COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Processes of neighborhood-level change frame much planning theory, practice and policymaking. In this course we will examine neighborhoods— as social geographies, economic enclaves, sites of political action, symbolic places, and embedded localities. We will explore the potential and limits of local actors and local institutions to shape neighborhood conditions. We will also examine ways that public policies, institutional practices and spatial perceptions get inscribed on local landscapes and influence local contexts. Throughout the semester we will analyze the processes and effects of neighborhood change for different social groups, political and economic interests, public and private organizations, and the city agenda.

This course engages with extant debates about neighborhoods, starting with theories of change, revitalization, gentrification, community planning, ethno-racial stratification and economic opportunity. All of which are at the intersection of planning, policy and sociology. This seminar draws on empirical evidence from various neighborhoods that have undergone dramatic change since the 1990s. While some neighborhoods change as a result of local planning and intention, others change as a consequence of structural, environmental and extra-local contextual factors. Analyzing the direction of neighborhood change, meaning the distribution of benefits and burdens, stakeholders included and excluded, as well as intentional and inadvertent outcomes, reveals fundamental questions and perennial dilemmas regarding the form and function of cities.

In other words, neighborhood-level analysis illuminates broad urban concerns pertaining to access, equity, civic capacity, opportunity, rights and responsibility on the one hand, and the norms and rules of planning, preservation, and development on the other.

The three primary objectives of this course are:
1) To develop a common conceptual framework and language for understanding why neighborhood change is often hotly contentious by discussing how and why neighborhoods change, and how spatial identities are framed;
2) To sharpen methodological and analytical skills for neighborhood-level research by conducting “small area” analyses and demographic profiles; and
3) To learn how to apply conceptual tools and research techniques to analyze place-based policies, programs and planning decisions.

COURSE MATERIAL:
Course reader available @ Village Copier on Broadway (111th – 112th Street)
COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:
All written work will be evaluated based on substantive content, analytical rigor, plausible argumentation, and the clarity of writing. All assignments are to be submitted in hard-copy form during class, unless otherwise arranged. Late assignments will be penalized.

I. CLASS PARTICIPATION (10%)
As graduate-level seminar, students are expected to attend class weekly. GSAPP policy states that more than 3 absences results in course withdrawal or failure. I expect students to complete readings before class, and to be prepared to engage in thoughtful discussion. Your contributions should seek to synthesize, analyze, inquire and critique assigned texts, and integrate outside material when applicable.

II. RESPONSE QUESTIONS (20%) DUE week 4
Close read of texts for week 4. Respond in writing to questions I will disseminate.

2. Building Successful Neighborhoods (April, 2012) The Urban Institute (in reader)

III. CRITICAL REVIEW (15%)
The critical review should compare and contrast texts for the week, and aim to address discussion questions in the syllabus for the week you’ve chosen to write a review. Your critical review should explicate connections between the texts assigned that week, draw on examples, explain what the authors did well, and what you thought was missing from the arguments.

- Select ONE from weeks 6, 7, 9, 10, & 12 (review should be no more than 600 words)

IV. NEIGHBORHOOD COMPOSITE (25%) DUE Week 8 (3/13)
Develop a neighborhood profile for a neighborhood based on socioeconomic, cultural, geographic, physical, institutional and other attributes. Use two to three time periods (e.g., 1990 and 2010) depending on the variables. Draw from multiple data sets. MAX 1-2 pages! (see examples)

- Explicit parameters for the composite will be disseminated when we begin examining data in week 5

V. NEIGHBORHOOD STUDY: FINAL PAPER (30%) DUE MONDAY MAY 6TH
Drawing on your neighborhood profile, analyze neighborhood changes. What are the key indicators of change? What (extra-local and local) factors seem to underlie the changes? How have planning tools, development and/or preservation decisions, and place-based policies shaped the rate, direction and magnitude of change? How have local stakeholders (residents, organizations or others) responded? What kinds of tools are necessary? (12-15 pages)
### PART I: THEORIES AND META-LEVEL EXPLANATIONS

**Discuss:** An Introduction to Neighborhood Change

**Week 1**

1/23


#### Discuss:

**What are Neighborhoods?**

1/30

What are the multiple dimensions of neighborhoods? How are neighborhoods constructed and reconstructed? What is the role of planning and policy?


#### Discuss:

**Theories of Neighborhood Change (and Sense of Community)**

2/6

Compare and contrast perspectives on neighborhood change: How is change measured? What are strengths and limits of measures and methodologies? What are the underlying assumptions? Does sense of community align or conflict with theories of neighborhood change?

- Clive Thompson. 2005. The rise of the micro-hood

#### Discuss:

**Neighborhood Dynamics: Policies, Plans and Processes**

2/13


**Response Questions DUE**

- Chapters I - IV (p.1-50)
- Chapter VII - DNT Neighborhood Typology (p.151-168)
PART II : SMALL-AREA METHODS, MEASURES & TRENDS

Discuss: Neighborhood Level Data and Datasets
Week 5 2/20
Neighborhood change progresses in a nonlinear even discontinuous fashion, particularly once a critical “threshold” has been exceeded. Planners, policymakers, advocates and scholars rely on time series data, however imperfect, to inform public policies and planning decisions. This week we begin analyzing “small area” data for NYC neighborhoods
+American FactFinder: http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml
+National Historical Geographic Information System: https://www.nhgis.org/

Discuss: Interpreting Data: Dissimilarity or Similarity, Exposure or Isolation?
Week 6 2/27
Contrasting perspectives on US urban neighborhoods becoming more or less segregated. Why isn’t there consensus? What arguments seem most valid? How are authors deploying data or methods as to substantiate claims?
(response paper option)
• Logan, John. 2011. Separate and Unequal: The Neighborhood Gap for Blacks, Hispanics and Asians in Metropolitan America

Discuss: Change Agents
Week 7 3/6
What are critical determinants of neighborhood improvement --social, economic, political, institutional, and geographic, among others? How do they vary by neighborhood type? How do “events” inform the direction and magnitude of neighborhood change?
(response paper option)
Chapter V- Drivers of neighborhood change (p.51-83)
Chapter VI - Drivers of neighborhood change in low income neighborhoods (p.84-110)

PART III: NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITY

Discuss: Spatial Perceptions
Week 8 3/13
When someone describes a neighborhood as “bad” or “good” what factors are they considering?
What are the strengths and limits of these factors, and how might they be improved?
(response paper option)
Ideaological Conflicts and Neighborhood Effects

How does the “Culture of Poverty” thesis influence planning and policymaking? What are urban ghettos? How are notions of ghetto developed and reinforced? Are neighborhood types fixed or mutable? Under what circumstances do they change?

- Peter Marcuse. 1997. The enclave, the citadel and the ghetto: What has changed in the post-Fordist city? Urban Affairs Review, 33, 228
- Guy Baeten. 2004. 'Inner-city misery', City, 8: 2, 235 - 241

Causes and Effects of Gentrification

Why does gentrification elicit visceral responses? Is it worth trying to reframe the nomenclature? What are the favorable and unfavorable dimensions of gentrification, for whom, when and why?


Neighborhood Conflict

An age of transformation. 2008. The Economist, May 29th
- William Holt and Donald Celmer. 2003. Urban renewal in the model city, Contexts; Fall, 2, 4
- Julia Vitullo-Martin. 2007. “Four Jane Jacobs Ideas that Should Have Made a Difference”

FILM: Flag Wars

Alternative Approaches

How should community-based organizations respond to newly created neighborhood allure? Is it possible to embrace development yet mitigate displacement? If so, under what circumstances, by whom, and is it sustainable?


Seeing Cities Change: Local Culture and Class

Jerome Krase (2012)