FYSM-190: Reading the City
Fall Semester 2020

Time: Tues. & Thurs. 3:55-5:10 pm  
Instructor: Sean Fitzpatrick
Office: 70 Vernon St. 307
Email: sean.fitzpatrick@trincoll.edu
Phone: (860) 297-4124 (o)  
(860) 970-4360 (c)
Office hours: Tuesdays, 1:00-3:00 p.m.
Zoom Office Link: https://trincoll.zoom.us/j/5192366278

Classroom: Admissions Bldg., Room 301
First-Year Mentor: Ali Odermann ‘21
Email: alison.odermann@trincoll.edu
Phone: (913) 426-3100 (c)

Syllabus

Course Description:

“The City,” as both a social phenomenon and an ideal of human collaboration, evokes questions that have long engaged scholars, artists, and critics. Trinity College’s own urban setting has powerfully shaped its heritage and increasingly informs its mission. Recent events, from the COVID-10 pandemic to an accelerating cycle of urban protest movements, have only heightened our awareness of the paradoxes and inequities that persist in our cities. In this seminar, we will examine the idea and the reality of “the City” through readings from a variety of disciplines and viewpoints, exploring the promise and the perils of our urban centers.

Course Readings:

Required course texts are available at the Trinity College Bookstore.

Eric Mumford, Designing the Modern City Urbanism Since 1850 (Yale Univ. Press, 2018) (“Mumford”).

Additional weekly readings will be posted on Moodle.

9.6.20. ed.
**CLASS GROUND RULES:**

Intellectual honesty is the obligation of all students to their classmates and the entire Trinity College community. The *Student Handbook* lays out the College’s policy on cheating and plagiarism. You are responsible for knowing and following all College policies, including the *nine rules of intellectual honesty* found on pages 13-14 of the Handbook. Also

In addition, to encourage a classroom environment that supports respectful, critical inquiry through the free exchange of ideas, the following principles will guide our work:

- Treat every member of the class with respect, even if you disagree with their opinion;
- Reasonable minds can differ on any number of perspectives, opinions, and conclusions;
- Because constructive disagreement sharpens thinking, deepens understanding, and reveals novel insights, it is not just encouraged, it is expected;
- All viewpoints are welcome;
- No ideas are immune from scrutiny and debate; and
- You will not be graded on your opinions.

**WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:**

The requirements and due dates for writing assignments will be provided on Moodle. For writing assignments where citations are appropriate, please refer to the *Chicago Manual of Style*, which is also a useful reference for questions of grammar and usage.

For any assistance you may require with these assignments, you are encouraged to use the College’s *Writing Center*, staffed by specially trained Writing Associates, to improve your writing, no matter your skill level. To make an appointment using the online scheduling system, use [https://trincoll.mywconline.com](https://trincoll.mywconline.com).

We also have our own librarian assigned to this course, Rob Walsh. You’ll meet Rob (virtually) during our first week of class and are urged to consult with him about your research (or other library-related) questions at any time during the semester. You can make an appointment with Rob at this link: [https://libcal.trincoll.edu/appointments/rob](https://libcal.trincoll.edu/appointments/rob).

**GRADING:**

Course grades will be based 30% on class participation; 40% on the short writing assignments; and 30% on the final paper.1

---

1 The grading scale is based on the 100 total points possible from the above percentages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97.5-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93.5-97.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>89.5-93.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87.5-89.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83.5-87.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>79.5-83.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77.5-79.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73.5-77.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>69.5-73.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67.5-69.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63.5-67.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>59.5-63.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assignments turned in late will be subject to a 5-point deduction in grade for each day late, absent special permission from the Instructor obtained prior to the due date.

Copyright © 2020 Sean M. Fitzpatrick
Class Schedule & Readings

Week 1 (Sept. 8 & 10, 2020)—Visions of the American City: The City and English America


9/10: John Winthrop, “City on a Hill” Sermon (1630); John Bunyan, The Pilgrim’s Progress (1678) [excerpts]; Frederick Douglass, “Coming to Baltimore,” Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass (1845) [excerpt].

Guest lecture by Librarian Rob Walsh.

Week 2 (Sept. 15 & 17, 2020)—The City and Early America


Week 3 (Sept. 22 & Sept. 24, 2020)—Industrialization, Urbanization, and Immigration


Week 4 (Sept. 29 & Oct. 1, 2020)—The Gilded Age and the Industrial City

9/29: Mallach, pp. 13-19; Upton Sinclair, The Jungle (1906) (excerpt); Theodore Dreiser, Sister Carrie (1900) (excerpt); DuBois, The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study (1901), Ch. 4, Sec. 12 (excerpt).

Week 5 (Oct. 6 & Oct. 8, 2020)—The Muckrakers & Progressivism


10/8: Wiebe, 164-195; Herbert Croly, *The Promise of American Life* (1909), Ch. 1, Sec. 3.

Week 6 (Oct. 13 & Oct. 15, 2020)—The “City Beautiful” and “Garden City” Movements


10/15: Mumford, pp. 112-137; Jacobs, pp. 1-25.

Week 7 (Oct. 20 & 22, 2020)—The Great Depression, the New Deal, and “Political” Urbanism


Week 8 (Oct. 27 & 29, 2020)—“Mid-Century Modern:” Deindustrialization, Suburbanization, and Conflict in an Age of Consensus


10/29: Jacobs, pp. 29-88; Mumford, 202-219.

Week 9 (Nov. 3 & 5, 2020)—Cities of Color: “Minorities” and the City


11/5: Ruth Glasser, “From ‘Rich Port’ to Bridgeport: Puerto Ricans in Connecticut,” in *Puerto Rican Diaspora*, Ch. 8 (Carmen Whelan & Victor Vasquez, eds. 2005); Llana Barber, “If We Would… Leave the City, This Would Be a Ghost Town,” in Chen & Bacon, Ch. 4, pp. 65-81.

Week 10: (Nov. 10 & 12, 2020)—Crucibles of Cool: Cities, Noir & the Counterculture


Week 11 (Nov. 17 & Nov. 19, 2020)—Cracks in the Celestial City: Urban Decline & Renewal; The Fascination of Dystopian Fiction


Over Thanksgiving Break:

Watch: Alexander Mackendrick, Sweet Smell of Success (1957) [film]
Watch: Ridley Scott, Blade Runner (1982) [film]

Suggested additional reading: Philip K. Dick, Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? (1968) (Blade Runner was based on this short novel set in an urban dystopia.)

Week 12 (Dec. 1 & 3, 2020)—Inequality and the Paradoxes of Gentrification


Week 13 (Dec. 8 & 10, 2020)—The New Urbanism and the Age of COVID-19

