

University of Washington  
**HSTAA 208 – THE CITY**  
University of Washington - Winter 2013  
MW 12:30-1:50 – Thomson Hall (THO) 101  
<http://faculty.washington.edu/momara/HSTAA208.html>

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We live in an urban age. Half the world's population now lives in cities; by 2030, many more will have joined them. In 1900, only sixteen cities in the world had populations of one million people or more. By 2000, there were 417. In 1950, only one city in the world had a population of over ten million people; today, there are 19 megacities. Urban places are home to both extraordinary innovation and mind-boggling poverty. They are hubs of high technology, higher education, and high culture. They are responsible for most of the world's consumption of energy and natural resources, and they are often extremely vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

Understanding the world today requires understanding its cities. And understanding its cities requires knowing their history.

The course will give you a foundational understanding of the economic, political, and social forces shaping cities' evolution over time and the central role cities have played in modern history. You will understand major trends shaping urban development from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. You will learn the urban history of North America and what it does and does not have in common with other urban places around the globe. Beyond that, this course will teach you skills needed for success in the history classroom, other courses in other departments, and in your professional career.

Because high-quality writing is one of the most important requirements for nearly any high-quality job, the course is writing-intensive (and has a W designation to reflect that). By the end of the term you will have written more than 15 pages of historical writing, submitted in a variety of formats, and you will have received instructor and peer feedback to help you write more effectively. Research assignments will teach you critical analysis of source materials and sharpen your ability to read and understand both quantitative and qualitative data. Discussion section will teach you to present, discuss, and debate ideas in informed, balanced, and incisive ways. Examinations will not only test the breadth of your knowledge but also ask you to synthesize data and create compelling narratives about the past. Our use of an online platform will allow sharing of knowledge among your peers and a wider public, teach you to develop polished portfolios using both visual and textual materials, and help you explore how social media can advance your academic and professional goals.

### **READINGS**

The course requires four books and a number of shorter articles. The readings are chosen to deepen and expand upon the topics introduced in lecture and will be a critical focus of discussion section each week. The books all are in paperback and may be bought at the UW Bookstore and are on two-hour reserve at Odegaard Library.

1. John T. Stilgoe, *Outside Lies Magic: Regaining History and Awareness in Everyday Places*
2. Timothy Gilfoyle, *A Pickpocket's Tale: The Underworld of Nineteenth-Century New York*
3. Coll Thrush, *Native Seattle: Histories from the Crossing-Over Place*
4. Kevin Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism*

Additional readings and documents may be accessed electronically through the course web site.

Any students for whom purchasing books presents a severe financial hardship and whose life circumstances make it difficult to access reserves should consult with me about alternative means of obtaining access to readings.

Each Monday, the instructor will post questions related to the reading on the course web site. These are designed to help you read in a more directed manner and identify major themes and ideas, as well as pose critical questions for discussion in quiz section at the end of each week. Make a habit of checking the course web site each Monday for these questions and other updates.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

The course has three critical elements:

**Lecture and discussion participation** – 25% of course grade.

- Participation in the two 80-minute lectures per week that provide a comprehensive overview of American urban history from 1600-2012. This includes occasional written exercises, quizzes, small-group activities, et al.
- Active and regular participation in one 50-minute quiz section per week in which we discuss required readings, do work related to the course research project, and work on additional writing and close reading.
- Weekly journal entries of approximately 150-250 words. **You must bring these journal entries to section each week, handing them into the instructor at the end of class.** These entries should do two things: 1) reflect on the week's assigned readings, addressing *at least one* of the reading questions posted by the instructor on the course web site each week; 2) provide an update on the progress of your major research project (description below), thus creating an informal record for you of your site visits, developing questions, and connections to classroom learning and readings.

**Urban history research project: South Lake Union Stories** – five parts, totaling 55% of course grade.

This centerpiece assignment of HSTAA 208 is a project in which you do an intensive historical analysis of one block in Seattle's newly booming high-tech district, South Lake Union. All assignments should be uploaded to the free online platform, [Omeka](#); you will receive training and support on using this platform as part of the course. A detailed description of the project is found on the last page of this syllabus. Key assignments are:

- Site report #1: deep read of the site (300-450 words) plus images – 10% of grade
- Site report #2: environmental history (300-450 words) plus images – 10% of grade
- Site report #3: narrative script (200-300 words) describing evolution of the site through time, accompanied by recording of you reciting this script (2 minutes long) – 10% of grade

- Site report #4: the past and future site (300-450 words) plus images – 10% of grade
- Peer review: commenting on at least 4 of your fellow students' Omeka galleries after the first three site reports (12 comments in total) – 5% of grade
- Final gallery: final rewrite of all four elements to create cohesive whole, addition of introductory and concluding analysis (200-300 additional words) – 10% of grade

**Late-term examination** – 20% of grade

This is an in-class blue book exam that consists of a short essay, identification questions, and multiple-choice questions. It will test your knowledge of the material presented in class and, more importantly, ask you to demonstrate how these different elements fit together and their broader impacts and relevance. The midterm will be given in week 8 of the quarter.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

**Week of January 7: Uncovering the Urban Past**

LECTURES: Sources and methods of urban history; theories of urban growth; the city in politics and culture; introduction to Omeka and South Lake Union

SECTION: Choose block for research project, discuss readings, sign up for walking tour

Readings: *Outside Lies Magic*, pp. 1-58  
 Jill Liddington, "[What is Public History?](#)" *Oral History* 30:1 (Spring 2002), 83-93.  
 Istvan Szijarto, "[Four Arguments for Microhistory](#)," *Rethinking History* 6:2 (2002), 209-215

**Friday, January 11: MOHAI Visit and Walking Tour of South Lake Union (optional but strongly encouraged).** We have set up a special class event at the newly opened Museum of History and Industry ([www.mohai.org](http://www.mohai.org)) with a walking tour of South Lake Union led by MOHAI Chief Historian Lorraine McConaghy. The tour will introduce you to Seattle's urban history, give you useful background on the neighborhood, and can give you an opportunity to visit the block you will be studying for the research project. Parking is limited; public transit is strongly encouraged. Use Metro's Trip Planner (<http://tripplanner.kingcounty.gov>) to find out how to get to MOHAI by bus or streetcar (address: 860 Terry Ave N). There will be two tours; sign up for one during section the first week:

TOUR ONE – 1:00-2:45 PM

TOUR TWO – 3:00-4:45 PM

Meet at the MOHAI information desk at the main entrance 15 minutes prior to the start of each tour. The tour is open to enrolled students and auditors of HSTAA 208 only. If you are unable to make these tours, you still must make time in the first two weeks of the quarter to visit your block to take notes and photographs of the site.

**Week of January 14: Cities in Early America**

LECTURES: Functions of the city; public space; disease; patterns of life and work

SECTION: Submit journal, discuss readings

Readings: *Outside Lies Magic*, pp. 89-129; 179-187  
*Native Seattle*, pp. 3-39

**Week of January 21: Life and Work in Antebellum Cities**

PODCAST LECTURE: Politics and citizenship; women and the city; poverty; urban amusements

NO LECTURE ON MONDAY, JANUARY 21 (MLK DAY HOLIDAY)

NO LECTURE ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23

NO SECTIONS ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 24 AND FRIDAY, JANUARY 25

- Students will not attend regular lectures but must listen to Professor O'Mara's podcast lecture on antebellum cities sometime during this week.
- Students should use class time to visit their site if they have not done so already.
- Journal should be submitted via email to your section instructor at the same day/hour that your quiz section usually meets.
- **Site Report #1 should be posted to Omeka no later than 1:30PM on Friday, January 25.**  
Readings: *Pickpocket's Tale*, pp. 1-80  
*Native Seattle*, pp. 40-78

#### **Week of January 28: Industrialization and Instant Cities**

LECTURES: Rise of corporate capitalism; railroads and commerce; transportation; mass immigration; environmental consequences

SECTION: Submit journal, discuss readings

- **Comment on at least 4 other Omeka galleries (Site Report #1) before 1:30PM Friday Feb. 1**  
Reading: *Pickpocket's Tale*, pp. 81-126  
*Native Seattle*, pp. 79-125

#### **Week of February 4: Landscapes of Wealth and Poverty**

LECTURES: The new middle class and the first suburbs; urban leisure and the urban consumer; women and men in the city; urban poverty

SECTION: Submit journal, discuss readings, discuss the practices of online commentary and peer review

- **Site Report #2 must be posted on Omeka no later than 1:30PM on Friday, February 8.**  
Reading: Anne Spirn, "[City and Nature](#)," in *The Granite Garden*, pp. 9-37  
Catherine Beecher, "[A Christian House](#)" in *The American Woman's Home*, ed. Catherine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe (1869)  
Mary Corbin Sies, "[North American Suburbs, 1880-1950: Cultural and Social Reconsiderations](#)," *Journal of Urban History* 27 (March 2001): 313-346.

#### **Week of February 11: Planning and Politics**

LECTURES: Garden cities and the City Beautiful; political machines; Progressive reform; increased role of governments; New Deal programs

SECTION: Submit journal, discuss readings

- **Comment on at least 4 other Omeka galleries (Site Report #2) before 1:30pm Friday Feb. 14**  
Reading: *Native Seattle*, pp. 126-161  
Theodore Roosevelt, "[Machine Politics in New York City](#)," *The Century* 33:1 (November 1886)

#### **Week of February 18: Suburbia**

NO LECTURE MONDAY, FEBRUARY 18 (PRESIDENTS' DAY)

LECTURE: Imagining suburbia at the 1939 World's Fair; the role of the US government; the homebuilders; popular culture; segregation

SECTION: Submit journal and script, discuss readings, midterm review session

- **Site Report #3 (script) must be turned into the instructors at section**  
Reading: *White Flight*, pp. 3-104

### **Week of February 25: Urban Crisis**

LECTURE: Deindustrialization; race; urban education; urban renewal; crime

SECTION: Submit journal, discuss readings, discussion of oral history and sound recordings as history

- **MIDTERM examination will be given on Wednesday, February 27 during the regular lecture time. Material from White Flight will not be on this exam.**
- **Audio of script from Site Report #3 must be posted on Omeka no later than 1:30PM on Friday, March 1**
- Reading: *White Flight*, pp. 105-179  
*Native Seattle*, pp. 162-207

### **Week of March 4: Metropolitan America**

LECTURES: Suburban job centers; car culture; housing markets; gentrification; metropolitan politics; “smart growth” and the environment

SECTION: Submit journal, discuss readings

- **Comment on at least 4 other Omeka galleries (Site Report #3) before 1:30pm Friday March 8**  
Reading: *White Flight*, pp. 180-266  
Howard Frumkin, “[Urban Sprawl and Public Health](#)” *Public Health Reports* 117 (May-June 2002), 201-217.

### **Week of March 11: The Next City?**

LECTURES: Globalization; wealth and poverty; health and the city; sustainable urbanism; transportation alternatives; beyond suburbia

SECTION: Submit journal, discuss readings, discuss final gallery project

- **Site Report #4 must be posted on Omeka no later than 1:30PM on Friday, March 15**  
Reading: Matthew Sparke, “[Global Geographies](#),” in *Seattle Geographies*, ed. Michael Brown and Richard Morrill (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011).  
Margaret O’Mara, “[Don’t Try This At Home](#),” *Foreign Policy* (Sept/Oct 2010)  
Christina Larson, “[Chicago on the Yangtze](#),” *Foreign Policy* (Sept/Oct 2010)

### **Wednesday, March 20: Exam Week**

- **Final gallery must be posted on Omeka no later than 5:00PM.**
- There is no final examination for this course.

### **CLASS POLICIES**

GRADING STANDARDS AND WRITING ASSISTANCE can be found on the course website.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS: Your grade on an assignment will be reduced by one-tenth of a grade point every 5 minutes it is late (i.e. turning in midterm or paper after the start of section will decrease your grade; uploading electronic assignments after the deadline will decrease your grade). I do not give extensions for any causes other than severe or incapacitating illness or family emergency.

ABSENCES: Success in this course will depend on your being present and engaged in the lectures and sections. Please alert the TA to any expected absences well ahead of time so that we can make

arrangements for makeup assignments. In cases of unexpected absences (illness, family emergencies), you must contact us within a week of the absence to be considered for makeup credit.

**ILLNESS:** Please follow common-sense guidelines in order to protect yourself and your fellow students. Please stay home if you have a fever or any malady that might be easily communicated to those sitting near you in the lecture hall. Doctor's notes are not required for occasional absence, but are required in cases of debilitating illnesses that result in missing a significant stretch of class sessions.

**LECTURE HALL ETIQUETTE:** I allow **laptop computers** and electronic note-taking devices (iPads, etc) in the lecture hall but ask that all users seat themselves in the "laptop zone" at the front corner of the room. As use of laptops for anything other than taking class notes is a distraction and a discourtesy to your classmates, the TA will join you in the laptop zone to ensure that laptops are being used for class purposes. Repeated violations will result in a laptop ban for the entire class. Please remember to turn off **cell phone** ringers prior to lecture. Texting or any other cell phone use during class will be noted and will adversely affect your participation grade. If you are right-handed, please leave the **left-handed desks** for those who are. Your professor and her fellow lefties thank you.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** In all assignments you are expected to adhere to the standards of academic integrity outlined by the University of Washington Student Conduct Code. In an age of internet-based research and writing, the standards for plagiarism and academic dishonesty can become unclear, and I strongly encourage all students to read the statements and guidelines found on my website that outline acceptable practices and procedures.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact the UW Disability Resources for Students Office. If you have a letter from their office indicating that you have a disability that requires academic accommodations, please present the letter to the professor at the start of the quarter so we can discuss the accommodations that you might need in this class. Letters presented later in the quarter may come too late to allow proper accommodations for examinations and other assignments.