

22-23

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Chicago Studies



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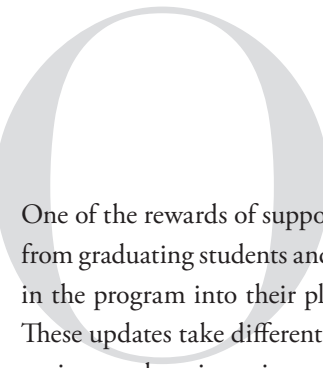
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Preface



One of the rewards of supporting Chicago Studies is the chance to hear from graduating students and alumni who have carried their involvement in the program into their plans for advanced study or professional life. These updates take different forms, from reflections at end-of-year symposia to podcast interviews with contributors to the *Annual*. Some of the latter are available on the Chicago Studies website, along with many other resources for students interested in local opportunities for research and engagement. I encourage readers to visit them at chicagostudies.uchicago.edu/podcasts.

Self-evidently, reflections on Chicago Studies give their due to the city as a force in their education. In many cases, however, graduates also credit the educators who introduced them to the urban environment as a tool for thinking and growth, quite often with reference to specific courses, lessons, and outings. These are the faculty, instructors, and staff who supervise capstone projects, lead tours and site visits, and capture students' interest with well-designed courses that set a scope beyond campus. Chicago Studies relies on artful teaching of this kind that finds points of correspondence between course planning, scholarly interests, and the urban civic life that connects our campus to the wider city.

Promoting creative teaching has been critical to Chicago Studies since 2007, but there is a much longer tradition that warrants our attention. Readers of the *Annual* may know that the University of Chicago hosted numerous faculty research programs in the first decades of the twentieth century that looked to the city for data and also had footprints in the classroom. This was true in departments like Sociology, Political Economy, Geography, and the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy (later the School of Social Service Administration and now the Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice), all of which designed curricula that were conversant with cutting-edge, local research. While they looked first to graduate study, their ideas filtered into college programs as well, in part because of the imaginative pedagogy of figures like Rollin Salisbury, John Paul Goode, and Robert Hoxie, but also because of the ubiquity of mixed-level seminars where doctoral students shared classes with advanced undergraduates. In the years before the First World War, the course catalogs, called the *Annual Register*, advertised more than fifty courses that found ways to bring the life of the city into the classroom or to take students out to sites like newspaper offices, charities, railroad depots, and infrastructure projects for first-hand observation. The distinguished political scientist, Gabriel Almond, who earned a PhB from the College in 1932 and a PhD in Political Science in 1938, made much of these mixed-level seminars in his reminiscences on Chicago. He always found the “sharp distinction between graduate and undergraduate courses [at eastern institutions] anomalous,” given that Chicago seminars were “populated without distinction” by both groups.¹

With regard to teaching, the early faculty saw the city primarily as a vehicle to introduce students to disciplinary study and research: a ready

1. “Chicago Days: An Oral History of Gabriel A. Almond,” in *A Discipline Divided: Schools and Sects in Political Science*, ed. Gabriel Almond (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1990), 312.

means to illustrate methods and problems in their fields, and often to recruit students into programs for graduate degrees.

But it did not remain so for long. By the 1920s, faculty were also thinking of the city in the design of the liberal arts, with specific benefits for undergraduate learning. Ernest Burgess, for example, found immediate uses in his introductory sociology course, *Modern Cities*, for his famous map of Chicago’s “Community Areas” (fig. 1). Sensing an opportunity to heighten powers of observation and self-awareness, he assigned each student to four neighborhoods at the start of the term and asked them to visit repeatedly, field notebook in hand, with a set of questions in mind.²

Chicago also played a role in the first iterations of teaching in the Core curriculum, above all in the Social Sciences Course launched in 1931. The course made no provision for data gathering, interviewing, or taking field notes, but it did use the city as a living illustration of the issues raised in texts and lectures, bringing students to sites like the Federal Reserve Bank, the Union Stock Yards, the Stock Exchange, and International Harvester Works to enrich classroom discussions. A discussion leader from 1933 recounted in detail a guided tour of the stockyards, attended by more than one hundred students. The tour groups, she wrote, were drawn to observe “a very high degree of specialization of tasks,” some of which impressed students with their “apparently brutalizing character,” to “see a highly diversified industry as far as products are concerned; and the far-flung extent of markets in relation to buying raw materials and selling finished products.” The instructor was especially proud that her students picked up on phenomena from the readings, such as “wages, hours, and working conditions” and “problems of management in relation to purchasing raw materials, control of production [and] determination

2. Ernest Watson Burgess Papers, box 27, folder 3, Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago.

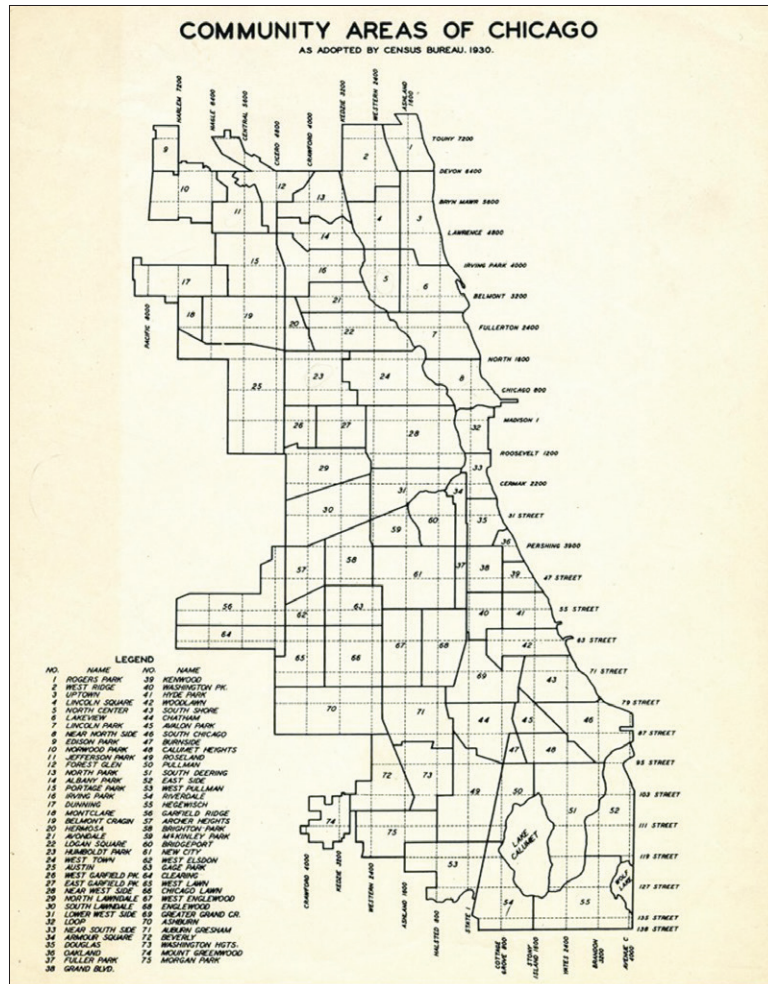


Figure 1. Ernest Watson Burgess, *Community Areas of Chicago*, 1930. Oversize folder 2, item 3, Ernest Watson Burgess Papers Addenda, Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago.

of selling prices.” Students raised all of these topics with a genial executive at the conclusion of the visit.³

The bridge between the city and general education was consequential, because it brought Chicago into the common undergraduate experience, rather than to a group winnowed by specialization. Yet it also invited faculty to consider the city as a part of students’ transition to intellectual and civic adulthood. As one member of the instructional staff put it in 1945, there was “scarcely any problem in race relations, economic discrimination and inequality, housing, city planning, speculation and graft, party politics, crime and punishment, etc., but what can be found in Chicago [with] the naked eye.” Teaching with reference to the city, he argued, could “lend reality to the exercise and musculature which the student, learning to thread his way through the mazes of modern social problems, needs above all else.”⁴

We find creative, locally-rooted courses at each level, from disciplinary research to general education, in the College of today. In 2023–24, students had access to several dozen departmental courses bearing the Chicago Studies course code, CHST, lodged in programs like Global Studies, Art History, Geographical Sciences, and Theater and Performance Studies. A connection to the Core curriculum flourishes as well. In Spring 2025, the College offered a Chicago Studies Civ sequence, titled Latin American/Latinx Chicago, that mirrors the University’s famed Civ Abroad programs by offering a full three-class sequence within a single quarter. Students considered the theme from the perspectives of hemispheric connections to Chicago—social, political, and intellectual—over the long twentieth century; the variety of immigrant experiences in Chicago from different regions of the Americas; and the

3. Mary B. Gilson to Dean C. S. Boucher, May 11, 1933, box 8, folder 2, Dean of the College Records, 1923–1958.

4. Robert A. Brady, “Memorandum of the Teaching of the Social Sciences in the College,” January, 1945, box 8, folder 2, Dean of the College Records, 1923–1958.

world of Latinx artistic production in the city. As with the ancestral Core courses, a menu of excursions, guest speakers, community engagements, and connections to research extend classroom learning and challenge students to think through the city.

If a goal of Chicago-based teaching is to “lend reality to the exercise and musculature” of student reflection on the world, then instructors have much to be proud of in the contributions to this year’s *Annual*. Drawn from submissions to two cycles of the Chicago Studies Undergraduate Research Prize, in Spring 2022 and 2023, the four essays show a sturdiness of thinking and inquiry that draw from regular interaction with place.

David Owen Carter received the 2022 Prize for his submission, “Fighting for Community Control: The Diasporic Origins of Puerto Rican Catholicism in Chicago.” Building from a deep investigation of archival, secondary, and visual sources and his own oral histories, Carter explores how the foundations of Chicago’s Puerto Rican community moved away from their conservative, Catholic roots over the course of the 1960s.

Daniel Green combines archival research and quantitative analysis in his study of the place of interracial conflict and violence in the policies of the Chicago Park District in the 1960s. The view that conflict was inevitable, he demonstrates, had a marked impact on the shape and access to Chicago’s important public spaces.

Isadora Brito Kron, our 2023 Prize Winner, has written an essay informed by many years of competitive rowing on the Chicago River. “A Tale of Two Rivers: Zoning Policy Conflict and the Production of Public Space on the Chicago River,” examines the differential impact of policies meant to develop public space along the North and South Branches.

Ruby Rorty explores the planned relocation of the General Iron metal recycling plant to the Southeast Side of Chicago. This socio-legal project analyzes the role of litigation in environmental justice movements, with a particular focus on how lawsuits can best interact with strategies in the media and political organizing.

It is gratifying to note that opportunities for our students to venture out in the city and test their ideas are sponsored by alumni Claudia Joyce (AB’92 Economics) and Jim Joyce (AB’92 Economics), who have seen for themselves the dynamic role that place can play in education. We thank them for their support of this volume and their faith in the Chicago Studies program.

Daniel J. Koehler, AM’02, PhD’10 (History)
Deputy Dean of the College for Academic Affairs

Acknowledgments



DAVID OWEN CARTER | I want to thank my partner, Mya Rivera, and her mother, Noni Lazú, who have taught me most of what I know about the Puerto Rican community in Chicago; my late mother, Jane Huber, who was herself a student of liberation theology and spent many nights on the phone helping me with my original thesis; and my friends, Abed Alsolaiman and Davis Larkin, who guided my theoretical perspectives. I also want to thank my BA advisor, Professor Adam Green; Morgen McIntosh Hodgetts and Derek Potts at DePaul Special Collections; my interviewees, José “Cha-Cha” Jiménez, and his cousin, Adulio “Duly” Jiménez, Yolanda Nieves, and Wilfredo Santana; my professor, Nicholas Kryczka; and my conversation partners, Ken Sawyer, Michael Staudenmaier, Thomas Kelliher, and Roger Haight. After graduating, I obtained my master of arts in teaching at Northeastern Illinois University and am currently teaching civics and Latin American history at Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School in Chicago.

DANIEL GREEN | Thank you to everyone who made this project possible, especially my advisor, Professor Rashauna Johnson, and my preceptors, Alex Hofmann and Daniel Sonnenstuhl. Thank you also to my parents, the rest of my family, and my friends from high school, the University of Chicago, and beyond—basically, anyone who ever had to listen to my stream of consciousness about this topic. Thank you to the entire Chicago Studies team for the opportunity to publish my work. Finally, thanks to my classmates in the Department of History thesis seminar: Cat, Ellie, Olivia, Brennan, and Eli. After graduating, I spent a year in Springfield, Illinois, working as a Dunn Fellow in the governor’s Office of Management and Budget. I have since moved west and am entering my third and final year at the UCLA School of Law, where I am an articles editor for the *UCLA Law Review* and vice president of the Moot Court Honors Board.

ISADORA BRITO KRON | Revisiting this work two years after my graduation has been an enjoyable return to academic writing and thinking about the Chicago River, one of my favorite places in the world. Thank you to the *Chicago Studies Annual* for the opportunity to have this piece of work published. Thank you to Neil Brenner and all of the other professors and mentors who had an impact on this work while I was on campus—this project would have been impossible without both their encouragement and critiques. The autumn after graduating from the University of Chicago, I moved to the UK to begin a job at an engineering and development consultancy. Working in the built environment sector abroad has opened my eyes to new challenges and opportunities in creating public spaces for communities, and I will always be grateful to the Committee on Environment, Geography, and Urbanization for giving me a framework to think both critically and hopefully about these possibilities.

RUBY RORTY | I would like to thank my advisor, Sabina Shaikh, who has been a source of constant encouragement and guidance during my years at the University of Chicago and beyond. I also owe a debt to my preceptor, Kristi Del Vecchio, whose willingness to explore new territory helped bring this research to fruition. Daniel Koehler, Christopher Skrable, and Joanne Berens helped carry the work from 2022 to 2025 with patience and helpful edits. Finally, I am grateful to the champions of environmental justice who agreed to be interviewed. I hope this research proves useful to others in their fight for greater justice. After graduating, I accepted a role at the Center for RISC (Radical Innovation for Social Change), a think tank led by *Freakonomics* coauthor, Steven Levitt. There, I lead a project on living organ donation and health justice. In the fall, I will attend law school, where I plan to focus on environmental justice litigation.