



NYU

**ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE**

**PHD-GP 5912 and
PHD-GP 5913
Urban Research
Seminar
Fall 2018/Spring 2019**

Instructor Information

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Course Information

- Class Meeting Times: Alternate Mondays, 9/10 – 12/3. 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm
- Class Location: Rudin Conference Room on the second floor of the Puck Building (295 Lafayette Street).

Course Overview

This course, taught jointly by faculty members of the Gallatin School and the Wagner School, offers doctoral students an opportunity to learn about the latest theoretical and empirical research on critical urban issues. The course is not taught in a lecture format. Rather, the course focuses on discussions of academic works in progress by scholars from around the country and the world, working in such disciplines as sociology, history, planning, law, public

health, public policy, and economics. Students will participate in an in-depth discussion of the paper with the author, together with other faculty and researchers from NYU and the New York area. Students must submit short papers critiquing a number of the works in progress, and have the opportunity to meet informally (usually over dinner) with a few authors to discuss the topic further. Students will also be assigned supplemental readings to ensure that they have the background necessary to understand upcoming papers. The course is designed to be multidisciplinary, and we invite doctoral students from across the university to enroll. We will give preference, however, to doctoral students selected to participate in the University's Urban Doctoral Fellowship Program. If there is space, we will also consider allowing some advanced, research-focused masters' students to enroll in the class.

Course Objectives

The goal of this course is to expose students to cutting edge, multidisciplinary research on cities and urban issues. Through reading the papers and assigned background readings, students will learn about critical urban issues as well as a variety of research methods and approaches. They will learn to read research papers in a variety of different fields and critically assess their strengths and weaknesses. Students will also have a chance to meet and discuss research ideas with leading urban scholars.

What You Will Take Away

After this course you will be able to:

1. Understand the research techniques and approaches used by different disciplines.
2. Identify research gaps relating to important urban challenges.
3. Critically assess research, across a variety of disciplines.
4. Distinguish causal and non-causal claims.
5. Engage with researchers across disciplinary boundaries.

Learning Assessment Table

Graded Assignment	Course Objective Covered
Submitted Questions	#1, #2, #3, #4, #5, \$6
Paper Critiques	#1, #2, #3, #4, #5, \$6

Course Schedule

(Sessions that are open to the public are explicitly mentioned as that)

- **Class 1 - September 10th**
 - Topics: Introduction to Seminar; background lecture on basics of research design and quantitative methods
- **Class 2 – September 17th (Open to the Public)**
 - Guest Speaker: Matthew Desmond, Professor of Sociology, Princeton University
- **Class 3 – October 1st (Open to the Public)**
 - Guest Speaker: Laura Barraclough, Sarai K. Ribicoff Associate Professor of American Studies, Yale University
- **Class 4 – October 15th (Open to the Public)**
 - Guest Speaker: Jessica Trounstine, Associate Professor of Political Science, University of California, Merced
- **Class 5 - October 29th (Open to the Public)**
 - Guest Speaker: Charles Branas, Anna Cheskis and Murray Charles Gelman Professor of Epidemiology, Columbia University
- **Class 6 – November 12th (Open to the Public)**
 - Guest Speaker: Edward Glaeser, Fred and Eleanor Glimp Professor of Economics, Harvard University
- **Class 7 – December 3rd (Open to the Public)**
 - Guest Speaker: Tracey Meares, Walton Hale Hamilton Professor of Law, Yale University
- **Class 8 – January 28th**
 - Topics: Introduction to Themes of Spring Semester
- **Class 9 – February 11th (Open to the Public)**
 - Guest Speaker: Mary Patillo, Harold Washington Professor of Sociology and African American Studies, Northwestern University
- **Class 10 – February 25th (Open to the Public)**
 - Guest Speaker: Rucker Johnson, Associate Professor of Public Policy, Goldman School, University of California, Berkeley
- **Class 11 – March 11th (Open to the Public)**
 - Guest Speaker: Mario Small, Grafstein Family Professor of Sociology, Harvard University
- **Class 12 – March 25th (Open to the Public)**
 - Guest Speaker: Cesar Hidalgo, Associate Professor of Media Arts and Sciences, MIT
- **Class 13 – April 8th (Open to the Public)**
 - Guest Speaker: Eric Klinenberg, Professor of Sociology, NYU
- **Class 14 – April 22nd (Open to the Public)**
 - Guest Speaker: Raquel Rolnik, Professor of Architecture and Urbanism, University of Sao Paolo

Required Readings

Required readings include the papers authored by our speakers and background readings assigned for each, to be determined once speakers provide paper titles.

Assignments

The seminar will host 12 leading urban researchers throughout the year, listed above in the course schedule. Students are required to do background reading together with the presented paper, participate in the seminar discussion, and to submit critiques of six of the 12 papers (3 per semester). The critiques must be e-mailed to the faculty by 5:00 p.m. on the Friday following the presentation. Each critique should be between 800 and 1000 words. The critique should assume that the reader is familiar with the paper, and should not summarize its contents. Instead, the critique should analyze such questions as:

- What are the key takeaways from the paper?
- What is unclear or imprecise in the argument or methodology?
- What assumptions underlie the argument, and are they unjustified?
- How, if at all, would relaxing assumptions underlying the argument change the result?
- Are there any flaws in the study's methodology?
- Does the methodology actually test the hypothesis?
- What questions did the author ignore that should have been considered?
- Are there alternative explanations for the study's findings?

These questions are suggestions only, and are not meant to be exhaustive. A critique should tackle just one or a few of the questions, not all of them

Course Requirements

- **Submitted Questions:** Students are required to submit questions in advance of each session with an outside speaker. These collectively count for 10% of a student's grade.
- **Class Participation:** Students will be expected to attend and participate in each class and to submit questions in advance of each session with an outside speaker. Class participation will count for 20% of a student's grade.
- **Papers:** The six critiques will collectively count for 70% of a student's grade.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a vital component of Wagner and NYU. All students enrolled in this class are required to read and abide by [Wagner's Academic Code](#). All Wagner students have already read and signed the [Wagner Academic Oath](#). Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated and students in this class are expected to report violations to me. If any student in this class is unsure about what is expected of you and how to abide by the academic code, you should consult with me.

Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at NYU

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the [Moses Center for Students with Disabilities \(CSD\) website](#) and click on the Reasonable Accommodations and How to Register tab or call or email CSD at (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

NYU's Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays

[NYU's Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](#) states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Please notify me in advance of religious holidays that might coincide with exams to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives.