

Syllabus

Let's take care of some of the bureaucratic matters first:

- **Who are we?** The instructor of record for this class is Dr. Patrick Bahls (please feel free to call me Patrick), a Professor of Mathematics and Director of the University Honors Program. We have a peer mentor for this course as well, Alayna Graves, a sophomore, sociology/WGSS double-major, and Honors student.
- **When and where is our class?** The class will generally meet from 2:00 p.m. to 2:50 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. We will meet elsewhere on occasion, sometimes at different locations on campus, sometimes off-campus in the community. Please recall that this course is "linked" with Prof. Jessica Pisano's Honors section of LANG 120, which is scheduled to meet right before our class, and there will be occasions when we "merge" the meetings of these two courses.
- **What texts will we be using?** You have not been asked to purchase any texts for our course, but you will complete excerpts from several books, including Mindy Thompson Fullilove's *Root shock: How tearing up city neighborhoods hurts America, and what we can do about it*, Andrew Hurley's *Beyond preservation: Using public history to revitalize inner cities*, and Jane Jacobs's *The death and life of great American cities*. We will supplement these excerpts with various other readings. Anything that we read will be provided to you free of charge, so that this course can be as affordable as possible.
- **What do I bring to class?** Yourself, of course. As well as something to write with/on and a copy (print or electronic) of whatever readings we're working with at that time. I will let you know ahead of time if you'll need to bring anything else to class.
- **Where and when are your office hours?** Though I do not have formal office hours, I have an "open door" policy that makes me available for several hours each week, spread pretty evenly from day to day. Please feel free to make an appointment if you'd like to guarantee a meeting with me.
- **How can I get a hold of you?** My phone number is 828-232-5190 and my e-mail addresses are pbahls@unca.edu and patrick.bahls@gmail.com. E-mail's typically the best way to get a hold of me. Drop me a line if you need to! Alayna's email is agraves1@unca.edu and her phone number is 828-493-2512.
- **What about other electronic media?** My website is located at faculty.unca.edu/~pbahls, and from there you can access just about any course-related information you need (notes, exams, a copy of this syllabus, *etc.*).

I also have a blog, *Changes of Basis* (<https://pbahls.wordpress.com/>), on which I frequently write openly about my ideas regarding teaching and learning. I encourage you to read and comment on this blog to help you understand what goes through my mind as I put our course together. Many students have found the blog to be an entertaining and enlightening read.

Finally, I should mention my Facebook policy: I am happy to be your friend on Facebook, but it is my policy not to *actively* friend my students. I will, however, warmly accept your friend requests. If you do wish to be my friend on Facebook, I only suggest that you think carefully about the sorts of things you'd like your professor to be able to see about you when you update your status, post pictures, *etc.*

A few words about accessibility, equity, and inclusion. I would like to make every attempt to address any learning disabilities or other accessibility issues you might have that could affect your participation in our course. To that end, if you believe your participation may be so affected, I encourage you to get in touch with the Office of Academic Accessibility via academicaccess@unca.edu. Furthermore, I would like to make our classroom as equitable and inclusive as possible. To that end, at the very least, I ask that you ensure that I address you in the manner in which you wish to be addressed. This means not only that I invite you to inform me of the name you wish to go by, but that you also, for instance, inform me of the gender with which you wish to be identified so that I might make appropriate use of pronouns. I invite you to inform me of any other accommodations I might be able to make in order to improve our class's accessibility.

What will we be studying? *Urban renewal* is a phrase that can be used quite generally or more specifically. The latter use refers to the governmentally-sanctioned demolition of dilapidated houses, businesses, schools, and other “blighted” urban fixtures in order to make way for renovated city features; the former use refers more broadly to any actions (destructive or constructive) that result in transformation of a city's landscape, usually to the detriment of a particular neighborhood or community. As you might imagine, much depends on the way in which the word “blight” is construed, and the way in which urban transformation is effected. Historically, urban renewal has resulted in the uprooting of city neighborhoods, whole communities falling into disarray and decay when the systems that lend life to them (systems of housing, commerce, civic resources, *etc.*) are reorganized, relocated, or simply removed. Though the word “urban” calls to mind major cities, urban renewal has happened nearly everywhere. It's likely your own hometown was affected by it in some way.

Unsurprisingly, urban renewal has had a profound impact on Asheville. We will take urban renewal in Asheville as our focus of study. While we will spend some time learning of the more widespread phenomenon of urban renewal, our primary concern will be on the local situation. Through readings, archival research, fieldwork, and even oral histories, we will come to know more about the impact urban renewal has had right here in your new hometown.

As we study the Asheville community together, we will also spend some time in gaining acquaintance with the UNCA community. UNC Asheville, like the city it calls home, has residences, businesses, and other community resources, and it functions not unlike a small town in and of itself. As the semester progresses, we will learn more about its functioning and about its liberal arts mission, unique among the missions of its sister schools in the UNC system.

What do you expect me to get out of this course? Think of the following list as a set of skills I'd love for you to have four years after taking this course. You should be able to...

- ...define *urban renewal* and illustrate this term with relevant local examples,
- demonstrate proficiency in archival research and basic urban ethnography,
- collaborate with others to craft multimedia projects for a variety of audiences, and
- find and make use of a number of on-campus resources offering support for students' life and learning.

Additionally, students in all first-year colloquia are meant to meet two more “universal” learning outcomes:

- **Knowledge of the Liberal Arts:** Students can articulate the characteristics and values of the liberal arts approach to higher education.

- **Critical Thinking:** Students can apply components of critical thinking to an issue or problem and understand the value of approaching such from more than one perspective.

It might not hurt you to go back over these lists every so often and ask yourself (and me!), “am I making progress in developing these skills?” If at any time you feel the answer is “no,” please come and talk to me about it; one or both of us might be able to change our ways to help you better reach these goals.

What kind of work will I do in this course? Your grade will be based upon the following activities:

- completing a few short individual writing assignments, including
 - a memoir reflection,
 - a rhetorical analysis of a particular place,
 - a brief report on a specific campus resource, and
 - an end-of-semester reflection on your experience in working with the community;
- coordinating a class visit by a representative from a specific university office,
- performing (in pairs) archival research, fieldwork, and oral history interviews,
- crafting (again, in pairs) exhibit posters on urban renewal’s impact on specific Asheville locations, and
- active participation in in-class discussions and activities (scavenger hunts, tours, *etc.*).

Below is a bit more information about each of these components of the course. More detailed information about **all** of these assignments and activities will be given as the semester progresses!

Individual writing assignments. As listed above, you will complete four relatively short (3-5 pages each) writing assignments over the course of the semester. Your *memoir reflection* will ask you to look back over a piece you will have crafted for our linked LANG 120 course, mining that piece for language indicating the physical and social environments of your hometowns. In your *rhetorical analysis of place*, you will consider a specific geographic location in Asheville, examining that location’s rhetorical situation: what is its purpose? Who makes use of it? What does its form say about its function? Your *report on a campus resource* will introduce your peers to a specific office on campus and the opportunities it provides. Finally, your *service-learning reflection* will give you a chance to talk about the growth you will have achieved through your work with our community partners.

I will give you specific and detailed guidelines for each of these pieces as we come to them, and they will all go together to help meet our learning goals for the course.

I would like to propose that, taken together, these writing assignments be worth 40% of your overall grade.

Campus rep class visits In addition to writing a brief report on particular campus resource, you will also be asked to coordinate a visit to our class by one of the university staff charged with providing that resource. Working off of a common class-wide schedule, you will arrange for visits from leaders in the Math Lab, the Student Health and Counseling Center, Campus Rec, and more!

I would like to propose that your arranging a campus rep class visit be worth 5% of your overall grade.

Research activities. At various points in the semester, I will give you guidance in conducting archival research in the Special Collections department of our own Ramsey Library, performing field research

on-site at various specific locations in Asheville (designated by our community partners), and perhaps even interviewing members of the community on their experiences under urban renewal and other city-wide change. You will do all of this work with a partner. As with the writing assignments listed above, you will receive more involved training and detailed expectations regarding these requirements as needed, beginning with an orientation to the Special Collections department and an overview of urban ethnography provided by a member of the Sociology Department, both in the first few weeks of class. Your research will be graded as much (if not more!) on the process of completing it as on the research products themselves.

I would like to propose that the aforementioned research activities be worth 25% of your overall grade.

Exhibit posters. The end result of your research efforts will be a large format poster of the quality of a museum exhibit. (You will see many examples of such pieces throughout the semester.) This poster, crafted with your research partner, will provide the viewer with a detailed history of the geographic location that you'll have researched, illustrating clearly the impact of urban renewal and other forces of changes on that location while paying attention to the roles of power and privilege.

I would like to propose that your exhibit posters be worth 15% of your overall grade.

Participation. I expect that you will all play an active role in constructing our class on a day-to-day basis. For many of you, this might mean playing a leading role in in-class discussions. However, not everyone is an outgoing or extroverted person, so I won't demand constant comment from you all (though I do expect you to try to contribute to our conversations at least once a day). Therefore, for some of you, "participation" might mean curating the collaborative note-taking space we will maintain for most class meetings or taking the lead in self-guided tours on campus or in the community. As long as you are playing an active and ongoing part in the success of our class, I will consider you an eager participant.

Please note that attendance is a prerequisite for participation. I will allow you each **two** absences from class, excused or not, no questions asked. After you have missed this many classes, each unexcused absence will result in the automatic deduction of 5% from your course grade. (**Note:** excused absences include absences for documented medical reasons, family emergencies, or official university activities like participating in athletic events or conferences. Please see me if you have questions about excused absences.)

I would like to propose that your participation in class activities be worth 15% of your overall grade.

The astute reader will note that I've listed the percentage values for the various components of our course as "proposals." This is because I feel strongly that you all should have a hand in designing this course (it is, after all, *our* course and not merely *mine*), and so early in our time together this summer I will lead us in a discussion on the matter of assessment and grades...we might decide, as a class, on different point values; those listed above are meant as a starting point for negotiations.

Also, please note that I consider it your responsibility to keep tabs on your grade at any given time in the semester. I will be happy to let you know what grade you have in the course at any time; all you have to do is ask! That said, I try to de-emphasize grades as much as possible, and I encourage you to do the same, focusing less on grades and more on learning and engaging with the community. If you do these things well, the grades will come!

What does it mean that this class is designated "SL"? Our class carries the designation "SL," standing for "service-learning." Service-learning, and more broadly, community engagement, offer opportunities to apply the concepts we learn about in the classroom to non-academic settings in our community. Think of the hyphen in the phrase "service-learning" as a bridge connecting these two activities, the service you will perform to partners off campus and the learning undertaken in our studies together.

In our class, we will be partnering with a number of individuals representing historically African-American neighborhoods in Asheville, including renowned photographer Andrea Clark. These individuals will help us to identify the geographical features that will serve as the foci of your research this term. They will also represent the beneficiaries of your research, as your exhibits will be crafted for public display in community centers across the city as interpretive pieces showcasing important local landmarks.

A note about our class's peer mentor. I am delighted that Alayna Graves will be serving as our class's peer mentor. Alayna has been officially appointed to help out with class activities and to serve you all as a resource and a representative as you come to know the campus better. Alayna will sometimes take a lead in and outside of the classroom, and she will facilitate some of the work you do outside of class as well. I've asked Alayna to say a few words of greeting herself:

Hello to all! I look forward to working with everyone and getting to know you! As stated earlier, I am a double major in sociology and WGSS; if you have any questions about those departments I would be happy to talk. I started out my freshman year in political science with teacher licensure so I have a bit of information on those, too! I've thoroughly enjoyed my year at UNCA and my time in the Honors Program. I hope to help you guys fall in love with everything that's offered just as much as I have! Please take note of my phone number and use it if you ever need guidance. Whether it pertains to class or not doesn't matter. I'm here for you! I really want to assist in easing your transition to college.

A note about academic dishonesty. The phrase *academic dishonesty* is an umbrella term sheltering all manner of breaches of academic ethics, including plagiarism, unwarranted collaboration, fabrication of research results or data, *etc.* Such actions must be reported to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and generally warrant at least failure of whatever assignment dishonesty took place in. Please see the following excerpt from the UNC Asheville Student Handbook for more information:

<https://studenthandbook.unca.edu/academic-misconduct-and-grievance-procedures>

That's all that I have to say about our class for now. Note that I will post a detailed schedule of day-to-day activities, assignments, due dates, and other resources, on the class website. Please don't hesitate to let me know at any time if you have questions, or if concerns arise. Let's go ahead and dive right in!