

SOC220 Theory of Urban Communities

3rd and 4th quarters, Sophomore

Instructor	TANAKA YUKITAKA
Style of Class	Lecture
Number of Credits	2
Day and Period	Monday, period 2

Course Description

In this course, students will learn about urban community lifestyle modes, social relationships, social structures and the realities of urban challenges via both theory and case studies. In the first half of the course (classes 1–8), students will cover transformation processes affecting modern cities such as urbanization, de-urbanization, re-urbanization, and the emergence of mature cities, while also learning about different aspects of communities centered on the various phases of urban transformation. In the second half of the course (classes 9–15), students will cover case studies in regional development applicable to city center and suburban communities, and deepen their understanding through exposure to challenges facing communities in changing modern cities and initiatives geared toward resolving those challenges.

Course Objectives

Students will:

- (1) gain an understanding of basic principles and theory related to urban communities,
- (2) learn about transformation processes applicable to urban communities, and gain the ability to analyze prevailing conditions and challenges, and
- (3) become familiar with case studies that highlight activities to resolve challenges faced by urban communities, and look for clues to resolve these challenges.

Prerequisites

Although not a prerequisite, completion of the courses Community and neighborhood organizations is desirable.

Class Materials

Reference literature will be introduced as needed prior to each lecture.

Course Method

This course will cover basic frameworks and introduce case studies using a lecture format. In addition, students will be given regular short report assignments, which will serve to confirm individual learning and the development of problem awareness, while also contributing toward the final report.

Evaluation/Assessment

Students will be evaluated based on in-class discussions, mini-reports and the final report.

Grading

20%	Discussions
30%	Mini-reports
50%	Final report

Course Schedule

Week 1: Class overview; definition of urban areas and urban communities

General outline of the course schedule, as well as an overview of definitions and other information related to urban areas and urban communities.

Week 2–4: Basic concepts and theories related to urban areas and urban communities

These lectures will provide an overview of various characteristics of lifestyle modes, community relationships, social structures, challenges facing urban areas and other topics, and pursue study of related viewpoints and theories, to understand the reality of urban areas and urban communities.

Week 5–8: Transformation of urban areas and urban communities

These lectures will cover transformation processes such as urbanization, suburbanization, re-urbanization, and the emergence of mature cities, and provide a general overview of how urban structures, social relations and urban challenges shift during various phases. In addition, using various urban areas ranging from global cities to domestic metropolises and regional cities as case studies, the lectures will investigate characteristics that stand out at different phases of transformation processes and various problems arising in urban communities, while adopting a perspective that compares urban areas and considers their historical genealogy.

Week 9–15: Various challenges facing urban communities and initiatives to resolve challenges

These lectures will introduce practical case studies geared toward the resolution of various community problems arising from social conditions that are directly affecting modern cities, including population flows back to central metropolitan areas and the hollowing out and declining population of regional cities. In addition, comparisons will also be made with urban case studies that are of interest to students and will form the subject of their final reports, and students will highlight challenges based on their own perspectives, and grasp key points of related initiatives.

Preparation and Follow-up

- Preparation: Review upcoming themes and reference materials distributed in advance by the next class (approx. 1 hour).
- Follow-up: Review class content, and identify points requiring clarification (approx. 1 hour).