

History 97h: What is Urban History?

Harvard College/GSAS: 110445

Spring 2015-16

Course Head: Elizabeth Hinton

TFs: Sonia Tycko

Location: Robinson Lower Library

Meeting Time: Tuesday, 12-3pm



This section will explore the methods historians have used to understand the political, economic, and social development of cities and urban life over the past four centuries. How have historians approached the study of metropolitan regions and their inhabitants? What methods have they used to examine the ways in which social and spatial forms differ by time and place? How does urban history provide a unique vantage to analyze issues of class, ethnicity, migration, race, and gender? Readings and discussions will give special attention to cities and transformations in the United States, but we will draw comparative examples from the histories of urban centers across the globe.

The seminar will meet on Tuesdays, 12-3 pm. During weeks with a scheduled tutorial, the seminar will be divided into two groups: one group meets in normal class time and one meets in an extra time slot TBD.

Course Requirements

- Paper 1: Historical narrative/topic (1500 words) 10%
- Paper 2: Historiographical discussion (1500 words) 10%
- Paper 3: Primary source analysis (1500 words) 10%
- Paper 4: Final paper (3500 words) 30%
- Participation in seminar (20%) and in tutorial (20%) 40%

Course Policies

Collaboration Policy: You are encouraged to exchange ideas and consult your classmates on your paper topic, its content, and to share sources and lecture notes. However, all written assignments must be product of your own original and individual work.

Plagiarism is a grave academic offense, one that disrespects both your own intellectual development and the hard work of your peers. You are required to use standard methods for history citation and to properly note any books, articles, internet materials, etc. using Chicago Style. (For example, in the interest of proper acknowledgement of sources that I used in formulating this policy, I am noting that much of the content of this paragraph comes from Harvard University's suggested collaboration policies). Please consult "Writing with Sources. A Guide for Harvard Students" (available on-line) or speak with me if you have additional questions about what constitutes plagiarism or how to cite correctly.

Accommodations: I am happy to accommodate students with medical, psychological, learning or other disabilities. Students must present their Faculty Letter from the Accessible Education Office and speak with me by September 10th, the end of the second week of the term. All discussions will remain confidential.

Attendance: It is essential that you attend every section meeting and tutorial in order to succeed in this course. If an absence is foreseeable you are expected to notify me or your Teaching Fellow in writing. Excessive absences will severely impact your final grade in the course.

Deadlines and Extensions (Common to all History 97 Courses): Papers must be submitted by the posted deadlines—Sunday before our seminar meeting by 5pm. Late papers will be downgraded by 1 full letter-grade for every 24 hours submitted late (i.e. papers submitted at 5:01pm will receive no higher than a 'B'). This is course policy and no tutor or instructor has any power to alter it. We urge you to plan ahead and to submit early to avoid last-minute problems. The only acceptable excuses for late work are family or medical emergencies. If such an emergency arises, immediately contact the administrative tutor, Elizabeth Cross (ecross@fas.harvard.edu). All extensions must be granted through the administrative tutor. You will need to submit a note from University Health Services, in the case of medical excuses, or your Resident Dean, in the case of family emergencies. If you submit a draft within 2 hours of the deadline, only 1/3 of a letter grade will be deducted per 24 period (such that A- will be the maximum grade).

Required Texts

For purchase (prices from Amazon)--also on reserve in Lamont.

Arlette Farge, *The Allure of the Archive* (Yale UP, 2013) 978-0300176735; \$15 [common to all seminars]

Sam Bass Warner, *Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston* (Harvard UP, 2nd ed. 1978) 978-067482113; \$22.18

Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (NY: Vintage Reissue, 1992) 978-0679741954; \$9.57

Robert Caro, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (New York, Vintage Press 1975) 978-0394720241; \$14.79

Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (Oxford UP, 1985) 978-0195049831; \$14.98

Thomas Sugrue, *Origins of Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton UP, Revised Edition 2005) 978-0691121864; \$29.40

Readings not for sale will be provided via the course website.

Unit 1: What is Urban History?

Examining the Various Approaches to Historicizing Cities

Week 1 (Tuesday Jan. 26)--seminar: past and present motives for doing urban history

- Topics: examining various approaches to urban history, motivations and methods in U.S., Europe, and the Global South
- introduction to course content and discussion.
- introduction to the tutorial elements (led by your tutor)
- discussion of the first assignment (due Week 3).
- Reading:
- Lewis Mumford, "What is a City" in Richard Le Gates and Frederic Stout, *The City Reader*, 92-96.
- David Harvey, "Contested Cities: Social Process and Spatial Form," in Jewson and McGregor, eds. *Transforming Cities: Contested Governance and New Spatial Divisions*, 19-27.
- Peter Hall, "City as Pleasure Principle: Vienna 1780-1910," *Cities in Civilization* (London: Phoenix Giant, c1998) 159-201.
- Mike Davis, "The Treason of the State," in *Planet of Slums*, 50-69.
- Hazel Carby, "Policing the Black Woman's Body in an Urban Context," *Critical Inquiry* 18 (1992): 738-755.

Assignment: Choose a neighborhood in Boston to visit outside of Cambridge. Use either Mumford or Harvey's mode of analysis to report your observations to the class on Feb. 2.

Monday, February 1: Plenary Meeting (CGIS Tsai Auditorium/South Concourse, 6-8pm)

Week 2 (Feb. 2)--seminar: history among the disciplines and across time

- Topics: archives and sources in the history of history (manuscript v. print, archives vs libraries vs museums as repositories)
- Reading:
- Arlette Farge, *The Allure of the Archive* YUP 2013 [common to all seminars]

Assignment: report on your neighborhood observations from Week #1 (2-5 minutes)

Sunday Feb. 7 Paper #1 due by 5pm (1500 words; ca. 5pp): Historical Narrative—Discussion of your narrative and chosen topic for the course

Week 3 (Feb. 9)--tutorials

Meetings in tutorial groups (5-7 students) for peer review. What is the meaning and purpose of revision? What constitutes productive feedback?

Revised paper #1 due Sunday, February 14 by 5pm

Unit 2: Historiography

Emphasizing successive layers of interpretation

The Pioneers and the "New Guard"

Week 4 (Feb. 16)--responses to a historiographical classic

- Topics:
- What is historiography?

- The formation of a field and the context of its rise
- Reading:
- Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Frontier in American History" (1893)
- Arthur Meier Schlesinger, Sr. "The City in American History" (1940)
- Howard Gillette Jr., "Changing Directions in U.S. Urban History," *OAH Magazine of History*, Vol. 5 No. 2 (Fall 1990) pp. 21-25.
- Richard C. Wade, "Urban Life in Western America, 1790-1830," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 64, No. 1 (Oct 1958): 14-30

Assignment: use E-resources to find 2 responses to Schlesinger (including *The Rise of the City*)--one from before World War II and another from the postwar period or the late twentieth century. Bring a print out of each and be prepared to present each of these briefly (5 minutes max) to the class.

Week 5 (Feb. 23)--seminar on tropes--decline, progress, fragmentation

- Topic: what are some major debates in urban history? Is the city a site or a process? Should urban history be concerned with place and development or with demographic changes and social life? What is gained and lost in both approaches?
- Reading:
- Sam Bass Warner, *Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston (1870-1900)*: "Introduction to the Second Addition," Chapters 1-2, Chapter 6-7.
- Joan Scott, "The Glassworkers of Carmaux," 3-48 in Thernstrom and Sennett, eds. *Nineteenth Century Cities: Essays in the New Urban History* (Yale UP, 1969)
- Theodore Hershberg, "The New Urban History: Toward an Interdisciplinary History of the City," *Journal of Urban History* (1978): 3-40
- Terrance MacDonald, "Theory and Practice in the 'New' History: Rereading Arthur Meier Schlesinger's *The Rise of the City 1878-1898*," *Reviews in American History* 20 (1992): 432-445

Assignment: Choose a historiographical footnote (i.e. a reference to a secondary source) to pursue from Timothy J. Gilfoyle's "White Cities, Linguistic Turns, and Disneylands: The New Paradigms of Urban History," *Reviews in American History* (1998): 175-204. Find the work cited in the library or on e-resources and explain how Gilfoyle used that historiographical reference. Be prepared to make a brief oral report on your finding (2-5 minutes).

This week in addition to seminar: Exploring Hollis and E-Resources

Sunday (Feb. 28): Paper #2 due by 5pm (1500 words, ca. 5 pp): Historiographical Discussion- Literature Review for Final Paper

Week 6 (Mar. 1)—tutorials

Meetings in tutorial groups for peer review discussion.

This week and next in addition to seminar: meetings with Elizabeth Hinton on final paper topics.

Revised paper #2 due Sunday, March 6 by 5pm

Unit 3: Primary Source Analysis

Slum Clearance and Urban Development: Do the ends justify the means?

Highlighting the range of historians' use of government documents and of ways of analyzing them.

Week 7 (Mar. 8)—seminar--held at Loeb Library to explore FHA and Government Documents

- Topic: Examining the material context of sources
- Reading:
- Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961): Introduction, Part 1, Part 4, and (equivalent to) 1 Part your choosing
- Robert Caro, *The Power Broker*: Selections of your choosing
- Text of the Housing Act of 1949, Pub. L. 81-171.
- Division of Slum Clearance and Urban Redevelopment, Housing and Home Finance Agency, *The Relationship between Slum Clearance and Urban Redevelopment and Low-Rent Housing*
- Documents of the Federal Housing Authority (at Lamont)
- Documents of the Boston Redevelopment Authority (at Lamont)

Find sources at Lamont that are relevant to your final paper topic

Assignment: Reflect on a final paper topic.

This week in addition to seminar: Meetings with Elizabeth Hinton on final paper topics.

Spring break (Mar. 12-20)

Week 8 (Mar. 22)--seminar: approaches to a primary source

- Topic: Sample different ways of using government documents including laws, brochures, progress reports, etc. to tell an urban history
- Readings:
- Hillary Ballon, "Robert Moses and Urban Renewal: The Title I Program," 94-114 in Hillary Ballon and Kenneth T. Jackson, eds. *Robert Moses and the Modern City: The Transformation of New York*
- Martha Biondi, "Robert Moses, Race, and the Limits of an Activist State," 116-121 in Hillary Ballon and Kenneth T. Jackson, eds. *Robert Moses and the Modern City: The Transformation of New York*
- Craig Stephen Wilder, "Vulnerable People, Undesirable Places: The New Deal and the Making of the Brooklyn Ghetto, 1920-1990," in *A Covenant with Color: Race and Social Power in Brooklyn*, 175-218.

Assignment: declare choice of primary sources and topic for final paper

In class assignment: prepare for capstone presentations

Sunday (March 27): statement of topic and annotated bibliography due

Week 9 (Mar. 29)--tutorials

Meetings in tutorial groups for peer review discussion.

Paper #3 due April 3 by 5pm (1500 words, ca. 5pp): Analysis of a primary source related to your neighborhood of study

Unit 4: Synthesis

How to merge historiographic analysis and primary sources into a historical argument

Week 10 (Apr. 5)--seminar: another classic/ contextualizing and primary source

- Topic: Discuss a pathbreaking work in light of its tropes and historical context
- Reading:
- Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (1985): Introduction, Chapter 1, Chapter 16, and 2-3 Chapters your choosing
- Thomas Sugrue, *Origins of Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (1997): Introduction, Part 1, and 1 Part your choosing

Paper Outline Due Sunday, April 10

Week 11 (Apr. 12)--seminar: in class presentations on final paper

- Assignment: Prepare oral/powerpoint/prezi presentation
- Bring written thesis statement + outline of final paper

Sunday Apr. 17: Draft final papers due by 5pm (10-15 pages, ca 3500 words); these should integrate historiographical analysis, primary source analysis, and contextualization

Week 12 (Apr. 19)—tutorials

Peer review of paper drafts in tutorials

Week 13 (April 26): Final Seminar Session

Monday, May 2, 6-8pm: capstone meeting of whole course, CGIS Tsai

Auditorium/South Concourse, 6-8pm

May 4, 5pm: Revised final papers due