Course Description and Objectives

The purpose of this course is to examine the most common residential setting in the United States: the Suburb. Recognizing and building upon understandings of American cities, this course examines the history, contemporary life, and politics of American metropolitan areas, focusing on suburbs, but not losing sight of the broader metropolitan—and urban—context. Students in this course will review histories of a number of U.S. suburbs in order to understand not simply their origins, but also the debates about the forces driving suburbanization in America. We will look at suburban life, with regard to socio-economic, ethnicity, and political aspects of people living in suburbia, from governance to contemporary culture and questions of local politics.

Students successfully completing Suburbanization: People, Place, and Politics will be able to do three things: (1) outline the development of suburbia in the United States and explain the role of government policy and American culture in this process; (2) connect the historical development of suburbs to contemporary conditions, illustrating both recurring patterns as well as points of divergence; and (3) articulate an informed argument about what the future of suburbia may look like.

The most important outcomes of this course are the knowledge and thought processing that students achieve. The course is designed as an introduction to the theories of suburbanization for upper-level undergraduate students. The course is scaled to learning at two levels, with writing and discussion being the primary methods by which students will communicate their learning within these levels. At its basic-level, the course introduces students to foundational and factual knowledge about suburbs (e.g., historical development). At a more advanced level, it asks students to think conceptually about the role suburbs have played in the American imagination, both as a utopian ideal and as reality. The course challenges students to recognize not only how the suburbs have been shaped by the choices people make about where they live and work, but that suburbia itself has also shaped those choices. The course requires that students comprehend how the foundational knowledge and theoretical frameworks interrelate to form a useful body of knowledge.
Texts

There are two required books for this course:

1) Teaford, Jon C. 2008, The American Suburb
2) Lindstrom/Bartling, 2003, Suburban Sprawl

In addition to reading and class discussion from the above texts, various readings from other texts will be covered. These will be sent to students via email or will be discussed in class lectures. Note-taking will be vital to this class.

Monday classes will be discussion from text readings. Wednesday classes will be lecture and discussion from recent, (no older than two years) student-found articles about suburbs of large urban areas. These articles must pertain to the sections of the syllabus that we cover each week. Students will not need to summarize the articles in writing or hand them in, but prior to each discussion, dates and sources of the articles must be cited.

Written Assignments, Final Exam, & Course Evaluation

In addition to the text readings and weekly articles, there will be three short papers due: September 5th, October 3rd, and November 7th. Each paper must be three pages, double spaced, with the questions repeated, prefacing the answers. You will be evaluated on organization, grammar, spelling, in addition to appropriately and coherently addressing the substance of the assignment.

**Paper #1 – Individual Discussion Paper- due 9/5:** What do you understand to be an American suburb? Where did you grow up, i.e., in what kind of living environment (urban, rural, suburban)? Your parents? Where and what kind of living community or space do you envision being in 10 years from now? Last, what are two pros and two cons regarding the type of living area that you grew up in. The grade will be based on meaningful responses related to the subparts of the questions, rather than on the substance of the answers, i.e., there will be no “right” or “wrong” answers. **This paper counts 5% of your grade.**

**Paper #2 – Is suburbia diverse? – due 10/3:** If it is, explain whether or not this diversity is problematic and how it came about. If it is not, explain why you think that is the case. This question is asking you to build on your review of the history/creation of suburbia, explaining whether or not you see contemporary suburbia as diverse and connected to past trends. You must argue whether you see fundamental connections between diversity as a suburban characteristic (or the lack thereof), and the history of suburbs—that is, how has history shaped the present, or hasn’t it? If you do not see any connections, why do you think that’s the case? It is expected that you will also argue a position regarding whether or not diversity in suburbia is ‘good’ or ‘bad.’ **This paper counts 20% of your grade.**

**Paper #3 – Is there a future in the American suburb? – due 11/7:** What does it look like? If yes,why? If you think that there is no future for the suburb, effect an argument
that everyone will live and work in the city or in rural environments, what reasons do you offer for that conclusion? This question is asking you to articulate an informed vision for the future of suburbia based in the literature we have read and your own interpretations and synthesis of that literature. This paper counts 20% of your grade.

Final Exam - (details to be discussed) - The exam will count 15% of your grade.

Class Participation – Participation will be determined by your attendance at each class, your engagement during the class discussions (related to text readings and article selection and discussion), and your responses to class questions and other students’ comments. Participation grade will also be determined by your willingness to speak up and share thoughts, questions, and concerns during the course. Participation counts as 40% of your grade.

Your final grade for the course will be calculated using the following undergraduate grade distribution (percentage of total score of all assignments).

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
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<td>A</td>
<td>92.5 – 97.4</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>90 – 92.4</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>B-</td>
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General Policies and Procedures

Honor Code and all related processes in the Student Handbook at http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/index.php

Statement on Academic Integrity: Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when suspected, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved. Incidents where the instructor determines the student’s actions are related more to a misunderstanding will be handled by the instructor. A written intervention designed to help prevent the student from repeating the error will be given to the student. The intervention, submitted by form and signed both by the instructor and the student, will be forwarded to the Dean of Students and placed in the student’s file.

Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly by the instructor and/or others having knowledge of the incident to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive a XXF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This status indicator will appear on the student’s transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the XX to be expunged. The F is permanent.

Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration--working together without permission-- is a form of cheating. Research conducted and/or papers written for other classes cannot be used in whole or in part for any assignment in this class without obtaining prior permission from the instructor.
**Student Email:** Students are required to have a College of Charleston email account and to check it at least once/day. All notices regarding the course will be sent to the College of Charleston account or group text, (if all students agree to share #s for text messaging).

**Faculty Email:** The professor uses LuckaM@cofc.edu and will check it at least once/day. Responses via email should be expected within a 24-hour period.

**Cell phones and pagers** may be left on, but they must be turned to silent mode. **Texting, checking Facebook/Instagram/Twitter/Snapchat, etc. is not allowed in class.**

**Special needs or concerns:** Any student eligible for and needing accommodations because of a disability is requested to speak with the professor during the first two weeks of class or as soon as the student has been approved for services, so that reasonable accommodations can be arranged.

**Mutual respect for differing questions and ideas:** The College is a place for open inquiry and exchange of ideas. All members of the College should treat all other members of the College and members of society with mutual respect and appreciation.

### Class Calendar

**22 August** - Preface: (Teaford ix-xvi)

**27, 29 August** – History and Creation of Suburbia: (Teaford 1-41)

**3, 5 September** – Diverse Suburbia (Teaford 43-85) [1st paper due 9/5]

**10, 12 September** – Commercial Suburbia (Teaford 87-121)

**17, 19 September** – Governing Suburbia (Teaford 123-158)

**24, 26 September** – Housing Suburbia (Teaford 159-186)

**1, 3 October** – Race/Ethnicity: (Lindstrom/Bartling137-166) [2nd Paper due 10/3]

**8, 10 October** – Politics and the Governing of Suburbia (Teaford: 123-158)

**15, 17 October** – Sprawl and the Rural Dimension/Waiting at the Gate (Lindstrom/Bartling 5-15; and 23-43)

**22, 24 October** – Planning Suburbia (Teaford 187-216)

**29, 31 October** – New Urbanism (Lindstrom/Bartling 93-131)

***No Class Nov 5; Fall Break***

**7 November** – Smart Growth/Law (Lindstrom/Bartling 213-230) [3rd Paper due 11/7]

**12, 14 November** – Special topics/readings re suburbia

**19 November** – Environment and Sustainability in Suburbia

***No class Nov 21; Thanksgiving Break***

**26 November** – Suburbs and the Future

**28 November** – Future of/Alternatives to Suburbia