

HTS 2803-HP: SEMESTER IN THE CITY: ENGAGING WESTSIDE COMMUNITIES
Spring 2018, Georgia Institute of Technology
Dr. Todd M. Michney

Meeting Place/Time: West Village Dining Commons 277 TR 3:00-4:15pm
Office/Office Hours: Old Civil Engineering G24 M 10am-12pm, W 3-4pm,
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This course invites students to explore how urban neighborhoods work—and equally important, to work in and with urban neighborhoods. We will focus on nearby Westside communities facing serious sustainability challenges, but which are also developing significant strategies for positive change. Looking at historic Westside neighborhoods with a particular focus on Bankhead and Grove Park from a variety of perspectives—historical, social, political, economic, and environmental, among others—we will endeavor to understand these communities on their own terms, but also study them within the larger context of the City of Atlanta and its metropolitan region. Students will meet with community stakeholders and attend several community events including at least one Westside civic meeting; they will also collaborate with organized neighborhood residents in designing an attainable and sustainable project and in the process, strengthen these communities’ existing ties to Georgia Tech.

Learning Outcomes:

In studying Westside communities and engaging directly with residents, students will learn how ecological, social, and economic systems have historically operated and how policy decisions and metropolitan-wide economic development strategies have local impacts; will develop skills to work and collaborate in a community different than their own; and will explore how promoting sustainability and community engagement can potentially transform civic life and values in the Atlanta metro area. Students will acquire firsthand knowledge of Westside sustainability challenges directly from residents, and of the approaches they have pursued in attempting to maintain the livability of their neighborhoods. Students in “Semester in the City” will also develop civic leadership skills in the process of meeting and learning to communicate effectively with individuals whose life experiences most likely differ from theirs, and thereby hopefully become more aware of their positioning in local, metropolitan, national, and future professional communities.

Required Texts (2):

- Larry Keating, *Atlanta: Race, Class, and Urban Expansion* (2001). ISBN: 978-1-56639-821-3
- Harley Etienne, *Pushing Back the Gates: Neighborhood Perspectives on University-Driven Revitalization in West Philadelphia* (2012). ISBN: 978-1-4399-0068-0

Overview:

“Semester in the City” will not stay only in the classroom; it will move into the community as well. We will meet with stakeholders and attend at least one Westside civic meeting in order to understand the issues as the residents do. (Scheduling details will be worked out over the course of the semester).



This course is part of Georgia Tech's Serve-Learn-Sustain (SLS) initiative, uniting classroom learning with community action. SLS works with all six colleges to offer courses and programs connecting sustainability and community engagement with real-world partners and projects, allowing students to use their disciplinary expertise related to science and technology to help “create sustainable communities” where humans and nature flourish, now and in the future, in Georgia, the U.S., and around the globe. SLS is a multi-year emphasis on sustainability issues, specifically designed to reconnect the institution with nearby communities, especially including Westside ones.

“Semester in the City: Engaging Westside Communities” is partially funded by Dr. Michney's SLS Course Development grant for the Spring 2017 semester, which will enable us to schedule events such as guided tours, visits to local archives, community outreach and programming, as well as to compensate guest speakers and buy recording and other necessary equipment for projects. More information about SLS can be found at www.serve-learn-sustain.gatech.edu. Visit the website to sign up for the [SLS Email List](#), view the full list of [affiliated courses](#), and find links to Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

Our community partner is the Grove Park Foundation (<https://groveparkfoundation.org/>), which in 2017 branched off of the Emerald Corridor Foundation, established in 2012 (ECF; <http://emeraldcorridor.org/>). ECF is a nonprofit promoting “the healthy and sustainable revitalization of Proctor Creek and its surrounding neighborhoods in Northwest Atlanta,” and is currently planning a new city park (Proctor Park) on a reclaimed industrial site directly across from the Bankhead MARTA station. The park will feature “green” infrastructure, specifically an artificial wetland that can contain stormwater to reduce the flooding that negatively impacts the surrounding area's livability, while simultaneously improving water quality. Proctor Creek is the most polluted tributary of the Chattahoochee River, due to a history of industrial development and dual-use sanitary and runoff sewers that leads to “combined sewer overflow” events during storms. Part of the future Proctor Park design will include a walking trail with signage documenting and interpreting the local history of the surrounding areas; our class will contribute the content to be used in developing the historic markers installed along the trail and a mobile phone app currently being developed by a team of Computer Science Majors as their “Junior Capstone Project.”

In collaborating with GPF/ECF, we expect to be able to contribute in terms of: 1) *research*, in local libraries and archives as well as online; 2) *technical support and training*, to conduct interviews with neighborhood residents and local activists; and 3) *production*, helping to design a prototype for the historic walking trail and possibly also media and/or online content in keeping with the GPF/ECF's local history emphasis.

Weekly Class Schedule; Readings, Visits, etc.

Week 1

Jan. 9 – INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION

Jan. 11 – *Read/Discuss:*

- “Reflections on the West Side: Lessons from Semesters in the City,”
<http://www.iac.gatech.edu/news-events/stories/2016/3/reflections-west-lessons-semester-city/519801>
- “West Side Story,” *Georgia Tech Alumni Magazine* 88:4 (2012): 54-61.

Week 2

Jan. 16 – *Read/Discuss:*

- Bartow Elmore, “Hydrology and Residential Segregation in the Postwar South: An Environmental History of Atlanta, 1865-1895,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 94 (Spring 2010): 30-61
- Skye Borden, “Bellwood Quarry: A New Water Project with an Old Sales Pitch,”
<https://scholarblogs.emory.edu/atlantastudies/2017/01/17/bellwood-quarry-a-new-water-project-with-an-old-sales-pitch/>
- Debra Edelson (GPF Executive Director), blog on SLS website: <http://serve-learn-sustain.gatech.edu/emerald-corridor-foundations-partnership-sls-and-georgia-tech>

Jan. 18 – Visit: Grove Park Foundation, 1562 Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway NW

Week 3

Jan. 23 – *Read/Discuss:*

- LeeAnn Lands, *The Culture of Property: Race, Class, and Housing Landscapes in Atlanta, 1880-1950* (2009), 158-198

Jan. 25 – *Read/Discuss:*

- Kevin Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (2005), 78-104

Week 4

Jan. 30 – *Read/Discuss:* Keating, *Atlanta*, 1-112; Guest: Larry Keating, Professor Emeritus

Feb. 1 – *Read/Discuss:* Keating, *Atlanta*, 113-210; Guests: Junior CS Capstone Team Members

NOTE: class meeting in Clough Undergraduate Learning Commons 441

Week 5

Feb. 6 – *Read/Discuss:* Etienne, *Pushing Back*, 1-77; Guest: Katie O’Connell, Healthy Places Lab

Feb. 8 – *Read/Discuss:* Etienne, *Pushing Back*, 79-129; Guest: Mackenzie Madden, Office of Government and Community Relations

**** PAPER ASSIGNMENT/TOPIC:** What does history tell us about the sustainability challenges faced by Atlanta’s historic Westside neighborhoods? Discuss specific examples drawn from the readings, and consider focusing on one of the following topic areas: a) water and the environment; b) education and student engagement; c) health and food access; d) transit and development (housing, retail, etc.). The most logical choice would probably be a), but you are welcome to explore other topic areas according to your interest. Besides the

readings, see you can find online in terms of sources (NPU agendas, city statistics, news articles, etc.); two particularly useful resources for this assignment are the “data dashboard” at <http://communitieswhoknow.com/Home/> and this tool from the EPA: <https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen>). Based on what you know of the history of Westside neighborhoods, as well as initiatives at other universities, what would you say a community-Georgia Tech partnership needs to look like in order to succeed? Where do you see yourself in the process? 5-6 pages, due **MARCH 8** **

Week 6

Feb. 13 – Guest: Howard Wertheimer, Capital Planning and Space Management, Georgia Tech

Feb. 15 – Guest: Ruth Yow, Serve-Learn-Sustain

Week 7

Feb. 20 – Archives orientation

Feb. 22 – NO CLASS; MICHNEY AT CONFERENCE

Week 8

February 27 – Visit: Atlanta University Center/Woodruff Library

March 1 – Visit: Kenan Research Center, Atlanta History Center

Week 9

March 6 – Visit: Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History; Grove Park Neighborhood Association Regular Meeting, 7:00 p.m., Paradise Missionary Baptist Church, 1711 Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway NW

March 8 – Visit: Grove Park/Proctor Creek (tour led by Joel Bowman of Emerald Corridor Foundation)

Week 10

March 13 – Research day (in class)/discuss class project

March 15 – Guest: Daniel Horowitz Garcia, StoryCorps (oral history orientation)

** SPRING BREAK MARCH 19-23; NO CLASS **

Week 11

March 27 – Research day (in class)/discuss class project; NPU-J Regular Meeting, 7:00 p.m., Frederick Douglas High School, 225 Hamilton Earl Holmes Drive NW

March 29 – Visit: City Hall/Mayor’s Office of Resilience (Yeou-Rong Jih, Project Manager; Jennifer Carlile, Water Specialist; and Cicely Garrett, Deputy Chief Resilience Officer)

Week 12

April 3 – Research day (in class)/discuss class project

April 5 – NO CLASS; MICHNEY AT CONFERENCE

(** NOTE: Speakers/schedule subject to change at Dr. Michney’s discretion **)

Week 13

April 10 – Research day (in class)/discuss class project

April 12 – Convergence-Innovation Competition, 4:00-7:00pm

April 14 (**Saturday**) – ** Community Oral History event with Grove Park residents **

Week 14

April 17 – Research Day (in class)/discuss class project

April 19 – Discuss class project

Week 15

April 24 – Presentation of Walking Trail History App prototype to Emerald Corridor Foundation/Grove Park Foundation (with Junior Capstone CS Major Team)

Expectations: Like any Honors Program Special Topics Course, “Engaging Westside Communities” is not a spectator sport. To work well, it must be a student-driven effort in which the instructors set the basic framework and moderate the conversation but otherwise leave students to exchange and debate ideas with each other. Each student must therefore assume responsibility for the success of the course by coming to each class meeting well prepared for taking an active part in the discussion, having already read the assigned works with attention to both the specific information and the broader ideas and implications that come from the readings. Once up and running, students will respond to prompts for self-reflection relating to readings, community interactions, and and the course project.

Readings: This course includes both two required texts and supplementary readings which are available through T-Square, under “Resources” on the relevant course tab. This is an intermediate-upper level course, for which the reading load averages 96 pages per week for the first five weeks in which there are assigned readings. It is imperative that you do the required readings beforehand, since they form the basis of our class discussions and writing assignments. Also, please be sure to bring the readings with you to class, to facilitate discussion.

Course Requirements and Grading Policy:

There are four sets of required assignments for the course.

1. **Short paper** (5-6 pages, due *March 8*; see above for assigned question). Be sure to cite your sources, which should consist of assigned course readings; parenthetical citations (MLA style) with an accompanying “Works Cited” page will suffice.
2. **The class’s group project** in collaboration with our partner the Emerald Corridor Foundation (ECF), which will document the history of nearby Westside neighborhoods (Bankhead/Grove Park/NPUs J & K). We can go back at least as far as the Civil War, but emphasis will be on more recent decades (since 1950), when these areas have been particularly impacted by urban redevelopment, job loss, environmental inequality, and more. The project will involve media, archival research, and (hopefully) oral history in partnership with the ECF, neighborhood residents, and other stakeholders. To complete the final project, we may divide into teams with all participating members of

each team receiving the same grade, unless there is some compelling reason to the contrary (i.e., small class size). We will spend several class periods over the last three weeks discussing the project in detail, and then make a formal presentation of the walking tour prototype to ECF on *April 24*.

Grading breakdown:

Class Participation	25%
First paper assignment	25%
Class/group project	50%

Class Participation and Attendance Policy: You should come to class prepared to participate verbally; successful class discussions depend on it, and I will take your participation over the course of the term into account in formulating your final grade (25%). For this component, one contribution per week would translate into an average passing grade (“C”). Discussion will center mainly around the assigned readings and supplementary materials (posted to the blog, available through T-Square) during the first five weeks of the course.

Attendance is mandatory, and more than **FOUR** unexcused absences will result in the *total forfeiture* of this portion of your grade; missing more than **SEVEN** classes will result in automatic failure of the class. **NOTE:** *my definition of “absent” includes, but is not limited to, the following: failure to bring the textbook to class; chronic tardiness without explanation of a special circumstance or documented disability; disruptions, texting/phone-calling, and, of course, sleeping during class.*

Georgia Tech students are required to follow instructors’ stated attendance policies, with absences excusable only in a handful of situations (for example participation in athletics). In such non-ordinary cases I may ask you to provide official documentation. For details, see:

<http://studentlife.gatech.edu/content/class-attendance>

Academic Integrity: In all written requirements for the course, the standards of the Georgia Tech Academic Honor Code will apply and will be stringently enforced (including the provisions regarding plagiarism), and the Student Code of Conduct, available online at:

<http://osi.gatech.edu/content/honor-code>

<http://www.policylibrary.gatech.edu/student-affairs/code-conduct>

Plagiarism is defined as the use of another’s ideas or verbiage without proper citation; it is a direct violation of the Georgia Tech Honor Code and is completely unacceptable; plagiarism includes lifting as few as three words verbatim, or paraphrasing without crediting the source. It falls under the category of cheating; any offender will receive a “0” on the assignment in question, or else fail the course outright, at my discretion. For more details on plagiarism, see:

<http://www.plagiarism.org/>

THE OFFICIAL POLICY AT GEORGIA TECH IS THAT ALL INCIDENTS OF PLAGIARISM MUST BE REPORTED TO THE OFFICE OF STUDENT INTEGRITY (<http://osi.gatech.edu/>). For an overview of the process that follows upon the reporting of such an incident of academic misconduct, see:

<https://policylibrary.gatech.edu/student-life/academic-misconduct>

Writing Assistance: For assistance in preparing the assigned papers, you can make an appointment with the Communication Center (Clough Learning Commons, Suite 447); for more information see

<http://www.communicationcenter.gatech.edu/content/frequently-asked-questions>

I would also be glad to glance over rough drafts of papers, provided you submit these at least four days in advance. I may not have time to provide you with detailed feedback if you allow me less time to do so than that.

Learning Accommodations: Classroom accommodations will be made for students with disabilities. These accommodations must be arranged in advance and in accordance with the ADAPTS office; please visit

<http://www.adapts.gatech.edu>

Grades: By my standards, “A” quality work demonstrates a mastery of the materials covered in the course; “B” work is characterized by a full understanding of the materials, but a less thorough evaluation of them; and “C” work shows a satisfactory understanding, but an even less-thorough evaluation. Work not showing an understanding of the course materials or a highly inadequate evaluation will earn either a “D” or an “F.” On all assignments, you will receive letter grades along with a numerical score on the following scale: A=90-100; B=80-89; C=70-79; D=60-69; F=59 and below. NOTE: If you are taking this class Pass/Fail, a “C” is the minimum grade required to pass.

Visits:

Emerald Corridor Foundation, 1314 Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway NW
Grove Park Foundation {staff}
Proctor Park (neighborhood tour led by Emerald Corridor Foundation staff)
Woodruff Library, Archives Research Center, Atlanta University Center (Tiffany Atwater, Archivist; tatwater@auctr.edu)
? Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History
Mayor's Office of Resilience (Stephanie Stuckey Benfield, Chief Officer; sstuckey@atlantaga.gov; Yeou Jih, yjih@atlantaga.gov)

Guests:

Howard Wertheimer, Capital Planning and Space Management, Georgia Tech (howard.wertheimer@cpsm.gatech.edu)
Mackenzie Madden, Communications and Planning, IAC, mmadden@gatech.edu
Ruth Yow, Serve-Learn-Sustain, yow@gatech.edu
LeeAnn Lands, Kennesaw State
Chris Burke, Georgia Tech Director of Community Relations {Outreach?} (chris.burke@gatech.edu)
Joycelyn Wilson (?)
Tony Torrence (Proctor Creek Stewardship Council (<http://www.proctorcreek.org>); freetheland@live.com)

Grove Park Neighborhood Association (<https://www.groveparkatlanta.com/>); contacts on site; meetings (1/2; ... {first Tuesdays = 2/6, 3/6, 4/3}). President of GPNA is TJ Austin: tj.austin@yahoo.com

Grove Park Revitalization Committee (smaller subset) {Justine thinks less relevant}

NPU-J {also potentially NPU-H, I}: Fourth Tuesday, 7pm (1/23, 2/27, 3/27, 4/24). Contacts – Benjamin Dickerson, Chair benjamin.dickerson35@gmail.com (404) 794-1000 Anthony Brown, Vice-Chair raamses@bellsouth.net (404) 794-3313 Richard Jones, Secretary rj404@yahoo.com (404) 274-0642 Joann Scott, Assistant Secretary joannscott542@yahoo.com (404) 838-6397 Jimmy Brown, Parliamentarian jimmybrown1944@gmail.com (404)781-8893 Patricia Roberts, Treasurer patrob73a@aol.com (678)848-0525. Justine says NPU-J Chair is Al Bartell: cabtell@gmail.com

John and Gail Mapp own a local construction business: johngail5@bellsouth.net

Oral histories Box Link: <https://app.box.com/s/ndej37p0tef9jni10u5qg30revr066ge>