



FYSM-190: Reading the City

Fall Semester 2022

Time: Tues. & Thurs. 1:30-2:45 pm

Classroom: Seabury N128

Instructor: Sean Fitzpatrick

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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.

Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961) (Vintage Books ed., 1992) (“Jacobs”).

Alan Mallach, *The Divided City: Poverty & Prosperity in Urban American* (Island Press, 2018) (“Mallach”).

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

David Scobey, *Empire City: The Making and Meaning of the New York City Landscape* (Temple Univ. Press 2002) (“Scobey”).

Xiangming Chen & Nick Bacon, *Confronting Urban Legacy: Rediscovering Hartford and New England’s Forgotten Cities* (Lexington Books 2013) (“Chen & Bacon”).

Erik Larson, *The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair That Changed America* (Vintage Books 2003) (“Larson”).

Additional weekly readings will be posted on Moodle.

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. Please submit all writing assignments in Microsoft Word format (.doc or .docx).

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>.

We also have our own librarian assigned to this course, [Yoli Bergstrom-Lynch](#). You'll meet Yoli at the beginning of the semester and are urged to consult with her about your research (or other library-related) questions at any time during the semester.

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:

A+ = 97.5-100	A = 93.5-97.49	A- = 89.5-93.49
B+ = 87.5-89.49	B = 83.5-87.49	B- = 79.5-83.49
C+ = 77.5-79.49	C = 73.5-77.49	C- = 69.5-73.49
D+ = 67.5-69.49	D = 63.5-67.49	D- = 59.5-63.49
F = 0-59.49		

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.

Class Schedule & Readings

Week 1—The American City: Themes and Memes

Class 1: Andy Reischling, “New York City and the Staging of Disaster,” *Los Angeles Review of Books* (8/9/2020); Mortice, “Chicago’s 1855 ‘Beer Riot’ Is a Bridge to the Unrest of 2020,” *Bloomberg CityLab* (8.14.2020); Donald Trump & Ben Carson, “We’ll Protect America’s Suburbs,” *Wall St. Journal* (8/16/2020); Kiley Gosselin & Kevin Taylor, “Connecticut’s ‘Suburban Strategy’ Caused Segregation. It’s Time to Fix It,” *Hartford Courant* (Aug. 22, 2020).

Class 2: 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]; Ron Chernow, “Alexander Hamilton: City Boy,” *New York Times* (4/25/2004); Clay Jenkinson, “Thomas Jefferson, Epidemics and His Vision for American Cities,” *Governing.com* (4/1/2020).

Week 2—The City and Early America

Class 3: Andrew Walsh, “Hartford: A Global History,” Chen & Bacon, pp. 21-29; Mumford, pp. 4-19, 41-49; W.E.B. DuBois, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (1901) Ch. 3, Sec. 7 (excerpt).

Class 4: Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order: 1877-1920* (1967), pp. 1-43 (“Wiebe”); Mumford, pp. 79-85; William Dean Howells, *A Modern Instance* (1882), Ch. XIII, pp. 111-16.

Week 3—Industrialization, Urbanization, and Immigration

Class 5: David Scobey, *Empire City: The Making and Meaning of the New York City Landscape* (2002), pp. 55-88; Chen & Bacon, pp. 29-38.

Class 6: Kevin Kenny, “Race, Violence, and Anti-Irish Sentiment in the Nineteenth Century,” *Making the Irish American* (New York Univ. Press 2006), Ch. 13 at pp. 364-377; W.E.B. DuBois, *The Philadelphia Negro*, Ch. 4, Sec. 10-11 (excerpt).

Week 4—The Gilded Age and the Industrial City

Class 7: 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); Lawrence Biemiller, “Mills and Canals Preserve History of Holyoke, Mass.,” *Chronicle of Higher Education* (1996).

Class 8: Mumford, pp. 49-59; Scobey, pp. 89-157.

Week 5—Progressivism & The Muckrakers

Class 9: Wiebe, 164-195; Herbert Croly, *The Promise of American Life* (1909), Ch. 1, Sec. 3.

Class 10: Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Leadership in Turbulent Times* (2018), pp. 135-43; Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives* (1890) (excerpts); Lincoln Steffens, *The Shame of the Cities* (1904) (excerpts); Herbert Asbury, *The Gangs of New York* (1927) (excerpts).

Week 6—The “City Beautiful” and “Garden City” Movements

10/11: No class; Trinity Days.

Class 11: Mumford, pp. 59-67 & 85-96; Erik Larson, *The Devil in the White City* (2003), pp. 1-255.

Week 7—The Great Depression, the New Deal, and “Political” Urbanism

Class 12: Mumford, pp. 138-193; Le Corbusier, “A Noted Architect Dissects Our Cities,” *New York Times Magazine* (Jan. 3, 1932); Frank Lloyd Wright, “Broadacre City: An Architect’s Vision,” *New York Times Magazine* (Mar. 20, 1932).

Class 13: Wirth, “Urbanism as a Way of Life,” 44 *Amer. J. of Sociology* 1-24 (1938); Mumford, 112-137; F. Scott Fitzgerald, “My Lost City” (1932).

Week 8—“Mid-Century Modern:” Deindustrialization, Suburbanization, and Conflict in an Age of Consensus

Class 14: Mallach, pp. 19-31; Robert Caro, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (1974), Ch. 39, pp. 895-919; Jacobs, pp. 1-25.

Class 15: Jacobs, pp. 29-88; Mumford, 202-219; Zipper, “The Dangerous Promise of the Self-Driving Car,” *Bloomberg* (Oct. 2021).

Suggested additional reading: Meryman, “The Jimmy File,” *Hartford Courant* (Jan. 28, 2001).

Week 9—Cities of Color: “Minorities” and the City

Class 16: Nicholas Lemann, *The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How It Changed America* (1991), pp. 3-7, 70-77 & 117-129; Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America’s Great Migration* (Vintage Books 2011), pp. 8-15; Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law* (2017), pp. 59-75 & 106-109.

Class 17: Hunter S. Thompson, “Strange Rumbblings in Aztlan,” *Rolling Stone*, No. 81 (Apr. 29, 1971); 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—Crucibles of Cool: Cities, Noir & the Counterculture

Class 18: Fred Kaplan, *1959: The Year That Changed Everything* (2010), pp. 26-38; 1969 Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (1957), Part II, Ch. 4; David Hinkley, “Greenwich Village and the Birth of the Folk Movement,” *NY Daily News* (Aug. 14, 2017); “[The Hippie Temptation](#),” *CBS News* (Aug. 22, 1967) [video]; 10,000 Maniacs, “[Hey Jack Kerouac](#),” on *MTV Unplugged* (1993) [song]; Bruce Springsteen, “[Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out](#),” on *Born to Run* (1975) [song].

Class 19: “Stonewall Riots,” *History.com* (May 31, 2017); Frank O’Hara, “Avenue A” (1960) [poem] and “Walking” (1964) [poem]; Jameson Fitzpatrick, “[Morning Scene](#)” (2014) and “[A Poem for Pulse](#)” (2016), *Pricks in the Tapestry* (Birds 2020) [poems], pp. 58-60; Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class Revisited* (2012), pp. 237-265.

Week 11—Cracks in the Celestial City: Urban Decline & Renewal; The Fascination of Dystopian Fiction

Class 20: Jacobs, pp. 270-290; Chen & Bacon, pp. 38-45; Edward Banfield, *The Unheavenly City Revisited* (1974), pp. 25-51.

Class 21: Mumford, pp. 294-300; Condon, “City Revival—Did We Learn from the Urban Renewal Era?” *CT Mirror* (June 24, 2019); Chatelaine, “The NYC That Never Was: Robert Moses’ Lower Manhattan Expressway,” *UntappedCities.com* (Sept. 11, 2013); Schwartz, “When June Jordan and Buckminster Fuller Tried to Redesign Harlem,” *New Yorker* (Aug. 22, 2020).

Week 12—The Fractured City in Art

No class 11/22 and 11/24.

Watch: Alexander Mackendrick, *Sweet Smell of Success* (1957) [film]

Watch: Ridley Scott, *Blade Runner* (1982) [film]

Listen: Bob Dylan, “[Desolation Row](#),” on *Highway 61 Revisited* (1965)

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 13—Inequality and the Paradoxes of Gentrification

Class 22: Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law* (2017), pp. 39-57; Mallach, Ch. 4, pp. 75-96; Jacqui Rabe Thomas, “Separate by Design: How Some of America’s Richest Towns Fight Affordable Housing,” *CT Mirror* (May 22, 2019); Michael Agranoff, “Save Our Towns: We Must Say No to Death by Zoning,” *Journal Inquirer* (Aug. 18, 2020). Visit: DesegregateCT.org.

Class 23: Mallach, Ch. 5-6, pp. 97-143; Oppel, *et al.*, “The Fullest Look Yet at the Racial Inequity of Coronavirus,” *NY Times* (July 6, 2020).

Week 14—The New Urbanism and the Post-Pandemic City

Class 24: Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class Revisited* (2012), pp. 183-202; pp. 280-303; Mumford, pp. 312-316; Peter Moskowitz, *How to Kill a City* (2017), pp. 1-10, 181-195; Regional Plan Ass'n, *The Fourth Regional Plan* (Nov. 2017).

Class 25: Joseph De Avila, *et al.*, "Connecticut's Big Bet on the Suburbs. That Might Finally Pay Off," *Wall St. J.* (July 12, 2020); Smith, [*U.S. Cities Are At A Crossroads*](#), *Bloomberg* (July 5, 2021); Condon, "Getting Back to the River," *CT Mirror* (July 18, 2021); Condon, "Boston Fed and CT Community Foundations Fight for Inclusive Recovery," *CT Mirror* (May 31, 2021); Tunku Varadarajan, "Can America's Cities Make a Post-Pandemic Comeback?" *Wall St. J.* (May 27, 2022); Joel Kotkin, "Reconsidering the City," *Quillette* (June 9, 2022); Sarah Holder, "On TikTok, Teens Stuck in the Suburbs Get the Urbanist Pitch," *Bloomberg CityLab* (July 15, 2022).