

HIST 36700
American Urban History: New York City

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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 12:30-1:30, Room 5131 D (x7472) NAC

Introduction

Although the course is titled “American Urban History” we will be focusing almost exclusively on the History of New York City. From time to time we will employ a comparative perspective to further our understanding of urban environments, but New York will remain our locus. We will cover a range of historical subtopics, including the development and significance of urban architecture, city planning and design, public space, culture, housing, sexuality, race, and demography. By the end of the course, all of us should develop a heightened understanding of New York’s history, the significance of its evolution, and the larger contextual questions of how urban environments have shaped, and (at least implicitly) will shape, the course of American History.

Additionally, by the end of the course you should be able to analyze and interpret primary sources, synthesize secondary works, conceptualize the evolution of urban processes, and build a foundational knowledge of urban history.

Required Texts

Timothy J. Gilfoyle, *City of Eros: New York City, Prostitution, and the Commercialization of Sex, 1790-1920*

David Nasaw, *Children of the City: At Work and at Play*

Robert A. Caro, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*

David Levering Lewis, *When Harlem Was in Vogue*

Joshua B. Freeman, *Working-Class New York: Life and Labor since World War II*

Assignments

Over the course of the semester you will complete two short papers (4-6 pages), one oral presentation, and a final paper (10-12 pages). Additionally, short quizzes (based on the reading for that day) will be given regularly. Throughout the semester there will also be several web-based assignments involving primary sources. These assignments will be posted on the course website and will count towards participation. Grades will be determined according to the following scale:

Quizzes and Participation, Including Online Contributions (25%)

Final Paper (25%)

First Paper, Second Paper, Group Presentations (50% total)

Schedule

Jan 29: Introduction

Jan 31: Conceptualizing the City

Arthur M. Schlesinger, "The City in American History," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 27 (June, 1940), 43-66.

Zane L. Miller, "The Crisis of Civic and Political Virtue: Urban History, Urban Life and the New Understanding of the City," *Reviews in American History*, 24 (Sep., 1996), 361-368.

Timothy J. Gilfoyle, "White Cities, Linguistic Turns, and Disneyland: The New Paradigms of Urban History," *Reviews in American History*, 26 (Mar., 1998), 175-204.

Feb 5: Vice in the City

City of Eros, Introduction and Part I

Feb 7: Sex and the City

City of Eros, Part II

Feb 12: Abe's Birthday, No Class

Feb 14: Undermining the Underworld

City of Eros, Part III

Feb 15: Film

According to the University today is a Monday, class WILL be held

Feb 19: President's Day, No Class

Feb 21: City Children

Children of the City, Chapters 1-4

Feb 26: Urban Families

Children of the City, Chapters 5-9

Feb 28: Workers

Children of the City, Chapters 10-13

March 5: The Emergence of Greater New York

The Power Broker, Chapters 1-10

Mar 7: City Politics

The Power Broker, Chapters 11-15

Mar 12: New York's Power Brokers

The Power Broker, Chapters 16-19

Mar 14: The Automobile and the City

The Power Broker, Chapters 20-24

Mar 19: Urban Planning

The Power Broker, Chapters 25-28

Mar 21: The New New York

The Power Broker, Chapters 29-35

Mar 26: Changing Power Dynamics

The Power Broker, Chapters 36-40

Mar 28: Walking Tour

Apr 2: Spring Break, No Class

Apr 4: Spring Break, No Class

Apr 9: Spring Break, No Class

Apr 11: African-Americans and the City

When Harlem was in Vogue, Chapters 1-2

Apr 16: The Harlem Renaissance

When Harlem was in Vogue, Chapters 3-4

Apr 18: City Culture between the Wars

When Harlem was in Vogue, Chapters 5-6

Apr 23: Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration

When Harlem was in Vogue, Chapters 7-9

Apr 25: Film

Apr 30: Film

May 2: The Post-Industrial City

Working-Class New York, Part I

May 7: The Working-Class City

Working-Class New York, Part II

May 9: The Fall of New York

Working-Class New York, Part III

May 14: The Modern City

Working-Class New York, Part IV

May 16: September 11th and the Fate of New York