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**instructor:** Dell Upton  
**course title:** History & Anthropology of the Modern City  
**institution:** University of Virginia  
**date offered:** Fall 2004

  

**posted date:** June 2008  
**stable URL:** [www.vafweb.org/resources/syllabi/upton3.pdf](http://www.vafweb.org/resources/syllabi/upton3.pdf)

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**ARH 989/ANTH 759**  
**History & Anthropology of the Modern City**

Dell Upton  
Fall 2004

Instructor's office hours: Wednesday 10-12 in 111 Campbell (odd-numbered Wednesdays) or 202 Brooks (even numbered Wednesdays) or by appointment.

Instructor's e-mail: [du2n@virginia.edu](mailto:du2n@virginia.edu)

Course meets Tuesdays 3:30-6 in 108 Campbell

This course is not intended to be a survey or a comprehensive overview of urban studies. Instead, it is intended to allow students interested in urban history and life to build or extend their acquaintance with fundamental works in the field. Each week we will read and discuss classic and/or current works – both theoretical and monographic – in the history and anthropology of modern (post-18th-century) cities. As a proseminar rather than a research seminar, meaning that the emphasis is on immersion in the literature rather than original student research, hence the writing assignment will consist of two shorter critical papers rather than a long research paper.

Course Requirements

Relentlessly thorough and thoughtful reading, faithful attendance, and active participation in discussion every week.

Two 10-12-page critical papers examining materials other than those we will read together.

1. Pick a major but well-defined urban issue and write a 10-12-page methodological essay examining the ways that various flavors of historians, anthropologists, geographers, and members of at least one other discipline have approached that issue. Obviously a paper of this length cannot treat any of the disciplines or the literature exhaustively. Rather, you should make careful choices that epitomize the disciplines and highlight the advantages and disadvantages of their methods. It might be helpful to look to some of the sample bibliographical and thematic essays listed at the end of this syllabus for models and starting points, but that is not required. Due October 19.

2. A 10-12-page critical essay examining the ways historians, anthropologists, and other urbanists have dealt with a single major city. Again, a paper of this length cannot be a comprehensive overview. Instead you should concentrate on framing the major issues that scholars have raised with respect to your city and on setting them into the larger context of urban studies. **Due November 23.**

### Books for Purchase

We will read all or most of these works – too much, at any rate, to place on Toolkit. I will also place them on two-day reserve.

- Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (2003)
- Matthew Gandy, *Concrete and Clay: Reworking Nature in New York City* (2002)
- David Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity* (2003)
- Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (1996)

## Schedule of Meetings, Readings, and Assignments

Sept. 7. **INTRODUCTION**

Sept. 14. **MODELS & APPROACHES 1**

### Reading:

- Max Weber, *The City* (1958), chap. 1: “The Nature of the City”
- Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life” (1903), in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* (1950), ed. Kurt H. Wolff
- Robert E. Park, “The City: Suggestions for Investigation of Human Behavior in the Urban Environment” (1915), in Robert E. Park, Ernest W. Burgess, & Roderick D. McKenzie, *The City* (1925)
- Louis Wirth, “Urbanism as a Way of Life,” *American Journal of Sociology*, 24/1 (1938): 1-24
- Ulf Hannerz, *Exploring the City: Inquiries Toward an Urban Anthropology* (1980), chap. 2: “Chicago Ethnographers”

### Recommended:

- Don Martindale, “Prefatory Remarks: The Theory of the City,” in Max Weber, *The City* (1958)
- Samuel P. Hays, “From the History of the City to the History of the Urbanized Society,” *Journal of Urban History* 19/4 (Aug. 1993): 3-25

Sept. 21. **MODELS AND APPROACHES 2**

### Reading:

- Paul M. Hohenberg & Lynn Hollen Lees, *The Making of Urban Europe, 1000-1950* (1985), chap. 2: “Systems of Early Cities”
- David Harvey, *The Urbanization of Capital: Studies in the History and Theory of Capitalist Urbanization* (1985), chap. 1: “The Urban Process under Capitalism: A Framework for Analysis”
- Susan S. Fainstein, *The City Builders: Property Development in New York and London, 1980-2000* (2d ed.;

2001), chap. 1: “Economic Restructuring and Redevelopment”

- Catherine L. Ross & Nancey Green Leigh, “Planning, Urban Revitalization, and the Inner City: An Exploration of Structural Racism,” *Journal of Planning Literature* 14/3 (2000): 367-80

**Recommended:**

- Sharon Zukin, *Landscapes of Power from Detroit to Disney World* (1991), chap. 1: “Market, Place, and Landscape”

Sept. 28. **MODELS AND APPROACHES 3**

**Reading:**

- Ernest W. Burgess, “The Growth of the City: An Introduction to a Research Project,” in Robert E. Park, Ernest W. Burgess, & Roderick D. McKenzie, *The City* (1925)
- Richard Dennis, *English Industrial Cities of the Nineteenth Century: A Social Geography* (1984), chap. 7: “The Spatial Structure of Nineteenth Century Cities”
- Sherry Olson, “Urban Metabolism and Morphogenesis,” *Urban Geography* 3/2 (Apr.-June 1982): 87-109
- Sherry Olson, “Baltimore Imitates a Spider,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 69 no. 4 (Dec. 1979): 557-74
- Christopher Alexander, “A City Is Not a Tree,” pt. 2, *Architectural Forum*, 122/2 (May 1965): 58-61

**Recommended:**

- Richard Dennis, *English Industrial Cities of the Nineteenth Century: A Social Geography* (1984), chap. 1: “Urban Geography and Social History”

Oct. 5. **MODERNITY 1**

**Reading:**

- Miles Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity: London's Geographies, 1680-1780* (1998), chap. 1: "Spaces of Modernity"
- Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (1982), "Introduction: Modernity – Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow"
- James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (1998): chap. 3, "Authoritarian High Modernism"
- Brian Owensby, "Domesticating Modernity: Markets, Home, and Morality in the Middle Class in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, 1930s and 1940s," *Journal of Urban History* 24 (1998): 337-63
- Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture* (2000), "Metropolitan Montage: The City as Film in Kracauer, Benjamin, and Eisenstein"

Oct. 12. **READING HOLIDAY**

Oct. 19. **MODERNITY 2**

**Reading:**

- David Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity* (2003)

**Recommended:**

- Sharon Marcus, "Haussmannization as Anti-Modernity: The Apartment House in Parisian Urban Discourse, 1850-1880," *Journal of Urban History* 27/6 (Sept. 2001): 723-45

PAPER 1 DUE TODAY

Oct. 26. COMMUNITIES

**Reading:**

- Brian J. Godfrey, *Neighborhoods in Transition: The Making of San Francisco's Ethnic and Nonconformist Communities* (1988), chap. 2: "A Social Theory of Community Morphogenesis"
- Bryna Goodman, *Native Place, City, and Nation: Regional Networks in Shanghai, 1853-1937* (1995), Introduction: "The Moral Excellence of Loving the Group"
- Lynne B. Feldman, *A Sense of Place: Birmingham's Black Middle-Class Community, 1890-1930* (1999): chap. 3, "Steps Toward Building the Home Sphere"
- Robert Self, "'To Plan Our Liberation': Black Power and the Politics of Place in Oakland, California, 1965-1977," *Journal of Urban History* 26 (2000): 756-92
- Tamar Rothenberg, "'And She Told Two Friends': Lesbians Creating Urban Social Space," in *Mapping Desire: Geographies of Sexuality* (1995), ed. David Bell & Gill Valentine. Pp. 165-181

**Recommended:**

- Robert A. Slayton, *Back of the Yards: The Making of a Local Democracy* (1986), chap. 1: "The World the Meatpackers Made"

Nov. 2. **URBAN CRISIS 1**

**Reading:**

- Carolyn Adams, David Bartelt, David Elesh, Ira Goldstein, Nancy Kleniewski, & William Yancey, *Philadelphia: Neighborhoods, Division, and Conflict in a Postindustrial City* (1991), chap. 2: “Economic Erosion and the Growth of Inequality”
- Herbert J. Gans, *The Urban Villagers: Group and Class in the Life of Italian Americans* (1962; 2d ed.; 1982), chap. 13: “Redevelopment of the West End”
- Katherine G. Bristol, “The Pruitt-Igoe Myth,” *Journal of Architectural Education* 44 (1991)
- Steven Gregory, “The Changing Significance of Race and Class in an African American Community,” in *Theorizing the City: The New Urban Anthropology Reader* (1999), ed. Setha M. Low
- Rebecca Solnit & Susan Schwartzenberg, *Hollow City: The Siege of San Francisco and the Crisis of American Urbanism* (2000), “A Real Estate History of the Avant Garde”

Nov. 9. **URBAN CRISIS 2**

**Reading:**

- Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (1996)

Nov. 16. **NO MEETING**

Nov. 23. **SUBURBIA 1**

**Reading:**

- Richard Harris, *Unplanned Suburbs: Toronto’s American Tragedy 1900 to 1950* (1996), chap. 7: “The Rhetoric and Reality of Community Building”
- Adam Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism* (2001), chap. 1: “Levitt’s Progress: The Rise of the Suburban-Industrial Complex”
- Owen D. Gutfreund, *Twentieth-Century Sprawl: Highways and the Reshaping of the American Landscape* (2004),



chap. 3: “The Decentralization of Post-World War II Denver”

- Herbert J. Gans, *The Levittowners: Ways of Life and Politics in a New Suburban Community* (1967), chap 9: “The Vitality of Community Culture”
- Renee Y. Chow, *Suburban Space: The Fabric of Dwelling* (2002), chap. 4: “Seeing Suburban Dwelling as a Fabric”

## PAPER 2 DUE TODAY

Nov. 30. **SUBURBIA 2**

### **Reading:**

- Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (2003), Prologue and parts 2 & 3

Dec. 7. **CITY AND ENVIRONMENT**

### **Reading:**

- Matthew Gandy, *Concrete and Clay: Reworking Nature in New York City* (2002), Introduction and chaps. 2-5

## Some Useful Recent Bibliographies and Review Essays

- Layla Al-Zubaidi, "Urban Anthropology," at  
<http://www.indiana.edu/~wanthro/URBAN.htm>
- Diego Armus & John Lear, "The Trajectory of Latin American Urban History," *Journal of Urban History* 24 (1998): 291-307
- Richard Dennis, "History, Geography, and Historical Geography," *Social Science History* 15/2 (summer 1991): 265-87
- Timothy J. Gilfoyle, "White Cities, Linguistic Turns, and Disneylands: The New Paradigms of Urban History," *Reviews in American History* 26 (1998): 175-204
- Howard Gillette, Jr., "Rethinking American Urban History: New Directions for the Posturban Era," *Social Science History* 14/2 (1990): 203-28
- Richard Harris, "Canadian Cities in a North American Context," in *North America: The Historical Geography of a Changing Continent* (2001), ed. Thomas F. McIlwraith & Edward K. Muller Pp. 445-62
- Richard Harris & Robert Lewis, "The Geography of North American Cities and Suburbs, 1900-1950: A New Synthesis," *Journal of Urban History* 27 no. 3 [Mar. 2001]: 262-92
- Samuel P. Hays, "From the History of the City to the History of the Urbanized Society," *Journal of Urban History* 19/4 (Aug. 1993): 3-25
- "Review Essay: Historicizing the City of Angels," *American Historical Review* 105 (2000): 1667-91
- Mingzheng Shi, "Secondary Sources in Chinese Urban History: A Topical Bibliography," *Journal of Urban History* 27 no. 1 (Nov. 2000): 114-24
- Mary Corbin Sies, "North American Suburbs, 1880-1950: Cultural and Social Considerations," *Journal of Urban History*, 27/3 (Mar. 2001): 313-46
- Mary Corbin Sies, "North American Urban History: The Everyday Politics and Spatial Logics of Metropolitan Life," *Urban History Review/Revue d'histoire urbaine* 32/1 (fall 2003): 28-42
- University of Massachusetts, "Urban Anthropology: Library Research Guide,"  
<http://www.library.umass.edu/subject/anthro/urban.html>