

Cities & Epidemics

UrbDP 498 H / 598 L (3 credits)

University of Washington, Department of Urban Design & Planning

Summer, 2020 (full-term)



Seattle transit, 1918 and 2020

Meeting Wednesdays, 9:00 am – 11:50 am,
on Zoom at <https://washington.zoom.us/j/96884207052>.

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OVERVIEW

This class uses urbanism as a lens for understanding the spread of disease and our collective responses to threats to community health. Equally, it uses epidemics as a lens for understanding the built environments, social relations, and cultures that characterize our life together in cities. Put simply, studying epidemics and studying cities are complementary ways of learning about people—their hopes, their fears, and the ways they do or don't manage to get along with each other. Our class is being held in the summer of 2020, and so we inevitably begin from our present experience of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. The novel coronavirus has demanded cities' urgent responses to the acute pains

Acknowledgements — This syllabus has benefited from the work of many others who have spent recent months collecting a wide variety of resources on Covid-19, diseases, and cities. Especially: Prof. Evan Carver's Spring 2020 class "Pandemics, Urban Space, and Public Life" at the University of Chicago; the Pandemic Urbanism reading list from Columbia University; the crowd-sourced #CoronavirusSyllabus curated by Alondra Nelson and published on Google Docs; and coronavirus readings from the-syllabus.com. Thank you.

of the crisis. Yet at the same time, the pandemic has merely revealed and intensified cities' preexisting conditions of inequality, neglect, and discrimination — and so too their capacities for mutuality, resilience, and care. We bring the current pandemic in dialogue with past urban epidemics to learn how the experience of an outbreak is both a product and producer of conditions of the city. Seen in this way, Covid-19 becomes an opportunity for better understanding what our cities are, and for more hopeful reimaginations of what they could be.

There are several themes that we will return to throughout our exploration of cities and epidemics:

- The relationship between bodily health and architecture, public spaces, land use, and other aspects of the built environment.
- The relationship between bodily health and the economy, public policy, cultural norms, and other aspects of the social environment.
- The persistence of discrimination, exclusion, oppression, and fear of others in both cities and epidemics.
- The tension between the benefits and threats of life in close proximity to others.
- The aims and consequences of state efforts to manage populations.
- Collective resilience of communities during acute or chronic crises.

Prerequisites

This class is open to graduate and undergraduate students with an interest in the topic, regardless of degree program or prior coursework.

Objectives

At the end of this class, you will be able to:

1. Understand the intersecting themes of epidemics and urbanism.
2. Describe various examples of lasting effects of cities' responses to health concerns.
3. Use your knowledge of past urban epidemics to illuminate our current experience of Covid-19.
4. Use historical tools to create a primary account of your pandemic experience.
5. Propose opportunities for positive urban transformations as a result of Covid-19.

CLASSROOM VALUES AND EXPECTATIONS

A note on education during the Covid-19 pandemic

The University of Washington has designated Summer 2020 an “extraordinary circumstances quarter.” You are surely well aware that we are living and studying under extraordinary circumstances, as we have been since the end of winter quarter. Although we have all been affected by the pandemic, I also know that each of us is affected differently. I do not know the particular challenges you are facing this summer. However, I do recognize that for me to achieve my goal of supporting your education, many of the typical classroom norms and policies, including some described in this syllabus, will need to be adjusted. In short, we will all need to approach each other with greater-than-usual levels of mutual understanding and humanity.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The University of Washington’s Department of Urban Design and Planning, the institutional home of this class, have included the following statement as part of their mission:

Urban Design and Planning is striving to shift the culture of planning to engage and enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion, not just within the academic context, but also in the profession. We aspire to drive change not merely by responding to trends, but also by leading the change we seek.

Further, the department has defined the following three values:

Equity: Striving for fairness of results or outcomes, rather than equal access to opportunity.

Diversity: Recognizing and supporting differences that create vibrant and healthy communities

Inclusion: Creating an environment where everyone can participate and everyone belongs.

I wholeheartedly agree. In this class, we will value and honor diverse experiences and perspectives and strive to create a welcoming and respectful learning environment for all students. In this class, we will also respect the general goals of academic freedom and ensure that they are maintained. Differences of opinion, critical analysis, and honest feedback are welcomed, and should be expressed in a manner that supports the learning process.

Class format

We meet just once per week. Classes are a mixture of instructor lectures, student presentations, and class discussion. Class meetings are what we collectively make them; each will benefit from your active participation. Students are also expected to undertake substantial reading, writing, and thinking outside of class.

Student Responsibilities

To make this class as a success, your responsibilities are to:

1. *Actively* attend every class meeting.
2. Take class assignments seriously; complete assignments on time and to a high standard.
3. Respect your classmates.
4. Think about how *you* can get the most out of this class.

If you do all of these, you will get a good grade, you will learn a lot, and you might even have fun.

Instructor Responsibilities

My responsibilities as instructor mirror yours: to arrive prepared for all classes; to provide timely and constructive feedback on assignments; to create an environment in which all students can learn; and to take your academic goals, your work, and the class material seriously.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND POLICIES

Texts

All required (and many optional) readings are available to students digitally. You will not need to purchase books or any other materials for this class.

Website

Our class website is on Canvas: <https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1418767>.

We will use Canvas for many class functions, including distributing readings, sharing discussion questions, and submitting assignments. You are probably already familiar with Canvas, but if not, just ask.

Attendance

Regular attendance is important for your success in the class. If for some reason (and there are plenty of good ones) you need to miss a class, I appreciate it if you let me know in advance.

Late Submissions

I expect work to be submitted on time. Plan ahead, and leave some buffer time in your schedule. However, things happen, and I am ready to make reasonable accommodations for unforeseen circumstances. Please communicate as early as possible to request an extension. Unexcused late submissions will be penalized 10% of the total available points for each day (or portion thereof) it is late.

Communication

My communication to the class will generally happen through Canvas announcements, perhaps also through email. Email is the easiest way to reach

me directly (ptdunn@uw.edu), but sending a message through Canvas is fine too. I do my best to stay on top of my inbox, but please don't count on a response in less than 24 hours. Make sure that you have turned on the appropriate Canvas notifications, and check your email regularly.

I also have scheduled office hours, am available by appointment, and will generally try to be on Zoom for a few minutes before and after each class.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch. I enjoy talking to students, and most people say I'm a nice guy. You certainly don't need to feel like you have a "smart" question before we talk. If you are struggling, for whatever reason, you shouldn't feel ashamed to say so. My job is to help you learn however I can.

Accommodations

I am committed to creating an environment in which all students are included and have the opportunity to learn. If you require an accommodation for a religious observation or practice, please let me know. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at <https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/>. Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the form at <https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/>.

If you would benefit from accommodations for a disability, let me know and we will work with Disability Resources for Students to ensure you get the most out of this class. DRS offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and/or temporary health conditions. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, me, and DRS. You can reach DRS at 206-543-8924 (V) or 206-543-8925 (TTY). More information is available at disability.uw.edu. Please note that I am unable to provide accommodation for a disability without prior notification from DRS.

Code of Conduct / Academic Honesty

As always, students are expected to adhere to the UW's code of conduct. Be respectful of each other. Also remember that students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity in all of their work. Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses. If you are not sure what is OK, just ask!

Assignment Feedback

My goal in providing feedback and grades on your work is always to help you learn. Graduate students are held to a higher standard than undergraduate students, and will be graded accordingly.

Course Feedback

There is no need to wait until course evaluations at the end of the quarter to provide feedback to the instructor. If you have any concerns or suggestions related to teaching, assignments, organization, classroom environment, or other

elements of the class, you are welcome and encouraged to let me know at any time. This gives me the opportunity to make improvements as we go.

If you prefer to give feedback anonymously, you may do so online here: <https://forms.gle/EsuydE4MZiQFMyn36>. This form will remain open all quarter, and I will see responses as soon as they are submitted.

You may also raise any concerns directly with the chair of the Department of Urban Design and Planning, Christopher Campbell (ccamp1@uw).

ASSIGNMENTS

Your final grade will be calculated from the following components:

	UrbDP 498	UrbDP 598
Reading Responses	30 %	30 %
Discussion Facilitation	n/a	10 %
Pandemic Profile	10 %	n/a
A Covid-19 History	50 %	50 %
Class Contribution	10 %	10 %

Reading Responses

Most classes have assigned readings. You are expected to read these texts before class. In addition, you will complete reading responses for at least five classes. A reading response has two parts:

1. A brief response (generally no more than 100 words) to a given prompt. Each week’s prompt will be posted as a Canvas assignment at least one week before it is due. Submit your response to Canvas by Tuesday evening before class. (4 points each)
2. 2-3 discussion questions for the class. Your questions can be anything inspired by the readings that you think will bring up interesting ideas in class. Your questions do not need to reference each assigned reading. Post your response to that class’s Canvas discussion by Tuesday evening. These will be visible to your classmates. You are encouraged to prepare for class discussions by reviewing your classmates’ questions. (2 points each)

Discussion Facilitation

Students registered for UrbDP 598 will lead one class discussion of the assigned readings. You might prepare some discussion questions, review the student-submitted discussion questions, and outline any key arguments, terms, people, or facts that you think we should cover. When classes have readings assigned to graduate students only, you should be prepared to summarize the main ideas of this reading to the students who have not completed it. You aren’t expected to be

an expert on the topic, or to teach it to the class. Instead, you will be *facilitating* the class's shared effort to learn from the material. There is no need to consult additional resources or prepare a formal presentation (unless you really want to). Some classes will have joint facilitators.

Pandemic Profile

Students registered for UrbDP 498 will present a profile of one historic outbreak, epidemic, or pandemic to the class. You will need to do some basic research, but this is not meant to be an intensive study. Consult and properly cite at least three scholarly sources. Then give a presentation of 5-10 minutes to the class. See further detail on the class website.

A Covid-19 History

Each student will produce a primary account of Covid-19. Your sources are your own lived experience of this pandemic, and the experiences of people in your community. The assignment is structured so that you will work on it throughout the quarter, submitting an individual component most weeks. You will then synthesize your work into a polished final product, a post to our class blog, due at our final meeting.

The components of your coronavirus history are:

1. A Covid-19 place map (graphic, due Week 3, 5 points)
2. A speculative reflection (written, due Week 4, 5 points)
3. An artifact analysis (written with potential for other media, due Week 5, 5 points)
4. A photo essay (images, due Week 6, 5 points)
5. Interviews and analysis (written, due Week 8, 10 points)
6. Blog post synthesizing selections of previous work and connecting to themes from class (multi-media, due Week 9, 20 points)

More specific instructions will be provided. However, there is also opportunity here for flexibility, if you have ideas for something else.

Class Contribution

The class contribution portion of your grade reflects a simple truth: you have something to bring to our class, and it's your responsibility to bring it. We all benefit from your active participation. That doesn't necessarily mean talking a lot. Good participation means you come to class with all readings and other assignments completed. You listen actively and respectfully to what your classmates and instructor are saying. If you read and listen thoughtfully, then questions, disagreements, uncertainties, connections, experiences, visions, and other responses will naturally occur to you. Share these with the class when you think it will help our learning. Your ideas don't need to be fully formed or brilliant or original to benefit the class; they only need to come from your genuine desire to learn. Participation also means helping your classmates to learn by creating an environment for them to make their own contributions.

Of course, this kind of participation can be made more difficult when mediated by webcams, Zoom, Canvas, and unreliable internet connections. The familiar social cues of the classroom are absent, and we have many more opportunities for distraction and interruption. Still, our class is not a passive experience. Each of you has something to contribute to our class, and it's your responsibility to contribute it. And our digital format presents new opportunities too. Let's make the most of it, together.

SCHEDULE

**Readings marked with an asterisk are optional for students in UrbDP 498*

WEEK 1
JUNE 24

Class Introduction

Readings

- Excerpt from introduction to Boccaccio's *The Decameron*

WEEK 2
JULY 1

(Un)Healthy Cities

Readings

- Corburn, J. (2009) "Retracing the Roots of City Planning and Public Health" In *Toward the healthy city: People, places, and the politics of urban planning* (pp. 25 – 60). MIT Press.
- Dye, C. (2008). Health and Urban Living. *Science*, 319(5864), 766–769.
- *At least one of the following:*
 - Ellis, E.G. (2020, May 18). "[How Smart City Planning Could Slow Future Pandemics.](#)" Wired.
 - Klaus, I. (2020, March 6). "[Pandemics Are Also an Urban Planning Problem.](#)" Bloomberg CityLab.
 - Constable, H. (2020, April 26). "[How do you Build a City for a Pandemic?](#)" BBC.
 - Shenker, J. (2020, March 26). "[Cities After Coronavirus: How Covid-19 Could Radically Alter Urban Life.](#)" The Guardian.
- * Gandy, M. (2006). The Bacteriological City and Its Discontents. *Historical Geography*, 34, 14–25.

Discussion Facilitator(s): _____

Pandemic Profile(s): _____

Due

- Reading response

WEEK 3
JULY 8

(Un)Healthy Peoples

Readings

- McNeill, W. H. (1998). Introduction. In *Plagues and peoples* (pp. 19 – 32). Anchor Books Doubleday.
- Snowden, F. M. (2019). Emerging and Reemerging Diseases. In *Epidemics and society: From the Black Death to the present* (pp. 448 – 465). Yale University Press.
- Koch, T. (2011). Disease in Cities: The Neighborhoods of Plague. In *Disease maps: Epidemics on the ground* (pp. 48 – 71). University of Chicago Press.
- Kolbert, E. (2020, April 6). The Spread. *The New Yorker*, 58–61.
- * Rosenberg, C. E. (1989). What Is an Epidemic? AIDS in Historical Perspective. *Daedalus*, 118(2), 1–17.

Discussion Facilitator(s): _____

Pandemic Profile(s): _____

Due

- Reading response
- Covid-19 History: Map

WEEK 4
JULY 15

Built Cities

Readings

* *Students in 498 may skip any one of the first three readings*

- Crompton, J. L. (2013). The health rationale for urban parks in the nineteenth century in the USA. *World Leisure Journal*, 55(4), 333–346.
- Campbell, M. (2005). What Tuberculosis did for Modernism: The Influence of a Curative Environment on Modernist Design and Architecture. *Medical History*, 49(4), 463–488.
- Schultz, S. K., & McShane, C. (1978). To Engineer the Metropolis: Sewers, Sanitation, and City Planning in Late-Nineteenth-Century America. *The Journal of American History*, 65(2), 389.
- Budds, D. (2020, March 17). [Design in the age of pandemics](#). *Curbed*.

Discussion Facilitator(s): _____

Pandemic Profile(s): _____

Due

- Reading response
- Covid-19 History: Speculative reflection

WEEK 5
JULY 22

Social Cities

Readings

- Tomes, N. (2010). “Destroyer and Teacher”: Managing the Masses during the 1918–1919 Influenza Pandemic. *Public Health Reports*, 125(3_suppl), 48–62.
- *Selections from* Jetten, J., Haslam, S. A., Reicher, S., & Cruwys, T. (Eds.). (2020). *Together apart: The psychology of covid-19*. SAGE Publications.
 - Ch 7, Group threat (pp. 61 – 67)
 - Ch 9, Social isolation (pp. 73 – 78)
 - Ch 12, Crowds (pp. 91 – 96)
 - Ch 13, Emergencies and disasters (pp. 97 – 101)
 - Ch 14, Solidarity (pp 102 – 106)
- Kimmelman, M. (2020, March 17). [Can City Life Survive Coronavirus?](#) *The New York Times*.
- Rogan, K. (2020, April 6). [The City and The City and Coronavirus.](#) *Failed Architecture*.
- * Wald, P. (2002). Communicable Americanism: Contagion, Geographic Fictions, and the Sociological Legacy of Robert E. Park. *American Literary History*, 14(4), 653–685. (Focus mainly on the first part, through p. 665.)

Discussion Facilitator(s): _____

Pandemic Profile(s): _____

Due

- Reading response
- Covid-19 History: Artifact analysis

WEEK 6
JULY 29

Discriminatory Cities

Readings

- Deverell, W. F. (2004). Ethnic quarantine. In *Whitewashed adobe: The rise of Los Angeles and the remaking of its Mexican past* (pp. 152 – 180). University of California Press.
- Hoffman, D. (2016). A Crouching Village: Ebola and the Empty Gestures of Quarantine in Monrovia. *City & Society*, 28(2), 246–264.
- *Current perspectives:*
 - Ettachfini, L. (2020, April 14). [Coronavirus death rates are a direct result of environmental racism](#). Vice.
 - Levine, C. (2020, April 17). [In the Age of COVID-19, Whose Job Is It to Fight Racism?](#) Nonprofit Quarterly.
 - Honigsbaum, M. (2020, June 6). [Epidemics have often led to discrimination against minorities – this time is no different](#). The Conversation.

- *Optional listen (45 min), but read the highlights: [Asian American Discrimination And The Coronavirus Crisis](#). (2020, April 14). In *On Point*. WBUR.*
- * Olivarius, K. (2019). Immunity, Capital, and Power in Antebellum New Orleans. *The American Historical Review*, 124(2), 425–455.

Discussion Facilitator(s): _____

Pandemic Profile(s): _____

Due

- Reading response
- Covid-19 History: Photo essay

WEEK 7
AUGUST 5

Cities and the State

Readings

- Mooney, G. (2015). Finding disease in the Victorian city. In *Intrusive interventions: Public health, domestic space, and infectious disease surveillance in England, 1840-1914* (pp. 19 – 39). University of Rochester Press.
- Hoppe, T. (2018). Controlling Typhoid Mary. In *Punishing disease: HIV and the criminalization of sickness* (pp. 17 – 42). University of California Press.
- Belenky, S. (April 10, 2020). [Welcome To The Coronavirus Surveillance State](#). HuffPost.
- * Füller, H. (2016). Pandemic cities: Biopolitical effects of changing infection control in post-SARS Hong Kong. *The Geographical Journal*, 182(4), 342–352.

Discussion Facilitator(s): _____

Pandemic Profile(s): _____

Due

- Reading response

WEEK 8
AUGUST 12

Cities and Communities

Viewing

- France, D. (2013). How to survive a plague. [Film] Sundance Selects: MPI Media Group. (*Currently available for streaming through the UW Library*)

Readings

- Stavrides, S. (2020, May 8). [Life as Commons](#). Undisciplined Environments.

- Tolentino, J. (2020, May 18). [Can I help You? The meaning of mutual aid during a pandemic.](#) *The New Yorker*, 24–29.
- Solnit, R. (2020, April 7). ["The impossible has already happened": What coronavirus can teach us about hope.](#) *The Guardian*.

Discussion Facilitator(s): _____

Pandemic Profile(s): _____

Due

- Reading response
- Covid-19 History: Interviews and analysis

WEEK 9
AUGUST 19

Student Presentations

Students will present their final Covid-19 history blog posts in class.

No readings.

Due:

- Covid-19 History: blog post and presentation