

Urban Sociology - Preparation Sheet for the Midterm Exam!

The exam will include 10 points worth of multiple choice questions taken directly from the readings. The other 90 points of the exam will come from your answers to two essay questions out of the four below. You will not have a choice from among the four. At the beginning of the exam period, I will throw a die, and Lady Fortuna will determine your fate.

A word about studying for an exam of this type: it's ok to talk in a very general way with classmates about these prompts or to ask each other clarifying questions about them. It is plainly out of bounds to divvy up the labor by, for example, having four students prepare a thorough answer to one prompt each, then exchanging notes. Somewhere between those two scenarios, cheating commences. Consider that the goal of an exam is to get each student to master the material for himself or herself. If you're undermining that goal, you're cheating. If I catch you cheating, I will (at least) give you a zero for the exam and bring academic dishonesty charges. If the boundaries in this regard aren't clear to you, ask me about them!

Generally speaking, I'm more interested in seeing mastery of the material rather than evidence of memorization of undifferentiated material. Commonly, the essay questions in this course will oblige you to pick one side or the other. In such cases, pick one side and stick to your guns. No waffling, please. Saying "both" and then rehearsing everything in your notes that is somehow related to the question does not let me see whether you really understand what we're talking about. Here are the four possible questions.

1. Thinking about the ongoing protests in Hong Kong, write about sociocultural adaptation and about structural variables versus cultural variables.
2. Thinking in terms of *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft*, and in terms of critical urban sociology (urban political economy), write about recent plans by the Austin Independent School District to close a dozen schools.
3. Considering the broad history of cities over the centuries, which has promoted cultural convergence more, standardizations relating to time, or standardizations relating to money? Why has the other mattered less?
4. The federal government has hired you to build a New Town on Mars. How would you proceed? In your answer, address urban ecology, planning, and zoning.