

Urban Sociology - Preparation Sheet for the Final Exam!

The exam will include 10 points worth of multiple choice questions taken directly from the readings. The other 90 points of the exam will come from your answers to two of the three essay questions you see below. You will not get to choose from among those three; at the beginning of the exam period, I will throw a die, and Lady Fortuna will determine your fate.

A word about studying for an exam of this type: it's ok to talk in a very general way with classmates about these prompts or to ask each other clarifying questions about them. It is plainly out of bounds to divvy up the labor by, for example, having three students prepare a thorough answer to one prompt each, then exchanging notes. Somewhere between those two scenarios, cheating commences. Consider that the goal of an exam is to get each student to master the material for himself or herself. If you're undermining that goal, you're cheating. If I catch you cheating, I will (at least) give you a zero for the exam and bring academic dishonesty charges. If the boundaries in this regard aren't clear to you, ask me about them!

Generally speaking, I'm more interested in seeing mastery of the material rather than evidence of memorization of undifferentiated material. Commonly, the essay questions in this course will ask you to pick one side or the other. In such cases, pick one side and stick to your guns. No waffling, please. Saying "both" and then rehearsing everything in your notes that is somehow related to the question does not let me see whether you really understand what we're talking about. Here are the three possible questions.

1. Imagine that 100 years ago, cities all over the United States passed strict laws about compactness, density, and growth boundaries, and imagine that as a result, the kind of suburban sprawl that is so characteristic of American cities today never happened. But, except where the lack of sprawl in this alternate universe disallows, everything else in society is about the same as in our world here. In that alternate America, would life for most people, most of the time, be better or worse than in our America? Explain.
2. Compare (describe the similarities in) working class people of color in gentrifying neighborhoods and rural white Trump supporters.
3. Which is likely to be worse 50 years from now: affordable housing shortages in cities of the global north, or affordable housing shortages in cities of the global south? Discuss economic globalization and fertility rates in your answer.