



## ***The History and Future of Detroit***

***Public Policy 626.001/Public Policy  
466.001  
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### **Instructor:**

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*(Updated August 14, 2018)*

***Speramus meliora, resurgent cineribus (We hope for better things. It arises from ashes)***  
***MOTTO OF THE CITY OF DETROIT***

***Two individuals played key roles in founding the University of Michigan and the growth of Detroit: Federal Judge Augustus Woodward and Father Gabriel Richard. On June 11, 1805, Detroit baker John Harvey did not keep an eye on his oven. Strong winds spread flames from his shop and the entire Francophone village burned to the ground. Father Richard uttered these words that became the motto for the city of Detroit. Judge Woodward first arrived in the devastated village on June 30, 1805, less than three weeks after the village was wiped out by the conflagration.***

# SYLLABUS

## PLEASE NOTE **THIS SIGNIFICANT** INFORMATION

- Classroom meetings will be held in Room 1230 of the Weill Hall Building of the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy on Tuesday and Thursday mornings: September 25 and 27 and then again, the next week on Tuesday morning, October 2 and on Thursday morning, October 4. Each class will meet from 8:30 to 10 AM. Please remember the new “Michigan” tradition of starting classes at the scheduled time. There will be a tour of Detroit on Saturday, September 29 from 9 AM to 5 PM.
- There are only five meetings of this one-credit course. It is necessary to attend all five meetings to receive credit for the course. Please make sure that your plans for the Fall term allow you to spend Saturday September 29 on a tour of Detroit.
- The Saturday, September 29 bus tour of Detroit will depart from the State Street side of the Ford School Building at 9:00 AM promptly. We will return by 5 PM. We will travel in a restroom-equipped comfortable bus. Doughnuts will be available at 8:45 AM, but you need to bring your own coffee or juice on Saturday, morning. We will stop briefly for lunch at Detroit’s Farmer’s Market. If you wish, you may stay on the bus and eat a lunch you may bring.



*“There are cities that get by on their good looks, offer climate and scenery, views of mountains or oceans, rockbound or with palm trees; and there are cities like Detroit that have to work for a living, whose reason for being might be geographical but whose growth is based on industry, jobs. Detroit has its natural attractions: lakes all over the place, an abundance of trees and four distinct seasons for those who like variety in their weather, everything but hurricanes and earth-quakes. But it’s never been the kind of city people visit and fall in love with because of its charm or think, gee, wouldn’t this be a nice place to live!”*

(Elmore Leonard, The Chicago Tribune, June 27, 1986)

### Aims of this Course about Detroit:

- To briefly examine the economic, demographic and social trends that contributed to the growth, then the very sharp decline and, now, the numerous well-financed efforts to reinvigorate of the city of Detroit and the surrounding area.
- To link changes in Detroit to the large scale social and economic shifts that shaped this country with an emphasis upon the importance of events and people from or closely linked to Detroit. No city, arguably, played a greater role in Twentieth Century American and no city played a larger role in the Civil Rights movement.

- To provide a perspective about the bankruptcy of Detroit and the endeavors to develop a much more prosperous and less racially polarized city.
- To raise questions about the future of Detroit and other cities that prospered greatly during an industrial era when manufacturing boomed and blue-collar wages were high but then saw their employment plummet when automation and outsourcing drastically reduced the need for blue collar workers who formed the backbone of the middle class.

### WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY DETROIT?

When you hear the word **Detroit** or see it in a headline, what does it mean to you?

- Do you think of the frequently successful athletic teams that represent the city?
- Does it suggest to you the motor vehicle industry?
- Do you think of historically important figures born in Detroit or who lived there for long spans, including Henry Ford; Ty Cobb; Reinhold Niebuhr, Walter Reuther; Joe Louis; Rosa Parks; Malcolm Little (Malcolm X); Barry Gordy, Bob Segar; Aretha Franklin, Eminem and Kid Rock?
- Does it mean the 139 square miles with their 677,000 residents that make up the legal entity that entered bankruptcy in 2013 and exited from bankruptcy in 2014?
- What about the 184,000 or so persons who live outside Detroit in places such as Ann Arbor, Warren or Livonia but are employed in the city of Detroit?
- And then there are business people, investors and philanthropists who are very concerned about what happens in the city of Detroit but may live elsewhere.
- Or when Detroit is mentioned, do you think of the three-county or six-county metropolitan area that occupies much of southeast Michigan?



*Map showing the 9-county greater Detroit area*

This course will focus upon the city of Detroit. But that city is closely linked to a much larger metropolis and is governed by the state of Michigan. What happens in the city of Detroit has great implications for the metropolis and for Michigan, but the city operates subject to state laws and regulations. The city's population of 677,000 in 2017 made up about 16 percent of the population of the six-county Detroit metropolitan area which has 4.3 million residents. The Census Bureau also defines a Combined Detroit Metropolitan Region that encompasses southeast Michigan, including Ann Arbor and Flint. This inclusive Detroit metropolitan currently has a population of 5.3 million.

## How and Why Cities Change

One of humankind's greatest inventions is the city. The aggregation of population in cities allows for the exchange of goods and, more importantly, the exchange of ideas. Our overall quality of life depends greatly upon what happens in cities.

Between the Civil War and the Depression of 1929, large cities developed across the nation. The country's population switched from living primarily on farms and in small hamlets that were linked to agriculture to a situation in which the majority of resided in cities or in the suburbs that were slowly growing around big cities.

A major reason for urbanization was the change from an agricultural based economy to an industrial economy centered around manufacturing. Cities prospered and, for the most part, their residents were more economically strong than those who remained in rural areas. No city better illustrates the industrialization of the nation than does Detroit. Detroit grew to a very large size before 1900 because of its manufacturing, but the booming automobile industry made it a quintessential industrial city. Perhaps no city in the world better illustrated the new industrial age than Detroit



## The Era of Suburban Growth

Changes happened after World War II as large metropolises emerged—one large city with dozens or even hundreds of distinct suburbs. The older industrial cities of the Northeast and Midwest lost their manufacturing employment rapidly as firms abandoned older factories and shifted production to the suburbs or to the rapidly growing South and West. Later, some manufacturers shifted production abroad and foreign firms came to the United States. In the 1950s, the federal government's housing policies and the government's financing of the National Defense Highway system shifted population away from older cities to the flourishing suburbs in the nation's crabgrass frontier. Rather than living in a large city, the typical urban resident lived in a suburb.

Many southern and western cities recognized the far-reaching demographic and economic trends and annexed those outlying areas that became suburbs in the Northeast and Midwest. In the Northeast and Midwest, cities came to include smaller and smaller fractions of the metropolitan population. And, by the late 1960s, a large city-suburban racial difference emerged in older cities. As the Kerner Commission observed following the 1967 violence in Detroit, a low-income and often African American population live in the older cities while the suburban ring was home to a more prosperous and largely white population. Detroit became the nation's leading American Apartheid metropolis.

## The 1970s: An Era of Federal Assistance for Declining Cities

After the OPEC oil boycott, most older manufacturing cities faced grave financial challenges. Their tax bases were decimated by the suburban migration of both people and employment.

Few cities attracted major new employers or experienced population growth. New York approached bankruptcy.

Federal government officials realized the impending urban crisis in the 1970s and acted. President Nixon proudly announced and then enacted a program of federal revenue sharing program in which a small fraction of federal income tax revenues was distributed to local governments, primarily based on their population sizes and tax base. He experimented with negative income tax programs that became, in the Ford years, the Earned Income Tax credit which is the largest anti-poverty program. In the Nixon years, Section 8 vouchers were funded, allowing low-income households to compete for rental housing. New programs were initiated to provide federal dollars for housing and mass transit and then, in the Ford era, a Community Block Grants program came on line allowing non-profits to garner some federal funds to improve local neighborhoods. For many years in the 1970s, the federal government extended some financial support to financially troubled cities.

### **Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan and the Neoliberal Philosophy of Governance**

President Carter was the last fiscal hawk to serve as president and tamed some of the programs that helped cities. He faced the prospect of New York City going bankrupt, but realized that if the federal government bailed out New York they would have to do the same for dozens of other troubled cities. President Carter became cautious about federal spending for cities. But there was a massive change in the philosophy of governance, the elections of Margaret Thatcher in 1979 and Ronald Reagan the next year. There was a huge cutback in federal support for local governments. Revenue sharing was eliminated and most programs providing federal funds to cities were greatly reduced. Cities were increasingly left to fend for themselves. Many cities in the south and west were growing rapidly in population and employment and became increasingly prosperous. But cities in the Midwest and Northeast were surrounded by suburbs and saw their employment and populations plunge. Detroit and Flint led the nation in this regard. Consistent with the new governmental philosophy, the tax bill of 1986 included a Low Housing Credit giving investors a tax incentive to invest in low-income housing. This is now a major component of funding the construction of moderate cost housing.

### **Are Cities Necessary?**

By about 1990, urban specialists seriously discussed the need for cities, especially the older manufacturing ones. With modern communication, ideas could readily be exchanged instantly regardless of who lived where. Supposedly, rather than financial specialists clustering in New York, computer science specialists clustering near San Jose, or automobile engineers near Detroit; anyone could live anywhere and exchange ideas instantly. Older cities appeared to be dying. Maybe their populations would continue to decline, and they might wither away as many rural villages did.

It did not work out that way. For both psychological and economic reasons, specialists still cluster in cities where their employers are located so stories of the demise of cities were prema-

ture. If anything, it appears that the clustering of specialists in specific locations has increased. There is a very clear consensus: Cities are definitely necessary in this new era.

As manufacturing employment declined rapidly, employment increased rapidly in the medical sector, in higher education, in financial services and in the entertainment industry. Cities, even the older declining ones that specialized in these employments sectors, saw their populations begin to grow. Boston was a challenged former industrial port city declining rapidly in the 1950s. The emergence of the eds/meds/financial services economy has turned it into a very prosperous and booming place. New York came to the cusp of bankruptcy but now has a larger population than ever before. Seattle and San Jose went from being sized towns in the 1960s to centers for technological innovation. People with specialized skills moved to these cities in great numbers and drove up home prices.

Urban scholars, particularly Richard Florida and Alan Mallach, argue convincingly that large cit-



*Indian Village Neighborhood*

ies are increasingly economically polarized places. With very rapid gains in the earnings of those highly skilled persons who can contribute in the new economy, the incomes of those at the top of the income distribution have soared. The median value of a home or condo in San Fran in 2015 was \$941,000; in Seattle, \$717,000; in Washington, \$551,000 but only \$43,000 in Detroit. The middle-class population of most cities has declined substantially as highly rewarded jobs building cars, home appliances and consumer durables fell sharply and the blue-collar jobs that remain pay much less than they did fifty years ago in constant dollars.

Instead of unionized blue-collar jobs with generous benefits, many depend on jobs in fast food restaurants or labor for the minimum wage at big box stores. The middle class has not disappeared, but it has been hollowed out. Thus, many cities are much more economically polarized with some very upscale neighborhoods such as Indian Village and Sherwood Forest in Detroit but other neighborhoods where the residents are having a very hard time holding on.

### **What about Detroit?**

Arguably, the economic fortunes of only two cities—Flint and Gary—were impacted more than those of Detroit in the last fifty years of changes in our employment structure. Since Detroit exited bankruptcy in December 2014, there have been major investments by entrepreneurs in downtown, in Midtown and along the east waterfront. These areas appear prosperous. In downtown, Midtown and along the east waterfront, the population is growing moderately, and the number of jobs is increasing. A recent tabulation reported that \$5.1 billion dollars will be spent in the next three years to construct new buildings and renovate old ones in booming downtown Detroit. There are a few locations in Detroit where the boom seems to be spreading. Perhaps, the rapidly economic development of the 7.2 miles of booming Detroit will create jobs and wealth for the residents of the other 132 square miles of the city.

There is, of course, an opposing view—one that stresses that Detroit is now the epitome of a polarized city. Some tell the story of today's Detroit as a "Tale of Two Cities." Highly-skilled and well-compensated paid scientists and financial experts are coming to take the rewarding jobs available in Detroit's downtown. Many of them may live in the city's growing upscale neighborhoods. But this may not benefit the residents of the rest of the city who have suffered for decades with very poor city service, ineffective schools, poor police protection and an absence of public transportation. There are many neighborhoods in Detroit that appear untouched by the prosperity of the 7.2 square miles of booming growth.

There is also a key racial issue. By 1990, metropolitan Detroit was the nation's leading American Apartheid location: almost all whites in the suburban ring and African-Americans in the city. That has changed as the suburbs became open to blacks and by 2020, it is likely that the suburban black population will be as large as the African-American population in the city. And while there are a few suburban African-American enclaves, Detroit's suburbs are now quite racially integrated. The city's black middle-class population has been moving to the ring just as whites did in the 1950s and 1960s. It is also the case that the businesses leading the revival of Detroit and the major foundations now making efforts to improve the city are often— but not always— led by people other than African-Americans.

On Saturday's tour we will see many different areas of Detroit, but the emphasis will be upon recent efforts to stabilize or increase employment and to improve the quality of life for those who live in Detroit or who may migrate into Detroit. The current mayor, Mayor Duggan, is committed to increasing the number of people living in the city and realizes that this will occur only if there are attractive homes, good city services, high quality neighborhoods and effective schools. Will these efforts attract new residents and stop the suburban migration of Detroit's African-Americans? Can Detroit become a poster child for how an older industrial city is revived and becomes a place with numerous pleasant residential communities that many will find appealing?

## FORMAT FOR THE CLASS AND READING ASSIGNMENT

- There is one book to be read for this class: The Fifty-Year Rebellion: How the U. S. Political Crisis Began in Detroit by Scott Kurashiege (Oakland, Calif., University of California, Press, 2017). I have asked the Barnes and Noble bookstore on north campus to order copies. If you contact that book store, they will be able to supply a copy. The phone number for the Barnes and Noble store on North Campus is 734-668-6022. However, you may be able to locate a lower-priced copy from one of the on-line booksellers. It is also available as a Nook Book. Please read this book before the first-class meeting on Tuesday, September 25. There are brief reading assignments for the four other class meetings. These are listed in this syllabus. All of them are now or soon will be available on the CANVAS site for this course.

**Please note:** Scott Kursahiege's book argues that the multi-million-dollar investors who are rebuilding the downtown areas of Detroit are, quite likely, exploiting the poor and less fortunate residents of the city. He argues this is happening around the county. As he sees it, rather than saving the city, these very well-financed investors are contributing to social and economic inequality. In his view we need radical changes. I do not agree with all of many of his views about urban change, but a student of contemporary urban change should be knowledge about the provocative views.

- In each of the four classroom meetings, there will be a presentation at the start. Sometime will be devoted to describing concepts, measures, legal decisions and other matters that have or will influence Detroit. There will be time for discussion of these issues with an emphasis upon how the city of Detroit and the metropolis are changing. In each class, there will be time for you to ask questions. **Please do so.**
- There will be a day-long bus tour of Detroit on Saturday September 29 with a stop for lunch at Detroit's Farmers Market. There will be several opportunities to take short walks or snap pictures of sites. Let's hope it is sunny and warm. If you wish to bring a sandwich, please do so. If there are places you think we should certainly visit in Detroit, please suggest them to me: [renf@umich.edu](mailto:renf@umich.edu).



## REQUIREMENTS

- Attendance at **all five** meetings of the class
- Completion of reading assignments
- Participation in discussions as appropriate
- Completion of three short writing assignments. There will be not be any in-class quiz or test and there will not be a final exam. I will hand out assignments that you can submit at the next class or by using CANVAS.

## HOW YOUR GRADE IS DETERMINED:

- **FOR UNDERGRADUATES, THIS WILL BE A PASS-FAIL COURSE. GRADUATE STUDENTS WILL RECEIVE A LETTER GRADE.**
- At the end of the first class on Tuesday, September 25, I will pass out—and post on CANVAS—an assignment asking several questions about Scott Kurashige’s book, *The Fifty-Year Rebellion*, and ideas presented in the first class. This will require you to write a very brief—one page or less—essay which will likely be due on Thursday, September 27. It will count for 20 percent of your grade.
- I will ask you to write a very brief essay about issues or questions that arise from our Saturday, September 29 tour of Detroit. This assignment will require about four carefully written paragraphs. It may be submitted on line. The deadline will likely be due on October 6. It will count for 20 percent of your final grade.
- You will need to write an “Op-ed” style essay about issues pertinent to the city of Detroit; that is, issues discussed in class The or in your readings or topics that arise from our tour. This essay should be no longer than 1200 words and should be submitted electronically about one week after the date of our last classroom session. It may be sent to [renf@umich.edu](mailto:renf@umich.edu) or posted in appropriate place in the CANVAS site for this course by Saturday October 13. If you wish to propose an alternative to the Op-ed essay such as adding a webpage to the [www.Detroit1701.com](http://www.Detroit1701.com) site or preparing a CD of Detroit oriented music, please check with me. Or, if you wish, you could submit a short YouTube video of sites in Detroit that are meaningful to you with a brief description of why.

## CLASS MEETINGS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

- **FIRST CLASS MEETING: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2018; 1230 WEILL; 8:30 TO 10 AM**

***TOPIC: The History of Detroit and Its Importance for the Twentieth Century***

***Reading assignment: Scott Kurashige, The Fifty-Year Rebellion: How the U. S. Political Crisis Began in Detroit. (Oakland, Calif, University of California Press, 2017) This is not available on-line.***

- **SECOND CLASS MEETING: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 1230 WEILL; 8:30 AM TO 10 AM**

***TOPIC: The Decline of Detroit After World War II: A Story of black-white; labor- management conflict and city-suburban conflict***



## READINGS FOR THIS CLASS (AVAILABLE ON CANVAS SITE)

**KEVIN BOYLE (U OF M GRADUATE) ARC of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights, and Murder in the Jazz Age (New York: Henry Holt and Co. 2004)**

**PROLOGUE: “America: 1925”, Pages 1 to 12**

**CHAPTER 1: “Where Death Waits”, Pages 13 to 43**

TIYA MILES, *The Dawn of Detroit: A Chronicle of Slavery and Freedom in the City of the STRAITS*, (NEW YORK: THE NEW PRESS, 2017),

CHAPTER 4: "The Winds of Change" (1802-1807), Pages 139-184.

- **THIRD CLASS MEETING: SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2018; BUS TOUR OF DETROIT: 9:00 AM TO 5 PM**

*This tour will depart **promptly at 9 AM** from the State Street side of the Gerald Ford School of Public Policy Building. We will return at 5 PM.*

**READINGS FOR THIS CLASS (AVAILABLE ON THE CANVAS SITE)**

EDWARD McCLELLAND, *Nothin' But Blue Skies: The Hey Day, Hard Times, and Hopes of America's Industrial Heartland* (New York, Bloomsbury Press: 2013)

CHAPTER 1. The SIT-DOWN Striker: Pages 1 to 1

CHAPTER 2. The Arsenal of Democracy, Pages 17 to 29

BILL MCGRAW essays in July 2067 editions of the Detroit Free Press. ***The hot links on the website provide access to the essay and to accompanying audio. Please read the essay. If you wish, you can listen to the audio that Bill McGraw selected.***

July 15, "Before '67 riot Detroit Thought It Could Avoid Civil Unrest"

July 17, "Riot or Rebellion? What to Call Detroit '67"

July 20, "He Helped Start the 1967 Detroit Riot, Now His Son Struggles with the Legacy"

July 29, "Detroit 67: The Scars the City Feels Today"

- **FOURTH CLASS MEETING: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2018; 1230 WEILL HALL 8:30 AM TO 10 AM**

***TOPIC: The Demographic and Economic Trends Shaping the City of Detroit, the Metropolis and the State of Michigan***

**READINGS FOR THIS CLASS (AVAILABLE ON THE CANVAS SITE)**

NATHAN BOMEY *Detroit Resurrected: To Bankruptcy and Back* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2016)

CHAPTER 3: Kevyn Orr, Pages 30 to 43

CHAPTER 11: Fixing the City, Pages 176 to 192

*This is the most informative book yet published about the bankruptcy process. If you are going to specialize in municipal finance issues or in litigation about municipal bankruptcy, you might download or purchase this book.*

- **FIFTH AND FINAL CLASS MEETING: THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2018; 1230 WEILL HALL 8:30 TO 10 AM**

***TOPIC: Detroit's Future: What will Detroit look like and who will live there in Twenty Years.***

## READINGS FOR THIS CLASS (AVAILABLE ON THE CANVAS SITE)

**Alan Mallach**, *The Divided City: Poverty and Prosperity in Urban America*, (Washington: Island Press, 2018)

**Chapter 1.** The Rise and Fall of the American Industrial City; Pages 13 to 32.

**Chapter 11.** A Path to Inclusion and Opportunity; Pages 255 to 293

**Benjamin Carson, M. D.** *Gifted Hands: The Ben Carson Story* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990)

**Chapter 22.** Think Big; pages 216 to 224

### **Secretary of Department of Housing and Urban Development**

Essay focused upon the Rebuilding of Flint and Rust Belt Cities

Detroit News, July 28, 2018 (Nine paragraphs)

***NOTE:*** I maintain a website about the history and future of Detroit: [www.Detroit1701.org](http://www.Detroit1701.org)

***Most of the pictures on this syllabus are taken from that website where you will find more information about these and many other sites in and near Detroit.***

**If you have any questions about this course or this syllabus, please send a message to:**

Ren Farley at [renf@umich.edu](mailto:renf@umich.edu)

## **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you believe you need an accommodation for a disability, the University's Services for Students with Disabilities office (SSD) can be a valuable resource with which to start. In addition, if you believe you need an accommodation for a disability in any of your courses, please let the course instructor know at your earliest convenience. You need to allow sufficient time for your faculty member to respond, minimally 7 days, preferably more, in advance of when the accommodation is needed. Some aspects of courses may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make your instructor aware of your needs, they can work with Student & Academic Services and/or the SSD office to help determine appropriate academic accommodations. Any information you provide will be treated as private and confidential.

## Student Mental Health and Wellbeing

The University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. We acknowledge that a variety of issues, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, and depression, directly impacts students' academic performance. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, contact [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS) and/or [University Health Service](#) (UHS). For a listing of other mental health resources available on and off campus, visit: <http://umich.edu/~mhealth/>.

## Inclusivity Statement

Members of the Ford School community represent a rich variety of backgrounds and perspectives. We are committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity. While working together to build this community we ask all members to:

- share their unique experiences, values and beliefs
- be open to the views of others
- honor the uniqueness of their colleagues
- appreciate the opportunity that we have to learn from each other in this community
- value one another's opinions and communicate in a respectful manner
- keep confidential discussions that the community has of a personal (or professional) nature
- use this opportunity together to discuss ways in which we can create an inclusive environment in Ford classes and across the UM community



**MODEL T FORD, 1924**

PICTURE TAKEN AT 2016 ROLLING SCULPTURE CAR SHOW  
IN ANN ARBOR.



**FORD FIESTA**

TODAY'S REPLACEMENT FOR THE MODEL T. FORD  
PICTURE TAKEN AT 2016 NORTH AMERICAN  
INTERNATIONAL AUTO SHOW



# Map of Metropolitan Detroit



