History 377 – CITIES IN HISTORY:

THE 20TH CENTURY

AMERICAN CITY

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| Professor: Dr. Kyle Riismandel | Email: [kriis@njit.edu](mailto:kriis@njit.edu) |
| Section: 377-002 | Office: Cullimore 326 |
| Time: Monday and Thursday 1-2:25PM | Office Hours: Monday 3-5 PM and by appointment |
| Classroom: Cullimore 110 |  |

**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 and Assessments:**

**Students will:**

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| Understand the 'production' of urban space through the legal process, media narratives, and cultural representations | Lecture  Primary and Secondary Readings  Discussion  Exams  Paper Assignment |
| Understand the legal history of American cities in the 20th century | Lecture  Primary and Secondary Readings  Discussion  Exams  Paper Assignment |
| Practice the skills necessary to analyze, discuss, and write about primary and secondary sources related to the study of American cities | Lecture  Primary and Secondary Readings  Discussion  Exams  Paper Assignment |

**Course Texts**  
All course readings are available via moodle.njit.edu.

In addition to course readings available via Moodle, all students must read the *Atlantic* magazines blog Atlantic Cities. This blog will be the source of an assignment explained below. You can find the site here - <http://www.theatlanticcities.com>. Another way to keep abreast of the blog is to follow them on Twitter where links to new articles are posted daily - @AtlanticCities.

**Course Grade:**

The course grade will be calculated as follows:

Class participation – 30%

Paper – 20%

Forum discussion post – 10% x2

Final – 30%

**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).

**Discussion Post:**

During the semester, each student must start a discussion about an article they read on the Atlantic Cities blog. The forum post should do three things – 1. Identify the article by title and url 2. Explain the argument of the article 3. Present a question for class discussion.

Each student must also post at least one response to another student’s original post.

Further explanation of this assignment will be provided in a separate assignment sheet available on Moodle.

**Paper:**

The paper assignment sheet will be distributed during the semester.

**Final Exam:**

The final exam will be a comprehensive, take-home essay exam asking you to think comparatively and integratively about the topics and sources covered during the semester.

**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 accrue more than 5 unexcused absences, you will receive an F in this course.** This policy refers to all absences, including missing class because you are ill or have a family emergency. However, if you miss class to attend an NJIT sponsored event, to observe a religious holiday, or documented illness such 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.

Office hours/student appointments: My office hours will be every Wednesday from 3-4 PM. 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 to me. And please come by if you 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. For the tenets of the code or for clarification of what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, please consult: <http://www.njit.edu/academics/honorcode.php>.

Cell phones: Students must turn off 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. You will receive only one warning. After that warning, you will be asked to leave class and marked absent for that class. Though, you may think texting, using Twitter, etc. is innocuous or invisible, it is not. It interrupts the flow of discussion, distracts other students, and will inevitably embarrass the texter when I have to call you out.

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. Further, do not keep headphones in your ears even if you are not listening to anything. 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 – Introduction/Course Expectations/What is a city? /Why study it?**

Jan 23 – Introductions

**Week 2 – The City at the turn of the 20th century**

Jan 27: Lecture

Jan 30: Discussion

Primary Text:

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

<http://www.tenant.net/Community/Riis/contents.html>

Secondary Text:

Timothy Gilfoyle, *City of Eros*, Ch. 10

**Week 3 – Prohibition and Urban Nightlife**

Feb 3: Screening – PBS *Prohibition*

Feb 6: Discussion

Primary Text:

18th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States

Secondary Text:

Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Male Gay World 1890-1940*, Ch. 5, pp. 131-151

**Week 4 – Race and Real Estate**

Feb 10: Lecture

Feb 13: Discussion

Primary Texts

*Shelley v. Kraemer* (1948)

Secondary Text

Arnold Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-*

*1960*, 171-212

**Week 5 – Urban Crisis**

Feb 17: Lecture

Feb 20: Discussion

Primary Text:

Excerpts - Kerner Commission Report (1968)

Secondary Text:

Kevin Mumford, *Newark: A History of Race, Riots, and Rights in America*, Ch. 5, pp. 98-125

**Week 6 – Newark Museum/Historical Society**

**Meet at Newark Museum –**

Feb 24

Feb 27

**Week 7 – Public Housing**

March 3: Lecture

March 6: Discussion

Primary Texts:

Robert Taylor Homes plans and design

*City of Chicago v. Morales* 527 U.S. 41 (1999)

Secondary Text:

Sudahir Venkatesh, *American Project: The Rise and Fall of a Modern Ghetto*, Ch. 2

Newark Primary Text Assignment Due

**Week 8 – The War on Drugs**

March 10: Group Work

March 13: Screening

Primary Text:

*The Wire*, Season 3, episodes 1 and 2

**MARCH 17-24 NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK**

**Week 9 Taxes and Inequality**

March 24: Lecture

March 27: Discussion

Primary Text:

California Proposition 13 (1978)

Secondary Text:

Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland*, pp. 135-177

**Week 10 Environmentalism and Ecojustice in the City**

March 31: Lecture

April 3: Discussion

Primary Text:

Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA), aka Superfund

Secondary Text:

Matthew Klingle, *Emerald City: An Environmental History of Seattle*, Ch. 6, pp. 180-203

**Week 11 – Preservation and Renewal**

April 7: Lecture

April 10: Discussion

Primary Text:

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

Secondary Text:

Susan Datel, "Preservation and a Sense of Orientation in American Cities"

**Paper Due**

**Week 12 – Gentrification**

April 14: Lecture

April 17: Discussion

Primary Text

www.lookatthisfuckinghipster.tumblr.com

http://diehipster.wordpress.com/

Secondary Text:

Neil Smith, “New City, New Frontier,” in *Variations on a Theme Park*

**Week 13 – Stadiums and Sports in the City**

April 21: Lecture

April 24: Discussion

Primary Text

City maps of stadium development

Secondary Text:

George Lipsitz, “The Silence of the Rams: How St. Louis School Children Subsidize the Super Bowl Champs”

**Week 14 Atlantic Cities Forum Post Discussions**

April 28: Forum discussions

May 1: Forum discussions

Primary Text – Selected articles from Atlantic Cities discussions

Final Exam Distribution and Review

**Week 15**

May 5: Final Exam Distribution and Review