

**History 271A/371A**  
**THE SUBURBAN WEST**  
Stanford University  
Winter 2004  
Tuesday 3:15-5:05 p.m.  
Building 200, Room 217

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Between 1940 and 2000, the population of the eleven westernmost states in the continental U.S. nearly quadrupled in population, growing from less than 13 million people to nearly 53 million. The explosive growth of this region was not the result of people moving to high-density central cities, nor was it due to a surge in the rural population of the West. The vast majority of the population growth in the West was the result of people moving to thousands of single-family-home subdivisions, linked by new superhighways and dotted with regional shopping malls. These communities were both independent towns on the outskirts of major cities as well as areas annexed into the cities themselves.

In this seminar, we will explore the rise of the postwar suburban West and its role as a place that both generated and reflected crucial political, social, and economic transformations in late-20<sup>th</sup>-century America. We will examine the role of politics and policy in regulating natural resources, subsidizing the growth of the suburban landscape, and shaping its economic development. We will explore the many different kinds of suburbs that have emerged in the West – from middle-class subdivisions to blue-collar immigrant communities to high-tech office parks. We will consider how the political and social transformations of the past sixty years have redefined the West as a region that extends beyond national political borders. And we will take a close look at *our* piece of the suburban West – Stanford, Palo Alto, and the rest of Silicon Valley – and try to understand how its history fits into the larger story of the region.

COURSE MATERIALS

Your required readings come from:

**BOOKS** available at the Stanford Bookstore.

1. Carl Abbott, *The Metropolitan Frontier: Cities in the Modern American West*
2. David Beers, *Blue Sky Dream: A Memoir of America's Fall From Grace*
3. John Findlay, *Magic Lands: Western Cityscapes and American Culture after 1940*
4. Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right*
5. Adam Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism*

A short **COURSE READER** of primary documents, articles, and book excerpts, also at the Bookstore.

**BOOKS ON TWO-HOUR RESERVE** in Green Library (also in stock at the Bookstore for OPTIONAL PURCHASE). I have tried to keep as few of the required readings as possible in

this category, but have done this in cases where excerpting certain books in the course reader would have made it significantly more expensive. However, as the books on reserve, *Crabgrass Frontier* and *Bourgeois Utopias*, are valuable additions to anyone's urban history library, I have ordered a few copies of these books at the Bookstore. You are not required to purchase these texts.

Documents and reports available **ONLINE** and occasional in-class **HANDOUTS**.

The required texts and a copy of the course reader are also on reserve at Green Library. You should arrive at class each week having read the materials listed for that date (e.g., come to class on January 13 having read Findlay et al.).

### UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT REQUIREMENTS

Each element is worth a certain number of points; the class grade will be based on how many points earned out of a possible 1000, e.g., grades in the "A" ranges require 900+ points, in the "B" ranges require 800+ points, etc.

**Participation (350 points)** that consists of:

Active engagement in class discussion, reflecting completion of assigned readings (250 points).

Co-leadership of discussion during one week of class (50 points).

One ten-minute presentation on the history of one of the places, individuals, laws, or institutions listed as *report topics* (50 points).

**Two reader response papers (200 points total)** that are:

Essays of 2-3 pages each, discussing and analyzing the implications of a week's readings. Each essay is worth 100 points.

**Final Research Project (450 points)** that consists of:

A research proposal of 2-3 pages (100 points).

A 10-15 page research paper (350 points).

A **one-time bonus credit (up to 30 points)** may be earned through a 2-3 page book review, accompanied by an informal in-class presentation. The text reviewed should be one of the items listed as *additional reading*.

### GRADUATE STUDENT REQUIREMENTS

Graduate students will be expected to meet all of the **participation** requirements with the exception of co-leading class discussion. They will be expected to hand in **five reader response papers**, one on each of the required books. These may be handed in during the week we complete each text. The **final project** assignment criteria are the same but the final research paper should be 20-25 pages in length. Graduate students may also earn bonus credit through a book review. The weight for these assignments will be as follows: class engagement 200 points; report topic 50 points; reader response papers 30 points each (x 5 = 150 points); final research proposal 100 points; final paper 500 points.

**Details of each assignment and grading standards are at the end of this syllabus.**

The success of this seminar depends on you. Your preparation, active participation, and intellectual engagement with this material and with your fellow students is what will make these three hours worthwhile for all of us. **Attendance is mandatory**, and your participation grade

will suffer if you are not in class every week during this very short quarter. Please contact me immediately about anticipated conflicts. In addition, **I do not give extensions**. The course has been designed to give you some flexibility in choosing when to turn in written assignments, and to help you avoid facing simultaneous deadlines in multiple classes. I expect you to manage your workload in a way that will allow you to submit all assignments on time.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### **1/6 Introduction and Overview**

**HANDOUT:** Richard Walker, "Industry Builds the City: The Suburbanization of Manufacturing in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1850-1940"

### **1/13 World War II and After: Migration and Decentralization**

**BOOK:** Findlay, *Magic Lands*, 14-51

Abbott, *The Metropolitan Frontier*, 3-49, 123-148

**READER:** McWilliams, "California – There She Goes!"

**RESERVE:** Jackson, "The Federal Subsidy and the Suburban Dream" and from *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*, 190-218.

*Additional reading:*

Gerald D. Nash, *The American West Transformed: The Impact of the Second World War*

Roger Lotchin, *Fortress California: From Warfare to Welfare, 1910-1961*

Chester Himes, *If He Hollers Let Him Go*

### **1/20 Ranch Houses to Disneyland: The Western Suburban Landscape**

**BOOK:** Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside*, 15-118

Findlay, *Magic Lands*, 52-116, 160-216

**READER:** Adamson, "California Modernism and the Eichler Homes"

**RESERVE:** Robert Fishman, "Los Angeles: Suburban Metropolis" from *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia*, 155-181

**ONLINE:** "Enter The World of Eichler Design"

<http://totheweb.com/eichler/>

**Report topics:** *Sunset* magazine; Interstate Highway Act of 1956; Kaiser Family Homes

*Additional reading:*

Robert Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia*

Kirse Granat May, *Golden State, Golden Youth: The California Image in Popular Culture*

Michael Rose, *Interstate: Express Highway Politics*

### **1/27 The Cold War and the High-Tech Suburb**

**BOOK:** Beers, *Blue Sky Dream*, 1-138

Findlay, *Magic Lands*, 117-159, 214-264

**READER:** Bylinsky, "California's Great Breeding Ground for Industry"

**Report topics:** Richland, Washington; Nevada Test Site; Wernher von Braun

*Additional reading:*

David Kaplan, *The Silicon Boys and their Valley of Dreams*

Rebecca Lowen, *Creating the Cold War University: The Transformation of*

*Stanford*  
Bruce Hevly and John Findlay, eds., *The Atomic West*

**2/3 The Suburban West as a Political Force**

**LAST DAY TO TURN IN READER RESPONSE #1**

**ARCHIVAL RESEARCH WORKSHOP:** *Class will meet in the Special Collections and Archives Conference Room, on the second floor of the Bing Wing of the Library. Head archivist Maggie Kimball will give a presentation during the first hour of class on using the archives for your own research projects. We will stay in the conference room for our discussion of the book afterward.*

**BOOK:** McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 3-216

**Report topics:** Sister Aimee Semple McPherson; Proposition 13; Sagebrush Rebellion

**Additional reading:**

Matthew Dallek, *The Right Moment: Ronald Reagan's First Victory and the Decisive Turning Point in American Politics*

Mark Baldassare, *Trouble in Paradise: The Suburban Transformation in America*

Rick Perlstein, *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus*

**2/10 Urban Crises and Suburban Discontents**

**BOOK:** Abbott, *The Metropolitan Frontier*, 53-120

**READER:** Wood, "The Freeway Revolt and What It Means"  
Whyte, "Are Cities Un-American?"

**HANDOUT:** Keats, selections from "The Crack in the Picture Window"

**ONLINE:** Governor's Commission on the Los Angeles Riots, "Violence in the City – An End or A Beginning?" (The McCone Report) (1965)

<http://www.usc.edu/isd/archives/cityinstress/mccone/>

**Report topics:** Kerner Commission; *The Organization Man*; Lewis Mumford

**Additional reading:**

Jon Teaford, *The Rough Road to Renaissance: Urban Revitalization in America*

Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*

Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*

**2/17 Sprawl Hits the Wall: Growth Control and Environmentalism**

**GUEST SPEAKER:** *Linda Elkind, Palo Alto community activist*

**BOOK:** Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside*, 119-270

**READER:** Belser, "The Making of Slurban America"

**HANDOUT:** O'Mara, "The Battle of the Hills"

**Report topics:** Rachel Carson; Teton Dam; Oregon Senate Bill 100 (1973)

**Additional reading:**

David Rusk, *Cities Without Suburbs*

Neil Pierce, *Citistates*

Paul Sutter, *Driven Wild: How the Fight Against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement*

## 2/24 ARCHIVAL RESEARCH WEEK -- NO CLASS MEETING

*This week is designed to give you time to visit the Green Library Special Collections and Archives (open M-F, 10-5) or other archival collections so that you can 1) identify the primary documents and collections you will use in your final research project, 2) request these files from the archives, and 3) begin your research and note-taking. You will sign up for a one-on-one meeting with the instructor at the end of the week to discuss your findings so far and address any potential research problems.*

## 3/2 A City or a Suburb?

### FINAL PAPER PROPOSALS DUE

**BOOK:** Beers, *Blue Sky Dream*, 139-273

**READER:** Winner, "Silicon Valley Mystery House"

**ONLINE:** Robert Kaplan, "Travels into America's Future: Southern California and the Pacific Northwest," *The Atlantic Monthly* 282:2 (August 1998), 37-42, 44+.

[http://infotrac.galegroup.com/itw/infomark/995/180/42036381w6/purl=rc1\\_EAIM\\_0\\_A30577139&dyn=5!xrn\\_12\\_0\\_A30577139?sw\\_aep=stan90222](http://infotrac.galegroup.com/itw/infomark/995/180/42036381w6/purl=rc1_EAIM_0_A30577139&dyn=5!xrn_12_0_A30577139?sw_aep=stan90222)

**RESERVE:** Fishman, "Beyond Suburbia: The Rise of the Technoburb"

**Report topics:** Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965; Henderson, Nevada; *colonias*

**Additional reading:**

Joel Garreau, *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier*

Myron Orfield, *American Metropolitcs*

Leland Saito, *Race and Politics: Asian Americans, Latinos, and Whites in a Los Angeles Suburb*

## 3/9 Where Do We Go From Here?

### LAST DAY TO TURN IN READER RESPONSE #2

**READER:** Rusk, "Portland, Oregon: Taming Urban Sprawl"

**ONLINE:** Alex Marshall, "Wrestling the Beast Called Sprawl"

[http://www.alexmarshall.org/am\\_articleFolder/wrestling\\_the\\_beast\\_called\\_sprawl.htm](http://www.alexmarshall.org/am_articleFolder/wrestling_the_beast_called_sprawl.htm)

Morrison Institute of Public Policy, "Which Way Scottsdale?"

<http://www.asu.edu/copp/morrison/WWScottsdale.pdf>

Montana Smart Growth Coalition, "The 2001 State of Growth in Montana"

[http://www.mtsmartgrowth.org/msgc\\_images/msgc\\_pdf/MSGCState1.pdf](http://www.mtsmartgrowth.org/msgc_images/msgc_pdf/MSGCState1.pdf)

**Report topics:** New Urbanism; growth control in Ventura County; Water 2025 (U.S. Department of the Interior)

**Additional reading:**

Duany et al., *Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream*

Richard Moe and Carter Wilkie, *Changing Places: Rebuilding Community in the Age of Sprawl*

John Mollenkopf, & Todd Swanstrom, *Place Matters: Metropolitcs for the Twenty-First Century*

## 3/18 FINAL PAPER DUE IN HISTORY DEPARTMENT OFFICE BY 3:00 P.M.

## DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

### **Facilitation of Class Discussion (50 points)**

At our second meeting, you will sign up to co-lead class discussion one week during the quarter with one or two other classmates. You and your partner(s) will be responsible for developing questions on the week's readings and helping the instructor lead discussion during class. You may prepare handouts or visual aids if you wish, but not electronic presentations such as PowerPoint and overheads (I do not want you to spend your time and energy on elaborate presentations). Creativity encouraged, as long as your facilitation plan will ensure substantive discussion of the readings. Discussion questions and a plan for seminar facilitation should be emailed to the instructor no later than 2:00 p.m. on the Monday before the class meeting.

### **Presentation on a Report Topic (50 points)**

You also will sign up for this assignment at our second class meeting. The report should be a substantive and succinct oral presentation lasting no more than ten minutes. It should tell your classmates the history of the person/place/thing, and should contextualize the topic within the issues and themes discussed in the class readings. You may prepare brief handouts or visual aids for your classmates if you feel they will add to your presentation, but they are not required. Again, please do not prepare electronic presentations. The report topic you choose should be presented during the week it is listed on the syllabus, and you should not be a discussion leader the same week you do your oral report.

### **Reader Response Papers (100 points each)**

You will write two of these 2-3 page essays over the course of the quarter for a total of 200 points. In order to give you flexibility in managing your assignments for this and other courses, I have not given these fixed due dates. At the second class session, you will sign up for the two weeks in which you will submit an essay; one must be in the first half of the quarter (before 2/3), the other must be in the second. These are not book reports, but concise analytic documents that give me your assessment of the readings for a given week, their relation to one another, and how they reflect other themes addressed in class. You should not be reluctant to point out shortcomings you find in the readings, but criticism must be constructive and convincingly argued.

I will accept rewrites on response papers if you are dissatisfied with your grade. You must submit rewrites to me no more than one week after you have received your graded paper; I will record the higher of the two grades.

#### *Graduate student variation:*

*You will write a response paper on each of the five required books for a maximum of 30 points each. These 2-3 page essays should follow the guidelines above but also place the book within the literature, i.e. identifying the important contributions you believe it makes to the field and how it contributes to our understanding of the topic at hand. Write these papers with an eye to their utility in preparation for comprehensive exams and dissertation-writing.*

### **Final Research Project (450 points)**

This project has two parts. The first is a research proposal of 2-3 pages that:

- 1) presents the subject of your research project and your key research questions;
- 2) provides a draft outline for the research paper that explains how primary and secondary source material will be incorporated into each element of the paper; and
- 3) includes an annotated list of the specific archival resources (with specific citations regarding collection location, series number, and box numbers) you will use to carry out your research. These brief annotations should indicate why these documents/collections are relevant to your topic.

The proposal is worth 100 points.

The second component is the research paper itself, which should be between 10 and 15 pages long. This is worth 350 points. Using the primary historical documents in the Stanford University Archives and Special Collections, and/or other local archival collections, the paper should tell the story of one part of the suburban Western landscape around Stanford/Silicon Valley and relate it to the themes discussed in the class. This paper is an exercise in discovering local history, but it also asks you to show how our local history reflects the greater economic, environmental, social, and political changes that shaped the suburban West since 1940. Your chosen area of focus could be a particular university development, residential subdivision, retail area, industrial facility, agricultural area, open space set aside for habitat protection or recreation, or other element of the natural or built environment. Research papers will be evaluated on the basis of:

- \* clarity of argument and structure;
- \* integration of local history with regional and national history;
- \* effective use of a variety of primary historical documents (which could include internal administrative documents, speeches, newspaper and magazine articles, films and photographs); and
- \* use of class readings as secondary sources.

Our archival research workshop with Stanford's head archivist Maggie Kimball on February 3 is designed to introduce you to the collections and provide you with some research guidance for this project. Our "research week" on February 24 – when we will not meet as a class but you must visit the archives individually and then meet with me one-on-one to report your progress – is designed to give you the opportunity to refine your research questions and identify your primary source materials well before the paper is due. During your "research week" you should count on visiting the archives twice: once to submit requests for files from storage, and a second time to read through requested files and take notes. Early research is crucial to the success of this project. Outstanding papers will be submitted for consideration for the Undergraduate Research Prize sponsored by the Stanford Historical Society and for publication in the Society's quarterly, *Sandstone & Tile*.

*Graduate student variation: Your final paper should be the length of an article in a scholarly journal, i.e. 20-25 pages. I welcome your writing on topics that are congruent with your research interests and thesis or dissertation topics, as long as they build upon what we have read and discussed in this class; if this requires a significant deviation from the topic described above, please consult with me in advance.*

### **Bonus Opportunity (up to 30 points)**

This is a 2-page review of one of the texts listed as *additional reading*. You will be asked to write a narrative analysis (not a summary) of the text, and give a very short (5 minute) presentation of your review in class. I will post reviews on the class web site as a resource for your classmates.

### GRADING STANDARDS

*Class Discussion.* In small colloquia such as this one, consistent, thoughtful, and respectful engagement in discussion is key to your success in this class. To receive high marks for discussion, you must be both a thoughtful commentator and a good listener. This is discussion, not oration; I grade on quality of commentary, not quantity. An “A”-range student comes to class with an understanding of the readings and how they relate to one another, and with discussion points already in mind. She actively and consistently contributes to discussion, but she also knows when to let others speak and responds to their comments with respect. Obviously, if you are not in class you cannot show off your mastery of the material and your penetrating analysis of the issues at hand; an unexcused absence will lower your class discussion mark by one third of a letter grade.

*Discussion Leadership.* The week that you will help design and lead class discussion is an important component of your participation grade. It also is your opportunity to hone in on issues in the reading that you find particularly interesting and provocative, and for you and your co-discussants to set our agenda for the day. An “A” grade for discussion results from discussion leadership that reflects solid preparation and in-person collaboration among the discussion leaders prior to class. Discussion questions should cover the key themes of the reading(s) and link these texts to the other readings and larger thematic issues addressed in the class. The discussion plan should also, however have a built-in flexibility that allows for class discussion going off in unexpected directions, and that enables discussion leaders to bring the conversation back on track if these tangents are not particularly fruitful.

*Report Topic Presentation.* An “A” presentation is one that is clearly organized and rehearsed so that it falls within its time limit. It quickly and effectively communicates the key information about the person/place/institution, and it explains why the subject is relevant to the history of the suburban West. It makes creative and effective use of visual aids, but it does not rely entirely on them to tell the story, nor does it use them gratuitously. Visual materials or handouts are not required for a high grade on this assignment.

*Book Review.* For maximum bonus credit, reviews should be clear, concise, and well-written. The written review and the in-class presentation should cover:

- a brief but thoughtful summary of the text’s main argument(s);
- a general description of the contents of the book; and
- your evaluation of the effectiveness of the text’s arguments and its relation to the other readings assigned and themes discussed in this class.

The review should not be an exhaustive summary of everything in the text, but a brief critical document that conveys main themes and contextualizes the book within the literature. For a

useful online guide, see [http://library.usask.ca/ref/howto/book\\_review\\_write.html](http://library.usask.ca/ref/howto/book_review_write.html).

*Papers.* You will write two short analytic papers and one long research paper for this class. The editorial standards for both are the same.

Grade Ranges

	A	B	C	D	F
Has cogent and incisive analysis that reflects full understanding of source material. Shows original insight and creative thinking. Tells us not only “what” and “why” but also “why this matters.”	*				
Well-written and well-organized, with a clear statement of thesis at the beginning and consistent and clear references throughout to how the evidence and analysis relates to main thesis.	*	*			
Clearly and consistently footnoted using a widely recognized style, such as MLA or Chicago.	*	*			
Demonstrates that you have read the source material and understand its main arguments, but lacks analytic rigor and does not provide new insights into the material.		*	*		
Sub-par writing and sloppy organization.			*	*	*
Demonstrates partial or no mastery of the material.				*	*
Fails to meet the basic length and topic requirements of the assignment.					*