



UNCO 1301.007:
Where are You?: Space and Place in Postmodern America
COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2019

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Andrew Baker
Office Location: Ferguson 106
Office Hours: M/W/F 11-12; M/F 3-5
Office Phone: 903-468-8742
University Email Address: Andrew.Baker@tamuc.edu
Preferred Form of Communication: email
Communication Response Time: within 24 hours Monday - Friday

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COURSE INFORMATION

Classroom: Monday 10 AM, Journalism 129
Wednesday, 10 AM, Journalism 129
Friday, 10 AM, Classrooms to be determined

Materials:

- All readings available for free online through the links in the course schedule
- *Each student will need to purchase a bound notebook of at least 50 pages to use as a reflection journal*

Course Description

A Signature Course at Texas A&M University- Commerce offers first-year students the opportunity to explore unique topics in engaging learning environments. Students develop college-level skills in communication, critical thinking, and social responsibility through a rigorous intellectual experience.

Description of this Course

From the suburban shopping mall and the football stadium to the front yard and the TAMU-C campus, the places we inhabit shape our lives and reflect our cultural values. Through this course we will use the tools of history, geography, anthropology, architecture, and philosophy to examine who designed these spaces, how these spaces shape behavior, and what meanings they convey. Ultimately, students will propose ways to reshape the campus community by refashioning part of its built environment.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to analyze, evaluate, or solve problems when given a set of circumstances, data, texts, or art.
2. Students will communicate in a manner appropriate to audience and occasion in either written, oral and/or visual format with an evident message and organizational structure.
3. Students will demonstrate an understanding of societal and/or civic issues.

Where to find information about the course:

The course syllabus and the course D2L page contain all of the necessary information related to assignments, deadlines, and expectations needed for you to successfully complete this course. Please consult these two resources before contacting Dr. Baker or your SI for instructions.

GRADING

Your final grade will be determined by the number of points you receive out of the 1000 possible through the course assignments as follows:

A = 895-1000
B = 795-894
C = 695-794
D = 595-694
F = 594 or below

Lecture Quizzes: 200
Friday Discussions: 100
Analog Reflection Journal: 100
On-site Reflections: 200
Final Project: 300
Total: 1000

ASSIGNMENTS

Monday/Wednesday Lectures (200 points)

We will spend most Mondays and Wednesdays learning the historical background and current form of places. During each week's lectures the SI's will compose 10 multiple-choice questions related to the content covered. These will be posted to D2L by 2 pm on Wednesday as an online quiz. Students must complete this quiz before Friday's class. These quizzes are open-note. A student must attend both Monday and Wednesday classes (or have have an excused absence) to receive full credit. A penalty of 5 points will be assessed for each unexcused absence. There will be 13 weeks of lectures scheduled with each quiz worth 20 points. We will count the 10 highest quiz grades for each student. Low scores will be dropped after the last day of class.

Friday Discussions: (200 points)

Each Friday students will meet during class time with their designated SI group. Students need to have read the assigned article(s) before class and should arrive ready to discuss its content and its connections to the course materials. SI's will assess each student's level of preparation and engagement throughout the semester for a total of 200 points.

Analog Reflection Journal (100 points)

The processes of writing, discussion, and revision are essential to thought and the development of a sense of self. To encourage this type of reflection students will each keep and use a bound journal for observations, reflections, questions, and reading responses related to the course. Students will use these to aid their participation in and response to course discussions. These

will be collected at the end of the semester for evaluation. See the rubric on D2L for more information.

On-site reflections: (200 points)

Each student will be responsible for spending one hour most weeks conducting observations and hand-written reflections about the designated type of space for the week in their reflection journal (see the course schedule). The syllabus will designate the type of space. It is the student's responsibility to select a particular example of this space that they can safely and legally access. Students are encouraged to travel in pairs or small groups, but these reflections should be first and foremost the product of your thoughts and observations.

During this hour, students should consider the following questions:

- What do you sense?
- What does the space encourage you to do or feel?
- What does the space discourage you from doing or feeling?
- Who is using the space? How?
- Who does this space exclude? Who does it welcome?
- Who designed the space and what values did they put into the space?
- Whose space is it and how do you know?
- What ideologies (messages) does the space communicate and enforce?

In our effort to understand the places that surround us we will use a variety of digital tools and methods over the semester. However, these technologies can often become barriers to fully understanding and experiencing a place. For this reason, each student is responsible for composing their site reflection without accessing a smart-phone, computer, or other such digital device during the designated hour (students may bring a silenced cell phone to use in case of an emergency).

After making these observations, students will type a 250-500 word narrative description of their experience of the site and selected answers to the questions above. This should be posted to D2L by Monday morning at 8 AM of each week. There are 11 posts slated at 20 points each. We will count the 10 highest posts for each student. Low scores will be dropped after the last day of class.

Final Project (300 points)

Over the course of the semester students will bring their learning and knowledge to bear on campus as a public space. Each SI team will be broken into 4-5 student groups, each of which will be assigned a public space on campus. The group will be responsible for creating a proposal for improving the space. Each proposal must include the following:

- A written report
- A visual component
- A multimedia presentation

Each student will receive both a group grade and an individual grade as part of this assignment. This project will comprise each student's contribution to the Lionizing event. See the project description on D2L for more information.

The Lionizing: a culminating event required of all sections of UNCO 1301. At this public event, students will present their final projects to the entire University Community. Students will be present at the Lionizing to take questions about their work. At The Lionizing a team of assessors will circulate the event with a rubric that will evaluate how well your project:

- Demonstrates critical thinking
- Demonstrates your understanding of your social responsibility
- Demonstrates your excellent written and oral communication skills

This assessment will not influence your grade; instead, it helps the University College assess how well our Signature Courses are helping students meet important outcomes.

The Fall 2019 Lionizing will be Monday, December 9th in the Sam Rayburn Student Center.

TECHNOLOGY ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

The electronic gradebook on D2L will be used in this course.

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace [D2L] , please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778 or click on the **Live Chat** or click on the words “[click here](#)” to submit an issue via email.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

All course communications will come through your university email account and D2L. Be sure to check both regularly. Your Supplemental Instructor (SI) is your first point of contact for questions about course content, attendance, policies, procedures, and grades. Use Dr. Baker's office hours to discuss more substantial issues related to the course. You may contact Dr. Baker through his TAMU-C email address (Andrew.Baker@tamuc.edu). He checks his email regularly between 8 am and 5 pm Monday – Friday. He does not check my campus email on Sunday. Plan accordingly.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Attendance:

Regular attendance is vital so success in the course. A student must attend both Monday and Wednesday classes (or have have an excused absence) to receive full credit on the lecture quizzes. A penalty of 5 points will be assessed for each absence. Students with an unexcused absence for the Friday discussion will receive a zero for that day's discussion. Only medical and family emergencies and university approved absences will be excused. Normal sickness does no not qualify as an emergency and will only be excused with a doctor's note. Students are expected to obtain class notes from fellow students when absent. Students who show up more late to class may be marked as absent for that day.

Late Work:

Lecture Quizzes, Site Reflections, and components of the Final Project may be submitted late. Each will be assessed a 25 percent penalty per 24 hour period late.

Electronic Devices

Students are permitted to bring laptop computers to class for the purpose of note taking. Students are NOT permitted, however, to check e-mail, use the internet, complete other assignments, update social media profiles, or use their computer or cell phone for any purpose

other than taking notes unless expressly instructed to by the professor. Please silence your phones when you arrive each day.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: [Netiquette](#)

<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

ADA Statement

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that

provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Week 1	Space, Place, and Non-place
August 26	Course Introduction
August 28	Space and place
August 30	Non-places
	Discuss: Biguenet, "The Luxury of Silence," <i>The Atlantic</i> , October 3, 2015 (online)
Week 2	Landscapes
Sept. 2	The Middle Landscape
Sept. 4	From Homestead to House
Sept. 6	American Landscapes
	Discuss: Laurent Savoy, "What's in a Name?" (online)
Week 3	Searching for Home
Sept. 9	Cities to Suburbs
	Browse: FHA Planning Guide (online)
	Reflection: neighborhood
Sept. 11	Suburban Exclusion
Sept. 13	Suburbia
	Discuss: Alofsin, "A Defense of the Suburbs," <i>The Atlantic</i> , June 6, 2018 (online)
	Discuss: Chang, "Beyond Foreclosure: The Future of Suburban Housing," <i>Places</i> , September 2011 (online) (stop at "Design Research")
Week 4	Home: Front Yard; Back Yard
Sept. 16	How we got the yard
	Reflection: Park (greenspace) or golf course
Sept. 18	The retreat from the yard
Sept. 20	The future of the yard
	Discuss: Garber, "The Life and Death of the American Lawn," <i>The Atlantic</i> , 2015 (online)
Week 5	Home: Kitchen
Sept. 23	How we got the kitchen
	Reflection: A restaurant
Sept. 25	Liberating the kitchen
Sept. 27	The future of the kitchen
	Discuss: Bogost, "The Curse of an Open Floorplan" <i>The Atlantic</i> , May 17, 2018 (online)
Week 6	Home: Garages and Parking Lots
Sept. 30	How the car conquered the nation
	Reflection: parking lot
October 2	Surviving the car
October 4	The future of automotive landscapes
	Discuss: Jackson, "The Domestication of the Garage," <i>Places</i> , February 2019 (online) (skip introduction/biography)
	Discuss: Saval, "Uber and the Ongoing Erasure of Public Life," <i>The New Yorker</i> , February 18, 2019 (online)

- Week 7
 October 7 Town: Courthouse Square and Library
 The dream of downtown
 Reflection: small town downtown (courthouse square or equivalent)
- October 9 The death of downtown
 October 11 The future of downtown
 Discuss: Reimagine Commerce ([online](#)) pages 1-8, 20-27
- Week 8
 October 14 Town: Shopping Mall
 The dream of the mall
 Reflection: shopping mall (with multiple stores)
- October 16 The darker side of the mall
 October 18 The future of the mall
 Discuss: Semuels, "A New Life for Dead Malls," *The Atlantic*, March 9, 2015 ([online](#))
- Week 9
 October 21 Town: Walmart
 The dream of Walmart
 Reflection: a Walmart or Target
- October 23 What Walmart has become
 October 25 The future of Walmart
 Discuss: Goldberg, "The Crappiest Wal-Mart in America," *The Atlantic*, June 23, 2008 ([online](#)) and ([online](#))
- Week 10
 October 28 Sacred Space: Sports Stadiums
 Football and stadium culture
 Reflection: Tailgating and football game (Attend A&M-Commerce vs Western New Mexico game and tailgating (October 26))
- October 30 Sports and civic religion
 Nov. 1 Sports on campus
 Discuss: Gumprecht, "Stadium Culture: College Athletics and the Making of Place in the American College Town," *Southeastern Geographer* 43.1 (May 2003), 28-53 ([online](#))
- Week 11
 Nov. 4 Sacred Space: Religious Buildings
 Sacred spaces
 Reflection: A sacred space with some religious connections
- Nov. 6 Sacred buildings
 Nov. 8 Churches in modern America
 Discuss: Merritt, "America's Epidemic of Empty Churches," *The Atlantic*, November 25, 2018 ([online](#))
 Discuss: Garber, "Reel Faith," *The Atlantic*, June 8, 2012 ([online](#))
- Week 12
 Nov. 11 Campus
 The dream of campus
 Reflection: Your assigned campus location
- Nov. 13 The modern campus and the public sphere
 Nov. 15 Our Campus
 Discuss: Gumprecht, "The Campus as a Public Space in the American College Town," *Journal of Historical Geography* 33 (2007), 72-103 ([online](#))

Week 13 Going digital
 Nov. 18 Digital spaces or digital places?
 Reflection: one hour of uninterrupted (or as close to it as feasible) "screen time"
 in one room
 Nov. 20 No Lecture, meet with your groups to discuss the final project
 Nov. 22 Minecraft's ruins
 Discuss: Wiles, "Minecraft and Me" *Places* (2018) ([online](#))
 Discuss: "A Sense of Place, A World of Augmented Reality: Part 2," *Places*, June
 2010 ([online](#))

Week 14 Campus - Site reports
 Nov. 25 No Lecture, meet with your groups to discuss final project
 Nov. 27 No Class
 Nov. 29 No Class

Week 15 Final Projects
 December 2 Final thoughts-students
 December 4 Final thoughts-Dr. Baker
 December 6 Present draft proposals to discussion group

Final Exam: The Lionizing: December 9, 2019 from 10AM-Noon
 Submit Course Journal by 5 PM on December 9