

EXPLORING BIRMINGHAM: IN SEARCH OF COMMUNITY

A 2007 UAB Freshman Learning Community

Tue and Thu 9:30-10:45

Location: Education Building 238 T3

Course Description: How does the design of physical spaces affect the way we interact with each other and build community? A closer look at community planning reveals how the built environment has a direct impact on our quality of life. This course investigates design movements, such as New Urbanism and Traditional Neighborhood Design, which counter urban sprawl and focus on the development of liveable and sustainable communities through the principles of walkability, connectivity and diversity. Students will explore the design of public spaces, neighborhoods and transportation systems and analyze how these aspects relate to community culture and lifestyle. Through experiential learning, students will develop a deeper understanding of Birmingham's historical, social, political and environmental landscape.

This class incorporates a variety of learning experiences that include classroom discussions, group activities, lectures, and experiential learning in which students learn through direct experience and field assignments.

Course Faculty: This course is team taught by UAB's Center for Urban Affairs (CUA), a unit within the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBS) that focuses on applied urban research and community outreach. Our offices are located at 1715 9th Ave South (approximately two blocks behind The Commons). Students are always welcome to call or email for an appointment.

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Course Website: the course website will serve as on-line repository for LCS101. We will use the course website to post class announcements, assignments, and class readings, and other class materials. We will also use this site to have on-line discussions.

Make sure to bookmark the Vista log in page:

<http://www.uab.edu/academiccourses>

Email: Your instructors will NOT use the WebCT Vista email tool to email you. Instead, if you need to email us, you should email us directly at our email addresses listed above. **In the subject line please type "Explore FLC"** – then any additional information you want to add. When emailing, please send to both of your FLC instructors.

Facebook.com – Please join our group on Facebook.com. Exploring Birmingham FLC on the UAB network. This is a place where we will also post informal announcements and information about the class. We also encourage you to contribute to our FLC photo albums.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty: Academic misconduct will not be tolerated in this class including plagiarism, abetting, cheating, fabrication, misrepresentation. For a detailed description of these offenses go to: http://www.app.uab.edu/progress_conduct_Griev.html.

Grading Requirements:

With Final

1. Class Assignments and pop quizzes – 45%
2. City As Text Presentation – 20%
3. Buying B'ham Poster Presentation – 10%
4. Final – 25%

Exemption from Final *

1. Class Assignments and pop quizzes - 70%
2. City As Text Presentation 20%
3. Buying B'ham Poster Presentation 10%

**Details for exempting the final exam are listed in Birmingham Bucks handout.*

***Also, specific instructions and due dates will be provided for City As Text Presentation and Buying B'ham Poster Presentation during the semester.*

Class Assignments: detailed information and due dates will be provided for each assignment throughout the course.

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|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Advising | 9. Research Clinic |
| 2. WebCT | 10. Downtown |
| 3. Notes | 11. Editorial |
| 4. Vulcan Museum | 12. SoHo |
| 5. Time Management | 13. Hope VI |
| 6. Mapping | 14. Group service activity |
| 7. Civil Rights Institute | 15. Ideal Community |
| 8. Student Affairs | |

Pop Quizzes: There will be a random number of open-notebook pop quizzes given throughout the semester, so it will benefit you to take really good notes! Readings and material covered in class are subject to quiz questions. There will be no make-up quizzes. For every four quizzes, you are allowed to drop your lowest grade.

Attendance Policies: Students are expected to attend all classes and field excursions. You are allowed three absences, any absences after three will result in a half letter grade drop for each absence. Two tardies equal one absence. Students are expected to be on time. If you must leave early, please notify instructors before class begins.

Readings:

Assigned readings are available for download on the course WebCT site. You are responsible for downloading, printing and reading all readings **before** each class that lists a reading assignment. Readings will include selections from:

- *Urban Issues: Selections from the CQ Researcher*, (Congressional Quarterly) Second Edition
- Selected Readings: Sheryl Cashin, Richard Florida, Robert Putnam, Jane Jacobs, William Whyte,
- ALSO – Daily scan of the Birmingham News – www.al.com

Field Excursions: We will take several field excursions during the semester. Some we will do together during class, others will be over the weekend homework assignments. The following is some general information about some of the places we will visit.

- Vulcan Museum –\$6 admission. (Homework assignment. Week 8/3 – 9/5).
<http://www.visitvulcan.com/visit.html>
- Birmingham Civil Rights Institute: \$4 admission - free on Sundays. (Homework assignment. Week 9/6- 9/13). <http://www.bcri.org/index.html>
- Downtown Library and Loft District - \$10 for lunch and \$1 for dart ride. <http://www.bplonline.org/>
- SoHo Square - \$5 for small snack or coffee
- Tour of Metropolitan Gardens/Hope VI – just your walking shoes
- City As Text Project - \$10 for community dining

Additional Items

- **Camera** – many of the class assignments will require you to take photographs in the community and upload them to on-line websites such as Panoramio.com – so you will need a camera in this class. Digital is preferable, but a disposable camera will also work as well as long as you have your prints developed on a CD or some other digital format. Just keep in mind that if you go the disposable route, you will need to factor in money for developing your photographs throughout the semester and with the prices of digital cameras these days, you may be better off buying a cheap one if you don't have one already. The instructors will have a few digital cameras available for student checkout on a first-come basis.
- **Walking shoes** – makes life a little easier, especially when we're out in the field.
- **Carpooling** – If you have your own personal transportation, please consider offering a ride to others who don't. Not only does this help out your fellow students, but it also reduces gas consumption! Conversely, if you carpool with someone, please consider offering a few dollars for gas money for your driver.
- **Web Applications** – We will be heavily using three web applications during the course of the semester. You will need to have access to a computer that can access the following applications:
 - **Google Earth** – free, downloadable software program that maps spatial data.
<http://earth.google.com/>
 - **Social Explorer** – mapping website that displays census and demographic information.
www.socialexplorer.com
 - **Panoramio**– free photo repository site. Requires you to create a user account – your photos have the potential to be viewed by people all over the world – you might want to consider using your real name for your username. www.panoramio.com

DATE		CLASS OUTLINE
8/23	Thu	1. Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet your FLC Instructor Team Using Web CT and accessing course documents Overview of course theme, assignments and class game called <i>Buying Birmingham</i>
8/28	Tue	2. The Fabric of Community: What Makes an Ideal Community? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploration of the components that constitute community Class exercise in defining the ideal community
8/30	Thu	3. 99 Neighborhoods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction and Overview of Birmingham's 99 Neighborhoods Region's history, history, geopolitical boundaries and cultural make-up Weekend field assignment: Vulcan Museum Reading – <i>The Magic City 1871-1912</i>
9/4	Tue	4. Fitting It All In: Time Management and Student Advising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn about time management tools that will get you through your first semester at UAB and beyond! Mapping out your future at UAB
9/6	Thu	5. Mapping Birmingham – Computer Lab Activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to GIS (Geographic Information Systems) using Social Explorer and Google Earth Analyzing and interpreting Birmingham demographics Weekend Field Assignment: Birmingham Civil Rights Institute Reading – <i>Chpt 2: Race in America, Congressional Quarterly (CQ) Researcher</i>
9/11	Tue	6. Campus Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to campus resources and programs
9/13	Thu	7. The Layers of Race and Class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn the difference between dialogue and debate and how to successfully engage in difficult discussions Understanding the effect of race and class on the development of Birmingham
9/18	Tue	8. UAB Campus Resource Activity and Student Advising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploration of various programs and activities available to UAB students
9/20	Thu	9. City As Text – class field assignment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn how to conduct a visual analysis through exploration of UAB's emerging Campus Green (class field assignment) Reading – <i>Design of Spaces, William Whyte</i>
9/25	Tue	10. Online Research – Computer Lab Activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Navigating online resources
9/27	Thu	11. Urban and Suburban <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding past and present demographic trends and populations patterns related to the city's growth. Reading – <i>Chpt 9: Smart Growth, CQ Researcher</i>
10/2	Tue	12. Going Downtown – class field assignment (9:30 – 2:00) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class Dart excursion Visit Southern History Archives Loft Living
10/4	Thu	13. Sidewalks and Front Porches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional Neighborhood Design Social Engineering: How design shapes our social interactions Reading – <i>Uses of Sidewalks: Safety, Jane Jacobs</i>
10/9	Tue	14. Making It Easier: Stress Management

- How to survive “Crunch Time”
 - Preparing for Exams, presentations and the holidays!
- 10/11 Thu 15. **SoHo Square – class field assignment**
- Class will conduct a visual analysis in downtown Homewood
- 10/16 Tue 16. **New Urbanism**
- Philosophy behind New Urbanism: mixed use, TND, diversity, connectivity
 - Reading – *Chpt 12 Affordable Housing*, CQ Researcher
- 10/18 Thu 17. **Living in a Mixed Income Community – group field assignment**
- Visit to Park Place, Birmingham’s mixed-income neighborhood in downtown Birmingham
- 10/23 Tue 18. **Diverse Communities and The Creative Class**
- Challenges of living in a multicultural society
 - What are the advantages of the diverse community?
 - Readings –
 - *Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital* (interview with Robert Putnam);
 - *Bowling Together*, Richard Stengel;
 - *Rise of the Creative Class* (interview with Richard Florida)
 - *Downside of Diversity*, Boston Globe article
- 10/25 Thu 19. **Group Service Activity - class field assignment**
- Entire class will participate in a service-learning activity at a local elementary school
- 10/30 Tue 20. **Buying the House for the School**
- How education influences housing patterns and demographics
 - Readings –
 - *Schools*, Cashin;
 - *Cost of the Ghetto*, Cashin;
 - *Vestavia Hills Desegregation*, B’ham News;
 - *City’s Black Students Leaving for Suburbs*, B’ham News
- 11/1 Thu 21. **City as Text: Student Presentations**
- Student teams present what they learned from their own community exploration
- 11/6 Tue 22. **City as Text: Student Presentations**
- 11/8 Thu 23. **City as Text: Student Presentations**
- 11/13 Tue 24. **Student Affairs and Advising**
- 11/15 Thu 25. **Planning for the Future**
- Financial literacy and money management
- 11/20 Tue 26. **Buying Birmingham**
- The nuts and bolts of house hunting
 - Students will begin looking for a house to buy with “cash” earned through participating in the game Buying Birmingham
- 11/22 Thu **NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**
- 11/27 Tue 27. **The Ideal Community – Revisited**
- A second look at the components of communities
- 11/29 Thu 28. **Buying B’ham Poster Session – Open House**
- Students will showcase the homes they purchase using their B’ham Bucks
- 12/4 Tue 29. **Wrap Up and Final Review**

BIRMINGHAM BUCKS

During the course of the semester, you will have the opportunity to earn class currency called "B'ham Bucks." This "money" has two purposes:

1. **Buying Birmingham Assignment-** \$ accrued during the course will be used to "purchase" a home in an assignment called "Buying Birmingham" that will be given out on 11/20.
2. **Buying out of your Final Exam** – Students who earn a total of **\$250,000** and meet the following requirements do not have to take the final exam:
 - No more than three class absences
 - Completed all Class Assignments and City as Text Presentation
 - B average or above on assignments listed above, as well as pop quizzes

How To Earn B'ham Bucks:

Class Assignments – Each completed class assignment is worth:

- A - \$10,000.....total net worth \$150,000
- B - \$8,000.....total net worth \$120,000
- C - \$6,000.....total net worth \$90,000

Instructor's Discretion – \$1,000 - \$5,000. These incentives will be offered throughout the course as part of class assignments and in-class discussion and participation.

Campus and Cultural Activities – each activity is worth up to \$20,000 for individual participation or \$25,000 for group participation (3 or more people). Each activity requires proof of participation (ticket stub where applicable and a photograph) and a 1-2 page typed report (12" Times New Roman, 12" font) addressing what you learned from the event. Reports are submitted individually even if you participated as a group. The following is a list of activities that qualify for B'ham Bucks.

- Food For Thought Series
- UAB Lecture Series
- UAB Historical Lecture series <http://www.uab.edu/reynolds/lecture.htm>
- UAB sporting event - (limit 1)
- Discussion Book Event – Birmingham Art Museum – 9/11/07
- UAB Ongoing Service and Volunteer Projects <http://www.uab.edu/lsc/ongoingservice.htm>

Other campus activities may be eligible, **but you must have instructor approval prior to the event** in order to earn \$. To search for additional activities check out:

- Blazernet <https://blazernet.uab.edu/cp/home/displaylogin> "Campus Life" tab
- <http://students.uab.edu/>
- Office of Student Involvement, Room 440, Hill University Center. Telephone (205) 934-8020
- UAB Student Planner
- Signs, flyers and posters in UAB dining Hall, classroom buildings and dorms
- Media: B'ham News www.al.com , UAB Reporter www.uab.edu/reporter and Kaleidoscope <http://studentaffairs.sass.uab.edu/kscope>

Fines or Deductions:

- Absence - \$10,000
- Tardy or leaving early - \$5,000
- Cell phone going off in class - \$5,000
- Text messaging or using laptop for something other than related to class (i.e surfing web, IMing, facebook, myspace, etc.) - \$5,000