Econ 322: Urban Economics
Spring 2016 Syllabus
Class: T Th 1:30 – 2:45

Dr. Samia Islam
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Phone: 208-426-1042
Office hours: By appointment
Room: MBEB3204

I. Course Description & Objectives

In this course, we will attempt to understand what makes cities *tick*, what prevents them from ticking accurately and what we can do about these inaccuracies.

You can think of this course as being divided into two parts. In one, theories of location will be considered. With these theories we will attempt to understand why cities exist, why they are located where they are, and the spatial distribution of alternative activities within cities. The other part of the course draws upon our knowledge of location theory to analyze the urban problem of neighborhood decay, poverty, substandard housing, urban sprawl, housing segregation, traffic congestion and other urban problems.

*Course Objectives:*
1) to understand firm and household location choices & implications
2) to analyze urban land use & housing policies
3) to understand the importance of transportation in urban economy
4) to integrate the learning in urban economics into service for the community. The readings and assignments are designed to increase your knowledge and skills in this regard.

The fourth goal is crucial, since you can take this course for *service learning (SL)* credit. In SL, you apply classroom knowledge to real world problems, while gaining valuable workplace skills and expanding your perspective. Specifically, you will strengthen your research skills by working with a real client, and by experiencing first-hand the challenges inherent in urban economic research, such as data collection. You will expand your perspectives on the connections between policies and urban economic issues such as those focused on refugee resettlement. You will gain insights into the economic issues facing refugees/immigrants, understand and appreciate those challenges, and think critically about solutions to those challenges.
In this case, you will be divided up into groups, and each group will work with a local community agency on a project focusing on new migrants in urban Boise. We will be collaborating with the International Rescue Committee (IRC). More information about the service learning component of the course is provided on the BB course site. Some helpful tips on how to do well in your SL project is at the end of this document.

PREREQ: Econ 202, and high school-level algebra & geometry.

II. **Textbook:**

a. *Urban Economics* by Arthur O’Sullivan; 8th ed. (or 7th but you will need to keep up with the revisions made in the newer edition)

*** Note: Textbook is currently backordered but the BSU book store expects it to be available in store during the first week of Spring semester classes. For the first week of classes, please read the class lecture notes for Ch 1 available on the Blackboard course site ***

b. **Assigned articles** listed in Section XIII below.

III. **Student Responsibilities**

You are expected to *attend every class* meeting and be *on time.*

It is imperative that you are respectful to your peers and instructor in class and in all class-related exchanges. Please be aware of the BSU policies for any violation of the student code of conduct.

It is your responsibility to be aware of all announcements made in class about test dates, assignment due dates, course content, test content and other course information. Some of this information may also be available on Blackboard. It is important that you check Blackboard on a daily basis.

Readings will consist of the textbook chapters and assigned articles. In the case of the latter, I will provide PDF files to print, or information on how to access them online/from the library.

Your responsibilities, like mine, include being well-prepared for class. Your job is to read the assigned readings before class and be prepared to discuss the topics. If you can’t make it to class, make sure you arrange to obtain any information you missed from classmates or me.

IV. **Assessment**

Your progress will be assessed by 2 exams, a research poster, poster presentation, and a written assignment in the form of a policy brief / project report which will serve as the final assignment for the course. The midterm exams may cover any material from the assigned readings and specified text chapters, as well as any additional material that I cover in lecture. Exams will consist of essay/short-answer questions. Exams are not cumulative. There is no final exam.
You are required to prepare a poster presentation for the Annual Boise State Undergraduate Research Conference to be held on Monday, Apr 18 from 1:00 – 4:00 pm (check in and set up by 12:30 pm). If you are taking this course for SL credit, this research poster will serve as your SL group project (max. 5 students per team) with the incorporation of an additional reflective component (details in assignment instructions on BB). Abstracts for the projects are due to me by Th, Feb 4 for my final approval. You will submit them at the conference website by end of Feb.

The SL teams will also present the poster at the Civic Engagement Student Exhibition on April 28, 2016 from 4-6 pm at the Hatch Ballroom in the SUB. This exhibition is an open forum for students who participate in service-learning to showcase their experience through a research or reflective poster about the application of their course work to current community issues. Held every spring and fall semester, the projects in the exhibition illustrates the broad reach of Boise State University’s commitment to civic engagement. The ‘Best of College’ projects from across campus will be displayed in the ILC 3rd floor lobby for a week at the end of semester. All relevant details for submission guidelines, deadlines, etc are available here.

V. Research Poster: Topics

Research poster projects for Spring 2016 Urban Economics class groups will pertain to migration, more specifically migration and settlement of refugees in the Boise urban area. Selection will be made from projects proposed by partnering agency as per their needs.

V.i. SL Final Assignment -- Final Reflection Report

One of the important components of service learning is reflection. After you have completed a project like this, you need to take time to look back on your experience to examine yourself and what you learned. In your individually prepared report, which you will submit online via the BB course site, address the following questions:

1. Discuss specific concepts and principles from class that were made real for you during your project.
2. What did you learn about the community? Here, talk about what new things you discovered about Boise City, about the issues that face us, and suggest ways in which we can improve efficiencies (if applicable).
3. How did course material help you address the question(s) your team was assigned?
4. What did you learn about yourself? What aspects of yourself did you discover that you hadn’t know before? What did you learn about your sense of place within this community? What strengths and weaknesses did you discover? What did you discover about yourself as a learner?
5. Finally, the most important question: Now What? Has this experience changed you? Discuss how you see this project impacting your life in the weeks, months, or even years to come.

V.ii. Policy Brief:

*** In case a student is unable to participate in SL activities in this course, she/he will be assigned a specific topic for a policy brief at my discretion. Details on the requirements for this assignment will be provided directly to the student. ***
The policy brief will need to be min. 1000 – max. 1200 words. Submit your work as a Word doc attachment on BB (link in the Policy Brief related content folder under Course Documents).

Topic for the policy brief will be assigned on an individual basis. Detailed instructions on how to write a policy brief, my expectations, grading rubrics, etc. will be available on BB on Mar 15.

To help you with the final SL assignment, you are required to maintain a weekly **team journal on Blackboard**, starting in week 5 or 6. The content of the journal post (min. 300 words per wee per team) should focus on the research topic, the processes, the community need/issue, and possible solutions. Possible post topics:

- Why is there a need of your service?
- What do you perceive as the underlying issue, and why does it exist? Who is involved in this issue? (in helping solve it, or perpetuating it)
- Do you see connections to policy at the local, state, or national level?
- What social, economic, political and educational systems are maintaining and perpetuating it?
- What would it take to positively impact the situation (from individuals, communities, education, and government)?
- What other needs are you noticing? What more needs to be done? What are other cities doing to help (with policies)?
- Where are the challenges? What were the challenges for that week?
- How is the research process helping you learn about the issue?
- Have there been anything in the news recently that addresses similar problems in other cities? Reflections on the findings/ best practices.

**How to complete the weekly journal entries:** Each group will assign one person per week to make the initial post (a different team member each week). The other members will then respond to that post with their own thoughtful insights.

By the end of the semester, your journal entries should address all of the above questions. This SL reflections report / Policy Brief is due on **Apr 28 by 12 pm through BB**, no exceptions.

**VI. Evaluation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam #1</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam #2</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Poster</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Conference Poster presentation</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>SL Team Journal (10%) + Final Reflection Report (15%)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Or, Policy Brief, where applicable)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class performance (attendance and class discussions)</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>100%</td>
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Grading policies and exam grades are final and not subject to negotiation. I reserve the right to adjust each student’s grade up or down based on individual in-class performance/participation.

Grades will be posted within 5 working days of an exam, including the last one.

VII. Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Minimum Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>96.5 and above</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>92.5 - 96.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>89.5 - 92.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>86.5 - 89.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82.5 - 86.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>79.5 - 82.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>76.5 - 79.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>72.5 - 76.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>69.5 - 72.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>66.5 - 69.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>62.5 - 66.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>59.5 - 62.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59.49 or less</td>
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</tbody>
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VIII. Class Policies

Class room Conduct: Students must attend every class session and come to class on time. It is to be noted that even though attendance is not directly factored into the grade calculations, I reserve the right to adjust a student’s grade in case of chronic absenteeism.

There are some behaviors that are not tolerated in the classroom, including - but not limited to – texting, inattention while I am lecturing, being disrespectful to me and/or fellow classmates, any other form of harassment towards any one in class, and other similarly disruptive conduct. Any such behavior will lead to immediate temporary dismissal from the course, and subsequent disciplinary actions, as per BSU policy.

Cell phones must be turned off or on silent mode during class. If I see anyone texting, I will deduct 5 points from the student’s next exam score – no warnings.

No e-cigs or chewing tobacco allowed during class or class related group meetings. No pets / recreational animals in the classroom as per MBEB policy.

Communication: Email etiquette: College is preparation for your professional life and career. Therefore, it is necessary to start using professional etiquette in your communications with others. Texting language and acronyms are not acceptable in emails addressed to me. Email messages need to be necessary, respectful (beginning with a proper address, such as “Prof. Islam” or “Dr. Islam”), concise, and clear. If you do not get an email response from me, it is likely that your email message did not meet the above guidelines.

All email addressed to me will need to be from your u.boisestate.edu account. I will not respond to emails from other cloud services such as yahoo / hotmail / your personal gmail account.

IX. Academic Integrity

Refer to Boise State’s Student Code of Conduct for definitions of cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty as well as policies and procedures for handling such cases. I strongly encourage you to familiarize yourself with this policy as it is applicable to all of your classes and dealings with the University. Any student found plagiarizing; cheating; or fabricating any assignment will receive an automatic “F” for the course and be dismissed from class immediately.
X. Disabilities:
If any student has a disability that requires special accommodation in class, for assignments, exams or any other task please come and see me by the second week of class. Information regarding disabilities and accommodations are available on the Disability Resource Center website.

XI. Important Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date/Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research plan / abstracts due for approval</td>
<td>Jan 28 (Submit Word doc by email: due by 4 pm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1 (in class)</td>
<td>Feb 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boise Refugee Conference</td>
<td>Feb 8-9, SUB</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Poster status report submissions (3)</td>
<td>Feb 23; Mar 11; Apr 7 (Submit a Word doc by email by 4 PM on each occasion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 2 (in class)</td>
<td>Mar 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Boise State Undergraduate Research Conference</td>
<td>Mon, Apr 18 (1 – 4 pm; SUB)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Civic Engagement Student Exhibition (SL groups will attend with their posters)</td>
<td>Apr 28, 4 – 6, Hatch Ballroom, SUB</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy Brief submission / SL reflection</td>
<td>Apr 28 by noon (using BB Safe-assignment)</td>
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I have the discretion to reschedule exams but will notify you in advance of any changes through in-class and Blackboard announcements.

XII. Important Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 17</td>
<td>Drop fee begins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 18</td>
<td>Dr. Martin Luther King Day (University Holiday)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 25</td>
<td>Last day to drop without a &quot;W&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 18</td>
<td>Last day to completely withdraw (with a &quot;W&quot;)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 18</td>
<td>Boise State Undergraduate Research Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 28</td>
<td>Boise State Civic Engagement Student Presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 29</td>
<td>Last day of classroom instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 10</td>
<td>Final grades posted</td>
</tr>
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XIII. Tentative Course Outline and Progress

| Week One         | Introduction and Overview                                           |
|                  | Text: Chapter 1 + Assigned Reading(s)                               |
| Week Two         | Market Forces in the development of Cities                           |
Text: Chapters 2 + Assigned Reading(s)

Week Three
Land Rent and Urban Land-Use Patterns
Text: Chapter 6 + Assigned Reading(s)

Week Four
Land Rent and Urban Land-Use Patterns
Chapter 7 + Assigned Reading(s)

Weeks Five
Market Forces in the development of Cities, Ch 3

Exam 1

Week Six
Land Rent and Urban Land-Use Patterns
Chapter 8 + Assigned Reading(s)

Week Seven
Poster in-class sessions

Week Eight
Urban Transportation
Ch 10 + Assigned Readings

Week Nine
Urban Transportation
Text: Chapter 11 + Assigned Reading(s)

Week Ten:
Housing
Text chapter 14 + Assigned readings

Week Eleven
Spring Break: Mar 21 - 27

Week Twelve
Exam 2

Week Thirteen
Housing
Text chapter 15 + Assigned readings

Week Fourteen
In class poster session and conference prep

Week Fifteen – Sixteen:
Market Forces in the development of Cities
Text Chapter 5 and Ch 9 + Assigned readings

Apr 28, 2016:
Due: Final reflection, group reflection / Policy brief (by noon through BB, no exceptions)

XIV. Assigned readings (subject to change)

Chapter 1


Chapter 2, 3 and 5:


Chapter 6, 7 and 8:


Chapter 9, 10 and 11:


Chapter 13 (7ed) / 14 (8ed) and Ch. 14 (7ed) / 15 (8ed):


XV. Using Blackboard

Blackboard will be my primary means of out-of-class communication with you. For information concerning students’ rights and responsibilities while enrolled in online courses, please read the “Student Privacy Notice” at:

[http://itc.boisestate.edu/BbSupport/BbDocs/general/PrivacyNotice.htm](http://itc.boisestate.edu/BbSupport/BbDocs/general/PrivacyNotice.htm)

**Important**: Every time you log in, check the Announcements, and, Course Documents folders.

I’ll use the email function of Blackboard 9 to notify you of any sudden changes (e.g., class cancellation).
It is imperative that you:

(i) use your u.boisestate.edu email account to correspond with me in this course (not yahoo, Hotmail or personal gmail);
(ii) keep your email addresses up-to-date so that you are receiving all emails and notifications from me and your class mates; and
(iii) check Blackboard every day.

For technical problems: Email: blackboard@boisestate.edu

XVI. COBE Undergraduate Core Learning Objectives for ECON 322

| Students in this class will learn or practice the following COBE Core Curriculum concepts, methods, and skills: |
| 1. Understand and apply analytical and disciplinary concepts and methods related to business and economics: |
| ☑ 1.3. Economics |
| ☑ 2.1. Communicate effectively: Write messages and documents that are clear, concise, and compelling |
| ☑ 2.2. Communicate effectively: Give oral presentations that use effective content, organization, and delivery |
| ☑ 3. Solve problems, including unstructured problems, related to business and economics |
| ☑ 4. Use effective teamwork and collaboration skills |
| ☑ 5. Resolve ethical issues related to business and economics |

Statement of Shared Values

Boise State University upholds the following values as the foundation for a civil and nurturing environment. Campus community members are expected to adhere to these common values.

**Academic Excellence** – engage in our own learning and participate fully in the academic community’s pursuit of knowledge.

**Caring** – show concern for the welfare of others.

**Citizenship** – uphold civic virtues and duties that prescribe how we ought to behave in a self-governing community by obeying laws and policies, volunteering in the community, and staying informed on issues.
**Fairness** – expect equality, impartiality, openness and due process by demonstrating a balanced standard of justice without reference to individual bias.

**Respect** – treat people with dignity regardless of who they are and what they believe. A respectful person is attentive, listens well, treats others with consideration and doesn’t resort to intimidation, coercion or violence to persuade.

**Responsibility** – take charge of our choices and actions by showing accountability and not shifting blame or taking improper credit. We will pursue excellence with diligence, perseverance, and continued improvement.

**Trustworthiness** – demonstrate honesty in our communication and conduct while managing ourselves with integrity and reliability.
Tips for Service Learning Projects

From: Clark, N. (n.d.) Persuasion [course syllabus]. Dept. of Communication, Appalachian State University, Boone, NC.

• Below you'll find some words of advice that may make your SL task much easier. Communication with your agency contact WILL be difficult. This can't be stressed enough, or said too often. You're busy, they're busy, everyone's busy. You will have to try several times to get through to your contact, just as they will have to try several times to reach you. Expect this; don't complain about it! It's a fact of life, and is unavoidable.
  ▪ Because communication is difficult, you must have one key quality: perseverance. Don't call the agency one time. Call, call again, e mail them, leave messages, keep trying until you are certain the message has been received.

• Another implication of the first tip is that you cannot procrastinate. You need to get started on the project immediately, because everything, and I do mean everything, will take longer than you expect.

• Don't expect to be able to get a hold of agency reps at hours convenient to you. In other words, at lunch time they're likely to be at lunch, and after 4:00 they're likely to have gone home. You need to call them during normal business hours.

• Remember that even though these are non-profit organizations, they are still organizations. They are working hard, and expect results. Do not have the attitude of, "I am providing this service voluntarily, so the agency should be grateful for whatever time/effort I can spare." This is NOT the way to approach service-learning. You are not "helping" them, you are working for/collaborating with them. So treat this as a job, and a job that rewards you with something much more valuable than money: the sense of accomplishment in having made a difference in the lives of people who need help.

• With your different schedules, it will probably be pretty difficult to get everyone in the group together at the same time. So be creative: divide up tasks, make use of e-mail for quick decisions/announcements, have food at the group meetings (that will get people to come!), break the group into two smaller groups for some tasks, or whatever you can think of to work around your schedules.

• A general tip that you should remember when you get out into the "real world," too: do not leave the agency hanging. If they ask you to come by to meet with them on Tuesday, don't say, "Well, I might be able to make it, I'm just not sure. I'll try to be there." As a wise man once said, "There is no try, only do." You'll either be there, or you won't. So let your yes be yes, and your no be no. If you can't say yes or no for certain at that time, say "I'll have to check, but I will get back to you tomorrow to tell you for sure whether or not I can make it." Then, be true to your word. And if you say you are going to be there, BE THERE. If you don't show up, for whatever reason, it will make you, your group, and your university look very, very unprofessional.

*** NOTE: Boise is hosting a “refugee conference” on Feb 8-9, 2016. It will be beneficial for you to mark your calendars and attend this event.