

# **The City in America**

**(01:512:314 & 01:050:304)**

Wednesdays, 12:35PM to 3:35PM, Ruth Adams Building 206

Prof. Andy Urban

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Office Hours: 1 – 4PM, Mondays, Ruth Adams Building 205E

## **Course Overview**

How do we interact with cities as historical texts? What can we learn about their pasts by “reading” their architecture, monuments, cultural venues, streets, and neighborhoods? How have human actors both produced urban places, and how have those different places shaped human behavior, actions, and culture?

Through an exploration of different sociological, historical, and theoretical texts, as well as primary source documents, maps, and photographs, this course will examine the evolution of the economic, cultural, and social landscapes that have defined the urban United States. We will also use music, film, and literature in order to gain insights into how individuals and communities have articulated the meaning of city life in the past and the present. Finally, this course aims to cultivate an appreciation for cities’ rich and complex pasts, and what cities can offer to residents in the present and future.

## **Required Books** (*available in the bookstore*)

- William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (ISBN: 0393308731)
- Timothy Gilfoyle, *A Pickpocket's Tale: The Underworld of Nineteenth-Century New York* (ISBN: 0393329895)
- Richard Wright, *12 Million Black Voices* (ISBN: 1560254467)
- Kevin Kruse and Thomas Sugrue, eds., *The New Suburban History* (ISBN: 0226456633)

In addition to the above books, all of the assigned chapters, articles, and primary sources have been (or will be shortly) posted as .pdf files on the course’s SAKAI site, under the heading “Resources.”

***PLEASE BRING THE ASSIGNED BOOKS AND READINGS TO CLASS.*** We will use the readings in discussion and in-class activities. The failure to bring readings with you will result in deductions from your participation grade.

### **Assignment and Grading Summary**

- *Essays – 30%* (three – 10% each)

Over the course of the semester, you will be assigned three essay questions covering the readings and lectures from the preceding weeks. You will have a week to complete a three-to-four page essay from the date that each essay question is distributed (see the schedule below for the dates when the questions will be distributed and due). The essay questions will focus on developing your writing skills, and analyzing the primary and secondary sources we have read and discussed.

- *History Pin Final Project – 35%* (Abstract and bibliography – 5%; Project – 25%; In-Class Presentation – 5%)

For your final project, each student will be required to create a virtual, mini-walking tour in the New Jersey, New York, or Pennsylvania city, mapping historical sites and locations that relate to the subject you have selected to research and interpret. On the History Pin website (<http://www.historypin.com/>), you will mark your locations and provide historical newspaper articles, images, and commentary relating to these locations and the subject you are analyzing. Further details on the assignment forthcoming!

- *Final Exam – 20%* (Date and time TBA – see <https://finalexams.rutgers.edu/>)
- *Participation – 15%*

If you attend all the classes, this will earn you an 80 for your participation grade. If you attend and offer at least one comment or question per class, you will receive a 100. You need to actively take part in discussions to earn a higher grade. Each unexcused absence, since we only meet once a week, will lower your participation grade by five percentage points per absence.

### **Grading Scale:**

92-100=**A**; 87-91=**B+**; 81-86=**B**; 77-80=**C+**; 70-76=**C**; 60-69=**D**; 0-59=**F**

**Note:** there are no minus grades at Rutgers.

### **History Department Learning Goals Met by this Course:**

*Students who study history at Rutgers can expect to develop and understanding of the following concepts:*

- 1.) How individuals are shaped by their own past and by the past of their society and institutions;
- 2.) The role of human agency in bringing about change in society and institutions;
- 3.) The operation of large-scale forces responsible for causing change over time, such as politics, economics, and human migration;
- 4.) The role of diversity and difference in shaping human experience;
- 5.) The nature of cause-and-effect relationships in human affairs as they have played out over time and as they continue to operate in the present.

*Students who study history at Rutgers can also expect to develop the following practical skills:*

- 1.) The ability to read and understand a variety of literary forms, including primary sources, as well as secondary sources written in academic prose;
- 2.) The ability to analyze information effectively and to construct cause-and-effect relationships from disparate data sources;
- 3.) The ability to write persuasively and communicate effectively;
- 4.) The ability to work independently and to conduct independent research.

### **American Studies Department Learning Goals Met by this Course:**

Students will learn to synthesize interdisciplinary sources and methods of analysis in order to conduct an investigation of urban American culture. Students will learn to use scholarship in history, politics, literature, and art in order to understand the significance of cities to American life, and how to conduct original research – using a wide range of sources - to further their understanding. Students will be able to write well; speak articulately; and think critically, analytically, and creatively.

## **Learning Goals Specific to this Course:**

- a) To assess what distinguishes cities spatially, culturally, economically, and politically from other American geographies.
- b) To offer a detailed, nuanced, and sustained analysis of why different cities take the form they take, and how they are developed, planned, and governed through strategies of urban design, in both the past and the present.
- c) To think about how the “Digital Humanities” – through interactive projects such as History Pin – help to make cities dynamic sites for learning.

## **Class Policies**

If you have to miss class due to sickness, an emergency, or another excused reason, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.

All cell phones and hand-held devices must be turned off prior to the start of class. **NO TEXTING** – if I catch you texting, you will be counted as absent that class, no exceptions.

**Computer use should be limited to looking at the .pdf readings for class (if you choose not to print them out), and taking notes.**

DO NOT EMAIL, INSTANT MESSAGE, SURF THE WEB, ETC. – IF I FIND THAT YOU ARE USING YOUR COMPUTER FOR NON-CLASS RELATED ACTIVITIES, YOU WILL BE MARKED ABSENT FOR THAT DAY AND LOSE YOUR COMPUTER PRIVILEGES.

Unexcused late assignments will receive a deduction.

## **Rutgers Academic Policies**

Please review the following policies. Should a situation arise where a violation occurs, it will be assumed that you were aware of this information and its ramifications.

### **Special Accommodation Requests**

All special accommodation requests must be brought to my attention during the first two weeks of class. Full disability policies and procedures are available for review at: <http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/>.

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations must follow the procedures outlined at <http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/request.html>

### Academic Integrity Policy

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml>

Violations include: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, denying others access to information or material, and facilitating violations of academic integrity.

### Honor Pledge

I pledge on my honor that I will adhere to all aspects of the Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy

Take an interactive tutorial on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:

<http://sccweb.scc-net.rutgers.edu/douglass/sal/plagiarism/Intro.html>

Consult Don't Plagiarize: Document Your Research! For tips about how to take notes so you don't plagiarize by accident.

[http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/lib\\_instruct/instruct\\_document.shtml](http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/lib_instruct/instruct_document.shtml)

## Class Schedule and Assigned Readings

### **January 23**

Course Introduction

### **January 30**

- Tim Pauketat, “Walking into Cahokia,” from *Cahokia: Ancient America's Great City on the Mississippi* (2009)
- Benjamin Carp, “Port in a Storm: The Boston Waterfront as Contested Space, 1747-74,” from *Rebels Rising: Cities and the American Revolution* (2007)
- Eric Sanderson, “The Mannahatta Project,” from *Mannahatta* (2009)
- Excerpts from Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787) and *Letters of Thomas Jefferson* (1785-1816)

### **February 6**

- Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, Prologue and Part I

### **February 13**

- Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, Part II
- Bryant, “A New Public Park,” *New York Evening Post* (1844)
- Albert Evans, “In the Streets of San Francisco,” from *A la California: Sketches of Life in the Golden State* (1873)

### **February 20**

- Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, Part III
- Marc Reisner, “The Red Queen,” from *Cadillac Desert: The American West and Its Disappearing Water* (1986)

### **February 27**

NO CLASS – RESEARCH WEEK

<p><u>Essay One</u>: Distributed Feb. 20, due by 5PM on Feb. 27, using the “Assignments” section of SAKAI</p>
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### **March 6**

- Gilfoyle, *A Pickpocket's Tale*, chapters 1 through 11
- George Foster, “The Dance-House,” from *New York by Gas-Light* (1850)

Abstract and bibliography for final project due, posted to the “Assignments” section of SAKAI by 5PM on Monday, March 11.

### **March 13**

- Gilfoyle, *A Pickpocket's Tale*, Chapters 12 to conclusion
- George Chauncey, “Urban Culture and the Policing of the ‘City of Bachelors,’” from *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (1995)
- Nan Enstad, “Urban Spaces and Popular Cultures,” from Nancy Hewitt, ed., *A Companion to American Women's History* (2002)

### SPRING BREAK

### **March 27**

- Richard Wright, *12 Million Black Voices*, foreword through chapter two
- Jacob Riis, “Genesis of the Tenements,” “The Bend,” and “Sweaters of Jewtown,” from *How the Other Half Lives* (1890)

### **April 3**

- Richard Wright, *12 Million Black Voices*, chapter 3 to end
- Letters from 1906, from ed. Isaac Metkzer, *A Bintel Brief: Sixty Years of Letters from the Lower East Side to the Jewish Daily Forward* (1971)

Essay Two: Distributed March 29, due April 5, by 5PM, submitted to the “Assignments” section of SAKAI.

### **April 10**

- In-class viewing: *The Pruitt-Igoe Myth: An Urban History*, dir. Chad Freidrichs (2011)
- Selections from Yves Marchand, *The Ruins of Detroit* & Andrew Moore, *Detroit Disassembled*

### **April 17**

- *A New Suburban History*: Introduction, Chapters 1, 4, 8, and 10

Essay Three: Distributed April 12, due April 19, by 5PM, submitted to “Assignments” on SAKAI

**April 24**

- Jane Jacobs, “The Use of Sidewalks: Contact,” from *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961)
- Richard Florida, “What Draws Creative People? Quality of Place,” from *Urban Land*, Oct. 2012
- Saskia Sassen, “The Global City: introducing a Concept,” from *Brown Journal of World Affairs* (2005)

**May 1**

- In-Class Presentations; Conclusions