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Рабочая программа дисциплины

**СОВРЕМЕННЫЙ ГОРОД И ОБЩЕСТВО РИСКА
The City and the Risk Society**

для образовательной программы
«Социология публичной и деловой сферы»
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Government of the Russian Federation

Federal State Autonomous Educational Institution of Higher Education National Research University “Higher School of Economics”

Faculty of social sciences
Department of Sociology

Course syllabus

The City and the Risk Society

For the Master’s Degree Program 39.04.01 “Sociology of Public Sphere and Social Communications”

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Course Overview

According to the UN Population Fund, since 2007 for the first time in history over half of Earth population lives in cities. But what is a city? And what is the nature of everyday life in it? What, to invert the title of Louis Wirth's famous paper, does 'urbanism' mean as a way of life? In this course we will unfold the nature of urban everyday life from a broadly construed nested ecological/transactional standpoint, that is, looking at multiple levels of organization of life (from a single person going about their routine daily activities; through the interactions between multiple people as they self-organize into various social forms of common living, such as neighborhoods or 'the public'; through the spatial embeddedness of human patterns of common activities in urban spatial and architectural forms; to the broad processes of urban change in context of globalization). We will examine these levels as they all project upon everyday life—that 'common denominator,' as Henri Lefebvre termed it, of the various facets and dimensions of social and economic life.

- The main purpose of this class is to understand urbanism as a complex process, and to examine how the various dimensions and domains of urban living arise out of everyday life and, simultaneously, enable, structure, organize, restrict, and project themselves into everyday life. Thus, our point of reference at all times will be the lived experience of a person inhabiting an urban milieu. We will bring in perspectives from urban sociology, urban psychology, and urban geography to explore these complexities.
- This is a graduate (Ph.D.) level seminar that brings together basic knowledge of how human beings regulate their social relationships through creation of episodic panic phenomena—within them-selves, in small groups and in inter-group relations, in crowds, and in society as a whole (disorder). We will be looking at how communication in human social life becomes ordered along the lines that promote anxiety, fear, and eventually panic: "something bad is about to happen" ("swine flu, terrorist attacks, volcano ash, global warming, etc."); and how these are culturally channeled through expert knowledge and state power: "you are incompetent" ("you need to turn to an expert"). Our interest is— how can such messages work? Why would human beings become vulnerable to such social suggestions? In order for this to be possible there has to be some intra-psychological readiness to accept such suggestions (rather than brush them aside). The basic processes of internalization/externalization are the arena where such vulnerabilities are being negotiated within our personal-cultural domains. These processes are embedded within purposefully organized redundant textures of the environment— suggestions for the particular direction of feeling (e.g., fear about what might happen paired with non-doubtful acceptance of "the authority" advice) are encoded in multiple forms in parallel within the collective culture. We will look at how the basic principles of human thinking function in an interplay with the fundamental structures and processes of contemporary societies—termed risk societies by Ulrich Beck—to produce the cultures of panic. In other words, we will try to understand how fear as an emotion and panic as a condition of its social expression turn into an increasingly self-solidifying state of affairs in social groups and communities, and how such social consolidation guides the psychological processes of persons towards further fear and panic, as well as to its social regulation by institutions. How is that organized? How can the spiral



of escalation of socially constructed and collectively shared panic phenomena be neutralized, and—ideally—reversed in the direction of resiliency?

- We will be reading into selected aspects of sociology (Ulrich Beck's work on "risk societies"), social psychology (crowd behavior in panic situations), clinical psychology (panic attacks), anthropology of mythical thinking, and (of course) cultural psychology (which so far deals rarely with the issues). Much emphasis is on introspective analysis of phenomena of panic and social disorder in different social situations. The “progress reports” and “essays” on the task will be made in our seminars on a regular basis. The task entails weekly reports on selected mass media—newspaper or TV channel—as to the profiles of promoted panics that could be found there. Reports on panic-like phenomena in online social media (e.g. blogs, e-mail, Facebook, Twitter) are also acceptable and encouraged.

Assignments and Grading

You are expected to be present and active in class and to prepare for the class by reading the assigned material in advance and by preparing a set of 3-6 photographs of urban environment to discuss in class. Use our discussions in class and the readings as a source of ideas for taking these photographs. In addition, the course involves a short photo-essay project (5-6 pages, or 1000-1500 words, plus photographs) on a topic of your interest. Some sample topics are listed below. You will be asked to take a walk in the city and take photographs that document the topic of your interest. The aim is to produce a grounded interpretation of a certain visible occurrence in the city, in terms of how it reflects the processes we discuss in our classes.

Grading will be based primarily on the photo-essay. Repeated absences (more than 20% of classes missed) will result in deduction of 15% from the final grade. Please make every effort to notify the instructors as soon as possible of any circumstances (religious holidays, illness, emergency, etc.) that may lead to your absence from the class or a delay in submission of the final paper. We will try to reasonably accommodate these circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

Note that utilizing required readings is a necessity for acceptance of the final paper. Moreover, an A (8-10) for the final paper requires additional literature review, in addition to using required readings.

Course Plan and Reading Assignments

Topic 1

Globalization and the City

Human, City, Community, World: Varieties of Settlement Organization

We will discuss the basic idea of globalization as reflected in urban living and urban everyday life, and what kinds of different systems, processes, domains, and levels of organizations are involved in its organization. We will search for inspiration in the work of Walter Benjamin, Guy Debord, and Georges Perec, who famously recorded their wanderings and perceptions of cities of their time and place.

No readings assigned.



Topic 2

Person-Environment Transactions and the Nested Ecology of Urban Living

This class is dedicated to basic concepts and models that we will use in our study of the city. In particular, we will explore what is known as ‘transactional’ approach in person-environment-behavior research, and discuss Urie Bronfenbrenner’s nested ecological model of human development.

- 📖 Simmel, G. (1997). The metropolis and mental life (H. Gerth, Trans.). In D. Frisby & M. Featherstone (Eds.), *Simmel on culture: Selected writings* (pp. 174-185). London, England: Sage. (Original work published in 1903).
- 📖 Werner, C. M., & Altman, I. (2000). Humans and nature: Insights from a transactional view. In S. Wapner, J. Demick, T. Yamamoto, & H. Minami (Eds.), *Theoretical perspectives in environment-behavior research: Underlying assumptions, research problems, and methodologies* (pp. 21-37). New York, NY: Kluwer Academic / Plenum Publishers.

Topic 3

Perceiving, Remembering, and Going About the City

What does it mean to perceive environment? How do we receive, process, organize, and make sense of environmental information and stimuli? Is our role that of passive receivers or active explorers of environment? How do we plan our actions in, and find our way about, the city? We will discuss the basics of cognitive information processing, storage, and retrieval, the active nature of our perception, and the troubles of remembering where things are and how to get to them.

- 📖 Milgram, S. (2010). The experience of living in cities. In Blass, T. (Ed.), *Stanley Milgram. The individual in a social world: Essays and experiments* (3rd expanded ed., pp. 11-28). London, England: Pinter & Martin. (Original work published in 1970).
- 📖 Tversky, B. (1992). Distortions in cognitive maps. *Geoforum*, 23, 131-138.

Topic 4

City Plan: Concentric Circles, Grids, Complex Patterns (and Rivers and Mountains Too)

How is the city organized physically? What are the basic elements that comprise ‘urban environment’? How are they connected between or separated from each other? We will discuss some of the basic ideas and models of urban planning, including the Burgess concentric circles model from the Chicago School, the idea of modernity in urban planning, and the purported collapse of this idea in late twentieth century. We will also discuss the different actors and factors that influence the city plan on various levels, and the ways in which human everyday life ultimately is embedded in this physical structure.



- 📖 Golubchikov, O., & Phelps, N. A. (2011). The political economy of place at the post-socialist urban periphery: Governing growth on the edge of Moscow. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers (New Series)*, 36, 425-440.

Topic 5 *Orders of Public Interaction*

What does it mean to be ‘in the public’? How does one interact with others in public space? We will discuss the basic tension between public and private behavior, and attempt to unfold it into a complex dimension with multiple degrees and possible regimes of ‘public-ness’. We will draw on the work of symbolic interactionists and on the focus theory of normative conduct to explore the ways in which complex social behaviors in public settings are ordered, and how individuals navigate these situations.

- 📖 Keizer, K, Lindenberg, S., & Steg, L. (2008). The spreading of disorder. *Science*, 322, 1681-1685.
- 📖 Kharlamov, N. A. (2013). On hearing an organ in a weird place. *Lo squaderno*, 28, 9-11.
- 📖 Valsiner, J. (2006). The street. *Khora II (Mind, Land & Society)*, 5, 69-84.

Topic 6 *Culture, Community, and Class: Courtyard, Neighborhood, District*

What are the larger social units into which humans self-organize in their settlements? Who are the ‘Muscovites’ and how can we know one when we see one? Can we infer the social and spatial structuring of the city just by looking at the physical environment? How do different people culturally mark the city? We will discuss the social and cultural structure of the city, particularly focusing on the culturally and historically specific phenomena of ‘courtyard’ and of ‘creative class’ as potentially discernible in the environment of Moscow. We will explore the notions of identity and belonging, the ways in which they are anchored in urban environment. Our methodological anchor will be Jerry Krase’s idea of ‘vernacular landscape’ and his visual sociological approach to it.

- 📖 Krase, J. (2012). *Seeing cities change: Local culture and class*. Aldershot, England: Ashgate. Introduction (pp. 1-30), Ch. 5 (pp. 139-158).

Topic 7 *Globalization, Mobility, and Splintering Urbanism*

What are the consequences of globalization for urban environment and urban living? How does the increased mobility (of humans, of commodities, of signs, of information, of corporations) change the constitution of urbanism? What attracts people to Moscow and what makes them move on (or out)? We will discuss the idea of ‘global city’ and the push and pull factors that influence urban populations. We will also explore the changing practices of consumption, and the ways in which these are reflected in the environment.



- 📖 Sassen, S. (2002). Cities in a world economy. In S. S. Fainstein & S. Campbell (Eds.), *Readings in urban theory* (Second ed., pp. 32-56). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Topic 8

Urban Futures: Concentration or De-Urbanization

What is the future of urban living? Are people going to continue to flock to highly urbanized and highly concentrated urban agglomerations? What are the ecological repercussions of concentration and de-concentration? Does ‘downshifting’ have potential to become a mass social process? We will discuss the potential future of urban everyday life in light of ecological, cultural, economic, and psychological challenges for urbanism as a way of life. We will also try and pull the different strings together, and to gather a general sense of what we can understand through the lens of person-environment-behavior transactions when these are mobilized at different levels of organization.

- 📖 Pokrovsky, N., & Guseva, U. (2012, April 9). Alternative to urbanization life after the city. *livebetter Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://livebettermagazine.com/article/alternative-to-urbanization-life-after-the-city/>
- 📖 Urry, J. (2008). Climate change, travel and complex futures. *British Journal of Sociology*, 59, 261-279.

Topic 9

Phenomena of panic and disorder in psychology and sociology — where to look to find out how they are possible?

The social significance of panic in contemporary society: theory and applications. Panic and disorder in the society. How we identify both phenomena in an everyday life experience? The difference between psychological and sociological approach. An observer of the city: how to make and structure your observations of panic and disorder in urban life in habitual settings.

Valsiner, J. (2007). Constructing the internal infinity: dialogic structure of the internalization/externalization process. *International Journal of Dialogical Science*, 2, 1, 207-221.

Papakostas, Y., et. al. (2003). A historical inquiry into the appropriateness of the term ‘panic dis-order’. *History of Psychiatry*, 14, 195–204.

Topic 10

What do we mean by society? What is Risk Society?

Social structure and culture. Persona and collective life. How is individual related to social structures through culture—personal and collective? The specific of contemporary social life. Globalization and its influence on human communication. Conceptualizing contemporary social life in terms: ‘informational society’/postmodern



society'/'globalized society'/'consumption society'/etc. What so-cial changes relevant to phenomena of panic can we reliably identify? 'Risk society' theory and its foundation. U.Beck, A.Giddence, N.Luman about "risk society".

Valsiner, J. (2007). Culture in Minds and Societies. New Delhi: Sage [Ch 2. – Society and Com-munity: Interdependence of Social Webs, pp. 75-126]

Urry, J. (2000). Sociology beyond Society. Cambridge: Polity [Ch.1 – Societies, pp.1-20]

Beck, U. (1992). Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity. Thousand Oaks: Sage. [Ch.2 — The Politics of Knowledge in the Risk Society, pp. 51-84]

Beck, U. (2009). World at Risk. Cambridge: Polity. [Ch.7 — Knowledge or Non-Knowing?, pp.115-128; Ch.12 — Dialectics of Modernity, pp. 212-234]

Beck, U. (1992). Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity. Thousand Oaks: Sage. [Ch.1 – On the Logic of Wealth Distribution and Risk Distribution', pp. 19-50]

Weingart, P., Engels, A. and Pansegrau, P. (2000). Risks of communication: Discourses on cli-mate change in science, politics, and the mass media. Public Understanding of Science, 9, 261-283.

Hornig, S. (1993). Reading Risk: Public Response to Print Media Accounts of Technological Risk. Public Understanding of Science, 2, 95-109.

Бек У. Общество риска. На пути к другому модерну. Москва: Прогресс-Традиция, 2000. Гл.2, гл.3.

Topic 11

Society-wide panicking: Witchcraft, disease, war, WMD, crime, terrorism...

Plague panics in medieval Europe, fears of witchcraft in colonial New England, 'Soviet rockets' and SARS, crime wave, terrorism... Some panics come and go, some panics are here to stay. The causes of society-wide panics that engulfed cultures in history. How did they change and why? The ways to overcome real and imaginary threats.

Glassner, B. (1999). The Culture of Fear. New York: Basic Books. [Ch.1 – Dubious Dangers on Roadways and Campuses: How Fears are Sold, pp. 1-19; Ch.7 – Metaphoric Illnesses: How Not to Criticize the Establishment, pp. 151-179]

Beck, U. (2009). World at Risk. Cambridge: Polity. [Ch.9 — Felt War, Felt Peace: Staging Vi-olence, pp. 140-159]

Gardner, D. (2009). The Science of Fear: How the Culture of Fear Manipulates Your Brain. L: Penguin. [Ch.2 – Of Two Minds, pp.18-31]

Бауман З. Глобализация: последствия для человека и общества.- М: Весь мир.2004.

Urry J. Sociology beyond Societies. Mobilities for the twenty-first century. - London and New York: Routledge, 2000/

Hier, S. P. (2008). Thinking Beyond Moral Panic: Risk, Responsibility, and the Politics of Mora-lization. Theoretical Criminology, 12, 2, 173-190.



Topic 12

Cognitive decision making: out, and in context

Contemporary sociology and cognitive psychology have made a business out of looking at people's decision making under conditions of uncertainty. The typical way how sociologists and psychologists like to separate their worlds from the social contexts and purposeful suggestions of social institutions, cognitive psychology rarely considers the social value contexts of the decisions made.

Tversky A. and Kahneman, D. (1982). Availability: The Heuristic for Judging Frequency and Probability. In D. Kahneman, P. Slovic and A. Tversky (Eds.), *Judgment under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases* (pp. 163-178). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kahneman D. and Tversky, A. 1982. The Simulation Heuristic. In D. Kahneman, P. Slovic and A. Tversky (Eds.), *Judgment under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases* (pp. 201-208). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gigerenzer, G. (2008). *Rationality for Mortals: How People Cope with Uncertainty*. New York: Oxford University Press [Ch.4 — I Think Therefore I Err, pp.65-79]

Gigerenzer, G. (2007). *Gut Feelings: The Intelligence of the Unconscious*. New York: Viking [Ch.9 — Less is More in Health Care, pp. 158-178; Ch.6 — Why Good Intuitions Should not be Logical, pp. 93-103]

Preda, A. (2005). *AIDS, rhetoric, and medical knowledge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press [Ch. 2 – The Economy of Risk Categories, pp. 67-112; Ch. 6 – Who is How Much? Pp. 210-224]

Topic 13

Fears in urban environment

What are the fears and panics specific to urban environment? How threat perception relates to objective measures of danger? What role does panic play in crime spread and prevention? Did terrorism displace crime as the fundamental urban fear?

Cook P. (2009). *Crime in the City*. Ch.10 in: Inman, R. P. (ed.), 2009. *Making Cities Work: Prospects and Policies for Urban America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 297-327).

DiFonzo, N., Bordia, P. (2007). Rumor, Gossip and Urban Legends. *Diogenes*, 213, 19-35. Low S. 2001. The Edge and the Center: Gated Communities and the Discourse of Urban Fear. *American Anthropologist New Series*, Vol.103 No.1, pp. 45-58.

Pace, D. (1982). 'Voilà les atoms qui arrivent' - The fear of science and the great atomic panics of 1946. *French Cultural Studies*, 3, 157-177.

Rainwater L. 1973 [1966] *Fear and the House-as-Haven in the Lower Class*. Ch.5 in Helmer, J. and Eddington, N. (eds.) 1973. *Urbanman: The Psychology of Urban Survival*. New York: The Free Press, pp. 92-106.



Topic 14

Fearful and Fearless Spaces: Fortresses, Utopias, Dead Spaces, Non-Places, He-terotopias

What are the types of space that emit, facilitate, accommodate, prevent, control fear? What spaces are created as a result of societal panics? What is the spatial result of fear management?

Auge, M. (1995) *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*. New York: Verso [Ch. 4 – From Places to Non-Places, pp.75-115].

Foucault, M. 2008 [1984]. *Of Other Spaces*. Ch.1 in Dehaene M. and De Cauter L. (eds.) 2008.

Heterotopia and the City: Public Space in a Postcivil Society. New York: Routledge, pp.13-29.

Davis M. 1992. *Fortress Los Angeles: The Militarization of Urban Space*. Ch. 7 in Sorkin, M. (ed.) *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space*. New York: Hill and Wang, pp. 154-180.

Sikes, P. (2008). *At the eye of the storm: An academic('s) experience of moral panic*. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 14, 2, 235-253.

Topic 15

Cultures of Safety, Security, Surveillance, and Control

'Safety' and 'Security' are the counterparts to threats, dangers and fears... or are they? What does it mean to be 'safe' and 'secure'? Why today a single accident or a statistically insignificant tendency can produce a massive (and sometimes apparently disproportional) society-wide response? And why some 'real' dangers are kept out of discursive focus? What are the social and psychological effects and grounds of 'zero-tolerance' policies?

Wilson, G. and Kelling, J. (1982). *Broken Windows*. *The Atlantic Monthly*, March 1982, pp.29-38.

Keizer, K, Lindenberg, S., and Steg, L. (2008). *The spreading of disorder*. *Science*, 322, 1681-1685. [+ Supporting online materials]

Kuipers, G. (2006). *The Social Construction of Digital Danger*. *New Media & Society*, 8, 3, 379-400.

Gardner, D. (2009). *The Science of Fear: How the Culture of Fear Manipulates Your Brain*. London: Penguin. [Ch.9 – Crime and Perception, pp.182-217].

Topics for the class discussions and self-control

1. What is the social significance of problem of disorder and panic in contemporary society?
2. What is panic and disorder in the society? How we can conceptualize it?
3. How we identify both phenomena in an everyday life experience?
4. What is the difference between psychological and sociological approach to panic and disorder.



5. How to make and structure your observations of panic and disorder in urban life in habitual settings?
6. How is individual related to social structures through culture—personal and collective?
7. How can we characterize the contemporary social life? How does it change with time?
8. What is globalization and what has it to do with human communication?
9. What do labels ‘informational society’/‘postmodern society’/‘globalized society’/‘consumption society’/etc. mean?
10. What social changes relevant to phenomena of panic can we reliably identify?
11. What does ‘risk society’ mean?
12. What are the causes of society-wide panics that engulfed cultures in history? How did they change and why?
13. What did humans do to counter real and imaginary threats?
14. How do contemporary sociology and cognitive psychology make a business out of looking at people’s decision making under conditions of uncertainty?
15. What are the typical ways by which sociologists and psychologists like to separate their worlds from the social contexts and purposeful suggestions of social institutions as related to the phenomenon of panic and social disorder?
16. What are the fears and panics specific to urban environment?
17. How threat perception relates to objective measures of danger?
18. What role does panic play in crime spread and prevention?
19. Did terrorism displace crime as the fundamental urban fear?
20. What are the types of space that emit, facilitate, accommodate, prevent, control fear?
21. What spaces are created as a result of societal panics?
22. What is the spatial result of fear management?

Visual Sociology

Potential Themes for In-Class Photo-Based Discussions and the Photo-Essay

These are just some suggestions, in no particular order (alphabetically listed), for your photographic expeditions into urban environments. You are welcome to narrow them down or to pick your own theme that is relevant to the themes of this course. The only requirement is that you take photographs yourself. You could also mix photographs that you will have taken during the course with photographs that you have taken in the past (during travels, or just snapped in your daily life), as long as all of them are made by you.

- ‘Is it really the same city on all these photographs?!’
- Abandoned and derelict spaces
- Children, adults, and elderly, and their spaces and places in the city
- Downshifting and alternative lifestyles
- Gentrification and urban redevelopment
- Living in a satellite town
- Loci of social interactions and non-interactions



- Patterns of pedestrianism
- Pollution and ecological damage
- Public and semi-public art
- Public identity displays
- Public transit vs. automobility: Who shall survive?
- Selfie and instant self-communication
- Spaces of consumerism
- Suburbanism, Moscow Style
- The hidden urban infrastructures: Sewers, water and heating, power lines, communication networks
 - The smallest, minutest, most inconsequential activity in urban environment that you could possibly think of
 - Trash, litter, cleanup, and maintenance
 - Urbanism in the wild: Can you find markers urban living outside the city?
 - Varieties of urban commerce
 - Visible markers of ethnic and religious communities and neighborhoods
 - Waterways and waterfronts
 - Wayfinding and navigation aids: Signage, maps, plans, directions

Academic Honesty Policy

We expect you to abide by the norms of academic ethics and integrity. In particular, we urge you to be careful with preparation of your project and final term paper and to avoid plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and alteration or fabrication of data, as defined by the Higher School of Economics policy on academic integrity (http://www.hse.ru/org/hse/antiplagiat_info/plagiat). Note that sometimes minor violations of these policies can occur due to negligence (e.g. accidentally failing to properly identify a quotation). This is not an excuse, and therefore we suggest that you carefully prepare and proofread your work before submission.