

# Art 197G

## The City

Professor Max Page

Office: 362 Fine Arts Center  
545-6940

Email: [mpage@art.umass.edu](mailto:mpage@art.umass.edu)  
<http://people.umass.edu/mpage/>

Office Hours: by appointment

This course will offer students a global introduction to the development of cities around the world. It will also examine approaches to the study of cities. The course will break fundamentally with the traditional nation-based approach to the study of cities. Instead, we will look at cities around the world and emphasize the growing movements of people, capital, and ideas between very different cities across the globe. We will look for universal aspects of urban life, across time and place, while defining the sharp differences in how people live, work, and interact in cities around the world.

Students in the Honors Colloquium will meet separately with the instructor to discuss the readings, and will devise a final paper that focuses on a city or urban issue of their choice.

### Readings

The books for this course can be purchased at Food for Thought Books on North Pleasant Street. I will also be giving you additional readings during the course of the semester, either by handing out xeroxes at the beginning of class, or sending you them electronically via email. These readings are marked with an asterisk (\*).

Bridge and Watson, eds., *The City Reader* (Blackwell) --- listed as **BW** in the syllabus  
LeGates and Stout, eds, *The City Reader* (Routledge, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition) -- listed as **LS** in the syllabus

### Course Requirements

#### 1. Class Attendance and Participation

This course will be a cross between a lecture course and a seminar. I will lecture for part of the class and then we will discuss the ideas raised in my lecture as well as the readings. The success of the class therefore depends on the regular, informed, energetic participation of its members. I am strongly committed to encouraging everyone to participate in class discussions.

## 2. Weekly Commentaries

In order to spark discussion, I would like each of you to email me, by midnight the night before Tuesday's class, a brief (no more than one page) series of questions or commentary about the topic and/or readings for that week. This might be a brief review of a reading or readings, or perhaps a discussion of something you saw in the newspaper that seemed germane to the topic of that class. **The weekly questions and comments will not be graded, but you must do them (i.e. not submitting them will affect your grade). In no more than three weeks of the term, you may submit the weekly commentary Wednesday night.**

## 3. Midterm

There will be in-class mid-term on March 16.

## 4. Final Exam

There will be a take-home exam due on

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## Week 1 What is a City?

**January 31** Introduction

**February 2** What is a City?

Readings:

Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life" BW

W.J. Mitchell, from *City of Bits: Space, Place, and the Infobahn*  
BW

Charles Dickens, from *Bleak House* BW

Djuna Barnes, "The Hem of Manhattan" BW

## Week 2 Origins

**February 7** Ancient Cities

**February 9** European Urbanism

Readings:

Kingsley Davis, "The Urbanization of the Human Population" LS

Kitto, "The Polis" LS

*First Person Accounts of Great Cities* LS

Engels, *The Great Towns* LS

Lughod, "The Islamic City: Historic Myths, Islamic Essence, and  
Contemporary Relevance" LS

William Cronon, from *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*  
BW

### **Week 3 Elements of the City**

**February 14** Plans

**February 16** The Image of the City: Boundaries, Pathways, Nodes, Walls, Landmarks

Readings:

Le Corbusier, from *The City of Tomorrow and its Planning* BW

Jane Jacobs, from *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* BW

Jane Jacobs, "Uses of Sidewalks: Safety" LS

Kevin Lynch, from *The Image of the City* BW

Frank Lloyd Wright, "Broadacre City: A New Community Plan" LS

James Holston, from *The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasilia* BW

### **Week 4 No Class this week**

**February 21** No Class -- Monday schedule followed

**February 23** No Class

### **Week 5 How People Live in Cities**

**February 28** Housing Types

**March 2** Neighborhoods and Ghettos: Community and Division

Readings:

Richard Sennett, from *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization* BW

Ernest W. Burgess, "The Growth of the City" BW

Mohammed Mahbubur Rahman, "Bastee Eviction and Housing Rights: A case of Dhaka, Bangladesh" BW

William Julius Wilson, "From Institutional to Jobless Ghettos" LS

James Q. Wilson and George Kelling, "Broken Windows" LS

### **Week 6 The Economy of Cities**

**March 7** Urban Economies and Urban Form

**March 9** Division and Inequality in the City

Readings:

David Harvey, "The Urban Process Under Capitalism" BW

Allen J. Scott, from *Metropolis: From the Division of Labor to Urban Form* BW

Susan Buck-Morss, from *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* BW

Aili Mari Tripp, from *Changing the Rules: The Politics of Liberalization and the Urban Informal Economy in Tanzania* BW  
Michael Porter, "The Competitive Advantage of the Inner City" LS  
Lindsay Bremner, "Reinventing the Johannesburg Inner City" BW  
John R. Logan and Harvey L. Molotch, from *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place* BW

## **Week 7 Public Places and Public Life**

**March 14** Public Lives, Urban Lives

Readings:

Richard Sennett, from *The Fall of Public Man* BW  
Henri Lefebvre, "The Right to the City" BW  
Setha M. Low, "Spatializing Culture: The Social Construction of Public Space in Costa Rica" BW  
Robert Putnam, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital" LS

**March 16** Midterm Exam

## **Week 8 March 21 and 23 SPRING BREAK**

## **Week 9 Public Places and Public Life, continued**

**Monday March 27, 4 pm** Attendance at the following lecture is required:

Sarah Whiting, Princeton University School of Architecture  
"Superblocking"  
Gordon Hall, 418 North Pleasant Street

**March 28** Walking the City

Readings:

"Author's Introduction," "The Relationship Between Buildings, Monuments, and Public Squares," and "The Enclosed Character of the Public Square"  
Walter Benjamin, from *The Arcades Project*  
Michel de Certeau, from *The Practice of Everyday Life* BW  
Judith R. Walkowitz, from *City of Dreadful Night: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* BW  
Elizabeth Wilson, from *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder, and Women* BW

**March 30, 4:30 pm** No regular class, but attendance at the following lecture is required:

Professor Engin Isin, York University, “*Other Global Cities: Beirut, Cairo, and Delhi*”  
Graham Hall, Smith College

### **Week 10 Public Places and Public Life, Continued**

**April 4** Public Parks: Nature in the City

**April 6** Crucibles of Culture: How Cities Promote or Hinder the Mixing of Cultures

Readings:

Frederick Law Olmsted, “Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns”  
LS

Neil Smith, “After Tompkins Square Park: Degentrification and the Revanchist City” BW

Sharon Zukin, “Whose Culture? Whose City?” LS

Mike Davis, “Fortress L.A.” LS

Mike Davis, from *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles*  
BW

**April 7** Trip to Boston

You should plan ahead to spend the whole day on this trip.

### **Week 11 Crucibles of Culture, continued**

**April 11** Case Study: Holyoke

Class will meet in South Holyoke at 9. Plan on returning by noon. We will be accompanied by Professor Joseph Krupczynski

**April 13** No Class -- Passover

### **Week 12 Urban Change in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

**April 18** Suburbanizing the City

Readings:

Ebenezer Howard, "Author's Introduction" and "The Town-Country Magnet" LS

Kenneth Jackson, “The Drive-in Culture of Contemporary America” LS

Robert Fishman, “Beyond Suburbia: The Rise of the Technoburb” LS

Duany and Plater-Zyberk, “The Neighborhood, the District, and the Corridor” LS

Peter Hall, from *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century* BW

**April 20** No class -- Passover

### **Week 13 Cities and Disaster: A Natural and Unnatural History**

**April 25** The Resilient City: Cities and Disaster in History

**April 27** The Kindness of Strangers: 9/11 and Katrina, New York and New Orleans

Readings:

Sorkin, "The Center Cannot Hold" LS

Readings on 9/11 and New Orleans, to be distributed

### **Week 14 The City of the Imagination**

**May 2** The Inspiration of the City

**May 4** Memory in the City

Readings:

Jeri Johnson, "Literary Geography: Joyce, Woolf and the City" BW

James Joyce, from *Dubliners* BW

Virginia Woolf, from *Mrs Dalloway* BW

Marguerite Duras, from *The Sea Wall* BW

Hanan al-Shaykh, from *Beirut Blues* BW

Sharon Zukin, from *Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World* BW

Stout, "Visions of a New Reality: The City and the Emergence of Modern Visual Culture

### **Week 15 The Contemporary City**

**May 9** Global Cities, Megacities

**May 11** Sprawl: Critics and Defenders

Readings:

Melvin Webber, "The Post-City Age"

Saskia Sassen, from *Globalization and its Discontents*

Green Urbanism and the Lessons of European Cities LS

Dolores Hayden, "What Would a Non-sexist City Be Like? Speculations on Housing, Urban Design, and Human Work" LS

Akhtar A. Badshah and Janice E. Perlman, "Mega-cities and the Urban Future: A Model for Replicating Best Practices"

### **May 17 Conclusion**