

COURSE OUTLINE

City, Inequality, & Urban Change
GEOG 2023A/ 202630

<https://brightspace.carleton.ca/>

Department of Geography & Environmental Studies
Carleton University, Fall 2026
Course delivery: In-person only

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Lecture: Thursday: 08h25-10h25

Lecture Hall: TBA

Tutorials/TAs

TBA

I. Course Description:

Cities are the defining landscapes of the twenty-first century. They are centres of innovation, cultural exchange, political transformation, and economic opportunity; yet they are also places where inequality, environmental vulnerability, housing insecurity, technological disruption, and social exclusion are produced and contested.

GEOG 2023 introduces students to the geographical processes shaping contemporary cities. The course examines urbanization and urban change through the interconnected lenses of society, economy, technology, governance, and environment.

Topics include: urbanization; globalization; urban inequality; housing and segregation; migration; environmental justice; urban political ecology; smart cities and digital transformation; transportation; climate resilience; food systems; and sustainable urban futures.

The course approaches cities as **complex socio-ecological systems** rather than simply built environments. A central feature of GEOG 2023 is *experiential learning*. Ottawa serves as a living urban laboratory where students engage with landscapes, communities, and urban systems through field observations and applied research. The course includes a field laboratory at **Maple Hill Urban Farm within Ottawa's Greenbelt**, where students investigate the relationships among urban agriculture, food security, sustainability, community resilience, and metropolitan planning.

II. Course Preclusions: Nil

Carleton is committed to providing academic accessibility for all individuals. You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. The accommodation request processes,

including information about the *Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances*, are outlined on the Academic Accommodations website (students.carleton.ca/course-outline)

III. Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

a) Explain Urban Processes

Students will understand major theories and concepts related to: urbanization; urban change; globalization; metropolitan development.

b) Analyze Urban Inequality

Students will critically examine how cities produce and reproduce inequalities related to: housing; income; mobility; race; gender; access to resources.

c) Understand Socio-Ecological Relationships

Students will evaluate how cities interact with: ecosystems; food systems; climate processes; natural resources.

d) Apply Geographical Methods

Students will develop skills in: field observation; landscape interpretation; spatial analysis; critical reflection.

e) Evaluate Urban Futures

Students will critically assess competing visions of: sustainable cities; smart cities; resilient cities; equitable cities.

IV. Required Text:

There is **no required textbook purchase** for GEOG 2023. All readings will be available through: MacOdrum Library, Brightspace, and open-access sources.

Core readings include selections from: Provide citations

- Michael Pacione, *Urban Geography: A Global Perspective*
- Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*
- David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City*
- Saskia Sassen, *The Global City*
- Anthony Townsend, *Smart Cities*
- UN-Habitat reports
- IPCC urban climate assessments
- contemporary journal articles

V Course Organization

GEOG 2023 is organized around four interconnected themes: 1) Cities and Power; 2) Cities and Technology; 3) Cities and Nature; 4) Cities and Futures through an experiential learning module, which involves a field trip to the Maple Hill Urban Farm, situated in the greenbelt of Ottawa.

Theme	Description	Topics
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Cities and Power	Who has the right to the city?	Urban inequality, housing, segregation, migration, and governance.
Cities and technology	How are digital technologies transforming urban life?	Smart cities, artificial intelligence, big data, and digital inequality.
Cities and nature	How do ecological systems sustain urban life?	Political ecology, food systems, climate resilience, urban agriculture, and environmental justice
Cities and Futures	What kinds of cities do we want to create?	Sustainable development, mobility, planning, Indigenous perspectives, and future urban imaginaries.

Experiential Learning Component:

Field trip to Maple Hill Urban Farm with the theme: Urban Agriculture, Food Systems, and the Socio-Ecological Metropolis, on September 26th, 2026. The field laboratory provides students with an opportunity to examine how urban systems depend upon ecological landscapes beyond the traditional urban boundary. Students will investigate food systems, sustainable agriculture, community resilience, greenbelt planning, environmental stewardship, and human–environment relationships.

NB: The field experience will serve as a foundation for later discussions throughout the semester.

VI. Course Calendar (Date-Topic-Reading Assignments/Tutorials:

Date	Topic	Reading
Sept 10th 2026	Cities in the Twenty-First Century	Introduction: Understanding Urban Geography. Pacione, Michael. <i>Urban Geography: A Global Perspective</i> UN-Habitat. <i>World Cities Report</i>
Sept 17 th , 2026	Urbanization & the Making of Cities	World Urbanization Prospects (Selected sections). Pacione, Michael UN Department of Economics and Social Affairs Swyngedouw, Erik
Sept 24th 2026	Cities as Socio-Ecological Systems.	"The City as a Hybrid: Nature, Society and Urbanization"
Oct 1st, 2026	Field Laboratory: The City Beyond the City.	Maple Hill Urban Farm Harvest Festival. Instructor Field Guide Ottawa Greenbelt and Urban Agriculture Resources City of Ottawa / NCC Selected article on urban agriculture
Oct 8 th , 2026	Theories of Urban Change.	The Death and Life of Great American Cities Jane, Jacob.

		Social Justice and the City David Harvey
Oct 15 th , 2026	Inequality and the Right to the City.	The Right to the City. Henri Lefebvre Seeking Spatial Justice Soja
Oct 22 nd , 2026	Global Cities, Migration and Economies.	The Global City. Saskia Sassen
October 29th, 2026 - No class – No Tutorial – University is closed.		
Nov. 5 th , 2026	Smart Cities and Digital Urbanism.	Big Data, Civic Hackers, and the Quest for a New Utopia. Anthony Townsend. OECD / UN-Habitat Reports
Nov. 12 th , 2026	Climate Change and Urban Resilience.	Sixth Assessment Report. Cities Chapter Urban Transportation Chapters World Cities Report Climate Resilience Sections
Nov, 19 th 2026.	Mobility, Transportation and Accessibility.	The Geography of Transport Systems Rodrigue, Jean-Paul. City of Ottawa
Nov. 26 th , 2026	Sustainable and Just Cities.	United Nations. SDGs Goal 11 The 15 Minute City. Carlos Moreno
Dec. 3 rd , 2026	Review	

VII. Evaluation

Assignment	Weight	Short Description
Tutorials	10%	<u>Discussion tutorials</u> cover key concepts and ideas from the readings and lectures. You are expected to participate in class discussions and group exercises. Participation in tutorials is worth 10 % of your final mark.

		Tutorial groups provide an opportunity to learn and practice skills and techniques related to the course material. The instructor is responsible for the day-to-day operation of tutorial sessions
Weekly Reflection Journal	15%	Each student will write short analytical reflections connecting readings and experiences in this course. Rubrics for the Reflection Journal will be shared on Brightspace. A hard copy of this assignment is due on October 19th, 2026 (in class)
Field Laboratory Podcast	20%	Maple Hill Urban Farm experiential analysis. In groups, students will imagine or identify a real environmental issue on the farm (local or global), research its causes and impacts, and produce an engaging podcast episode that proposes realistic, evidence-based solutions. The podcast should be informative, creative, and persuasive, demonstrating a strong understanding of environmental stewardship. Podcast Requirements 1. Group Presentation (4 marks) -Clarity and Organization - smooth flow, well-planned structure -Audio Quality - clear sound; appropriate use of music, effects, or transitions -Delivery & Engagement-- confident speaking, creativity, pacing, use of storytelling -Group Collaboration - evidence of balanced participation 2. Content (5 marks) -Issue Identification - clear explanation of a chosen environmental problem, <i>e.g., milkweed habitat</i> (1 mark) -Research Quality - credibility, accurate facts, relevant sources (1 mark) -Analysis of Causes & Impacts - ecological, social, and/or economic dimensions (1 mark) -Solutions Proposed - realistic, actionable, thoroughly explained (1 mark) -Environmental Stewardship Connection - demonstrates understanding of ethical responsibility and sustainable practices in the greenbelt (1 mark) 3. Additional Elements (11 marks)

		-Reflection Component - short written piece on group process, challenges, and learning (2.75marks) -Citation List / Bibliography - demonstrate academic integrity (2.75 marks) -Creative Hook - e.g., interview with an expert or fictional character, case study narrative, simulated news report, or soundscape (2.75 marks). Podcast Time Requirement - 5 minutes (to keep presentations consistent and manageable) Podcast will be presented in class on November 12 th , 2026
Neighbourhood-based research assignment	15%	Due date: November 5 th , 2026
Designing Future Cities project (group assignment)	15%	Due date: November 26 th 2026.
Final Exam	25%	Rubric will be shared by November 26 th 2026.

VIII Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

As our understanding of the uses of AI and its relationship to student work and academic integrity continue to evolve, students are required to discuss their use of AI in any circumstance not described here with the course instructor to ensure it supports the learning goals for the course. Students can also access resources related to citing Generative AI on the MacOdrum Library website.

IX Statement of Academic Integrity

Students must abide by Carleton University's [Academic Integrity Policy](#). The University Senate defines plagiarism as "presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own." This can include: (1) reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source; (2) submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else; (3) using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgement in any academic assignment; (4) using another's data or research findings; (5) failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's works and/or failing to use quotation marks; (6) handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs."

AI use must be done by students in a way that maintains academic integrity, and proper citation is required when using AI-generated content. <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/#:~:text=Academic%20Integrity%20is%20defined%20as%3A&text=%E2%80%9CA%20commitment%20even%20in%20the,trust%2C%20fairness%2C%20respect%2C%20and%20responsibility>.

Students are advised to consult with their instructor if they are unsure about AI use in a particular assignment.

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course.

X Statement on Student Mental Health

Carleton University's Student Mental Health framework can be found here: <https://wellness.carleton.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Carleton-University-Student-Mental-Health-Framework-2022-2026.pdf>

XI Requests for Academic Accommodations

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XII. Academic Standing

The course instructor determines standing in a course, subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean. The letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100	B+ = 77-79	C+ = 67-69	D+ = 56-59	F= less than 50
A = 85-90	B = 73-76	C = 63-66	D = 53-56	
A- = 80-84	B- = 70-72	C- = 60-62	D- = 50-52	

XIII. Submission and Grading of assignments

The penalty for late assignments is **2%** for each day past the assigned due date unless accompanied by university approved documentation (i.e., self-declaration form).

Submit the electronic copy of your group assignment, but please always *keep your own copy* of submitted assignments until after final grades have been posted for the course. In the assignments, use complete sentences that demonstrate your ability to convey ideas in a clear and grammatically correct manner.

Each assignment should have **a header with a title**, your name, your student number, the course number, the professor's name, and the actual date of submission. Your assignments will be marked, and grades will be posted on the course's Brightspace.

<https://brightspace.carleton.ca/d2l/home/372801>

Students are responsible for checking their assignment grades on Brightspace. Any questions regarding assigned grades must take place in written form (i.e., email) within 10 days after the assignment in question is returned in the tutorial. Final grades are subject to the Dean's approval.

Late assignments are strongly discouraged but can be submitted on the Brightspace assignment dropbox. Note that this dropbox will be open for two weeks after the due date. After that, it will be closed and no more assignments will be accepted.

The name of the professor must be on all pages of your assignment. Your electronic filename should include your surname, course code, and assignment number: e.g. Kusi-Appiah GEOG 2023 #1

If you are having problems submitting your assignment on Brightspace please contact the course TA via email with an attached copy of the assignment. For Brightspace support, contact Information Technology Service Desk (ITS). They are located on Floor 4 of the library, or can be reached via phone at 613-520-2600 x3700 or via email at its.service.desk@carleton.ca