Fall 2019

HIST 377-001: Cities in History

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History 377 – CITIES IN HISTORY: 
THE 20TH CENTURY 
AMERICAN CITY

Professor: Dr. Kyle Riismandel  
Email: kriis@njit.edu 
Time: Monday and Wednesday, 10-11:20AM  
Classroom: CKB 219  
Office: Cullimore 326  
Office Hours: Monday 12-1PM, Tuesday and Thursday 1-3PM, and by appointment

Course Description:
In this course, we will explore the legal, social, and cultural regulation of American cities in the 20th century. Broadly, then, this course asks to students to consider how urban space was produced and how did those who moved within cities make sense of it and themselves. Specifically, we will seek to understand how law and policy triggered struggles over urban spaces, and how narratives and representations contributed to the understandings of the limits and possibilities of urban space. To do so, we will examine primary sources ranging from legal cases, government reports, architectural plans, and newspaper stories to television, movies, and music. In addition, we will make use of leading scholarship on law, culture, and design to give us context for interpreting primary sources and to help make sense of key historical moments in 20th century US urban history.

Course Goals:
1. Students will have an understanding of the 'production' of urban space through the legal process, media narratives, and cultural representations  
2. Students will become familiar with the legal history of American cities in the 20th century  
3. Students will practice the skills necessary to analyze, discuss, and write about primary and secondary sources related to the study of American cities

Course Texts
All course readings are available via canvas.njit.edu.

Course Grade:
The course grade will be calculated as follows:
- Class participation 18%  
- Reading Quizzes – 5 x 3% 15%  
- Final Exam 25%  
- Primary Source Short Paper – 3 x 14% = 42%

Failure to complete all of the above assignments will result in an automatic F for the course.

Assignments:
Class participation: Students are expected to participate actively in all class discussions and activities, to be respectful to the instructor and their fellow classmates, to arrive to class on time, and to stay focused on what is happening in our classroom not on chatting or using digital devices. Further, participation will be assessed not just on quantity but also on quality. Quality participation demonstrates knowledge of the issues at hand, completion of that week's assignments, and a willingness to engage in critical assessment of course texts and lectures. The participation grade may also include pop quizzes and short writing assignments done in class.

I encourage students to check in with me over the course of the semester regarding their class participation performance. Further, do not wait to contact me if you are falling behind or having trouble understanding course content. Earlier is always better (I’m looking at you Seniors).

Short Primary Source Papers
This assignment asks you to complete a 400-600 word analysis of a primary source related to a particular week’s theme. You must choose a source or sources from the list provided. You may choose a different source but must get permission from the instructor to do so. Though a short paper, you will want to formulate an argument as to what your source(s) help us understand about the broader theme of U.S. urban history under consideration that week. You must complete one paper before Week 9 and one from Week 9 – Week 15. These papers must be posted to Canvas under the proper week by Sunday at 7PM. Further instructions will be available via Canvas.

Course Policies
Attendance:
Students are expected to attend all course meetings on time unless receiving prior authorization. Missing class will not only adversely affect your class participation grade, but there will be screenings in class that will only be offered during that class period so do your best to attend. If you miss class to attend an NJIT sponsored event, to observe a religious holiday, or due to a documented illness, those absences will be excused. For these absences to count as excused, you must receive permission from the instructor in advance or provide a doctor's note in the case of sickness.

Classroom Conduct:
In this course, we welcome intellectual inquiry and thoughtful discussion of difficult questions, but hate speech and disrespectful comments will not be tolerated. We must to come to class with an open mind, a willingness to learn, and fundamental respect for the humanity of each person in the room and the historical actors we discuss.

Office hours/student appointments:
My office hours will be every Monday 12-1PM and Tuesday and Thursday 1-3PM. I am also available to meet by appointment if students are unable to make it to my office during these times. Feel free to send me an email to set up a meeting if you’d like to talk or have any questions about course topics, assignments, or grades.

Academic dishonesty:
Students are expected to obey the NJIT honor code, and I will enforce this code to its fullest extent. The goal of this course is to evaluate your understanding of course materials and ability to express that understanding. Cheating, plagiarizing or otherwise violating the code of academic integrity not only breaks the trust between professor and student but keeps you from learning course content and improving writing and critical thinking skills. I am here to help so if you are having trouble, do not cheat, ask me for help.

For the tenets of the code or for clarification of what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, please consult: http://www.njit.edu/academics/honorcode.php.

Generally speaking, it is a violation of the academic integrity code to:

- Use someone else’s words or ideas without attribution
- Copy content from someone else’s paper, quiz, or exam
- Pay for course assignments to be complete by someone else

**Cell phones:**
Students must turn off and stow their cell phones before class begins. Under no circumstances may students answer their phones, make calls, send text messages, or use their cell phone in any manner during class hours unless approved by me before class begins. If I see a student using a cell phone in class, I will at minimum mark that student absent for the class and reserve the right to ask the student to leave for the remainder of the class. I do not want to interrupt class to ask you to stop texting. It interrupts the flow of discussion, distracts other students, and will inevitably embarrass the texter. I understand that cell phones have become central to many of our lives, but their use in class is a distraction for not just the user but others in class.

**Laptops and miscellaneous technology rules:**
Students may use laptops in this course for class-related activities only. If I learn that students are using laptops for any other purpose, I will issue a laptop ban for this class. Students are also prohibited from listening to ipods or using any other device in this class that has not received prior authorization. Essentially, you are in class approximately 3 hours a week. Please be present and prepared when you are here. If you would rather text or surf the internet, please do not come to class.

**Students with Disabilities or Special Needs:**
Students who have disabilities or special needs should contact NJIT’s Student Disability Services to help procure accommodations in completing coursework. The center can be found at http://www.njit.edu/counseling/services/disabilities.php.

**Course Schedule**

**Week 1**
SEPT 4: Introduction – What is a city? Why study it?

**Week 2** – Migration, Immigration, and the 20th Century City
SEPT 9: Lecture – Immigration, Tenements, Progressive Reform
SEPT 11: Discussion
Primary Source
• Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives*, pp. Intro, Chs. 2-4, 13-14, 25, Appendix and browse the List of Illustrations choosing some to discuss

Secondary Source
• George Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, Chapter 4, “Americanization and the Mexican Immigrant”

**Week 3 – Race, Ethnicity, and Belonging**
SEPT 16: Discussion – The Great Migration
Primary Source
• *The Negro Motorist Green Book*

Secondary Source
• Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America’s Great Migration*

SEPT 18: Discussion – Chinatown
Primary Source
• *Library of Congress, Chinatown Photo Collection*

Secondary Source
• Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco’s Chinatown*, Ch. 8, “Healthy Spaces, Healthy Conduct”

**Week 4 – Nightlife, Sex, and Leisure during Prohibition**
SEPT 23: Lecture
SEPT 25: Discussion
Primary Source
• *Valentine’s City of New York Guide* (1920) – Brows and be ready to discuss specific examples from the text

Secondary Source
• George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Male Gay World 1890-1940*, Ch. 11, “‘Pansies on Parade’: Prohibition and the Spectacle of the Pansy”

**WEEK 5 – Race, Housing, and Segregation/Urban Renewal**
SEPT 30: Lecture
OCT 2: Discussion
Primary Source
• *The Baltimore Plan* (film - 1954)

Secondary Sources
• Beryl Satter, *Family Properties: How the Struggle over Race and Real Estate Transformed Chicago and America*, Ch. 2

**Week 6 – Suburbanization**
OCT 7: Lecture
OCT 9: Discussion
Primary Source – Choose an episode from one of the following shows:
• *Leave it to Beaver, Father Knows Best, Ozzie & Harriet*

Secondary Source

**Week 7 – Car Country**
OCT 14: Lecture
OCT 16: Discussion
Secondary Source
- Eric Avila, *Folklore of the Freeway: Race and Revolt in the Modernist City*, “Communities Lost and Found: The Politics of Historical Memory - Available as an ebook from NJIT library

**Week 8 – Urban Crisis and Deindustrialization**
OCT 21: Lecture
OCT 23: Discussion
Primary Sources
- Church in Metropolis, “Civil Disorders, U.S.A.: Reports and Recommendations”
- New Jersey State Patrolmen’s Benevolent Association, “Press Release Response to Governor’s Select Commission on Civil Disorder,” February 19, 1968

**Week 9 – The Wars on Drugs and Crime**
OCT 28: NO CLASS
OCT 30: Discussion
Primary Source

Secondary Source

**Week 10 – The Wars on Drugs and Crime, cont./Fear City**
NOV 4: Discussion
Primary Source
- *The Warriors* (1979)

NOV 6: Discussion
Secondary Source
- Victor Rios, *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys*, Ch. 2

**Week 11 – Gentrification**
NOV. 11: Discussion
Primary Source
- *Do the Right Thing* (1989)

NOV. 13: Discussion
Secondary Source

**Week 12 – Environmentalism and Eco-Justice**

NOV. 18: Discussion
Secondary Source
- Robert Gioielli, “Get the Lead Out: Environmental Politics in 1970s St. Louis,” *Journal of Urban History*

NOV. 20: Discussion
Primary Source
- Flint Water Crisis Primary Sources – [https://libguides.umflint.edu/watercrisis/commentary](https://libguides.umflint.edu/watercrisis/commentary)

**Week 13 – Diversity, Integration, and Equality**

NOV. 25: Discussion
Primary Source
- Selected stories from First Days Project – firstdaysproject.org
Secondary Source

**Week 14 – Out in the City**

DEC. 2: Discussion – Out in the City
Primary Source
- Queer Newark Oral History Project - [https://queer.newark.rutgers.edu/interviews](https://queer.newark.rutgers.edu/interviews)
DEC. 4: Discussion

**Week 15 – Climate Crisis**

DEC. 9: Discussion
Secondary Source

DEC. 11: Final Exam Review/Big Takeaways