

History 214.402/Urban Studies 220.402 Spring 2009
Modern American Cities

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This seminar analyzes the history of American cities, with special emphasis on the period since World War II. It focuses on the origins and consequences of economic, demographic, and spatial transformation and on policy responses to urban change. Seminar sessions will be divided between discussion of readings, analyses of primary sources, and presentations on policy issues. The seminar will also sponsor a session in the Urban Studies Public Conversation series and feature a lecture by a noted urbanist. Requirements consist of reading approximately one book per week, presenting analyses of primary sources and a policy issue, writing short commentary papers, and a final exercise.

Assignments

There are 4 types of assignments: (1) reading assigned material; (2) organization and leadership of a session on one category of primary sources; (3) presentation of a policy issue; (4) 6 2-3 page commentary papers based on the reading; and (5) a final exercise. These assignments are explained below.

All assignments must be turned in on time. Late papers will not be accepted. Written assignments should be posted on the seminar's Blackboard site.

The Blackboard site provides an opportunity to continue discussions between seminar sessions. I hope you will take advantage of it by posting and replying to comments.

Remember that a seminar is only as lively as participants make it. I expect you all to do the reading faithfully and to come prepared to contribute to discussion.

Commentary papers: students should write 6 2-3 page papers commenting on the week's reading. These should not summarize the book or articles; I assume you all can do that. Rather, the papers should be a reaction to the reading: anything that strikes you as particularly interesting, important, outrageous, or worth thinking about. I will keep track of these papers, but they will not be given formal grades. I expect one paper every other week starting with either the first or second reading assignment. These papers are due at the end of the session at which the reading is discussed and should be submitted *via the digital drop box on Blackboard*. They are not acceptable later, and they are an integral part of the seminar. To receive credit for the seminar, you must turn them in on time. I may ask students with especially interesting papers to send them out to share with the whole seminar.

Primary source workshop. Roughly half of four seminars will be spent analyzing primary sources (listed below) related to the seminar's topics. The purpose of the workshops is to familiarize students with several of the principal primary sources available for the study of cities; to assess their strengths and limits; and explore how they might be used. These are groups projects. Session leaders should: (1) explain the features of the source and where it is to be found; (2) provide a bibliography and/or web addresses where appropriate; (3) develop and lead a group exercise based on samples of sources. For the most part, these exercises should consist of dividing the seminar into small groups and giving each group a sample of the source to analyze and report back on. The four types of sources are: (1) Sources for the study of urban populations; (2) sources for the study of the built environment; (3) sources for the study of institutions; (4) sources for the study of urban politics.

Remember that only a very small fraction of historical sources are found on the internet. Do not restrict your discussion of sources only to those available on line.

Policy issue. Groups will organize presentations on the following 4 policy issues: (1) charter schools as tools for educational reform; (2) casinos and tourism as strategies of urban economic development; (3) the new urbanism as a method of urban revitalization; (4) public health problems facing cities. The presentations should present the ideas underlying the issues; controversies around them; and relevant data. There should be an opportunity for the whole seminar to join the discussion.

Final Exercise. A final exercise will be distributed on the last day of the seminar. The due date will be announced during the semester. The exercise will require synthesizing ideas discussed in the readings and discussions and *not* additional reading or research.

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Assignments and Schedule

January 26

Introduction

February 2

Segregation

Massey and Denton

February 9

Deindustrialization, race, and urban crisis

Sugrue

Source discussion 1

February 16

Metropolitics and urban inequality

Dreier et al

Urban Studies Public Conversation

February 23

Suburbanization in modern American history

Kruse and Sugrue

Source discussion 2

March 2

The political economy of suburbanization and black power in cities

Self

Source discussion 3

March 16

Globalization and cities

Sassen, Venkatesh, Castells

Source discussion 4

March 23

The new immigration

Singer

Policy discussion 1

March 30

Public housing

Policy discussion 2

April 6

Riots

Mumford; Katz, "Why Don't American Cities Burn Very Often?"

Policy discussion 3

April 13

Drugs and crime

Schneider; Katz, "The Death of Shorty"

Policy discussion 4

April 20 Distopia

Davis

April 27 Hope; Katz, "What Is An American City?"

Gottlieb et al

History 214 Bibliography
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- Gottlieb, Robert, Mark Vallianatos, Regina M. Freer, and Peter Dreier. 2006. *The Next Los Angeles: The Struggle for a Liveable City*. Updated ed. Berkeley and Los Angeles University of California Press.
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- Mumford, Kevin. 2007. *Newark: A History of Race, Rights, and Riots in America*. New York: New York University Press.
- Powell, Lawrence N., and Clarence L. Mohr, eds. 2007. *Through the Eye of Katrina: The Past as Prologue?: A Special Issue, Journal of American History, 94(3) December 2007*: selected articles [see below]
- Sassen, Saskia. 2007. The Global City: Recovering Place and Social Practices. In *A Sociology of Globalization*, edited by S. Sassen. New York: W. W. Norton.
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- Self, Robert. 2003. *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Singer, Audrey, Susan Wiley Hardwick, and Caroline Brettell, eds. 2008. *Twenty-First Century Gateways: Immigrant Incorporation in Suburban America*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- Sugrue, Thomas J. 1996. *The origins of the urban crisis : race and inequality in postwar Detroit*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Vale, Lawrence J. 2000. *From the Puritans to the Projects: Public Housing and Public Neighbors*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Venkatesh, Sudhir Alladi, and Alexandra K. Murphy. 2007. Policing Ourselves: Law and Order in the American Ghetto. In *Youth, Globalization, and the Law*, edited by S. A. Venkatesh and R. Kassimir. Stanford: Stanford University Press.