

**Barrio/Ghetto Life (LCS 01:595:394 / Geography 01:450:272 / Sociology 01:920:393)**

**Instructor: Zaire Dinzey-Flores (zdinzey@lcs.rutgers.edu)**

***Fulfills Upper-Level Elective for LCS Major and Minor***

“Ghetto” and “Barrio” are used popularly to describe not only a physical location, but also to indicate certain values, customs, practices, and ways of life. This course examines the way marginalized neighborhood spaces that Latinos and Caribbean peoples occupy shape social experience. It considers the physical characteristics and symbolic meanings circulated by and about barrios and ghettos, the policies and politics that shape life in these urban spaces, and the cultural productions that emanate from these local geographies. The course begins with an examination of the concepts, their genealogies, historical applications, and conceptual deployment. We then do a scholarly spatial tour of “ghettos” and “barrios” in the United States, the Caribbean, and Latin America to see how the terms come into fruition on the ground, and how the ground sustains the terms. Through this tour, we examine the processes that lead to concentrations of racial and ethnic groups, and class subordinate populations, within the boundaries of cities. We also consider how the concepts of the “ghetto” and “barrio” are constructed and used, how attributions of lawlessness, poverty, and criminality to the concepts are given, and the visual imagery that accompanies the concepts. We also consider the ways in which residents and outsiders have deployed the concept, and how urban policies depend, confirm, reproduce, or challenge the everyday constructions of the ghetto/barrio. Throughout the course, we investigate how “ghettos” and “barrios” are studied, the perspectives and methods used to study them, and the narratives that emerge. Finally, we consider alternative formulations of the ghetto/barrio.

**Course Learning Goals**

Upon completion of the course, students will:

- understand the origins and important historical junctures for the development of the terms “ghetto” and “barrio” and its application in the Americas
- identify the physical and environmental qualities that define the concepts of “community,” the “ghetto,” and the “barrio”
- analyze how culture and cultural productions intersect with material productions and policy in shaping everyday life
- Critically examine how race, class, and gender are produced in urban space.
- Use research skills in urban planning and community studies to produce a community urban plan

**Required Reading\***

LeBlanc, Adrian Nicole. Random family: Love, drugs, trouble, and coming of age in the Bronx. Simon and Schuster, 2003. 978-0743254434

Rios, Victor M. Punished: Policing the lives of Black and Latino boys. NYU Press, 2011. 978-0814776384

Additional readings and other materials are in Sakai or Canvas.  
Consult Rutgers Barnes & Noble for current books for the course.

**Evaluation\***

Attendance and Class Participation	= 20%
Four Reaction Essays	= 40%
Proposal for New Barrio/Ghetto Concept and How to Study It	= 25%
Presentation	= 15%

\*This synopsis is intended for informative purposes only; it is provisional and subject to change before the beginning of the semester.