

HSTAA 590
AMERICAN URBAN HISTORY

University of Washington
Spring 2009

Tuesday, 3:30-5:20

<http://faculty.washington.edu/momara/Courses.html>

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This readings course introduces graduate students to major themes and scholarly literature in American urban history. Readings are a combination of some classic texts in the field and new interpretations from more recent literature; they draw from the disciplines of history, sociology, city planning, and political science. Thematic areas of emphasis include political economy, city planning, natural and built environments, politics and policy, technology and economic development, spatial segregation, urban "crisis" and recovery, and cultural discourses of urbanism. The course will consider American cities in an international context, identifying major international trends and intellectual discourses that influenced American urban policy and planning, and comparing and contrasting the drivers of urbanization in other nations and continents.

The course assignments emphasize collegiality and learning through collaboration via in-class discussion and weekly participation in an online discussion board. We also will maintain a course wiki in which students can add suggestions of books and articles as a current and future resource for their colleagues. Course assignments also emphasize professional preparation for teaching and the adaptation of scholarly discourses and arguments for wider public audiences by asking students to write a hypothetical course syllabus, book review, and op-ed on an urban topic. The final review essay assignment asks you to synthesize what you have learned in the course and prepares you to discuss this field in general examinations and draw upon this literature in dissertation work.

READINGS

Required books are available for purchase at the University Bookstore and on 2-day reserve at Odegaard. You are expected to read and be familiar with these books in their entirety.

Sven Beckert, *The Monied Metropolis, New York City and the Consolidation of the American Bourgeoisie, 1850-1896* (2001)
William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (1991)
John Friedmann, *China's Urban Transition* (2005)
Alison Isenberg, *Downtown America: A History of the Place and the People Who Made It* (2005)
Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (1985)
Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961)
Matt Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (2006)
Becky Nicolaides, *My Blue Heaven: Life and Politics in the Working-Class Suburbs of Los Angeles* (2002)
Margaret O'Mara, *Cities of Knowledge: Cold War Science and the Search for the Next Silicon Valley* (2005)
Gail Radford, *Modern Housing for America: Policy Struggles in the New Deal Era* (1996)
Saskia Sassen, *Cities in a World Economy* (1990)

Tom Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (2008)

Recommended books are on 24-hour reserve at Odegaard, or you may choose to purchase independently. We will read significant excerpts from these books.

Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920* (1986)

Robert Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias* (1986)

Arnold Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago* (1993)

Matthew Klingle, *Emerald City: An Environmental History of Seattle* (2008)

Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (2001)

Joel Tarr, *The Search for the Ultimate Sink: Urban Pollution in Historical Perspective* (2001)

Articles are available online using the links embedded below and via the course website.

ASSIGNMENTS

The assignments in this course are intended to support your professional education and are designed so that they may be repurposed at a later date in your training or your career.

Naturally, participation, completion of readings, and collegial and productive participation in discussion are weighed heavily. The other assignments are:

1. **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS.** To start the discussion in advance of our meeting as a group, you should post discussion questions raised by the week's reading on our class message board, accessed via the course web site. Questions can be posted throughout the week, up to 1PM on the day of class. You are welcome to post as early and as often as you like, although contributions will be assessed on quality rather than quantity.

2. **BOOK REVIEW.** One 4-page book review of one of the texts listed as additional reading on this syllabus, to be posted on the course website. These reviews are designed to expose the group to a wider historiography as well as provide you with the opportunity to do additional reading in an area of particular interest. The reviews should be similar in length and content to those found in a refereed scholarly journal like the *American Historical Review*. You will sign up for a book review the first week of class. *Book reviews should be submitted no later than seven days after this book appears on the syllabus.*

3. **SYLLABUS.** In order to begin to think about how you might teach this literature to future students, you will write a hypothetical course syllabus for a 400-level undergraduate seminar. The syllabus should be as substantively detailed and structurally precise as possible, built as if it were to be taught at the UW next autumn. The syllabus should be accompanied by an up to 500-word (one page, single-spaced) narrative describing your choices of readings and assignments. *This can be submitted at any time during the quarter, and no later than the last class meeting.*

4. **OP-ED.** The beginning of a new presidential administration has opened up new policy discussions about the future of metropolitan America. Urban transportation, sustainability, economic development, and land use continue to be topics of significant public debate both here in Seattle and nationwide. Thoughtful, historically grounded insights from scholars can be valuable to these discussions. You will be asked to write an 800-1000 word op-ed article suitable for publication in a regional or national US paper that places one element of this debate in historical perspective, using ideas and findings of the scholarly literature to make your case. *This can be submitted at any time during the quarter, and no later than the last class meeting.*

5. REVIEW ESSAY. The final assignment is a review essay of one strand of the urban history literature, approximately 15 pages in length (double-spaced, 12-point font). Although shorter than a review article found in a refereed journal such as *Reviews in American History*, the essay should be similar in spirit and tone of analysis. You may presume the reader's familiarity with the substance of the works under discussion. Focus on how each of the works speaks to your chosen theme; contrast/compare sources and methods; discuss effectiveness of argument; assess contribution to the literature. *Papers are due by noon on the Friday of exam week.*

Grading breakdown is as follows: participation/readings 30%; discussion questions 10%; book review 10%; op-ed assignment 15%; syllabus-writing assignment 15%; final review essay 20%.

Please note that most due dates are flexible so that you can accommodate other teaching and research demands. However, I strongly encourage you to manage your time wisely and not wait until the end of the quarter to submit all this work. Also be advised that I do not give extensions, and I do not allow incompletes outside of truly extraordinary circumstances.

SCHEDULE

3/30 **Theory and Historiography** Please come to the first class prepared to discuss these articles. You do not need to post questions to the discussion board this week.

[Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life \(*Die Großstadt und das Geistesleben*\)," 1903.](#)

[Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life." *American Journal of Sociology* 44 \(1938\), 1-24.](#)

[Claude Fischer, "The Subcultural Theory of Urbanism: A Twentieth-Year Assessment," *American Journal of Sociology* 101:3 \(1995\), 543-577.](#)

[Arthur M. Schlesinger, "The City in American History." *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 27 \(June 1940\): 43-66.](#)

[Charles Tilly, "What Good Is Urban History?" *Journal of Urban History* 22 \(1996\) 702-19.](#)

[Timothy Gilfoyle, "White Cities, Linguistic Turns, and Disneylands: The New Paradigms of Urban History," *Reviews in American History* 26 \(1998\), 175-204.](#)

Additional reading:

Durkheim, Emile. *The Division of Labor in Society* (1893).

Gillette, Howard and Zane Miller, eds. *American Urbanism: A Historiographical Review* (1987).

Mumford, Lewis. *The Culture of Cities* (1938).

----- . *The City in History* (1961).

Park, Robert E., Ernest W. Burgess and Roderick Mackenzie, eds. *The City*. (1925)

Tonnies, Ferdinand. *Community and Society (*Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*)* (1887)

Weber, Max. *Economy and Society* (1920, includes 1905 essay "The City")

4/6 **Political Economy of American Urbanization**

Beckert, *The Monied Metropolis*

Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order*, 3-64, 123-142

Additional reading:

Elizabeth Blackmar, *Manhattan for Rent, 1785-1850* (1989)

Eric Monkkonen, *America Becomes Urban: The Development of U.S. Cities and Towns, 1780-1980* (1988)

Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920* (1983)

Richard Wade, *The Urban Frontier: The Rise of Western Cities, 1790-1830* (1959)

Olivier Zunz, *The Changing Face of Inequality* (1982)

4/13 **City and Suburb**

Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*

Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias*, 3-133

Additional reading:

Andrew Weise, *Places of their Own: Black Suburbanization in America* (2003)

Ann Durkin Keating, *Building Chicago: Suburban Developers and the Creation of a Divided Metropolis* (1988)

Robert Fishman, *Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century: Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier* (1977)

James Gilbert, *Perfect Cities: Chicago's Utopias of 1893* (1991)

Sam Bass Warner, *The Private City: Philadelphia in Three Periods of its Growth* (1968)

4/20 **Policy and Progressivism(s)**

Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*

Radford, *Modern Housing for America*

Additional reading:

Howard Gillette, *Between Justice and Beauty: Race, Planning, and the Failure of Urban Policy in Washington, D.C.* (1995)

Robert D. Johnson, *The Radical Middle Class: Populist Democracy and the Question of Democracy in Progressive-Era Portland, Oregon* (2003)

David Jordan, *Transforming Paris: The Life and Labors of Baron Haussmann* (1995)

Eric Schneider, *In the Web of Class: Delinquents and Reformers in Boston* (1992)

Robin Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890-1935* (1991)

William Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement* (1989)

4/27 **The Urban Environment**

Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*

Klinge, *Emerald City*, 1-118

Tarr, *The Search for the Ultimate Sink*, at least two essays of your choice

Additional reading:

Gray Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power, Earthly Ruin* (2006)

Kathleen Brosnan, *Uniting Mountain and Plain: Cities, Law, and Environmental Change Along the Front Range* (2003)

Richard Evans, *Death in Hamburg: Society and Politics in the Cholera Years, 1830-1910* (1987)

Martin Melosi, *The Sanitary City* (2000)

Mark Rose, *Cities of Light and Heat: Domesticating Gas and Electricity in Urban America* (1995)

5/4 **Race and Space**

Nicolaidis, *My Blue Heaven*

Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*

Additional reading:

Ira Katznelson, *City Trenches: Urban Politics and the Patterning of Class in the United States* (1981)

Jonathan Rieder, *Canarsie: The Jews and Italians of Brooklyn Against Liberalism* (1985)

Josh Sides, *L.A. City Limits: African American Los Angeles from the Great Depression to the Present* (2003)

Gregory Squires, *Capital and Communities in Black and White: The Intersections of Race, Class, and Uneven Development* (1994)

George Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (1993)

Robert Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (2003)

Thomas Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (1996)

5/11 **Crisis and Recovery**

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

Isenberg, *Downtown America*

Additional reading:

Robert Caro, *The Power Broker: Robert Caro and the Fall of New York* (1974)

Robert Fogelson, *Downtown: Its Rise and Fall, 1880-1950* (2001)

John Mollenkopf, *The Contested City* (1983)

Max Page, *The Creative Destruction of Manhattan, 1900-1940* (1999)

Michael Sorkin, ed., *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space* (1992)

Jon Teaford, *The Rough Road to Renaissance: Urban Revitalization in America, 1940-1985* (1990)

5/18 **Urban Institutions**

O'Mara, *Cities of Knowledge*

Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*, 1-39, 100-170

Additional reading:

Stuart W. Leslie, *The Cold War and American Science: The Military-Industrial-Academic Complex at MIT and Stanford* (1994)

Roger Lotchin, *Fortress California, 1910-1961: From Warfare to Welfare* (1992)

Thomas Philpott, *The Slum and the Ghetto: Immigrants, Blacks, and Reformers in Chicago, 1880-1930* (1978)

Bruce Schulman, *From Cotton Belt to Sunbelt: Federal Policy, Urban Development, and the Transformation of the South, 1938-1980* (1991)

Clarence Stone, *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946-1988* (1989)

5/25 **Suburbs and Politics**

Lassiter, *The Silent Majority*

McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 5-53, 217-274

Additional reading:

William Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina, and the Black Struggle for Freedom* (1980)

Matthew Dallek, *The Right Moment: Ronald Reagan's First Victory and the Decisive Turning Point in American Politics* (2000)

Kevin Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (2005)

Myron Orfield, *Metropolitics* (1997)

Rick Perlstein, *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus* (2001)

6/1 **Global Cities** **LAST DAY TO SUBMIT SYLLABUS AND OP-ED**

Sassen, *Cities in the World Economy*

Friedmann, *China's Urban Transition*

Additional reading [reviews of these books must be submitted by Thursday of exam week]:

Thomas Campanella, *Concrete Dragon: China's Urban Revolution and What it Means for the World* (2007)

Wei Li, ed., *From Urban Enclave to Ethnic Suburb: New Asian Communities in Pacific Rim Countries* (2006)

John Mollenkopf and Manuel Castells, *Dual City: Restructuring New York* (1991)

Leland Saito, *Race and Politics: Asian Americans, Latinos, and Whites in a Los Angeles Suburb* (1990)

Henry Yu, *Thinking Orientals: Migration, Race, Contact and Exoticism in Modern America* (2001)

6/12 **FINAL ESSAYS** due by 12PM