

Modern Cities in Historical Perspective

HIST 388-002 / 389-004

Syllabus

Prof. Sun-Young Park
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Robinson B 336
Office hours: Th 1:30-2:30pm

Spring 2019
TR 3-4:15pm
Robinson B 228

(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.)

Contact information of 2 classmates:

1. _____
2. _____

Course overview

This course will examine the emergence of the modern metropolis in Europe and the U.S. between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. How do we conceptualize and theorize the modern 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? We will investigate a range of contexts, including Paris, London, Vienna, Berlin, Chicago, Boston, and Washington, D.C. We will be examining literature, prints, photographs, and films alongside historical texts, to address themes such as public health and hygiene, architecture and urban planning, technology, spectacles, nature, gender, race, and class. Over the course of the semester, students will conduct parallel investigations into other modern cities of their choice.

Course requirements

Grade breakdown:

Class participation 15%

Individual research, essay and presentation 25%

Midterm 25%

Final paper 35%

1. *Class participation:* This course will be comprised of both lectures and discussions. You are expected not only to attend each class session, but also to have prepared thoughts on the day's readings for discussion. I may occasionally give unannounced reading quizzes to check that you are keeping up. One of the aims of this course is to teach you how to read and reflect critically on a range of historical texts. Learning to respond to your fellow students' opinions and comments is a valuable part of this process, and a skill you will be able to take with you to future courses.
2. *Individual research, essay and presentation:* You will each select an urban context to focus on over the semester. As a first step, you will identify a primary source (this could be a textual or visual source, such as paintings/photographs/films) that you will analyze to identify historical themes and issues that relate to our class. You will write a short essay (800-1000 words) on this analysis, as well as lead a 15-20 minute class discussion/presentation around this source (to be shared in advance with your classmates) and the city under consideration. This assignment is intended to set the stage for your final paper.

3. *Take-home midterm* (due T 3/5): The midterm will comprise 2 essays (800-1000 words each) based on course readings. The exam will be posted on Blackboard at 4:30pm on Thursday 2/28, and due on Tuesday 3/5, 4:30pm.
4. *Final paper* (8-10 pages, due Th 5/9, 5pm): Building on your initial essay, you will identify a selection of primary and secondary sources to investigate your chosen city through a series of focused research questions and themes. The bibliography and 250-word paper proposal will be due on Thursday 4/11.

Reading assignments

Reading assignments for each week, comprising both primary and secondary texts, will be made available online through Blackboard.

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 with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity (<http://www.gmu.edu/academics/catalog/9798/honorcod.html>). 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 always be respectful of your classmates and professor in your speech and conduct.
- *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. Laptops/tablets may be used solely for note-taking purposes, and not for e-mailing, internet browsing, or using social media. I may occasionally check that you are complying with this policy, and in the case that it is not respected, I reserve the right to prohibit laptop/tablet use for the remainder of the course.
- *Late assignments*: For 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. 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

Week 1 Introduction

T 1/22 Course introduction

R 1/24 Industrialization and the era of urbanization

- Charles Dickens, "Ch.5: The Keynote," in *Hard Times* (1854)
- Victor Hugo, "A Bird's-Eye View of Paris," in *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* (1831)

Week 2 A Tale of Two Cities, part 1

T 1/29 Public health and the urban crisis

- Edwin Chadwick, *Report on Sanitary Conditions* (1842), excerpt
- Maps – cholera in 1832, prostitution in 1836

R 1/31 Birth of modern urbanism

- Honoré de Balzac, *Père Goriot* (1835), excerpt
- Patrice Higonnet, "The Urban Machine," in *Paris, Capital of the World* (2002)

Week 3 A Tale of Two Cities, part 2

T 2/5 Library research techniques + tools session with Dr. George Oberle

- N.B. If you have a laptop, you are encouraged to bring it to class for this session

R 2/7 'Improving' London

- Chris Otter, "Cleansing and Clarifying: Technology and Perception in 19th-Century London," *Journal of British Studies* (Jan. 2004)

Week 4 Urban forms: Rings and grids

T 2/12 Vienna

- Carl Schorske, "The Ringstrasse, Its Critics, and the Birth of Urban Modernism," *Fin-de-siècle Vienna* (1981)

R 2/14 Barcelona

- Martin Wynn, "Barcelona: Planning and Change, 1854-1977," *The Town Planning Review* (1979)

Week 5 World's Fairs

T 2/19 The fair in the city

- Zeynep Çelik, "Islamic Quarters in Western Cities," in *Displaying the Orient* (1992)

R 2/21 The city as fair

- The World's Columbian Exposition: Idea, Experience, Aftermath (<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~MA96/WCE/title.html>)

Week 6 Scenes of the World to Come

T 2/26 Chicago

- William Cronon, "Dreaming the Metropolis," in *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (1991)

R 2/28 New York City

- Jean-Louis Cohen, "Europe Interprets the Skyscraper," *Scenes of the World to Come* (1995)

Week 7 Midterm

T 3/5 Midterm (take home; no class meeting)

R 3/7 Fenwick Library book talk: S. Park, *Ideals of the Body: Architecture, Urbanism, and Hygiene in Postrevolutionary Paris* (2018)

Week 8 Spring Break

Week 9 Imagined futures

T 3/19 Futurism

- Antonio Sant'Elia + Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, "Manifesto of Futurist Architecture" (1914)

R 3/21 Film screening of Fritz Lang, *Metropolis* (1927)

Week 10 Planned cities

T 3/26 The garden city

- Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), excerpt

R 3/28 The modernist city

- Matheus Gorovitz, "Unidade de Vizinhança: Brasília's 'Neighborhood Unit'" (2005)

Week 11 City of memory

T 4/2 Mussolini's Rome

- Joshua Arthurs, "History and Hygiene in Mussolini's Rome," in *Excavating Modernity* (2012)

R 4/4 Divided Berlin

- Brian Ladd, "Divided Berlin," in *Ghosts of Berlin* (1997)

Week 12 Social geographies

T 4/9 Women and the city

- Sarah Deutsch, "The Moral Geography of the Working Girl," in *Women and the City: Gender, Space, and Power in Boston, 1870-1940* (2000)

R 4/11 Subcultures

- George Chauncey, "Urban Culture and the Policing of the 'City of Bachelors,'" in *Gay New York* (1994)
- Due: Final paper proposal and bibliography

Week 13 Sub/urban

T 4/16 White flight

- Eric Avila, "The Nation's 'White Spot': Racializing Postwar Los Angeles," in *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight* (2006)

R 4/18 Urban renewal

- Hilary Ballon, "Robert Moses and Urban Renewal" in *Robert Moses and the Modern City* (2007)

Week 14 The City Monumental

T 4/23 Washington, D.C.

- Histories of the National Mall (<http://mallhistory.org/>)

R 4/25 NO CLASS (Professor away)

Week 15 Contemporary issues

T 4/30 Grand Paris

- François Maspero, *RoissyExpress: A Journey Through the Paris Suburbs* (1994)
- George Packer, "The Other France: Are the Suburbs of Paris Incubators of Terrorism?" *The New Yorker*, 31 Aug 2015

R 5/2 Whose city?

- David Harvey, "The Right to the City" (2008)