
Urban and Community Studies (BA)

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THE PROGRAM

The Bachelor's Degree in Urban and Community Studies (B.A.) is designed for students with interests in urban, social, economic, and political issues, especially as they relate to diverse working-class communities. The program explores the dynamics of urban life, public policy and administration, the structure of urban government and agencies, the delivery of social services, and community and labor organization.

The field of urban and community studies draws on sociology, economics, political science, and anthropology to analyze our global economy and culture. Students in the program have opportunities for experiential and applied learning, including fieldwork and workplace based projects in New York City. They study with nationally known faculty from CUNY as well as with expert practitioners in the fields of public and health care administration, municipal politics, workforce development, labor, and community organizing. Additionally, students develop their special interests within the field by selecting one of three areas of concentration: Urban Studies, Community Studies, or Labor Studies.

Career Prospects

The Bachelor's Degree in Urban and Community Studies opens doors to careers in government agencies, community service and philanthropy, urban planning, law, urban design, education research, business, and finance, as well as in non-profit institutions serving urban populations. Students are also prepared for advanced study in the field, including the M.A. in Urban Studies, offered by CUNY SPS.

The program is offered through CUNY SPS's Joseph S. Murphy Institute for Worker Education and Labor Studies.

Note: Contingent upon the availability of General Education classes during a given semester, students may need to enroll in online courses to fulfill General Education curriculum requirements.

Program Requirements

120 credits are required for the B.A. in Urban and Community Studies.

- General Education – 39 credits
- Urban and Community Studies Courses – 36 credits
 - Core requirements - 20 credits
 - Concentration – 16 credits
- General Electives - 45 credits. General electives may be chosen from the Urban and Community Studies courses or courses in other degree programs.

Note: Courses are four (4) credits except where indicated.

Required Courses

- URB 310 - Introduction to U.S. Social and Economic Policy
- URB 320 - Urban Populations and Communities
- LABR 302 - Contemporary Labor Issues
- URB 351 - Research Methods for Urban and Community Studies
- URB 499 - Urban and Community Studies Capstone

Concentration Courses

Students select one of the following three concentrations:

Urban Studies

Students who select the Urban Studies track must complete six credits in the following:

- URB 340 - Contemporary Urban Problems
- PADM 211 - Government, Politics and the Policy-Making Process

Students must also complete two courses from the following:

- LABR 305 - Labor Relations in Transportation
- HCA 300 - Urban Health Services and Institutions
- PADM 201 - Public Administration
- PADM 202 - Public Management and the Delivery Services
- PADM 221 - Public Issues and Public Policy
- POL 201 - Politics and Government of New York City (3 credits)
- SOC 313 - Stratification (3 credits)
- NYTWU 210 - Operations Management in Public Transportation
- NYTWU 200 - Computer Applications and Data in Public Transit
- NYTWU 220 - Financial Planning, Policy and Administration
- NYTWU 230 - Organizational Behavior in Public Transportation
- URB 339 - Urban and Community Studies Field Work
- URB 341 - Metropolitan Transportation and Urban Development
- URB 399 - Urban and Community Studies Independent Study
- URB 451 - Urban and Community Studies Special Topics

Community Studies

Students who select the Community Studies track must complete six credits in the following:

- URB 321 - Community Organization and Community Organizations
- URB 322 - Social Movements

Students must also complete two courses from the following:

- GEOG 301 - International Migration (3 credits)
- LPOL 301 - Work, Culture, and Politics in New York City
- SOC 203 - Race, Class and Gender (3 credits)
- SOC 207 - Introduction to Criminal Justice (3 credits)
- URB 323 - Community Development
- URB 324 - Introduction to Non-Profit Leadership
- URB 339 - Urban and Community Studies Field Work
- URB 399 - Urban and Community Studies Independent Study
- URB 451 - Urban and Community Studies Special Topics

Labor Studies

Students who select the Labor Studies track must complete six credits in the following:

- LHis 301 - U.S. Labor History
- LABR 201 - Introduction to Labor Studies

Students must also complete two courses from the following:

- LABR 304 - Unions and Labor Relations
- LABR 320 - Collective Bargaining
- LABR 334 - Public Sector Labor Law
- LABR 339 - Understanding Labor and the Economy
- LABR 330 - Issues in Labor Organizing
- LSOC 301 - Sociology of Work
- URB 339 - Urban and Community Studies Field Work
- URB 399 - Urban and Community Studies Independent Study
- URB 451 - Urban and Community Studies Special Topics

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

GEOG 301 **International Migration** **3 Credits**

Prerequisite: None

This course is a quantitative and qualitative examination of historic and contemporary international migration patterns. Emphasis is on spatial demographic impacts of immigration policy in the United States with special attention to major urban centers. A comparative analysis of ethnic and racial minorities in the United States will also be offered.

HCA 300 **Urban Health Services and Institutions** **4 Credits**

Prerequisite: None

This course will use New York City as the context within which to examine a variety of urban health services and institutions, reviewing their historical development, financing mechanisms and regulatory and legislative oversight. Service provision in private and public institutions will be compared and contrasted, and the impact of services examined within a wide range of health contexts, including HIV/AIDS services, mental health, disabilities services, reproductive services, elder care, child health, and more. The course will also analyze how class, race/ethnicity, gender and sexuality affect provision of and access to services. Policies that influence the delivery of services and the functioning of institutions, such as the development of managed care, will be critically analyzed.

LABR 201 **Introduction to Labor Studies** **4 Credits**

Prerequisite: None

This course is designed to provide a broad, inter-disciplinary overview of labor studies, covering topics that are fundamental to the study of work, workers, and worker organizations. These include labor history as well as contemporary challenges facing the U.S. labor movement. Students in the course will examine the purposes and structure of unions, the political and economic landscape within which unions must operate, organizing strategies and the nature of employer resistance to unions, alternative forms of worker organization, and the impacts of globalization. Students will assess the legacy of labor as it relates to questions of gender, race, sexuality, and immigration and will look at proposals and strategies for building worker power and revitalizing the labor movement through coalitional organizing and cross-border alliances.

LABR 302 **Contemporary Labor Issues** **4 Credits**

Prerequisite: None

This course examines the social, economic, political, and organizational issues confronting the U.S. labor movement today. As an ever-changing economy and political climate impact workers and the labor movement, unions face challenges that require changes in the visionary, structural, functional, and strategic aspects of their organizations. Students in this course consider how the external environment—globalization, shifts in the economy, employer resistance, political and legal obstacles—has shaped the current state of the union movement in general and affected union density, economic power, and political influence in particular.

LABR 304 **Unions and Labor Relations** **4 Credits**

Prerequisite: None

This course focuses on unions and their role in labor-management relations. Students will examine the purpose, structure and function and governance of unions in the United States. Emphasis will be placed on how unions function in the collective bargaining process and in contract administration. Topics will include: sources and uses of bargaining power, the negotiation process, the content and language of labor contracts, and the role and function of grievance procedures and labor arbitrations. The study of union and labor relations will be studied in the context of a capitalist economy, and throughout the course, comparisons will be made between the private and public sectors, between craft and industrial model unionism, and between US models of unions and those in other parts of the world.

LABR 305 **Labor Relations in Transportation** **3 Credits**

Prerequisite: None

In this course, students will learn the fundamental concepts of labor relations in the field of public transportation and will analyze practices in the field. Topics in the course include the contractual, statutory and legal implications of labor relations in transportation. These issues will be examined and analyzed through lecture and discussion, case studies and simulations, and the participation of guest speakers. Collective bargaining agreements will be analyzed, with particular attention to grievance processes involving contractual and disciplinary issues. Workplace legislation involving safety and health, family medical leave, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) will also be discussed. Topics will be developed in a historical context. Students will examine the 1966, 1980, and 2005 NYC transit strikes and analyze the roles played by management and labor during those disputes. Students will have opportunities to study

comparative labor relations in transit, including examples from San Francisco's Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) and the Washington, D.C. Metro.

LABR 320 **Collective Bargaining** **4 Credits**

Prerequisite: None

This course is designed to give students an understanding of the practices and activities related to the negotiation of union contracts. It identifies key concepts, techniques, and bargaining issues, especially those that have emerged in recent years. Students will develop an understanding of the similarities and differences between public- and private-sector bargaining and how this has affected tactics and strategies employed by the parties involved. They will analyze fundamental and sometimes varying structures, scope, and legal dimensions of the bargaining process. They will also gain a historical perspective on public and private employment and on the evolution of state and federal bargaining theory and practice found in both the private and public sectors.

LABR 330 **Issues in Labor Organizing** **4 credits**

Prerequisite: None

This course examines the development of theory and practice in labor organizing as it has emerged over the course of a century. It addresses organizing in both the public and private sector, through certification elections, recognition actions and alternative methods of organizing. Students discuss the determinants of successful organizing campaigns, including targeting, tactics, and styles of organizing. The subject of organizing is studied in a historical, social, and political context, allowing students to analyze the evolution of an organizing mission and the emergence of various strategic initiatives over time. Students review differing theories of organizing and analyze worker attitudes as well as employer strategies and tactics. In addition, students examine the body of law (National Labor Relations Act) that regulates labor organizing in the US and consider methods of organizing outside the parameters of existing labor law. Students also examine union infrastructures administrative practices that affect how campaigns are financed and staffed.

LABR 334 **Labor and Employment Law** **4 Credits**

Prerequisite: None

This course will introduce students to the basics of the law governing labor relations and employee rights in the workplace. The course begins with an examination of the major areas of the law as they apply to workers and unions. Topics covered will include the National Labor Relations Act, employee representation, the grievance process, labor's right to organize, the ground rules for collective bargaining, legal aspects of strikes, Weingarten rights, obligation to bargain, and the duty of fair representation. The second part of the course will focus on employment rights at the workplace including statutes regarding discrimination, family medical leave and workplace privacy. Students will debate and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of labor law in terms of protections for workers and workers' rights and will discuss potential reform of current law.

LABR 339 **Understanding Labor and the Economy** **4 Credits**

Prerequisite: None

This course provides students with a solid understanding of the structure and direction of the U.S. economy, within a context of globalization. Students learn basic economic principles and concepts through an examination and analysis of labor markets. They analyze and compare competing perspectives and differing explanations of the political economy of work and examine how unemployment rates, global trade, wage inequality, and the growth of the service sector affect worker's bargaining power.

LHIS 301 **U.S. Labor History** **4 Credits**

Prerequisite: None

This course examines working class life and the evolution of the U.S. labor movement within the larger framework of U.S. history, with specific regard to class formation, industrial development, immigration and the major developments of the organized labor movement. Students in this course also explore the relationships of workers to unions, formal and informal economies, race and gender, technology, the American state; and cultural, political and social movements. Emphasis is placed on the issues that gave birth to the labor movement, the development of working class consciousness, and the milestones in the labor movement's progress during the last century.

LPOL 301 **Work, Culture, and Politics in New York City** **4 Credits**

Prerequisite: None

This course explores the work, culture and politics of New York City, examining where New Yorkers live and work, how communities develop, and questioning whether or not the cultural and political institutions of New York adequately serve the city's diverse population. Major topics covered include the history of New York, New York's key industries, trends in

immigration, economic development, public policy, public and private space, high culture, popular culture, urban social identity, community organizations, and labor's contributions to building the city's institutions.

LSOC 301 Sociology of Work 4 Credits

Prerequisite: None

This course introduces students to the sociology and political economics of work, workers, and worker organizations. It begins with an exploration of the meaning of work, an examination of the organization and control of the labor process, and a survey of the changes in the composition of the labor force over the last century. It then explores some of the challenges facing workers at the beginning of the 21st century, including the emergence of new forms of employment; increased gender, ethnic, and racial diversity in the labor force; the impact of technology; developments in labor management; and the emergence of a global economy.

PADM 201 Public Administration 4 Credits

Prerequisite: None

This course will examine the growth, structure, role and methods of local and federal bureaucracies and their impact on American society. It will introduce students to the subject of bureaucracy in American government and will survey the major areas of study in Public Administration, including the context of public administration, the meaning of federalism and intergovernmental relations. In addition, the course will address organizational theory and behavior; decision making; leadership; policy implementation; budgeting; personnel management; performance management; legal and regularity constraints; ethics; and accountability. Students will become knowledgeable about the roles and functions of public agencies and will acquire a grasp of current issues and controversies concerning public bureaucracies and public policy.

PADM 202 Public Management and the Delivery of Public Services 4 Credits

Prerequisite: None

This course introduces students to the subjects of public management and the delivery of public services. It combines theoretical and practical approaches, allowing students employed in public service organizations to apply their own experiences in analyzing the operations of public-service agencies and evaluating how these bureaucracies meet the needs of diverse urban populations. Students identify the range of human services required by city dwellers and examine the social agencies and institutions that deliver those services. In doing so, they seek to understand what public managers do and how they do it. They analyze the structure and operation of local bureaucracies; evaluate fundamental theories and styles of leadership and decision-making; and explore strategies for making organizational change. They also examine the influence of public-sector unions in determining the nature and structure of public management and the delivery of public services. In the latter half of the course, students examine concepts and theories of social welfare and the development of social welfare policy in the U.S. Topics include: the role of government and government regulation, the role of social-service professionals, and the privatization of public services. Students will identify challenges in service delivery; discuss legal and ethical questions confronting service providers; and identify the professional and technical skills required to function effectively as service providers.

PADM 211 Government, Politics and the Policy-Making Process 4 Credits

Prerequisite: None

This course will explore the policy-making process in a range of public institutions and will introduce students to the approaches, methods, tools and techniques of decision making. The role of conventional political institutions as well as alternatives to conventional politics will be studied. In the process, students will identify official as well as unofficial political actors, including those in the executive, legislative, and judiciary branches of government; social and political activists; the media; and the public. Finally, the course will examine several models of the policy-making process.

PADM 221 Public Issues and Public Policy 4 Credits

Prerequisite: None

This course will provide an overview of the major problems facing American cities and will examine the federal, state and local policies that address urban poverty and inequality. Students will explore a range of economic and social policies, including: taxation; minimum wage; social security; immigration; education; the environment; crime; social welfare; discrimination; and civil rights. Students will also examine the political and intellectual debates over policy initiatives to regulate social and private life. Finally, students will discuss pluralist and elitist perspectives on public policy and policy debate. Readings will include diverse points of view and will often emphasize developments in New York City.

POL 201	Politics and Government of New York City	3 Credits
<i>Prerequisite: None</i>		
This course analyzes the politics and government of New York City, including City-State relations; and the role of the City in the region, the nation and the world. Special attention is given to the municipal government's institutions and procedures, and the city's evolving political culture.		
SOC 203	Race, Class and Gender	3 Credits
<i>Prerequisite: None</i>		
Race and ethnicity often frame social relations in structures of inequality. Likewise, gender and class relations can also be shaped by unequal resources and differential access to the sources of power. In this course we explore the historic and social roots that have given rise to minority-dominant power relations both from a U.S. and an international perspective. Students will use their sociological imagination to envision how race, ethnicity, gender and other categories of experience -- i.e., age, religion, sexual orientation, physical abilities, and geographic region -- intersect with institutions in everyday society to create minority statuses.		
SOC 207	Introduction to Criminal Justice	3 Credits
<i>Prerequisite: None</i>		
This introductory course offers an overview of the history and trends of crime and justice within the United States. An examination of the different types of crime and the consequences will be discussed. Students will be introduced to the administration of police; court and correctional agencies; and the decision-making points from the initial investigation or arrest by police to the eventual release of the offender and his/her reentry into society. The role of the police, the prosecuting attorney, the defense attorney, judge, probation, corrections and parole will be examined individually and collectively.		
SOC 313	Stratification	3 Credits
<i>Prerequisite: None</i>		
This course provides an overview of classic and contemporary theories of social class and inequality within the United States and in a global context. Students will examine these as well as strategies for assessing and measuring the level of inequality within and across nations, mobility rates, and factors, i.e., religion, ethnicity, and gender that affect socio-economic status and impact life chances. Students will also evaluate the impact of social policies intended to mitigate the effects of inequality.		
URB 310	Introduction to U.S. Social and Economic Policy	4 Credits
<i>Prerequisite: None</i>		
This course will introduce students to basic economic concepts and political theories that have influenced the development of U.S. social and economic policy. Students will explore the ways national policy and political practice have historically affected the policies and practices of urban government, the structures of urban institutions, and the allocation of resources to urban communities. Students will evaluate how national and local policies address problems created by unequal distribution of income and wealth. In this context, students will discuss such topics as education, housing, health care, employment and labor relations, criminal justice, social welfare, and the environment. Students will also consider the ways globalization has altered the local as well as national economy and the ways in which it has affected social structures and social policies.		
URB 320	Urban Populations and Communities	4 Credits
<i>Prerequisite: None</i>		
Nearly half the world's population lives in cities. This course will introduce students to the history of urbanization and the development of urban communities and enclaves. Students will examine the various economic, social, and political factors that stimulate global immigration and internal migrations, including the shift from an industrial to a service economy that marks contemporary cities such as New York. Using New York as an example, students will explore multiple meanings of community—what defines and constitutes a community; what is the impact of race, class, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality; how do communities participate in the social and political life of the city? In addressing these questions, students will examine conflicts and contradictions between the concept of assimilation and the maintenance of social and cultural identity. Students will consider the ways in which structural inequalities affect employment, the development of public policy, and the delivery of public services. They will identify the various public and non-profit institutions that advocate for working-class communities and under-served populations, including worker centers, unions, and other non-profit organizations.		

URB 321 **Community Organizing and Community Organizations** **4 Credits**

Prerequisite: None

This course will examine the historical development and contemporary practice of community organization. Students will examine why and how people in urban communities and neighborhoods have organized to protect their rights and their entitlements to public services; to acquire resources for development; and to improve their quality of life. Through readings, students will develop a historical and theoretical perspective on community organization and explore the range of issues around which communities organize. They will gain familiarity with various models and strategies of community organizations in New York City and will acquire practical knowledge and skills for effective grassroots organizing. They will also examine the effectiveness of coalitions and alliances, including relationships between community organizations, public agencies, and labor unions. Weekly sessions will periodically include guest speakers; site visits will be scheduled, allowing students to learn first-hand about specific strategies or issues. Following each guest presentation or site visit, students will submit brief reflection papers relating experiential learning to theoretical concepts encountered in class readings.

URB 322 **Social Movements** **4 Credits**

Prerequisite: None

This introductory course explores the role of social movements in the U.S. as they relate to urban and community issues and organizations. The course will include an examination of social movement literature. Through readings and class discussion, students will analyze the interactions among civil rights, labor, women's, student, and global justice movements. The course will also examine working-class movements that deal with such issues as welfare and tenant rights.

URB 323 **Community Development** **4 Credits**

Prerequisite: None

Community development is a term used to describe strategies for improving the standard of living in low-income communities, often, but not always, in urban environments. The term is used widely and in varied contexts--sometimes applied to physical infrastructure; sometimes to quality-of-life issues. In this course, topics covered under the rubric of community development include: housing and infrastructure, economic activity, education, commercial outlets, access to healthy food, and public safety. The course will examine the way the term "community development" has been defined and used historically in the U.S. It will address the role of government and policy in community development, including the role of Community Development Corporations. Students will explore concepts of community development, focusing on current theories and empirical data to evaluate the effectiveness of different strategies for community development. They will seek to answer central questions, concerning community development: who sets goals; who has agency; how are diverse interests and needs balanced—or not balanced. Students will analyze case studies of specific community development projects. These case studies will provide the basis for a final research paper.

URB 324 **Introduction to Nonprofit Leadership** **4 Credits**

Prerequisite: None

This course provides an introduction to the field of nonprofit management. The class will cover issues that arise for leaders of these kinds of organizations, including governance and boards, strategic planning, fundraising and philanthropy as well as grant-writing, administration, personnel management, and ethical questions. The class will focus on nonprofits broadly but investigate variations in the sector, from public-sector organizations to education, labor organizations, 501c(3) organizations, and others. The class will emphasize issues related to best practices needed for nonprofit leaders to successfully meet the mission of their organizations. Students will be required to engage in discussion and exercises that explore the relationship between theories and practices of nonprofit leadership and management.

URB 339 **Urban and Community Studies Field Work** **4 Credits**

Prerequisite: Permission of the Academic Director

This course augments traditional classroom-based learning with experiential learning through an internship or field project at a public agency, city government office, community organization or public-sector union. The field work is guided and supervised by a mentor. Students and the course instructor will meet in a weekly class in order to reflect analytically on the field experience and to discuss related readings.

URB 340 **Contemporary Urban Problems** **4 Credits**

Prerequisite: None

Urban centers like New York City are very complex and diverse, increasingly affected by globalization, and always in a state of flux. While this description conveys the vitality and energy of cities, it also points to a host of challenges faced by city dwellers and communities as well as civic institutions, service providers, and local government. This course explores the

major challenges faced by U.S. cities in light of population shifts, widening disparities in income and wealth, restructuring of work, persistent unemployment, and diminishing resources for low-income and working-class populations. Though the majority of this course will focus primarily on urban issues in the US, the course will highlight a comparative selection of urban problems in developing nations.

URB 341 Metropolitan Transportation and Urban Development 3 Credits

Prerequisite: None

This course focuses on the ways transportation, especially mass transit, has influenced urban development in the New York metropolitan area from the late 19th century to the present, with comparisons between New York and other world cities. Students will examine the operations of mass transit, its characteristic infrastructure, and its impacts on urban development. Themes recurring throughout the course include: the effects of demographic patterns and land use on both transportation demand and transit system development; the ways improved technology has led to expanded development opportunities; comparisons of low density (automobile-oriented) and high density (transit-oriented) development patterns; intersections between politics, transportation and development; evolution in mass transit from private to public sector; ongoing conflict between pro- and anti-transit forces and its effects on urban and metropolitan development. The course is divided into six modules, each incorporating and historicizing a set of related topics.

URB 351 Research Methods and Community Studies 4 Credits

Prerequisite: URB 310

This course provides students with the tools necessary to conduct research on issues related to urban and community studies. It will introduce students to the fundamental concepts of qualitative and quantitative research methods, inductive and deductive reasoning, causality, and generalizability. Students will learn how to formulate a research question and construct a research design and will learn basic statistics. The course includes an introduction to various research methods, including in-depth case studies, historical research, and surveys. Course materials will provide a research perspective on race, gender, class and sexuality. Students will develop skills necessary to pursue research projects in their major as well as to enter careers that require basic research skills.

URB 399 Urban and Community Studies Independent Studies 1 – 4 Credits

Prerequisite: Permission of the Academic Director

The Independent Study will be taken under the supervision of an instructor. The student will develop a proposal and rationale for the Independent Study, which must be approved in advance by the instructor. The instructor and the student will develop a set of guidelines for the course, including the scope of reading and writing assignments. These guidelines will be submitted to the Academic Director in the form of a course proposal and plan. Students will be limited to one independent study in fulfillment of the elective requirement.

URB 451 Urban and Community Studies Special Topics 4 Credits

Prerequisite: None

This course will offer students the opportunity to study special topics within the scope of Urban and Community Studies that are not covered, or are only partially covered, in courses offered. Topics may vary from semester to semester and could include study of particular urban populations or communities, urban worker centers, coalitional campaigns including labor, community, and political groups, or particular urban institutions.

URB 499 Urban and Community Studies Capstone 4 Credits

Prerequisite: Permission of the Academic Director

In the Capstone course, students sum up and synthesize the body of knowledge they have acquired in courses leading to completion of the B.A. in Urban and Community Studies. Working with the instructor, students will develop an interdisciplinary or multi-disciplinary project that demonstrates an understanding of subjects and literature covered in the major. The project may take various forms, including group or individual research and presentations. Each student in a Capstone project will be required to submit an analytic research paper, including a bibliography. As part of each project, students will present 10-minute summaries of their final papers at an end-of-semester forum open to JSMI students and faculty.