Mark Your Calendars:
- Complete Human Subjects (CITI) training (Group 5. Students in Research) before the first class meeting on January 28.
- Neighborhood Walking Tour, Saturday January 31 10 am.
- Interview Workshop February 4, 5:50-8:50 pm University Downtown Center.
- Interviews February 18-March 3.
- Project components completed by April 22.
- Project Presentations date TBA (last week of classes or exam week).

Project Overview
You will be working on a component of a broader research project directed by Siobhan Hart (Anthropology) and George Homsy (Public Administration) called *Neighborhood Heritage and Sustainable Communities: Devising New Measures of Sustainability at the Local Level*. The purpose of this project is to understand transformation and sustainability in a neighborhood in Binghamton, NY, in order to develop a framework for tracking markers of neighborhood sustainability that can be tested in other Rust Belt cities in the American Northeast.

Sustainability is traditionally described across three dimensions: environmental protection, economic development, and equity. Missing from this conception is the notion of heritage, which shapes the context through which all three dimensions must be observed. Culture and heritage add social sustainability to the scope of factors that impact a place. Histories matter and must be taken into account when examining standard sustainability measures. Explanations of change viewed without recognizing this underlying aspect remain in the realm of rationality and, in our opinions, incomplete. Many changes are not necessarily reactions to the moment, but are rooted in the history of a place.

Heritage becomes particularly important when investigating sustainability at the neighborhood level. Given the commons issues around environmental, economic, and social challenges, most sustainability efforts focus at the regional or municipal scale. However, most residents connect to each other and to their community at the neighborhood level; it is within these sub-municipal units that people make the individual decisions that impact sustainability at the neighborhood, city, and regional level. Yet many factors influencing local sustainability are not well measured at such a small scale – including a measure of “community.”

We are using discussions about heritage--what people identify as valuable and significant about the past to meet their present needs (Carman 2005; Graham et al. 2000; L. Smith 2006)-- to identify indicators of sustainability. Shared heritage is foundational to a sense of community belonging and identity, and entails responsibilities to future generations. Heritage work plays a critical role in building and maintaining sustainable communities. This is best exemplified in the work of scholars who are developing methods and approaches to community engagement in projects that enhance connections to cultural heritage through empowerment, social transformation and equitable sharing in the benefits of research (e.g., sustainable heritage tourism, community-directed research projects, collaborative curation initiatives). This project is designed to enhance community identity as a means to developing a sustainable neighborhood.
Since heritage responds to contemporary needs and reflects individual and collective values and social norms, discussing heritage, what Laurajane Smith (2006:44) refers to as “heritage discourses,” allows for an analysis of the cultural and social processes and meanings of places (e.g., neighborhoods, streets, buildings, homes, etc.). According to Smith (2006:84), “what makes certain activities ‘heritage’ are those activities that actively engage with thinking about and acting out not only ‘where we have come from’ in terms of the past, but also ‘where we are going’ in terms of the present and future.” This looking back and to the future can contribute much to better understanding transformation and sustainability. Discussions about heritage, which link people and places across time, provide fruitful entry points for identifying what people value about the places they live and work.

Community Partner
Our class project will advance the mission and goals of the Safe Streets neighborhood organization. Safe Streets is a community organization representing the West Side of Binghamton north of Main Street. Their mission is to improve the quality of life for their neighborhood, a twenty-block area bounded on the east by Front Street, on the west by Jarvis, and extending north to the railroad tracks. Safe Streets has developed an important role as a facilitating organization, bringing people together to address neighborhood problems. Our project will contribute to the following Safe Streets goals:

• Have a beautiful neighborhood
• Have a positive neighborhood reputation
• To have an engaged community that takes pride in the neighborhood by promoting positive stories

We will be partnering with Professor George Homsy (Public Administration) and students in PAFF 510 Research Methods and Design, a required course in the Masters of Public Administration program.

Stories from North of Main
The collection of place-based stories, interview data, and sustainability markers may unfold over a series of classes in subsequent semesters and this project will be the first step in a longer-term research project aimed at understanding neighborhood transformation. In the short term, interview data will be evaluated quantitatively and qualitatively to produce a GIS-based “story map” that can be added to in the future and other data will be compiled into a community inventory.

What will we do?
We will interview residents and community leadership (e.g., shopkeepers, property owners, pastors, community organizers) from the “Safe Streets” neighborhood to identify the qualities people value about their neighborhood (past and present), how neighborhood change is told through place-based stories, and the indicators that community members identify as signs of change.

Student research will involve documentary and archival research on:

• particular properties and ownership (to be identified with Safe Streets)
• neighborhood architectural styles
• important events in neighborhood history
• current neighborhood events and activities

Students will conduct semi-structured interviews with:
Residents, e.g., newcomers and old-timers
• Business owners and shopkeepers
• Property owners
• Pastors
• Community organizers

What will our products be?
End-of-semester deliverables include a digital story map with edited content, a project archive (for audio, video, pdf files), and an event for students to demo the story map for Safe Streets, community members and other interested people (e.g., faculty teaching CSL and CEL courses).

We will build a digital story map using a free ArcGIS application--Story Maps--to highlight the history, architecture, and place-based stories of the neighborhood. Story maps use geography as a means of organizing and presenting information, telling the story of a place, event, issue, trend, or pattern in a geographic context. Story maps can combine interactive maps with other content (e.g., text, photos, video, and audio). We will link in pictures (current and historical), individual stories (audio), and other relevant data to locations on the map that will be “story stops”. Possible “stops” on the story map include, 47 North, Walnut Street Park, VINES Community Garden, businesses like JK Plumbing, and churches along Main Street.

What is a “Story Map”?
Story maps are designed for general, non-technical audiences and are basic and intuitive for users. Story maps use the tools of GIS, but do not require their users to have any special knowledge or skills in GIS, making it a flexible tool for both students and community members. The product can serve as a virtual neighborhood heritage trail with stories from residents and leadership and can be built on and added to in the future.

What do I have to do before class begins?
To comply with the University IRB approval for this project, you must complete the Human Subjects Educational online training before January 28. You must complete the Group 5 Students in Research modules (3 required modules; optional modules not required but recommended) and print out the certificate to submit to me on January 28. This link will take you to the training (scroll to Collaborative IRB Training Initiative [CITI] Group 5: Exempt Research) and follow instructions to create and register an account (enter “Binghamton” into organization field):
http://research.binghamton.edu/Compliance/humansubjects/educational_Requirements.php

How will we collect interviews and other data for the Story Map?
Data will be collected through archival research, surveys of existing data sources (e.g., census data) and through semi-structured interviews with participants. Interview questions are aimed at: (1) eliciting place-based stories for inclusion in the story map; (2) eliciting feelings and memories of neighborhood places; and (3) identifying neighborhood indicators that can be tracked over time.

Teams of two students, one from each course, will administer interviews. You will be assigned a partner and will meet your partner at the Interview Workshop on Feb 4. Interviews will take place in participant homes, offices, or at BU facilities (determined by interviewee preference) usually between 8 am - 8 pm. You will be assigned an interviewee and will arrange the interview date/time with your
partner and the interviewee. The Safe Streets neighborhood is accessible via the Blue Bus line and BC Transit and we will work out transportation issues as needed.

Interview guides will provide students with 20 open-ended questions, upon which they can follow-up and expand. Interviewers will use a digital recorder to capture the audio of interviews. The interviews will then be transcribed by students (each student will transcribe half the interview) and be coded by themes developed by the class. Students in ANTH 554G will select audio passages for inclusion in the story map and edit the audio content. Students in PAFF 510 will integrate the qualitative information into a report for the community inventory. They will also compile and analyze the results to determine innovative ways to measure progress.

Interview questions include:

1. What is your name?
2. How long have you lived and/or worked in this neighborhood?
3. If you moved here, why did you move here?
4. If you have lived here for a long time, why have you stayed?
5. How do you feel when you walk around your neighborhood?
6. What do you value about this neighborhood?
7. What places in this neighborhood are important to you? What places stand out most in your mind and why?
8. What stories and memories come to mind about those places (e.g., property, building, street)?
9. What kinds of local gatherings and events are there?
10. What community traditions are celebrated today? What are they like? How long have they been going on? How have they changed? Who is involved? Why are they important to the community?
11. What is important about this neighborhood’s past?
12. What is important about this neighborhood’s present?
13. What do you want your non-residents to know about your neighborhood?
14. How would you like to see that information presented?
15. How has your neighborhood changed over the years? What brought about these changes?
16. What has changed in your block? What differences do you see when you look around?
17. Tell me about where you work? Has your job changed over the years? How do you get to the job?
18. Where you shop for food? How you get there? Has that changed?
19. What do you do for fun? Where do you do it? How has that changed over time?
20. What is your main social activity? How long have you been doing that? How has that changed?

How will we analyze the interview data?

The heritage component of the study will involve analysis using critical discourse analysis (CDA) to identify particular heritage themes and values attached to neighborhood places. CDA is the study of society through the study of language (Waterton et al. 2006; Smith 2006). An analysis of what people remember and value about their neighborhood, as well as the way that they talk about it through place based stories, will reveal narrative themes and values that will be compared to other narratives from the neighborhood and contextualized with data gathered from archival sources.

Students in ANTH 554G will select audio passages for inclusion in a digital story map and edit the
audio content into short segments that will be illustrated with archival and contemporary photos of neighborhood places.

What kind of time investment will this require?
You will be collecting at least 1 1-hour oral interview with a community member and then spending a minimum of an additional 20 hours collecting additional community data (e.g., photos, archival research, etc.), processing the interview and other data, and building the Story Map. Engagement hours will be documented in three ways: (1) through journal entries and field notes with time records kept by students; (2) in a signed document by student, their partner, and the interviewee that the interview was completed; and (3) in regular in-class progress reports for project components. The time investment for this class and this project is significant.

How will the project benefit Safe Streets?
The tangible benefits of this project will be a digital story map with edited content, a project archive (for audio, video, pdf files), and an event for student to demo the story map for Safe Streets and community members. The story maps can be used to promote positive neighborhood stories and what residents value about where they live. In addition, the historical and archival research will contribute to Safe Street's interest in historic preservation in their neighborhood by identifying potentially important architectural styles, locales, or events based in the neighborhood. The community will benefit from the results of this project because it will provide a baseline inventory for measuring community development progress. This will be the basis for developing a neighborhood plan in the future. It will also help newcomers learn about the neighborhood. It may help attract businesses and other development opportunities or future University partnerships, as well.