The City as Text
Syllabus

This class will offer students a structured exploration of Ogden City, Utah, the location of Weber State University. City as Text is an interdisciplinary investigation of the people, architecture, culture, changing demographics of Ogden. The class is structured in an open manner that enables students to emphasize their respective disciplinary interests. It is the students’ task to investigate, documents, and discover Ogden, and in so doing become knowledgeable about how cities work and how people work in them.

Learning objectives
Students will be able to:
- Describe the demographics of Ogden over the last 20 years.
- Observe and describe various cultural landscapes (As defined by Carl O. Sauer: a landscape molded from the natural landscape by a cultural group) created throughout the city.
- Discuss on the important components of the urban environment.
- Explain the ways in which the city “works.”
- Map the patterns of life in Ogden.

Activities in support of the learning objectives
Students will:
- Maintain an artifact “Wiki-book”.
  - Students will collect city-related “artifacts”: news/web articles, images or their own photographs, summaries of conversations with city residents, personal observations. For each artifact, students will describe the artifact: how they came by it and how it explains/illustrates/reveals some aspect of the city? Students should “collect at least 2 items per week (one of which must be their written observations of travels they made/places they observed). Some entries will be based on mini-research projects into such as social issues such as local and federal policies, immigration, domestic violence, health inequalities, and other problems facing the city.

Entries will be posted on the course “wiki-book.” The “wiki-book” will be graded thrice during the semester:
  - Completeness on an ongoing basis
  - Quality of presentation
  - Depth of observation and insight
  - Evidence of reflection on class topics

Entries will be evaluated for their quality of communication. If you deal regularly and effectively with the materials for class in the journal, you will receive a B on the journal. If entries show strong evidence of grappling with issues, of a quest for understanding, and/or of effort to develop and support views, you will receive an A on the journal.
• **Read and view various texts and films as assigned**
  - *Utah Economic and Business Review* publications
  - Excerpts from Whyte’s *City, Rediscovering the Center*
  - Brochures
  - Films: *Flag Wars, The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces, The Perfect Life or Building America*
  - *Mapping America: Every City, Every Block*,
  - Online collection – such as photos, maps, reports

• **Write three formal papers**
  - Critique of one of the films
  - Critique of an article from a scholarly journal in the student’s disciplinary interest related to some aspect of the class.
  - *“Me and Ogden”* – this could be a formal summary and reflection on experiences or a creative expression such as a literary piece or web site.

  An “A” paper will contain at least the following elements:
  - demonstration of clear understanding of the course material covered in the paper
  - a clearly articulated thesis statement that directly addresses the specific question you are answering
  - convincing supporting arguments, including textual support
  - demonstration of independent/original thought
  - effective organization
  - near-perfect mechanics, including spelling and punctuation

• **Participate.**

  Effective learning in this course is contingent upon active participation: coming to class prepared, engaging in the various forays into the city, expressing observations and ideas in discussions. Students will write a statement awarding themselves points and describing their participation.

**Strategies: Mapping, Observing, Listening, Reflecting**

Students are split into teams with an assigned area of the city to explore. They report back for general discussions and exchange insights with others.

There are four basic strategies used in these exercise (based on “City as Text” methodology)

• **Mapping:** Students will construct the primary kinds of buildings, points of interest, centers of activity, and transportation routes. Where do people go? How do they get there? What do they do when they get there?
• **Observing.** Students will look carefully for the unexpected as well as the expected, for the familiar as well as the new. Students will notes details of architecture, landscaping, social gathering, clothing, possessions, decorations, signage, and advertising.

• **Listening.** Students will talk to as many people as they can and find out from them what matters to them in their daily lives, what they enjoy, what bothers them, what they appreciate. Students will strike up conversations wherever they go. Students will ask: how expensive is it to live here; where to find a mean – cheap or good; what are the local politics, what stories to they know about particular places; what is the population like? In other words, students will imagine that they are moving to Ogden and are trying to find out everything they need to survive her.

• **Reflecting.** Throughout their explorations, students will keep in mind that the people they meet, the buildings in which they live and work, the forms of their recreation, their modes of transportation – everything that they are and do— are important components of the ecology of the city. What are the particular roles in the ecology: how do persons use it, contribute to it, damage it or improve it, and change it? Students should consider that they are doing serious research. Like all good researchers, students should be aware of their own biases and should investigate them also.

Grades

Grades will be based on a percentage of the points possible:

- Artifact “wiki-book”  50 points
- Written papers  10 point each
- Participation  20 points

*Academic misconduct* includes traditional textual plagiarism and its manifestations, including self-plagiarism, falsifying work or academic records, cheating, substitution of work or the work of another, actively participating in or condoning these activities with others, appropriating creative works of art in whole or part (images, sounds, lighting designs, audio tracks, scripts, etc). Please refer to the Student Handbook, Rules and Regulations section.

*Any student requiring accommodations or services due to a disability must contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) in room 181 of the Student Service Center. SSD can also arrange to provide course materials (including this syllabus) in alternative formats if necessary.*

Weber State University recognizes that there are times when course content may differ from a student's core beliefs. Faculty, however, have a responsibility to teach content that is related to the discipline and that has a reasonable relationship to pedagogical goals. If you, as a student, believe that the content of the course conflicts with your ability to pursue the topic, you may request a resolution from the instructor. (See PPM 6-22.)

Weber State University is committed to providing an environment free from harassment and other forms of discrimination based upon race, color, ethnic background, national origin, religion, creed, age, lack of American citizenship, disability, status of veteran of the Viet Nam era, sexual orientation or preference, or gender, including sexual/gender harassment. Such an environment is a necessary part of a healthy learning and working atmosphere because such discrimination undermines the sense of human dignity and sense of belonging of all people.

*Syllabi and the Student Code for WSU (found in the Policy and Procedures Manual: http://documents.weber.edu/ppm/ 6-22) are the governing documents for a course. Your decision to take a course constitutes your consent to the conditions of the syllabus and the student code. Students may access the student code through the Weber State University homepage: www.weber.edu*
Class Schedule
Each week there will be 1 Walkabout assignment. Some assignments can be completed during class time; others will be completed on students' own time. Teams for each assignment will be chosen the previous week. Students will take public transportation as much as possible. (Schedule will be adjusted due to weather conditions.)

Each week there will be a session in which all students report and discuss. Discussion leaders will be assigned for each session.

| Week One          | Introductions and bus trip from campus to downtown and back. We will all view the city from the top of the Municipal Building | Discussion of observations and pre-semester review:
|                   |                                                                         | • What do you hope to accomplish in this class?
|                   |                                                                         | • What is a story you know about Ogden?
|                   |                                                                         | • Who is the major of Ogden?
|                   |                                                                         | • What are the major tourist sites in Ogden?
|                   |                                                                         | • Have you read the Standard Examiner?
|                   |                                                                         | Discussion of the Ogden City website: Ogden: http://www.ogdencity.com/ |
| Week Two          | Walkabout 25th Street – talk to merchants, customers, workers          | Discussion of observations and conversations
|                   |                                                                         | Discussion of Perlich’s “Utah’s Demographic Transformation,” |
| Week Three        | Walkabout Ogden Museums – pick up brochures, talk to docents and visitors | Discussion of observations and conversations
<p>|                   |                                                                         | Discussion of “How to Get Lost in a City: An Interview with Amira Hanfi,” |
| Week Four         | Walkabout Ft. Buenaventura and one other historical district: Crossroads, Jefferson, Eccles – talk to residents, visitors | Discussion of observations and conversations |
| Week Five         | Walkabout the Ogden River – public art, the housing, business, and public spaces | Discussion of observations and conversations |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Discussion of observations and conversations</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week Six</td>
<td>Walkabout Hispanic businesses</td>
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<td>Week Seven</td>
<td>Walkabout the Main Branch of the Weber County Library</td>
<td>Discussion of observations and conversations</td>
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<td>Week Eight</td>
<td>Walkabout city parks. Ogden has more than 40 park locations. Visit and at least two - one above and one below Harrison - observe who is using the park at the time of day you visited; talk to users.</td>
<td>Discussion of observations and conversations</td>
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<td>Week Nine</td>
<td>Walkabout neighborhood</td>
<td>Discussion of observations and conversations</td>
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<td>Week Ten</td>
<td>Walkabout neighborhood</td>
<td>Discussion of observations and conversations</td>
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<td>Week Eleven</td>
<td>Visit City Planning offices. Review one of the community plans</td>
<td>Discussion of observations and conversations</td>
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<td>Week Twelve</td>
<td>Attend Ogden City Council meeting (Tuesdays at 7 – agendas available online)</td>
<td>Discussion of observations and conversations</td>
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<td>Week Thirteen</td>
<td>Attend a church service not of your own faith; there are about 300 churches in Ogden</td>
<td>Discussion of observations and conversations</td>
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<td>Week Fourteen</td>
<td>Social Services. Visit: Golden Hours Center, Head Start, or Marshal White Center</td>
<td>Discussion of observations and conversations</td>
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<td>Week Fifteen</td>
<td>Guest informant: Charlie Trentleman, <em>Standard Examiner</em></td>
<td>Discussion of observations and conversations</td>
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<td>Finals week</td>
<td>Lunch and Post-semester review</td>
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