NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE

URPL-GP.2608
Urban Economics
Spring 2015

Section 1
Prof. Francesco Brindisi
Email: francesco.brindisi@nyu.edu
Time: Tuesday 6:45-8:25pm
Office hours: after class
Classroom: Global Center for Academic & Spiritual Life (GCASL)
238 Thompson Street, Room 275

Section 2
Prof. Jorge De la Roca
Email: jorge.delaroca@nyu.edu
Time: Wednesday 4:55-6:35pm
Office hours: after class
Classroom: 25 West 4th Street, Room C-20

Tutor
Patrick Hess
Email: patrick.hess@nyu.edu
Office hours: Tuesday 5:30-6:30pm, Puck Building, Office 3045

Course Description
The field of urban economics addresses a wide variety of questions and topics. At the most general level, the field introduces space into economic models and studies the location of economic activity. Urban economics typically addresses four sets of questions, and this course is organized around these four areas. The first set of questions focuses on the development of urban areas. Why do cities exist and why do some grow more rapidly? How can local governments encourage such growth? The second set of questions addresses patterns of development within metropolitan areas. Why do certain parts of metropolitan areas grow more rapidly than others? How do firms and households decide where to locate within given metropolitan areas? What determines the price of land, and how do these prices vary across space? The third set of questions concerns the spatial dimensions of urban problems. In this class, we will focus on poverty, housing, and suburban sprawl. Finally, in the last part of the class, we will briefly study the spatial aspects of local government policy and explore the inter-relationships between city and suburban governments.
Course Prerequisites

Students should have completed P11.1018 (Microeconomics) and should have taken or be taking P11.1101 (Statistical Methods) concurrently. Several assignments will ask you to use excel, so please brush up on your excel skills if needed.

Course Requirements

Students are expected to do the reading each week before class. In addition, there are four take-home assignments, a mid-term exam, and a policy memo. The assignments will combine problems and data analysis (using a spreadsheet program such as excel). I encourage you to work together on these three assignments, but you must submit individual write-ups.

Grading

All requirements must be completed by the dates specified or they will not be counted towards final grade. No late assignments will be accepted. Borderline grades may be adjusted on the basis of class participation.

1. First assignment (5% of final course grade) Due in class 4, Tuesday, February 24-25
2. Second assignment (5% of final course grade) Due in class 7, Tuesday, March 24-25
3. Third assignment (5% of final course grade) Due in class 9, Tuesday April 7-8
4. Midterm exam (50% of final course grade) Class 10, Tuesday, April 14-15
5. Policy memo (35% of final course grade) Due TBD (week of finals)

Readings

All readings are required, unless noted as supplementary. The readings include chapters from two textbooks:


Students do NOT need to purchase either book in its entirety. The O’Sullivan chapters are in a customized text available for sale at the NYU Bookstore. The customized text may also be purchased as an e-book (see instructions posted on the course NYU Classes site). The O’Flaherty chapters are included in the course reader for the class available at Unique Copy Center. You may want to call ahead to make sure that they have a packet ready for you (212-420-9198).

There are numerous other required readings for the class, all of which are posted on NYU Classes. Most of the supplemental readings should be posted on the site as well. These supplemental articles are there for your interest and are optional.
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Detailed class schedule and readings

Part I: Market forces in the development of cities

1. What are cities and why do they exist? (February 3, 4)

O’Sullivan, Chapter 1.

O’Flaherty, Chapters 1 and 2.


Supplementary


2. What drives urban economic growth? (February 10, 11)


Supplementary


3. Why do we care about economic growth? (February 17, 18)

O’Flaherty, Chapter 18, pp. 517-531.


Supplementary


4. Urban economic growth and state and local policy (February 24, 25)

O’Flaherty, Chapter 18, pp. 531-551.


Supplementary


Part II: Land rent and land use patterns in metropolitan areas

5. Introduction to land rent and land use (March 3, 4)

O'Sullivan, Chap 6.


Supplementary


6. Land Use Patterns and Causes of Suburbanization (March 10, 11)

O'Sullivan, Chapter 7.


Supplementary


O’Flaherty, chapters 3 and 6.
7. Overview of local government (March 24, 25)

O’Sullivan, Chapter 15.


8. The economics of zoning (March 31, April 1)

O’Sullivan, Chapter 9.


Supplementary


O’Flaherty, Chapter 8.

9. Economics of housing markets (April 7, 8)

O’Flaherty, Chapter 13.


**Supplementary**


10. In-class midterm (April 14, 15)

**Part III: Economics of urban problems**

11. Suburbanization and sprawl: an assessment (April 21, 22)


**Supplementary**


12. Race and housing (April 28, 29)

O’Flaherty, Chapter 12.


Supplementary:


13. Urban poverty: the role of space (May 5, 6)


Supplementary


14. Looking to the future (TBD)


Supplementary


