

History of Paris

HIST 635-004

Syllabus

Prof. Sun-Young Park
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Robinson B 336
Office hours: T 4:30-5:30pm

Spring 2016
T 7:20-10pm
Innovation Hall 323

(Please always e-mail me in advance if you plan on coming to office hours, as I may have unforeseen commitments on certain weeks. If you are not available during the scheduled office hours, please feel free to get in touch with me to set up an appointment.)

Course overview

This seminar will be an investigation into how we write the histories of cities, taking Paris, the oft-called "capital of modernity," as its case study. How do we conceptualize and theorize the city? How does a city's social and cultural history assume material dimensions? How can we recuperate past experiences and understandings of the city through urban representations, both written and visual? Our focus will be on the age of urbanization, from the late 18th to the early 20th centuries, and readings will bring in comparative contexts, such as London, Vienna, and Berlin. Weekly topics will include: public health and the hygienic city; architecture and the built city; nature and the landscaped city; spectacles and the imaged city. Over the course of the semester, students will conduct parallel investigations into other modern cities of their choice.

Course requirements

Grade breakdown:

Class participation 20%

Response papers 20%

Book review 25%

Final paper (historiographical essay or research paper) 35%

1. *Class participation:* As a graduate seminar, this class will be primarily based around group discussions. You are expected to come to class each week having read the assigned texts and prepared to discuss them with your classmates. Each week, one to two students will work together to prepare questions and thoughts to share with the class in advance of the seminar, and lead the discussion. Discussion leaders should spend approximately 20 minutes at the start of class providing some historical and historiographical context on the reading to your fellow students, and highlighting key topics you would like to address. On your week to lead, you will also be expected to read and present on a second text on another modern city of your choice, which addresses themes, issues, or historical methods that serve as a point of comparison with the assigned book. You may choose to write the book review assignment on this second text.
2. *Response papers:* To facilitate discussions and help you prepare your thoughts on the readings, you will write seven 1-2 page response papers over the course of the semester, to be submitted by 9pm each Monday prior to the seminar meeting. These papers should not be summaries of the texts, but critical reflections on issues, themes, and methods that emerge from the readings. In your papers, you

should frame at least 2 questions that can serve as prompts for class discussion. These questions will be shared online with your classmates in advance of the seminar.

3. *Book review* (4-5 pages), due 3/1: During the first few weeks of the semester, you will each select a book published in the past 5-8 years on another modern city, which you think relates to the theme(s) of the course. You will write a book review of your selection, conforming to the standards of a professional historical journal (*American Historical Review*, *Journal of Social History*, etc), and prepare a short presentation on it for our meeting on 3/15. You and your classmates will then choose one of these books to read and discuss together for the 4/12 meeting.
4. *Final paper* (15-20 pages), due 5/10 by 5pm: You will have two options for the final paper. The first is a historiographical essay that compares recent literature on two cities, Paris and a city of your choice, to compare and analyze different historical methods and approaches. The second option is a research paper on a modern city of your choice (ideally the city that was the focus of your book review), bringing in themes and issues discussed over the course. You will be asked to prepare a brief paper proposal (500 words) and a preliminary bibliography by 3/22. During the last two class sessions, you will each give an oral presentation on your work-in-progress.

Reading assignments

The following books are available for purchase at the university bookstore:

- Sharon Marcus, *Apartment Stories: City and Home in Nineteenth-Century Paris and London* (1999)
- David Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity* (2003)
- Richard Hopkins, *Planning the Greenspaces of Nineteenth-Century Paris* (2015)
- David Barnes, *The Great Stink of Paris and the Nineteenth-Century Struggle Against Filth and Germs* (2006)
- Vanessa Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Paris* (1998)
- Jennifer Anne Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis: The Urban Grounds of Anti-Imperialism and Feminism in Interwar Paris* (2010)
- Rosemary Wakeman, *The Heroic City: Paris, 1945-1958* (2009)
- Kenny Cupers, *The Social Project: Housing Postwar France* (2014)
- Louis Chevalier, *The Assassination of Paris* (1977)

Please also purchase or borrow the following book separately for our 1/26 class:

- John Merriman, *The Margins of City Life: Explorations on the French Urban Frontier, 1815-1851* (1991)

Other texts on the syllabus will be shared online through Blackboard.

For background reading that will give you a good grounding on the longer history of Paris, I would recommend Colin Jones, *Paris: The Biography of a City* (2004).

Course policies

- *Academic integrity*: The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. GMU has an Honor Code (<http://www.gmu.edu/academics/catalog/9798/honorcod.html>) with clear guidelines regarding

academic integrity. Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving the person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes. Paraphrased material must also be cited, using MLA or Chicago format. A simple listing of books or articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.

- *Course communication:* Mason uses only Mason e-mail accounts to communicate with enrolled students. Students must activate their Mason e-mail account, use it to communicate with their department and other administrative units, and check it regularly for important university information including messages related to this class.
- *Attendance and conduct:* You are expected to attend and participate in every class session. For justifiable absences (such as illness or other emergencies), you may be asked to provide official documentation. You should e-mail me in advance if you know of an upcoming conflict. Repeated absences will impact your participation grade. Please refrain from eating or sleeping during class time.
- *Use of technology:* Cell phones and other communicative devices must be switched off or put on silent (not vibrate) mode during class hours. If you are seen using your phone during class time, it will be confiscated until the end of the class. As this is a discussion-based seminar, I also ask that you not use laptops/tablets in class (unless you require special accommodations; see below). You should bring a hard copy of the week's readings to class, as we will frequently look at the texts together.
- *Late assignments:* For all written work, lateness will be penalized by 1/3 of a letter grade (for example, A to A-) for every 24-hour period beyond the deadline. Weekly response papers will not be accepted late. If you have extenuating circumstances, you should always get in touch with me directly.
- *Special accommodations:* If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services at 703.993.2474 or ods.gmu.edu. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Weekly schedule

- 1/19 Introduction
Victor Hugo, "A Bird's-eye View of Paris," *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* (1831)
- 1/26 The Capital City
Merriman, *The Margins of City Life* (1991) – Chs. 1-3, 8, Conclusion
Alain Corbin, "Paris-Province," *Realms of Memory: Conflicts and Divisions*, Ed. Pierre Nora (1998), 427-464.
Packer, George. "The Other France: Are the Suburbs of Paris Incubators of Terrorism?" *The New Yorker*, 31 Aug 2015.
- 2/2 Library research workshop with George Oberle, Fenwick 1009

- The Domestic City
 Marcus, *Apartment Stories* (1999)
- 2/9 The City of Modernity
 Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity* (2003)
- 2/16 The Landscaped City
 Hopkins, *Planning the Greenspaces* (2015)
 Due: Book review selection
- 2/23 The Hygienic City
 Barnes, *The Great Stink of Paris* (2006)
- 3/1 The Spectacular City
 Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities* (1999)
 Due: Book reviews (please be prepared to present on them in class)
- 3/8 SPRING BREAK
- 3/15 The Imperial City
 Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis* (2010)
- 3/22 The Political City
 Wakeman, *The Heroic City* (2009)
 Due: Final paper proposals
- 3/29 The Socialist City
 Cupers, *The Social Project* (2014)
- 4/5 The Future of the City?
 Chevalier, *The Assassination of Paris* (1977)
- 4/12 Reading: Book selected by the class
- 4/19 Student presentations
- 4/26 Student presentations and seminar wrap-up