

**The Metropolitan Environment**  
**(Pols: 3330 01)**  
**Spring 2020**  
**Dr. Gilsinan**

Course Goal:

The course introduces students to concepts that provide the basis for understanding the metropolitan environment on a global and local scale. It starts with the fundamental building block of that environment, your address, and progresses to the neighborhood, the municipality, the region, the state, the nation and the world.

All my life though some have changed.  
Some forever not for better,  
Some have gone and some remain.  
All these places have their moments,  
*In My life, the Beatles)*

You are a place-based person. You identify with your home community, your neighborhood, maybe even a shopping center or a favorite hangout. These places are associated with memories of particular experiences and people. Places can also provide opportunities for growth and development through access to education, jobs, and social networks.

But what if you had no place? Or what if you were confined to a place not because you chose it, but because you were denied access to a more desirable place? These questions force us to confront several contemporary issues. Being homeless means more than not having shelter; it

employed to deny people access to desirable space. In the case of people with disabilities, they confronted physical barriers that restricted their ability to move about which affected employment opportunities, educational attainment, and a robust social life. The visible demarcation of neighborhoods by race, ethnicity, and income level happened because of restrictions on the ability of certain groups to buy property outside of designated areas. To claim a just place in society necessarily involves a claim on access to and/or control of various physical spaces. Without such access economic horizons are limited, educational attainment is truncated, health is threatened, and social networks are diminished.

As the readings and class discussion will demonstrate, changes come about through a variety of means including personal choice, government policy, economic and social shifts, and the dynamics of land use growth and development. Moreover, these changes often result in conflict among groups as they compete for resources, political power and lifestyle options. Conflict also takes place at the metropolitan level as areas compete for jobs, people, entertainment venues, and amenities that result in a desirable quality of life for its residents.

At the local and regional levels, competition among spaces is usually, although not always, without violence. Because we are placed based people, national identity thus immigration policy and the role of undocumented workers is now part of



**Due: February 3**

Three absences with minimal participation = D  
More than three absences = F

Mid Term and Final: Each 20% of your grade

Assignments are due on the date indicated and will be graded one grade lower for each class day late.

Office hours: Mondays and Fridays: 9:30 – 11:30 A.M.  
1:30 – 2:15 P.M.

Or by appointment

Office Location: McGannon Hall, 133

### Dates, Topics, and Reading Assignments

January 13

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