

URBDP 565A
AMERICAN URBAN HISTORY
Winter 2007

Instructor: Manish Chalana, Dept. of Urban Design and Planning

Meeting time: M W 12:30-1:50

Meeting place: Gould 424

Credits: 3

Format: Graduate seminar

Course Website: <http://faculty.washington.edu/chalana/urbdp565>

Instructor contact info: 410 Gould, chalana@u.washington.edu, 206-616-6051

Office hours: M 2-3pm

Course Description

This course is designed as an intensive graduate-level seminar in American Urban History. Its purpose is to provide students with the opportunity for immersion in historical scholarship that addresses the social, economic, political, technological, and cultural forces that have shaped the development of American cities. As a seminar, this course emphasizes reading and discussion as the primary modes of learning. To promote engagement with the course and content, students will be actively involved by taking turns as presenters and discussion leaders.

Required readings

Core Textbook

Chudacoff, Howard A. and Judith E. Smith. The Evolution of American Urban Society. Upper Saddle River, NJ. Prentice Hall, 2000.

Course Readings

Bender, Thomas. Toward an Urban Vision: Ideas and Institutions in 19th-Century America. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982.

Chauncey, George. Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of a Gay Male World, 1890-1940. New York: W.W. Norton, 1992.

Cronon, William. Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West. New York: W.W. Norton, 1992.

Goings, Kenneth and Raymond Mohl, eds. The New African-American Urban History. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1996.

Jackson, Kenneth T. Crabgrass Frontier : the Suburbanization of the United States. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Sies, Mary Corbin and Christopher Silver, eds. Planning the 20th Century American City. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.

Spain, Daphne. How Women Saved the City. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

Warner, Sam Bass. Streetcar Suburbs: the Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978.

Copies of these books are being held on reserve at the Architecture Library on the third floor of Gould Hall.

Course Organization

The class meets Mondays and Wednesdays. Ordinarily Mondays will be centered on a discussion of the core text, led by the instructor. Most Wednesdays will be led by students, and will focus on the books. Teams of class members, on a rotating basis, will be responsible for making a presentation on the books and leading the discussion sessions on them. Needless to say, everyone is required to read the books in preparation for the discussion sessions.

Seminar requirements

Requirements for a **seminar-style course** are rather straightforward: do the readings, show up, pay attention, and engage in discussion that is rooted in the readings. Look for emerging patterns among and between the works we cover from week to week.

In addition to in-class participation, you are also expected to participate on the **discussion boards** for each book, located on the course website. Use the boards to post your comments on the topics covered in the books as well as respond to already posted comments to generate a meaningful discussion. **The discussion boards for each of the books will be maintained by the book presenters**; the instructor will rarely post his comments on the boards, but will be reading your comments carefully each week to determine the quality of participation.

Book Presentations

You will be expected to participate in leading discussions of TWO books during the quarter as a member of the team, with shared responsibilities and prepare—in writing—the following:

- 1) intellectual biography for the author(s)
- 2) critical reception of the work (review at least four published reviews in reputable journals)
- 3) contextualizing the work in contemporary scholarship (incl. contributions to the field of urban history)
- 4) outline of the book (by sections/chapter incl. sources used for each of them)
- 5) critique of the contents (incl. thesis, research method and writing style)

6) discussion questions (about five)

You will make these presentations in **teams of four** with other class members. This means reading the book thoroughly, meeting in advance with other team members, and preparing a group presentation lasting no more than **40 minutes** total. Your responsibility is to bring the class to a shared understanding of the kinds of sources and research methods used by the author, the arguments and evidence presented in the works, and its overall contribution to the field of American urban history. You may want to discuss in advance with the instructor, to get some feedback on your approach and to build confidence in your planned presentation.

When it is your turn to make a presentation on the reading, you will:

- develop a written book report covering all areas of the assignment
- e-post the book report on the book discussion board **12-hrs before** the presentation
- e-post the discussion questions on the discussion board **a week before the presentation** and facilitate e-discussions through that week
- make a pp presentation, then help facilitate the discussions that follows.

During the discussion section, facilitators' roles involve a number of objectives:

- ensuring that discussion probes into the major critical issues raised by the reading in relation to the knowledge and experience of the group
- ensuring that discussion does not wander repeatedly into unproductive territory while still allowing for spontaneous exploration
- ensuring that dialogue remains respectful while still allowing for critical disagreement
- ensuring that all voices are heard

Final Paper

You will write an original research paper applying any of the themes of American urban history that we have been discussing in class to the case of Seattle. A more detailed description of the assignment is available on the course webpage. Due dates:

05 Feb in class: initial draft and short presentation to class

14 March by 5 pm: final paper due in 410 Gould Hall.

Grading

25% book presentations

20% (midterm) draft and presentation

30% final paper

25% In-class participation (15%) and E-participation (10%)

Other resources for American Urban History

The Architecture Library on the third floor of Gould Hall holds an extensive collection of scholarly works on American urban history. You may also wish to explore some online resources. The major online discussion list for those in the field of Urban History is H-urban, a link to which is provided on the course webpage. I suggest that you join this list, if only for the quarter, as it is a critical source of information on the subject.

In addition there are innumerable web sites devoted to various aspects of urban history and you may wish to visit some of them. Flagship periodicals in the field include the *Journal of Urban History*, and the *Journal of Planning History*, where you will find current scholarship as well as reviews of recent publications. Scholarly meetings include the Urban History Association and the Society for American City and Regional Planning History, which meet regularly.