

U.S. Urban History

HIS 304/504 | M/W/F 12:15-1:20 p.m. | LB242 | Spring 2009

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INTRODUCTION

This course considers the development of American cities from the colonial era to the present, focusing especially on the formation and evolution of the physical urban environment, race and class interactions, political and economic development, growth and decline, suburbanization, and responses to urban crisis and decay. Particular attention is given to the development of the urban landscape: landscapes of production and consumption, as well as transportation. Throughout the course we will not only analyze urban development but will connect it to the broader patterns of American social, cultural, political, and economic history. The course examines cities in a comparative context as well as through individual case studies, notably New York, Chicago, Detroit, San Francisco, Las Vegas, Atlantic City, New Orleans, and Cleveland.

PURPOSE, METHOD, AND FORMAT

In this course we will develop a number of useful skills that reinforce our study of American urban history. In addition to developing skills such as engaged reading, critical thinking, and writing with clarity, organization, and a sustained thesis, we will explore urban history by using a variety of materials beyond scholarly works, including newspaper editorials, popular magazine articles, web sites, popular and documentary films, editorial cartoons, and even comic strips. We will also learn how to “read” the landscape of Cleveland—both as a class and individually through a semester-long project—to determine what it can tell us about urban change and continuity. Reading the landscape means turning to more than simply reading books and articles. It involves examining historical and contemporary photos, postcards, maps, city directories, and census records, and, ideally, actually viewing your subject firsthand. In class meetings, you should expect a mixture of lecture and discussion. Lectures will include a visual component. Class discussions will revolve around assigned reading. Occasionally we will also view portions of films.

REQUIRED READINGS

Five texts are available at the CSU Bookstore, 2400 Euclid Ave., <http://www.csuohiobookstore.com>. You should obtain books promptly, as you are responsible for all course activities associated with them.

George G. Foster, *New York by Gas-light and Other Urban Sketches*, ed. Stuart M. Blumin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

Dolores Hayden, *Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004).

Alison Isenberg, *Downtown America: A History of the Place and the People Who Made It* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

Jacob A. Riis, *How the Other Half Lives* (New York: Dover, 1971).

Bryant Simon, *Boardwalk of Dreams: Atlantic City and the Fate of Urban America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). Also available as an electronic book on OhioLINK.

Additional articles and book chapters are available on Electronic Course Reserve (ECR). All are PDF files. The computer lab on the fourth floor of Main Classroom Building offers free printing. You should always bring a copy of any required reading to class on the day for which it is assigned.

*“Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men’s blood.”
~Daniel Burnham, renowned architect and father of the “city beautiful”*

COURSE ACTIVITIES

All assignments prepared outside class must be typed (double-spaced unless otherwise noted) using 12 pt. Times or Times New Roman font and 1” or 1_” margins. The final draft of your research essay will be submitted in hard copy and electronically, so it must be saved as a Word document.

I also strongly recommend that you purchase a flash drive if you do not currently own one. A flash drive, which can usually be purchased for less than \$15, will make it easier for you to collect photos and transport them over the course of your project.

Site Selection. (no credit, but mandatory) The critical first step in doing the course project is to choose a site. I will distribute an approved site list in class. I will allow only one student per site. To select a site, send me an email no later than Tuesday, January 27, in which you list 5 preferred sites in rank order. I will assign topics on a first-come, first-served basis, making every effort to give you your first or second choice if possible. I will consider alternate sites, but you must still list 5 from the approved list. My sole criterion in deciding whether to approve an alternate site is whether I believe there is sufficient reference material to support a successful project.

Google Street View Essay. (10%) For this first portion of the course project, you will take an approximately 8-block-long section of a designated street (both sides) associated with your site and explore it. I will train you to use Google Maps’ Street View feature (<http://maps.google.com>), which enables you to “drive” down a street and see the cityscape on both sides. You will find Google’s version much sunnier than an actual visit this time of year as Google’s crew captured the imagery on a clear day in October 2007. For this portion of the project, you will record your observations in as much detail as you can in a clearly written, organized essay of at least 4 pages, emulating the model essay I will make available to you.

Photo Collection & Analysis. (10%) Begin by doing all pertinent “advanced searches” at <http://clevelandmemory.org>, following directions given in class. Make a note of images that are most interesting to you. Next, visit CSU Special Collections (3rd floor of library) and view all pertinent Cleveland Press photos, which will be made available to you in orange folders. Carefully select at least 20 images that you did NOT find online. Scan them at 300dpi JPEG and email them to yourself. Using the guide given to you in class as a model, analyze 20 images in individual paragraphs, noting the file name for each photo. For instance, you may have renamed a photo euclidarcade1.jpg, so you would list that and the name of the folder from which it came (or the search term that pulled it up online) as follows: euclidarcade1.jpg / Folder “Euclid Avenue 1,” or euclidarcade1.jpg / Keyword “arcade.” When submitting, bring a hard copy of your analysis paragraphs and the 20 or more corresponding image files on a flash drive to transfer to my laptop.

City Directory Essay. (10%) Go to CSU Special Collections and select five different Cleveland City Directories from the reference shelves. They should be as close as possible to the following years: 1930, 1945, 1960, 1975, 1990. The point is to choose directories that are as widely and evenly spaced as possible. Note that prior to the 1930s the directories do not include the necessary “crisscross index” (second half of each book) that

lists places by street address. In the crisscross index, find the same area that you examined in your Google Street View essay. Make notes about the types of land uses you observe by block in each year. Also, find 5 addresses that you can trace in all five years and note the changes you find. Relate your findings in a clearly written, organized essay of at least 4 pages.

Research Paper. (30%) Drawing upon the previous components of the course project *and* extensive research in both secondary and primary sources (including both local and national contexts), prepare an analytical essay of 12-15 pages. It should be analytical and relate a compelling story with broader implications for understanding Cleveland history and Cleveland's place in U.S. urban history. This assignment will be done in at least two drafts, which for undergraduates will apply to the WAC requirement. Each draft will be equally weighted in determining your grade for this portion of the course requirements. You must use, *at a minimum*, 3 academic books (selected in consultation with me), 30 newspaper articles, and other appropriate sources like city directory data, your photo analyses, census data, maps, and, where appropriate, digitized oral histories (which I will make available to you). You must document all sources from which you draw quoted passages or significant ideas by inserting footnotes, which must be prepared in the *Chicago Manual of Style* format. For examples of *Chicago* Style citations, see <http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc>.

Visual Presentation. 10% Think of this presentation as a virtual museum exhibit drawing upon your research. It must tell a story using images, text, and (optional) sound. I will provide training in inserting or embedding sound in PowerPoint as part of this course. Your presentation must have at 5 to 7 slides, and at least 10 images. It must be prepared using Microsoft PowerPoint (for reasons of compatibility).

Course Journal. 30% Each student will keep a "journal" containing reading notes, completed in-class short writing exercises, research notes and photocopies, and copies of all graded assignments in a binder. The purpose of this portion of your grade is to encourage active reading and thoughtful research, the two key components of a scholarly habit. You will submit this journal with the final draft of your research paper. For each reading assignment, you should take legible notes, which you will bring to class. You will be able to use your notes (but not the assigned reading itself) to complete short writing exercises (5-10 minutes each) in which you respond (again, legibly) to a question that I will give you at the start of class. We will do these exercises at least once each week and sometimes more frequently. You should then save your notes in your binder. I will grade and return each in-class exercise, which you should also save in your binder. Occasionally, especially early in the semester, I may ask you to turn in your notes as well for comment. Obviously, since we will do these short exercises at the start of class, it is imperative that you arrive on time. At the end of the semester I will drop your three lowest scores. There will be no make-ups, however. I will also from time-to-time ask you to view images, movies, or other materials in class. Often, I will ask you to engage in free-writing about these images/materials; you should record your thoughts in your journal. Finally, as noted above, you will collect all research notes and photocopies, as well as copies of graded project essays, in the binder. As a practical matter, you should use a 1-inch, three-ring binder and division tabs (widely available at bookstores, pharmacies, office supply stores, and discount stores). Larger binders *will not be accepted*. You may want to use clear plastic sleeves as well, but I will not require it. Place reading notes and associated responses in order. Do not store course readings in this journal/binder.

Graduate Students. I expect you to perform at a higher level on written work. In part this means a deeper analysis, and so I am requiring that you write a research paper of at least 15 pages. I also expect you to model proper engagement in classroom discussions. In addition, we will meet five times this semester to interrogate historical scholarship in greater depth. We will identify a time to meet every other week (beginning in week 4). I expect you to bring detailed notes to each meeting; these will comprise half of your course journal grade.

"The slum is the measure of civilization."

Jacob Riis, Danish-born muckraking journalist and tenement reformer

POLICIES

Email. I plan to respond to emails only twice a day (once in the morning and once in the afternoon), Monday-Saturday. I may respond at other times, but it is your responsibility to avoid placing yourself in urgent situations that necessitate quick responses by keeping abreast of course requirements.

Assignment Submissions. All assignments must be submitted in complete form in class on the due date. Any work submitted late will incur a penalty of 10 points after class on the due date, with an additional 10 points subtracted per subsequent day (including weekends and holidays). If you become ill or face circumstances that prevent your meeting the due date, you must notify me and email your assignment as a Word attachment prior to the start of class. In the event of an emergency, you must provide written documentation that explains your inability to meet the due date and must notify me as soon as possible to negotiate an extension.

Extensions. Apart from emergencies (see above) that prevent your submitting an assignment on time, you may request an extension between 2 and 7 days prior to the due date. Extensions may be granted only in extraordinary circumstances at my discretion. If granted, a new due date will be assigned.

Attendance. If you anticipate being unable to be in class consistently, you should withdraw from the course. I will take account of absences at the start of each class and may deduct 3 points (1/3 of a letter grade) from your final average if you accumulate 4 or more unexcused absences. Excused absences are those for which you request permission to miss via email or phone prior to the start of class (pending my approval) or produce appropriate written documentation (again, pending my approval). If you miss roll call, it is your responsibility to notify me *in person* immediately after class. I may bar you from the roll if you are more than 5 minutes late or if you leave early without proper notification.

Student Conduct. Unacceptable conduct in this course includes but is not limited to: excessive or disruptive talking or noisemaking, arriving late or leaving early without appropriate notice, intimidating or threatening anyone in the classroom, sleeping, or distracting either me or fellow students with any use of electronic devices. While I cannot police your use of such devices during class, I would ask that you be respectful and remember that you cannot be engaged in the class if you are surfing the Web, texting, or gaming. For exams, I will not tolerate your use of any electronic devices and reserve the right to expel you from the exam with no provision for retaking it, which would result in an automatic grade of “0.”

Academic Integrity. Using someone else’s ideas or phrasing and representing those ideas or phrasing as our own, either on purpose or through carelessness, is a serious offense known as plagiarism. “Ideas or phrasing” includes written or spoken material ranging from whole papers and paragraphs to sentences and phrases. “Someone else” can mean a professional source, such as a published writer or critic in a book, magazine, encyclopedia, or journal; an electronic resource such as material we discover on the World Wide Web; another student at our school or anywhere else; and a paper-writing “service” (online or otherwise) which offers to sell written papers for a fee. Source: Capitol Community College’s guide to plagiarism (based on the MLA style): <http://webster.commnet.edu/mla/plagiarism.shtml>. I will assign a grade of “0” on any plagiarized work and reserve the right to notify the University according to University procedures.

Writing Assistance. Writing is an art that must be practiced if it is to be improved. I strongly encourage you be proactive in cultivating your writing skills. The Department of History offers a History Tutoring Center where you may seek assistance in preparing written work. The Center is locating in RT 1913 and may be reached at (216) 687-3921.

Student Disabilities. If you have a disability, it is your responsibility to contact the Office of Disability Services (MC 147) at (216) 687-2015. Accommodations must be requested in advance and will not be grant retroactively.

Writing Across the Curriculum (Applies only to HIS 304). This course meets the following criteria for the Writing Across the Curriculum General Education requirement:

1. Require students to write between 3,000 and 5,000 words (10-20 pages, double-spaced, in 12-point font, with 1" margins) in writing assignments (which may include drafts).¹
2. Final versions of at least one assignment should total at least 2,000 words (eight pages).²
3. Teach students writing-to-learn strategies that foster students' experiences in learning and writing-to-communicate strategies that foster students' respect of readers' experiences.³ Whenever possible, planning assignments (e.g. reading logs, pre-writing strategies) and peer reviews should be included.
4. Assign writing complex enough to require substantive revision for most students. The instructor should give feedback to assist students in preparing subsequent papers or drafts of papers. This feedback should not consist entirely of mechanical correction of punctuation and grammar.
5. Provide instruction in discipline-appropriate forms of texts, arguments, evidence, style, audience, and citation.
6. Assign writing throughout the semester.
7. Where appropriate, address the needs of students regarding library competency.
8. Assign writing in English unless the course is specifically geared to improving writing at the 300-level in another language.
9. In order to receive a C or better in the course, students must write at a satisfactory skill level (C or better). If the student's writing is weak, but shows understanding of the course material, the student may be assigned a D, in which case WAC credit will not be received for the course.
10. Maximum enrollment for this course is 35 or 45 with a graduate assistant.

*"Our national flower is the concrete cloverleaf."
~Lewis Mumford, noted critic of urban sprawl*

DAILY SCHEDULE

Reading assignments are marked with a bullet point (•) below the day for which they are to be prepared. Remember, reading assignments followed by an asterisk (*) are PDF documents housed in CSU's Electronic Course Reserve and thus require that you enter your CSU ID.

Week 1

Wed., Jan. 21, **Course Introduction / Why Study Cities?**

- Review Syllabus carefully after class!

Fri., Jan. 23, **Observing Space & Place**

- Kevin Lynch, "The City Image and Its Elements" *
- William H. Whyte, "The Design of Spaces" *
- Stewart Brand, *How Buildings Learn*, "Flow" *

¹ The word count may only include one preliminary draft for each final draft.

² Exceptions to this criterion may be granted in disciplines or courses where students do a substantial amount of writing, but the course structure and /or content does not create opportunities for an assignment of this length.

³ Writing-to-learn helps students use writing to explore many aspects of the course as well as their own reflections; these activities should foster learning at deeper levels than memorization or recitation. Writing-to-communicate emphasizes aspects of writing (style, grammatical correctness, coherence, focus) that allow a reader to navigate the writing as he or she wishes.

Week 2

Mon., Jan. 26, **Introduction to Course Project**

- Review Syllabus, esp. “Course Activities” & “Policies”
- Project Introduction CD (distributed in class on Jan. 23)

Tues., Jan. 27, DUE: Site Selection via email by 12 noon

Wed., Jan. 28, **Project Workshop: Census, Maps, City Directories**

- Meet in CSU Special Collections, 3rd floor of library

Fri., Jan. 30, **Project Workshop: Cleveland Press Collection**

- Meet in CSU Special Collections

Week 3

Mon., Feb. 2, **The European and Native American Origins of American Cities**

- Inga Clendinnen, “Imperial city of the Aztecs: Mexico-Tenochtitlan,” available at *Common-place: Early Cities of the Americas*, <http://www.common-place.org/vol-03/no-04/>

Mon., Feb. 2, DUE: Google Street View Essay in class

Wed., Feb. 4, **Colonial Seaports**

- Gary B. Nash, “A Worm’s Eye View,” plus any two of the following essays: Boston, Charleston, New Amsterdam, Philadelphia, available at *Common-place: Early Cities of the Americas*, <http://www.common-place.org/vol-03/no-04/>

Fri., Feb. 6, **The Development of Urban Networks**

- Essays on Chicago, Salt Lake City, San Francisco, available at *Common-place: Early Cities of the Americas*, <http://www.common-place.org/vol-03/no-04/>

Week 4

Mon., Feb. 9, **Urban Order/Disorder in the Mid-19th Century**

- George Foster, *New York by Gas-Light*, pp. 1-199

Wed., Feb. 11, **Creating the Middle Landscape in Urban America**

- David Schuyler, *The New Urban Landscape*, “The Naturalistic Landscape: Central Park” *

Fri., Feb. 13, **Borderlands & Picturesque Enclaves**

- Dolores Hayden, *Building Suburbia*, chaps. 3 & 4

Fri., Feb. 13, DUE: Photo Collection & Analysis in class

Week 5

Mon., Feb. 16, **President’s Day—No Class**

Wed., Feb. 18, **The Rise of Urban-Industrial America**

- William Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis*, “Annihilating Space” & “The Busy Hive” *

Fri., Feb. 20, **The Immigrant City**

- John Bodnar, *The Transplanted*, chap. 6, “Immigrants & the Promise of American Life” *

Week 6

Mon., Feb. 23, **Urban Problems in the Industrial Age**

- *The Living City | NYC*, read sections on 1870s, 1880s, 1890s, + Featured Events sidebar links, available at <http://www.livingcityarchive.org>
- Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives*, intro. + chaps. 1-5, 9, 13, 20

Wed., Feb. 25, **Political Machines & Progressive Reform**

- Chudacoff & Smith, “City Politics in the Era of Transformation” *

Fri., Feb. 27, **The Rise of Downtown**

- Alison Isenberg, *Downtown America*, chaps. 1 & 2

- View footage of San Francisco's Market Street (1905) in class

Fri., Feb. 27, DUE: City Directory Essay in class

Week 7

Mon., Mar. 2, **Urban Expositions & the City Beautiful**

- Jon A. Peterson, *The Birth of City Planning in the United States*, "Civic Art, 1890-1900" *

Wed., Mar. 4, **The Emergence of Urban Mass Culture**

- Kathy Peiss, "Leisure and Labor" *

Fri., Mar. 6, **The Emergence of Urban Tourism**

- Catherine Cocks, *Doing the Town*, "An Individuality All Its Own" *
- Raymond W. Rast, "The Cultural Politics of Tourism in San Francisco's Chinatown, 1882-1917," *Pacific Historical Review* 76:1 (Feb. 2007), 29-60 *

Week 8

Mon., Mar. 9, **Streetcar Suburbs**

- Hayden, *Building Suburbia*, chap. 5

Wed., Mar. 11, **The Great Migration & the Black Metropolis**

- James N. Gregory, *The Southern Diaspora*, "The Black Metropolis" *

Fri., Mar. 13, **City & Suburb in the 1920s**

- Robert Fogelson, *Downtown: Its Rise and Fall*, "The Central Business District" *
- Dolores Hayden, *Building Suburbia*, chap. 6

Mar. 15-22, **Spring Break—No Classes**

Week 9

Mon., Mar. 23, **City & Suburb in Depression & War**

- Alison Isenberg, *Downtown America*, chap. 4

Wed., Mar. 25, **Case Study: Atlantic City in its Heyday, 1915-1955**

- Bryant Simon, *Boardwalk of Dreams*, chaps. 1-3

Fri., Mar. 27, **Creating the Crabgrass Frontier: Postwar Suburbs**

- Dolores Hayden, *Building Suburbia*, chap. 7

Week 10

Mon., Mar. 30, **The American City At Its Peak? The 1950s**

- Michael Johns, *Moment of Grace*, "The Downtown" *

Wed., Apr. 1, **The New Main Street: Shopping Malls**

- Malcolm Gladwell, "The Terrazzo Jungle," *New Yorker*, Mar. 15, 2004 *

Fri., Apr. 3, **Urban Renewal**

- Alison Isenberg, *Downtown America*, chap. 5

Week 11

Mon., Apr. 6, **The Emerging Urban Crisis**

- Thomas J. Sugrue, "Crabgrass-Roots Politics: Race, Rights, and the Reaction Against Liberalism in the Urban North, 1940-1964," *Journal of American History* 82:2 (Sept. 1995), 551-78 *
- Kevin Kruse, *White Flight*, "The Abandonment of Public Space" *
- View *Detroit: City on the Move* (1965) in class

Wed., Apr. 8, **School Desegregation, Racial Turmoil, & White (and Black) Flight**

- Kevin Kruse, *White Flight*, "The Fight for 'Freedom of Association'" *
- Andrew Wiese, *Places of Their Own*, "Something Old, Something New" *
- View footage of 1967 Detroit riot from *Eyes on the Prize (Two Societies)* in class

Fri., Apr. 10, **Controlled Integration & Planned Suburbs**

- Marian Morton, *Cleveland Heights*, “Changing People & Places” *
- Nicholas Bloom, *Suburban Alchemy*, “Columbia, Maryland,” & “The Shame of the Suburbs” *

Week 12

Mon., Apr. 13, **Case Study: The Urban Crisis in Atlantic City, 1955-1978**

- Bryant Simon, *Boardwalk of Dreams*, chaps. 4-7

Wed., Apr. 15, **Deindustrialization & Civic Responses**

- J. Mark Souther, “A veritable Acropolis of the Middle-West: Decay, Renewal, and Urban Image in Cleveland’s University Circle,” unpub. ms. *
- David Stradling & Richard Stradling, “Perceptions of the Burning River: Deindustrialization & Cleveland’s Cuyahoga River,” *Environmental History* 13:3 (July 2008), 515-35 *

Fri., Apr. 17, **Project Workshop: Chicago Manual of Style & PowerPoint**

- <http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc>

Week 13

Mon., Apr. 20, **Cities of Leisure: Tourist Cities & Urban Entertainment Districts**

- Alison Isenberg, *Downtown America*, chap. 7
- J. Mark Souther, *New Orleans on Parade*, chap. 7 *
- Eugene Moehring, “Las Vegas,” unpub. ms. *
- Nicholas Bloom, “Faneuil Hall Marketplace,” unpub. ms. *

Wed., Apr. 22, **Underground & Overhead: Privatized Space & the Fate of the City**

- Trevor Boddy, “Underground and Overhead: Building the Analogous City,” in *Variations on a Theme Park*, ed. Michael Sorkin *
- Bryant Simon, *Boardwalk of Dreams*, chap. 9, “Casino Publics”

Fri., Apr. 24, **New Directions: Urban Pioneers, Immigrants, & Exurbanites**

- Neil Smith, “New City, New Frontier: The Lower East Side as Wild, Wild West,” in *Variations on a Theme Park* *
- Dolores Hayden, *Building Suburbia*, any one chapter from chaps. 8-10

Fri., Apr. 24, DUE: First draft of Research Paper in class

Week 14

Mon., Apr. 27, **Unnatural Disasters & the City: Hurricane Katrina in Historical Perspective**

- Craig Colten, *An Unnatural Metropolis*, “The City and the Environment” *
- Any three short essays in *Journal of American History | Through the Eye of Katrina*, Special Issue, December 2007, available at <http://www.journalofamericanhistory.org/projects/katrina/content.html>

Mon., Apr. 27, DUE: Visual Presentation via flash drive in class

Wed., Apr. 29, **No Class / Individual Consultations**

- By appointment only, RT 1904, 9:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Fri., May 1, **Student Presentations**

Week 15

Mon., May 4, **Student Presentations**

Wed., May 6, **Student Presentations**

Fri., May 8, **Student Presentations**

Week 16

Mon., May 11, **Optional Euclid Avenue Walking Tour: 9:30-11:30 a.m.**

- Meet in front of Terminal Tower (S. Roadway, across from Public Square). Tour ends at CSU.

Mon., May 11, DUE: Final Draft of Research Paper and Course Journal in class, 1-3 p.m.