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**American Studies 153**  
**Individual and Community**  
**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND SYLLABUS**

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Summer Session II, 2007  
Mondays and Wednesdays 5:10 – 8:30 pm  
Location: Olson 147  
CRN #: 80993

Instructor: David de la Peña  
Office: 2133 Hart Hall  
Office Hours: W 4-5pm, & by appointment  
Email: dsdelapena@ucdavis.edu

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will take a closer look at the communities we experience every day. We will seek to define what community is and we will explore the web of relationships that it can create between individuals. While community is not always locational, this course will focus on communities that are defined by place. We will read about, discuss, and visit many different types of physical communities. We will evaluate whether physical design is capable of fostering a sense of community, and whether it can strengthen ties, nourish bonds, and create support networks that celebrate how interrelated we are to each other and to our environment.

### **REQUIRED BOOK LIST**

1. Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, 2002 (\$16.00)
2. D. J. Waldie, *Holy Land: A Suburban Memoir*, (\$11.95)
3. Dolores Hayden, *Building Suburbia*, 2003 (\$15.95)
3. A course reader available at Navin's Copy shop on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street

Books will be available at the UCD Bookstore.

### **READER CONTENTS**

Garry Stevens, "The Sociological Toolkit of Pierre Bourdieu," from *The Favored Circle*, 1998  
Patricia Limerick, "Disorientation and Reorientation: The American Landscape Discovered from the West," 1992  
Josh Sides, "Straight Into Compton," in *American Quarterly*, Sept., 2004  
James Rojas, "The Enacted Environment: Examining the Streets and Yards of East Los Angeles," in *Everyday America*, 1994  
Todd W. Bressi, "Planning the American Dream,"  
Michael Brill, "Problems with Mistaking Public Community Life for Public Life,"  
Ebenezer Howard, "Introduction," and "The Town Country Magnet," from *Garden Cities of To-morrow*, 1898  
Christopher Alexander, excerpts from *A Pattern Language*, 1977  
Jan Gehl, excerpts from *Life Between Buildings*, 1987  
Dana Cuff, "The Figure of the Neighbor," in *American Quarterly*, Sept., 2004  
Pew Internet & American Life Project, "The Strength of Internet Ties," 2006  
Kathryn McCamant & Charles Durrett, "Introducing Cohousing," in *Cohousing*, 1993  
W.D. Wetherell, "The Man Who Loved Levittown," 1985  
Barbara Myerhoff, excerpts from *Number Our Days*, 1978

### **GRADING**

**Participation (20%):** Being present and engaged is a very important part of this class. Because of this, I will take roll at every class. You should be present at all classes and all tours. In addition to being present, I expect you to make an effort to participate in class discussions, to ask questions, and to show me that you have completed the reading assignments. I understand that we all have different comfort levels with public speaking, but communicating clearly is

an important skill and this is a great place to practice that skill. *Tips for participation:* When you are doing the readings, think about what questions you might ask during the class. What is the main point of the reading? Are there flaws in the reading? Write down your questions and ask them in class. Come to my office hours or email me with your concerns about participation. I am happy to help.

**Reading Reactions (15%):** You will have 10 opportunities to write a brief reaction piece about the assigned readings. You will be expected to write 5 reaction pieces. These should be no more than one or two paragraphs in length. They should do two things: (1) summarize the main point of the reading (2) identify a question or issue of interest to you. They must be turned in at the beginning of class on the day the reading is due.

**Place Reactions (20%):** We will take five tours during this course. You will be expected to write a brief reaction paper about 4 of these tours. These papers should be approximately one page in length. These are looser in format than the reading reactions. You should be thinking about your reaction during the tour and looking for something of interest to you. It may be a way that houses relate to the street; it may be an interaction you observed; it may be a network of paths; it may demonstrate a point from the readings. You may include photos, drawings, or other media to augment your writing.

**Reading Quizzes (10%):** I will conduct regular pop reading quizzes. These are not difficult if you have done the reading. There are no make-ups for quizzes.

**Final Project (35%):** This course fulfills a "writing experience" requirement. We will dedicate time in class to discuss your writing, and you will also prepare a final research paper. You will select a topic related to the material covered in class, and you will select a community to apply to that topic. The final product will be a paper of at least 10 pages. You will present your proposal to the class, and you will also present the final project to the class on the final class day. You will be given specific direction on the final project after the start of the course.

## **OTHER REQUIREMENTS**

1. We will be taking 5 off-campus tours by bicycle during the course. You must complete and return a waiver form before the tours or you will not be allowed to participate.
2. If you have special needs, please speak with me at the beginning of the course so that I can make alternate arrangements for you.
2. Assignments are due when they are due. I will collect all assignments at the beginning of class. Late papers will receive a reduced grade equal to one third of a letter grade each day it is late (each calendar day, not each class day).
2. Cell phones, text messaging, i-Pods, and other means of electronic communication have no place in the classroom. Please keep your electronics in your bags or your pockets.
3. Please submit all of your assignments to me on paper (no emailed work). I will be writing my comments on paper to return to you.
4. Academic dishonesty is unfortunately too common. I have no tolerance for plagiarism, cheating, or other dishonest behavior. All of your written work must be your own, and you must understand how to properly cite information gained from other sources. I am obligated by Student Judicial Affairs to report EVERY case of plagiarism. You can review the campus standards for conduct at <http://sja.ucdavis.edu/scs.html>

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## THE COURSE AT A GLANCE

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### Week 1: Frameworks and Definitions

- Aug 6 Introductions
- Aug 8 Agency & Structure: Developing a framework  
DISCUSS: Garry Stevens  
DUE: Stevens Reactions, Plus copies for the whole class of your definitions  
TOUR: Dome Village, UC Davis

### Week 2: Perspectives on Community

- Aug 13 Whose community is it anyway?  
DUE: Place Reactions, Plus Limerick, Sides, and Rojas Reactions
- Aug 15 Contested territories & Nostalgic Community  
DUE: Bressi & Brill Reactions  
TOUR: Olive Drive, Aggie Village

### Week 3: Patterns of Physical Communities

- Aug 20 Historical American development patterns  
DUE: Place Reactions, Plus Hayden & Howard Reactions
- Aug 22 Sustainable Planning, Seeing Patterns  
DUE: Alexander, Gehl & Cuff Reactions  
TOUR: Village Homes

### Week 4: Isolation versus Participation

- Aug 27 Sociology of Isolation  
DUE: Place Reactions, Plus Putnam Reactions
- Aug 29 Cohousing  
DUE: McCamant & Durrett Reactions  
GUEST: Rick Mockler, Cohousing Partners  
TOUR: Muir Commons Cohousing

### Week 5: Suburbia

- Sep 3 Post-WWII Communities  
DUE: Place Reactions, Plus Hayden & Wetherell Reactions
- Sep 5 Modernist suburbs  
DUE: Waldie Reactions

### Week 6: Age and Community

- Sep 10 Where We Age  
DUE: Myerhoff Reactions  
TOUR: Glacier Circle
- Sep 12 Student research presentations

## READER CONTENTS:

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Garry Stevens, "The Sociological Toolkit of Pierre Bourdieu," from The Favored Circle, 1998

Patricia Limerick, "Disorientation and Reorientation: The American Landscape Discovered from the West," from Journal of American History 79:3, 1992

Josh Sides, "Straight Into Compton," in American Quarterly, Sept., 2004

James Rojas, "The Enacted Environment: Examining the Streets and Yards of East Los Angeles," in Everyday America, 1994

Todd W. Bressi, "Planning the American Dream," in The New Urbanism, 1994

Michael Brill, "Problems with Mistaking Public Community Life for Public Life," from Places 14:2, 2001

Ebenezer Howard, "Introduction," and "The Town Country Magnet," from *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* (1898), in The City Reader, 1996

Christopher Alexander, excerpts from A Pattern Language, 1977

Jan Gehl, excerpts from Life Between Buildings, 1987

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