Fall Semester 2017
MHC 1205
Monday 2:00–5:00 pm

Instructors
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Course Description
The 2016 election put into sharp contrast the political and social divisions that exist between rural and urban areas in this country. Even here in Utah, we see marked social, political, and policy divergence between areas of urban growth like Salt Lake and Utah counties, and rural areas of the state that are struggling to keep jobs and families in their communities.

Is there an urban-rural divide in Utah? If so, can or should something be done to address this divide? Understanding the extent and nature of this divide and determining what might be done to bridge the gap is ultimately the challenge for participants in this Praxis Lab. The first semester will begin with an investigation of the extent of the urban-rural divide. We will explore, among other things, the differences and similarities between living and working Utah’s capital city and in rural Utah. This exploration will set the stage for the second semester, when students will identify aspects of this complex area of problems and policies they want to focus on and develop relevant and realistic proposals for how governments and nonprofits might address these issues. Once identified, students will develop their ideas to help bridge the divide between urban and rural Utah.

Course Objectives
Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:
- identify and evaluate evidence related to the question of whether there are substantial and important differences between issues affecting urban and rural areas in Utah and/or in other states;
- investigate how citizens can, through governments and nonprofit organizations, affect the public policies related to issues of community life and individual opportunity;
• use ideas and evidence from multiple sources to consider what actions might be taken to address issues related to the urban-rural divide in Utah and/or in other states;
• implement ideas and take action to address urban-rural related issues facing Utah and beyond.

Course Information

Attendance and Participation: This course will be taught as a seminar. As such, your attendance and participation are critical to making this course into a meaningful learning experience for yourself and your classmates. You should come to each course having read and being prepared to discuss the readings and other materials. We will have a number of guest speakers who will attend and share their expertise and experiences. Please use all of our class sessions as opportunities to listen, ask questions, offer suggestions, and engage in constructive and respective debate concerning the issues under discussion. It is imperative to attend all classes, be on time, and stay for the duration of the class. If you must miss a class, please let us know in advance. Students may not “make up” participation points from missed classes. Course discussion should be relevant, respectful, and constructive. We understand that people show engagement in different ways and we do not expect everyone to participate in the same ways; however, if you are a student who does not frequently speak in whole group discussions, please make sure that you actively participate in small groups, or speak to us separately about how to participate in ways that contribute to the classroom community and to your own growth.

Communication: The course page in Canvas (the university’s online course management software) will include the syllabus, assignments, readings, and course related announcements. Please be sure to log in and check this course in Canvas regularly throughout the semester. The best way to communicate with us outside of class is by email at the addresses listed on the first page of the syllabus rather than the messaging function in Canvas.

Texts and Required Readings: There is no required text book for this course. The assigned readings will be provided in the course page in Canvas. The readings for each week should be completed prior to class. Some of the readings are media reports intended for a general audience and some are articles from academic journals that are longer and more difficult reading.

Use of technology in the classroom: There will be times during the semester when we will access the internet together for class presentations or course work. But, class time is not the time for checking email, surfing the web, texting, or working on the internet. It is our responsibility to ensure that our time together in class is well used and it is your responsibility to be fully present.

Assignments: All assignments are to be submitted by the beginning of class on the assigned due date. If you are unable to submit the assignment due to unforeseen circumstances, please contact us prior to the assignment due date so as not to affect your grade. To be fair to students who submit assignments on time, a letter grade will be deducted from the assignment for every day the assignment is late.

Academic Honesty: All students are expected to meet the standards of academic honesty in this course. This statement means, among other things, that the papers and assignments that you submit in this course must be your own work or submitted as part of a recognized collaborative
effort. Work submitted for this course must not have been submitted in a previous course nor may it be submitted in any course being taken concurrently without the knowledge and approval of all instructors concerned. An act of academic misconduct is a violation of the university's regulations regarding student conduct. As such, an act of academic misconduct may result in a failing grade for the course and may result in a recommendation to university officials for additional disciplinary action. The following definition is from the university's Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities (Policy 6-400, Rev 6, July 2009): "'Academic misconduct' includes, but is not limited to, cheating, misrepresenting one's work, inappropriately collaborating, plagiarism, and fabrication or falsification of information. . . . It also includes facilitating academic misconduct by intentionally helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic misconduct." Definitions of these terms as well as information regarding your rights and responsibilities as a student are available at http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php

Wellness: Stress, anxiety, depression, and other life-related issues can interfere with anyone’s ability to succeed and thrive at the University of Utah. For helpful resources, contact the Center for Student Wellness at www.wellness.utah.edu or 801-581-7776.

Accommodations: For students needing accommodations in this class, please work with the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 801-581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with us to make arrangements for accommodations.

Course Requirements

Course grades will be based on the following requirements:

1. Class participation (25%): Participation includes attendance, preparation for class discussions by completing readings before each class, and regular participation in both small and large group discussions and activities.

2. Three reflective essays (15%): These short essays (1-2 pages) are responses to questions posed on course materials during the semester.

3. Rural-urban issue research paper (25%): Students will select one of the following issues to research and write a paper (7-10 pages) that relates this topic to rural-urban differences:
   - Economic Development
   - Education
   - Health Care
   - Housing
   - Land Use/Public Lands
   - Mental Health/Suicide
   - Opioid Use/Substance Abuse
   - Philanthropy
   - Politics
   - Poverty
   - Recreation/Tourism
   - Or other topic of your choosing (prior approval required).
4. **Class presentation (20%)**: Students may work individually or in pairs to further research a topic on urban-rural topic, present that topic to the class during weeks 13-15, and propose a possible praxis activity for the class to do during spring semester. We will discuss further details of the presentations in class.

5. **Final paper (15%)**: Based on what you have learned over the course of this semester, you will write a short final paper (3-5 pages) that articulates your individual views as to what issue or issues should be the focus of the spring semester praxis activities. This paper should draw on the readings, class presentations and discussions, and your own ideas to articulate a compelling argument for the focus of our class during spring semester. We will discuss the ideas and proposals in your paper during the last day of class.

**Suggestions for written work:**

- Outline your assignments before writing them. Make sure you offer specific points and clear arguments in support of those points.
- Proofread all work before you hand it in. We suggest you ask someone else to also proofread your paper before submission. Watch for abrupt transitions, run-on sentences, and sentence fragments.
- Make sure your argument is clear and fully developed. Providing examples will often help to illustrate the point being made.
- We are happy to help you to improve your writing for future assignments. You may also consider using the writing center in the Marriott Library. More information can be found at: [http://www.writingcenter.utah.edu/](http://www.writingcenter.utah.edu/)

**Course Outline**

**Week 1, August 21**, Introductions, Course Outline, and Expectations

**Week 2, August 28**, Demographics of Urban and Rural America  
Read:  

**Week 3, September 4**, No Class: Labor Day Holiday

**Week 4, September 11**, Politics of the Urban-Rural Divide  
Read:  

Week 5, September 18, Politics of the Urban-Rural Divide (continued)

** First reflective essay due on Friday, September 22 **

Week 6, September 25, Social Change in Rural Areas
Read:


Week 7, October 2, Social Issues (continued)
Read:


** Second reflective essay due on Friday, October 6 **

Week 8, October 9, No Class: Fall Break

Week 9, October 16, Economic Development
Read:


Week 10, October 23, Economic Development (continued)
Listen:
Read:

**Third reflective essay due on Friday, November 3**

**Week 11, October 30, Public Lands and Land Use Issues**
Read:

**Week 12, November 6, Philanthropy and Innovative Solutions for Rural and Urban Issues and Potential Future Issues**

**Urban-Rural Research Paper Due: Monday, November 6**

**Week 13, November 13, Student research presentations**

**Week 14, November 20, Student research presentations**

**Week 15, November 27, Student research presentations**

**Week 16, December 4, In class workshop on proposals for spring**

**Final Paper Due: Monday, December 4, in class**