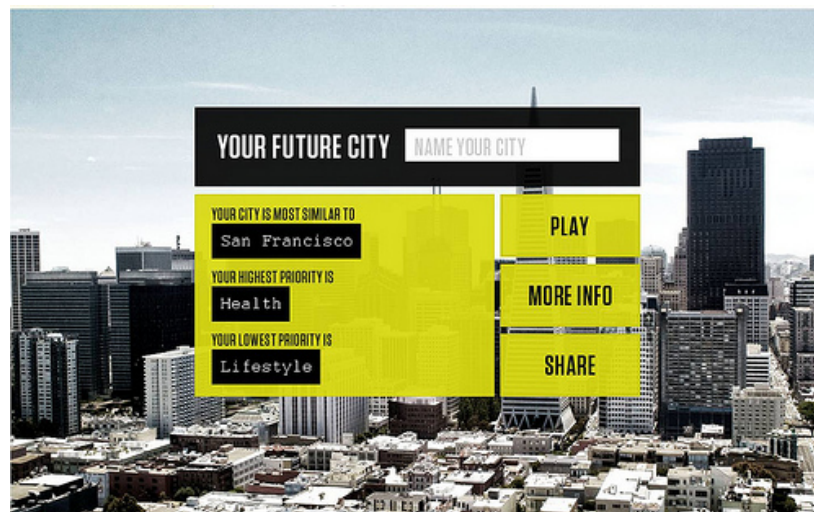


Anthropology 3500
Culture and The City
Fall 2018

Assignment #1: Urbanology!



In 2011 the BMW Guggenheim Lab (a mobile laboratory that travelled to nine major cities world-wide over six years) released an online urban planning game called “Urbanology.” It’s a fun game that asks users to make choices about urban issues, producing some quick findings based on the choices. The player assumes the role of a decision-maker and answers questions to determine the priorities of his or her city. By answering “yes” or “no” to 10 questions like “Will you double the cost of public transport to fund its conversion to a carbon-neutral system?” or “Will you pay for a free bike service in your city?” players build a future city that best matches their indicated desires and needs. Then, you’re told what real city most closely mirrors your values as an urban decision-maker.



Seven years later the game still has relevance. It deals in some hotly debated contemporary urban issues. Some of the choices you’re asked to make are not easy. Sometimes you need more background information or context in order to make an informed choice. For example, deciding to put affordable housing in a vacant lot instead of a five-star hotel may

increase a city's *affordability* for its citizens but decrease *lifestyle* points by making your city less attractive to tourists. Making such abstract decisions without having the necessary context—like knowing the average household income or other demographics—may have the opposite of the desired outcome for your future city.



Still, the game has a great potential to ignite debates on the challenges of urbanization. The questions change each time you play, and the results can vary. After each round, you can click to get “more info,” and see how important each of eight urban values is to you, according to the game. The eight urban values are:

1. Innovation
2. Transportation
3. Health
4. Affordability
5. Wealth
6. Lifestyle
7. Sustainability
8. Livability

To play Urbanology online, go here:

<http://www.bmwguggenheimlab.org/urbanologyonline>

Play at least 10 times. Then, write up a 2-3 page summary report that tells me:

- (1) Which real city shows up most often as sharing your values?
- (2) What are these most frequent values, based on your answers?
- (3) What you think about the exercise? Do your results make sense, given what you know about your personal values and the cities to which you are matched?