trees and Community Gardens

Blue Zones for a Happier Life by Daniel Buettner

Happy Cities by Charles Montgomery

Chromatic Homes: The Joy of Color in Historic Places (2019) by John I. Gilderbloom. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky

Chromatic Homes; The Design and Coloring Book by John Hans Gilderbloom Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky (free book given out as a pdf)

April 17

Required reading from *Climate Chaos*:

Chapter 13 - Biking is the Best Choice for Health, Safety, and Zero Emissions

April 24

Required reading from *Climate Chaos*:

Chapter 14 – Portland, The Best Livable City in America: Equity, Health, and Safety

Amsterdam: Is it the Ideal City?

The Rise of the Creative Class: and How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life by Richard Florida

Green Urbanism: Learning from European Cities by Timothy Beatley – read selected chapters

Walkable City Rules: 101 Steps to Making Better Places by Jeffrey Speck – read selected chapters

Course Evaluations

Self-Evaluation - we ask that you provide a grade for your work in this class: a fair and balanced assessment covering class participation, book reviews, project, and final exam. It is your chance to be the teacher and tell me what grade you think you deserve. You might also list bonus activities and the number of classes you have missed.

Final Student Presentations

University Policies

U of L Sexual Harassment Policy:

Sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, and any other nonconsensual behavior of a sexual nature) and sex discrimination violate University policies. Students experiencing such behavior may obtain confidential support from the PEACC Program (852-2663), Counseling Center (852-6585), and Campus Health Services (852-6479). To report sexual misconduct or sex discrimination, contact the Dean of Students (852-5787) or University of Louisville Police (852-6111). Disclosure to University faculty or instructors of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, dating violence, or sex discrimination occurring on campus in a University-sponsored program, or involving a campus visitor or University students or employee (whether current or former) is not confidential under Title IX. Faculty and instructors must forward such reports, including names and circumstances, to the University's Title IX officer. For more information, see the Sexual Misconduct Resource guide:

<http://louisville.edu/hr/employeerelations/sexual-misconduct-brochure>

Disabilities:

Whether mental or physical, please notify the professor by email of needed accommodations and also contact the Disabilities Resource Center at (502) 852-6938.

Academic Honesty:

Please note that I will be enforcing the University of Louisville's code of student rights and responsibilities. It can be found at [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities — Dean of Students \(louisville.edu\)](#). There is also a student code listed at the following address, but it omits the information on academic dishonesty:

<http://campuslife.louisville.edu/cloffice/conduct/index.html>

University Guidelines and Policies

* Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: “The University of Louisville is committed to providing access to programs and services for qualified students with disabilities. If you are a student with a disability and require accommodation to participate and complete requirements for this class, notify the professor immediately and contact the Disability Resource Center (Stevenson Hall 119; 852-6938) for verification of eligibility and determination of specific accommodations.”

* Academic Dishonesty: “Academic dishonesty is prohibited at the University of Louisville. It is a serious offense because it diminishes the quality of scholarship, makes accurate evaluation of student progress impossible, and defrauds those in society who must ultimately depend upon the knowledge and integrity of the institution and its students and faculty.”

Check the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities (Sections 5. and 6.): [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities — Dean of Students \(louisville.edu\)](#) for more information.

* Religious Holy Days and Observances. “Federal law and university policy prohibit discrimination on the basis of religious belief. It is the policy of the University of Louisville to accommodate students, faculty, and staff who observe religious work-restricted holy days.”

* Policy Regarding Notification of Course Modification: If changes are made to assignments, requirements and/or methods of grading during the semester, the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities requires that students must be provided that information in writing, including the reasons for modifications. Students will be notified via Blackboard, in the event of course modifications.

* Diversity: “The University of Louisville strives to foster and sustain an environment of inclusiveness that empowers us all to achieve our highest potential without fear of prejudice or bias.

We commit ourselves to building an exemplary educational community that offers a nurturing and challenging intellectual climate, a respect for the spectrum of human diversity, and a genuine understanding of the many differences—including race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, disability, religion, national origin or military status—that enrich a vibrant metropolitan research university.”

Class ends on page 12.