

Philosophy of Cities

Dr. Matteson
Fall 2012

Course Syllabus and Schedule

As of October 15, 2012

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Office: Babbitt Annex 304, MWF, 11:30-12:30, and happily by appointment

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Class: PHI 325-1 (1411), Tuesday and Thursday 11:10-12:25, Liberal Arts 114

Content. The earliest conceptions of cities understood them as autonomous communities of **citizens**, typically unified by shared ideals. More recently some have argued that cities are underwritten by voluntary **contracts** undertaken to secure personal rights or for personal gain. Both conceptions—citizenship and contractual—have been strained by revolutions in agriculture, trade, industry, medicine, the rise of nation states, and current trends towards globalization. The sheer size, internal complexity, and interconnectedness of contemporary cities seem to outstrip simple notions of citizenship and contracts. It is now common to understand cities in broadly **ecological** terms, especially in terms of collective economic and environmental sustainability. One aim of the course is to understand these various conceptions—citizenship, contractual, and ecological. A second aim is to critically evaluate what these conceptions get right, and what they get wrong, about the origins, nature, and good of cities. The larger aim of the course is to critically reflect on how cities interact with **human flourishing**, and whether cities in the future can be made to enable our flourishing. We will pursue these issues by carefully considering texts from philosophers, historians, architects, city planners, and urban theorists.

Teaching Aims, Expectations of Students, and Hoped for Outcomes. My main aims are to (1) direct your attention to interesting and important ideas and sources, (2) enable vigorous class discussions, and (3) support the improvement of your philosophical reasoning and writing. You are expected to (1) actively engage with difficult reading material until you understand it (2) write a lot and with philosophical rigor, and (3) have civil, challenging, and productive face-to-face discussions with other students and myself about complex moral, social, and political issues. If you and your classmates take the course seriously then together we will all: (1) develop our reading, writing, and conversation skills, (2) increase our historical and conceptual knowledge of cities, and (3) clarify, expand, and deepen the ways we can approach questions about where and how we live.

Discomfort and Respect. You should anticipate that dwelling on complex issues like citizenship, economics, sustainability, and human flourishing will be difficult. Moreover, thinking hard about how to live well is often a source of discomfort, especially in the presence of writers and people who disagree with you. I take special care to make sure that all viewpoints are treated with respect. I do my best to foster an environment conducive to intellectual and social growth. Please help me with this.

Better Answers. One methodological postulate for this course is that we can reach *better* views about these issues through careful reasoning and attention to the views and arguments of other people, perhaps especially views we disagree with. This postulate may be mistaken. However, if students have a deep conviction that it is impossible to make any progress on issues like these, then they are likely to be frustrated with the course, and should perhaps consider taking a different one.

Difficulty and Support. Many students are surprised at the difficulty of philosophy courses. I could lower my expectations. Instead, I go out of my way to address academic and non-academic obstacles while being fair to other students. The natural venue to discuss any of your struggles with the course is in (a) my office – during office hours, by appointment, or if I happen to be there. The (b) Student Learning Center also addresses a wide range of academic issues. If external problems are impacting multiple courses, then students should contact (c) the Dean of Students through the Student Life Office.

Disability Accommodations. The Disability Resources Office arranges all disability accommodations. Students must register with DR every semester they need accommodation and provide documentation of disability to DR at least eight weeks prior to requested accommodations. Students must notify me at least two weeks prior to any needed accommodations.

Preconditions. This course has no official NAU prerequisites. However, there are several serious practical preconditions. At a minimum you must: (1) be able to attend all classes, (2) buy all texts immediately, (3) have easy access to a modern word-processing program, the internet, and a reliable printer, (4) have a schedule that will allow you to spend at least six to ten hours every week outside of class working on this course.

Administrative Drop Policy. You will be dropped from the course if you: (1) miss either the first or second class and do not discuss this with me in my office within a week, or (2) fail to submit two or more of the first four class assignments on time.

Personal Technology in Class. You may use personal technology in class provided that it is *directly* relevant to the discussion around you. I will ban personal technology for individuals or the class, temporarily or permanently, if it becomes distracting to me or other students.

Required Texts and Readings. The best way to perform well on all of your assignments is to grapple with the assigned readings before, during, and after class. Some readings will be posted Blackboard. Most will be from the texts below. Purchase texts immediately *in the edition specified*. (If the bookstore is out, *prepay* for books and they will notify you. Otherwise books are returned.) Bring all required readings with you on days we discuss them.

1. Meagher (2008). *Philosophy and the City: Classic to Contemporary Writings*. \$30 0791473082
2. LeGates and Stout (2011). *The City Reader*. \$62 0415556651

Course Assignments and Grading Scale. See the schedule below regarding how all of the assignments for the class fit together. The final course grade will be calculated as follows:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Due</u>	<u>Comments</u>	<u>Possible Points</u>	<u>Course Scale</u>
Class Assignments	Every class	cannot be made up without NAU excuse	290 (10x29)	A > 900
Essay 1	Tue, Oct 2	3-4 pages, citizenship, possible rewrite	100	B > 800
Essay 2	Tue, Oct 23	4-5 pages, economic, possible rewrite	200	C > 700
Essay 3	Tue, Nov 27	5-6 pages, ecological	300	D > 600
Final Exam	Thu, Dec 13	10am-12pm, comprehensive, open note	200	F < 599
Arcosanti	TBA	weekend trip	30	

Class Assignments. Every class there will be an assignment *due in class* worth 10 points. Class assignments will be a mixture of worksheets, quizzes, discussion, and attendance. If you have an NAU excused absence for a missed class, and want to earn the 10 points for the missed class assignment, then come to office hours or make an appointment to see me within a week of the missed class. Bring your official excused absence form. I will ask you about the assigned reading. If it is clear that you took the reading material seriously I will give you the 10 points for the class assignment. Without a NAU excuse, missed class assignments cannot be made up except in extreme, unavoidable circumstances.

Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs). There will be regular CATs used in class. These are ungraded, anonymous assignments completed and collected in class. These help me keep my finger on the pulse of the class.

Essays. In all of your essays you will state a thesis and defend it using materials from this course. We will discuss how to write philosophical essay in class, and you will get feedback on a prospectus for each of your essays. You have the option to rewrite either Essay 1 or Essay 2 (but not both). The score on the rewrite will replace the original score. Rewrites are due no later than 10 days after you receive the graded essay back through Blackboard Learn. If you need an extension for any essay, you must email me a request explaining why it is necessary. I will respond, either denying an extension or granting it with a new due date.

Final Exam. The Final Exam will be a mixture of short answer and long essay. The exam will be comprehensive. You will take it at the time scheduled by NAU. Rescheduling your Final Exam will only be done in extreme, unavoidable circumstances.

Integrity. Violations of academic integrity (e.g. plagiarism, cheating, dishonesty) will be recorded with the university and will incur severe penalties, including course failure and the possibility of expulsion. See the NAU Student Handbook for policies.

Important NAU Fall 2012 dates.

Mon, Aug 27	First day of fall semester.	Mon, Sep 17	Administrative drop deadline.
Mon, Sep 3	Labor Day, no class.	Fri, Oct 19	Mid-term grades submitted.
Thu, Sep 6	Last day: Dropped classes not on transcript.	Mon, Nov 12	Veteran's Day, no class.
		Thu, Nov 22-3	Thanksgiving Holiday, no class.
		Fri, Nov 30	Last day: Withdraw from all classes.

Schedule. I reserve the right to make adjustments to the course as needed. Any changes will be announced in class (when possible) and posted on Blackboard in the announcement section. ‘M’ abbreviates Meagher’s book, *Philosophy and the City*. ‘LS’ abbreviates LeGates and Stout’s book, *The City Reader*. ‘BL’ abbreviates Blackboard Learn. Note: Class assignments are not listed on the schedule.

Course Introduction and Why Cities Matter. Why are cities important? How are philosophy and cities related to each other? What is expected of you in this course? How will you be assessed?

Tue 8.27	What are the aims and requirements of the course?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy all books.
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Thu 8.29	How are cities and philosophy related?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meagher (2007) Introduction, <i>Philosophy and the City</i>, M 1-9. • Hustwit (2011) <i>Urbanized</i>, BL 90 minutes. <i>9 pages, 90 minutes</i>
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Part 1: Citizens and Communities. Early cities were often conceptualized in terms of citizenship, where cities were comprised by its members organized into autonomous communities. About this conception we can ask: Is this an accurate description of the foundations of cities? And if so, what do citizens owe their city? Why? If citizens are ultimately responsible for, and dependent upon their cities, then why would cities ever collapse?

Tue 9.4	What do citizens owe their cities? What is justice for a city?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plato (d. 347) from <i>Crito</i> and <i>The Republic</i>, M 20-33. • Kitto (1951) The Polis, from <i>The Greeks</i>, LS 40-45. <i>18 pages</i>
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Thu 9.6	What are the relationships between good people and good citizens?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aristotle (c. BC 350) from <i>Politics</i>, M 33-39. <i>6 pages</i>
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Tue 9.11	Are cities constituted by shared commitment or shared ideals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Augustine (426) from <i>The City of God</i>, M 40-48. • St. Thomas More (1516) from <i>Utopia</i>, M 55-64. <i>17 pages</i>
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Thu 9.13	Are cities contingent social and political arrangements? Do cities fail because of bad decisions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diamond (2005) from <i>Collapse, The Ancient Ones: The Anasazi and Their Neighbors</i>, BL 136-156, <i>The Mayan Collapses</i>, BL 157-177. <i>40 pages</i>
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Tue 9.18	Why would citizens make bad decisions about their own future?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diamond (2005) from <i>Collapse, Why do Societies Make Disastrous Decisions?</i>, BL 419-440. <i>21 pages</i>
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Thu 9.20	Discussion of Essay 1 prospectus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay 1 prospectus due in class.
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Part 2: Rights and Contracts. In modern times some have conceived of cities as networks of contractual obligations, undertaken to protect property rights or for personal gain. About this conception we can ask: Is this an accurate description of the foundations of cities? Is this an attractive normative ideal cities should aspire to? Are there dangers in pursuing increasingly complex social dependencies for individual gain?

Tue 9.25	What rights are secured and forfeited in cities? How?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hobbes (1642) from <i>De Cive</i>, M 65-71. <i>6 pages</i>
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Thu 9.27	Do cities protect property rights? Can they?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hayek (1960) Housing and Town Planning, M 298-303. <i>5 pages</i>
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Tue 10.2	Is the point of cities their own growth?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay 1 due through BL by 11:00pm. • Molotch (1976) The City as Growth Machine: Towards a Political Economy of Place, LS 251-262. <i>11 pages</i>
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Thu 10.4	What is complexity and where does it come from?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tainter (1990) from <i>The Collapse of Complex Societies</i>, Ch 2: The Nature of Complex Societies, BL 22-38, and Ch 4: The Marginal Productivity of Sociopolitical Change, BL 91-126. <i>51 pages</i>
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Tue 10.9	Is the marginal benefit of social complexity always positive?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tainter (1990) from <i>The Collapse of Complex Societies</i>, and the sections on the Mayan and Chaco collapses, BL 152-186. <i>34 pages</i>
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Thu 10.11	Discussion of Essay 2 prospectus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay 2 prospectus due in class.
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Part 3: Growth and Sustainability. In 1800 only 3% of the world human population lived in urban areas. But since 2008 over 50% of us are now living in cities. About modern cities we can ask: What forces explain the rise of modern cities? What new moral, social, and political issues are raised by modern cities? Do modern cities merely expand upon previous citizenship and economic conceptions, or do they require fundamentally new concepts? Is it possible to achieve livable and sustainable cities without regional, national, and international planning?

Tue 10.16	What historical forces explain modern trends towards urbanization?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LeGates and Stout (2011) <i>The Evolution of Cities</i>, LS 15-19. • Davis (1965) <i>The Urbanization of the Human Population</i>, LS 20-30.
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Thu 10.18	How did developments in industry change cities in the 19 th and 20 th centuries?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engels (1845) <i>The Great Towns</i>, from <i>The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844</i>, LS 46-54. • Warner (2011) <i>Evolution and Transformation: the American Industrial Metropolis, 1840-1940</i>, LS 55-64.
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Tue 10.23	What is the Garden City? What is rational planning?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay 2 due through BL by 11:00pm. • Howard (1898) from <i>Garden Cities of Tomorrow</i>, LS 328-335. • Le Corbusier (1929) from <i>The City of Tomorrow and its Planning</i>, LS 336-344.
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Thu 10.25	What is the Broadacre?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wright (1935) <i>Broadacre City: A New Community Plan</i>, LS 345-350. • GM “Give Yourself the Green Light” (1954) BL 22 minutes.
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Tue 10.30	Is urban sprawl desirable?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruegmann (2005) <i>The Causes of Sprawl</i>, LS 211-221.
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Thu 11.1	How are cities related to climate change?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wheeler (2011) <i>Urban Planning and Global Climate Change</i>, LS 458-467. • Brundtland Commission (1987) <i>Towards Sustainable Development</i>, LS 351-355.
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Tue 11.6	What are the principles of smart growth? Is it possible?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charter of the New Urbanism (1993) LS 356-359. • Benfield, Terris, and Vorsanger (2001) <i>Rutland Wal-Mart, in Solving Sprawl</i>, BL 55-60. • Watch Douglas Farr (2009) <i>Sustainable Urbanism</i>, BL 80 min.
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Thu 11.8	Do cities require comprehensive regional and national planning? By what principles?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lissa McCullough, from <i>Conversations with Paolo Soleri</i>, BL 9-23. • Calthorpe and Fulton (2001) from <i>The Regional City: Planning for the End of Sprawl</i>, in LS 360-365.
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Sat 11.10 Arcosanti – 9:00am depart from Cline.

Tue 11.13	Should cities be manipulated through fixed pricing and law?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thompson (1968) <i>The City as a Distorted Price System</i>, LS 274-281. • Lincoln Institute of Land Policy (2009) <i>Portland: Quest for the Livable City</i>, BL 6 minutes.
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Thu 11.15	Discussion of Essay 3 prospectus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay 3 prospectus due in class.
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Part 4: Future Cities and Participation. Urban growth is projected to continue to increase in the near future. This will mean abandoning some cities, adding to and reshaping old cities, and building new cities. What do we want our cities in the future to be like? Who should be allowed political participation in cities? What forms of political participation in decisions about cities work?

Tue 11.20	How are ethnicity, disability, economics, and exclusion linked?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Madanipour (1998) Social Exclusion and Space, LS 186-194.
Thu 11.22	<i>Thanksgiving break – no class.</i>	
Tue 11.27	What is public space in a city? Who has a right to it? How is public space related to democracy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay 3 due through BL by 11:00pm. • Reiss (2007) <i>Bomb It</i>, BL 93 min. • Kolhonen (2005). Moving Pictures: Advertising, Traffic and Cityscape, BL (web link).
Thu 11.29	How are communities and crime related?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jacobs (1961) The Uses of Sidewalks: Safety, from <i>The Death and Life of Great American Cities</i>, LS 105-109. • Wilson and Kelling (1982) Broken Windows, LS 263-273.
Tue 12.4	Can cities enable productive political participation? How?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arnstein (1969) A Ladder of Citizen Participation, LS 238-250. • Kemmis (1995) Taxpayers vs. Citizens, M 256-258.
Thu 12.6	TBA	
Thu 12.13	Final Exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Exam 10am-12pm.