



History 221 Introduction to US Urban History

Description

Cities have shaped the American imagination. At times serving as beacons of hope and others as symbols of failure, there is no denying that they have played a central role in US history. This class provides an introduction to American cities from the eighteenth century to the present. As urban historians in training, students will investigate urban economics, culture, and politics. Special emphasis will be placed on the production of urban spaces and their relationship to ever-changing historical power dynamics. How have cities been planned, designed, and contested over time? How have the consequences of those decisions—intended and unintended—continued to shape the cities today? Regardless of whether students lived in cities, suburbs, or small towns, Introduction to US Urban History invites everyone to consider how studying urban history can change their understanding of national history.

Meeting Time and Location: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 1:20-2:10 PM

Instructional Modality: Online

Credit Hours: 3

Credit Hour Policy: One credit is the learning that takes place in at least 45 hours of learning activities, which include time in lectures or class meetings, in person or online, exams, presentations, tutorials, reading, writing, studying, preparation for any of these activities, and any other learning activities.

Professor Information:

Dr. Paige Glotzer

Assistant Professor of History, University of Wisconsin-Madison

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Office: Humanities 4116

Office Hours

Day and Time: Wednesdays, 2:15-4:15 PM Central or By Appointment

Zoom link can be accessed through Canvas

Explanation: The purpose of office hours is to provide a regular time where you can talk about any topic related to class. This may include questions about the reading or assignments, concerns about your grades, or chatting about a topic that sparked your interest during lecture. No appointment is necessary. I can also help with techniques for better succeeding in class. For example, come to discuss tips for how to take notes or study.

Course Learning Outcomes

- Investigate how the spaces of American cities are produced.
- Describe the relationships between different parts of metropolitan areas (such as cities and suburbs) through US history.
- Interpret urban spaces and artifacts as primary sources with information to offer about the past.
- Examine the important and dynamic roles of race, class, and gender in urban history.
- Explain how cities have changed over time through online discussions and activities.
- Argue how knowledge of the urban past can shape decisions about urban futures, including with evidence from online sources.
- Practice evaluating digital sources of information, such as virtual history exhibits and media.

Grade Scale

93-100% A 78-82% BC 0-59% F

88-92% AB 70-77% C

83-87% B 60-69% D

Grades are not curved.

Grades

- Participation in class meetings – 25%
- Completion of all surveys and all components of the orientation module – 5%
- Reading quizzes – 15%
- Activity Assignments – 35%
- Midterm Exam – 20%

Graded Work

Midterm Exam – The midterm exam will be an untimed, open book, unproctored exam. The exam will open on Monday, March 7 and close on Sunday, March 13. Students are not required to complete the entire exam in one sitting.

Reading Quizzes – Reading quizzes will be short untimed quizzes. Each quiz will open on Mondays and close on Wednesday before class. Quizzes are designed to ensure students practice reading regularly with the discerning eye of an urban historian. They encourage students to not only stay current with weekly reading but to complete it in time for synchronous meetings.

Activity Assignments – Each week there will be one asynchronous activity to complete. Each activity applies the toolset of an urban historian. The variety of assignments is intended to be enriching while acknowledging that members of our classroom have different learning styles. A full list of these assignments with grading rubrics and instructions will be available before the start of the semester. Use this advance list to plan each week accordingly. All activities will be submitted for grading through Canvas.

Diagnostic and exit surveys – At the beginning of each week a short poll will help Professor Glotzer understand what knowledge students are already bringing to a topic. Exit surveys at the end of each week will help Professor Glotzer understand what students have learned. Completing these surveys makes the class better and, best of all, they are an easy way to maintain a good grade: The only thing graded about surveys is whether they are completed, not the answers themselves.

Participation – Participation will be measured with the rubric attached to this syllabus. The rubric will also be available on Canvas. Attendance and participation in synchronous meetings is required. Students have two unexcused absences during the semester that will not affect their grade. Students do not need to inform Professor Glotzer ahead of time or provide a reason for the absence. The reason for this is that it takes a critical mass of people to make a class work. Each student is an important member of our classroom community.

Required Reading

Reading for this class will consist of articles, book excerpts, primary sources, and digital history projects. All material will be free and available digitally through one or more of the following: Canvas, the UW library, the internet.

Digital Considerations

The following guidelines will facilitate creating a welcoming, engaging seminar community.

- 1) Keep your camera on when possible
- 2) Mute yourself if you are not speaking
- 3) Be generous and understanding when we experience technical difficulties.
- 4) Be generous and understanding when members of our class have more limited bandwidth or differential access to technology.
- 5) Provide feedback on what is or is not working. All of our voices are needed to make our class successful.

Digital Instructional Tools

Canvas will be our class hub. All meetings will be conducted on Zoom. Links to our Canvas and Zoom will be sent when available.

The orientation unit for this class includes tutorials for all digital learning tools and university resources we will use this semester. Testing your technology and reading about these resources are so important that completing the orientation is 5% of your grade.

Consult with the UW Department of Information Technology (DoIT) for the best options to access technology, including loaned hardware, management of slow internet, as well as the locations of campus computer labs and printers. One link to get started is DoIT's [technology guidelines and recommendations](#)

Resources for Success and Well Being

Consult the list of resources on Canvas for campus services that assist with academics, health, and safety. Do you know a resource missing from this list? Contact Professor Glotzer to have it added.

Diversity & Inclusion Statement

[Diversity](#) is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Professor Glotzer is committed to creating a class where everyone can feel welcomed, included, and ready to learn. Disability will not be stigmatized in History 221 and should not be treated as something “bad” or “less than” in general. Accommodations are all about acknowledging that default university and workplace settings might have been created with a narrow vision of who might use them; accommodations help alter those short-sighted decisions to be more reflective of human diversity. If you have or think you may have a disability (e.g. attentional, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical) speak directly with Professor Glotzer and/or contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center, where staff members can unlock possibilities.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy ([UW-855](#)) require the university to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities to access

and participate in its academic programs and educational services. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

Contact: The McBurney Disability Resource Center

Website: <https://mcburney.wisc.edu/>

Phone: (608) 263-2741 Address: 702 W. Johnson Street, Suite 2104

Email: mcburney@studentlife.wisc.edu

Dependent Care Policy

I ask that all students work with me to create a welcoming environment that is respectful of diversity, including diversity in parenting and caretaking status.

1. All breastfeeding babies are welcome in class as often as is necessary.
2. Children are welcome on camera.
3. You do not need to inform me ahead of time if you are bringing a child to class. We can think of them as junior scholars auditing to determine if they want to study history.
4. Finally, I understand that the fatigue caused by caretaking can be a barrier to completing coursework. While I maintain the same high expectations for all students regardless of caretaking status, I am happy to problem-solve with you in a way that makes you feel supported as you strive for balance.

To learn more about UW-Madison's pregnant and parenting student policies and resources, see <https://doso.students.wisc.edu/guide/accommodations-for-life-events/pregnancy-and-parenting-students/>

Academic Integrity Statement

By virtue of enrollment, each student agrees to uphold the high academic standards of the University of Wisconsin-Madison; academic misconduct is behavior that negatively impacts the integrity of the institution. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these previously listed acts are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary action include, but is not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion.

Schedule

For the purpose of our class, a module begins on Monday and ends on Sunday, except when the university's academic calendar differs, such as the first week of the semester. Complete all assigned reading and reading quiz by Wednesday of each week before class. The course rhythm page of the orientation module on canvas explains each course component in depth.

Orientation Module (Module 0) – Available beginning January 3rd

Module 1 January 26-30 – Why Study Urban History and How to Do It

- Read: E.B. White, *Here is New York* (New York: Harper, 1949); Primary sources
- Activity: None

No reading quiz

Module 2 January 31-February 6 – The Early American City

- Read: Shannon Lee Dawdy, *Building the Devil's Empire: French Colonial New Orleans* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), Chapter 2; Primary sources
- Activity: Digital history projects exploration and response

Module 3 February 7-13 – Degrees of Freedom in the Antebellum City

- Read: Seth Rockman, *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), Chapter 3; Primary sources
- Activity: Collaborative primary source annotation. Ketchup.

Module 4 February 14-20 – City Growth

- Read: Selections from William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991); Sherry Olson, "Baltimore Imitates the Spider," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 69, no. 4 (December, 1979): 557-574; Primary sources
- Activity: Map interpretation - Reading growth in primary source maps.

Module 5 February 21-27 – The Progressive Era

- Read: Martin Melosi, *The Sanitary City: Environmental Services in Urban America from Colonial Times to Present (Abridged Edition)* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2008), Chapter 8; Primary sources
- Activity: City planner role play discussion thread

Module 6 February 28-March 6 – Movement, Migration, and the First World War

- Read: Shannon King, *Whose Harlem Is This Anyway? Community Politics and Grassroots Activism During the New Negro Era* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), Chapter 1; Primary sources
- Activity: Group concept maps

March 7-11 – Midterm and Mid-Semester Check In

Spring Break

Module 7 March 21-27 – Urban Change During the Great Depression

- Read: Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), Chapter 11; Primary sources
- Activity: Primary source analysis

Module 8 March 28-April 3 – Postwar Urban Change

- Read: Alex Krieger, *City on a Hill: Urban Idealism in America from the Puritans to the Present* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2020), Chapter 14; Primary sources
- Watch: William Whyte, *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*
- Activity: Analyzing space like William Whyte

Module 9 April 4-10 – The Urban Crisis

- Read: Llana Barber, *Latino City: Immigration and Urban Crisis in Lawrence* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017) Chapter 4; Primary sources
- Activity: Primary source comparison

Module 10 April 18-24 – The Urban Present

- Read: Davarian Baldwin, *In the Shadow of the Ivory Tower: How Universities Are Plundering Our Cities* (New York: Bold Type Books, 2021) Chapter 3; Mike Davis, “The Case for Letting Malibu Burn,” *Environmental History Review* 19, no. 2 (Summer, 1995): 1-36; Dan Egan, “A Battle Between a Great City and a Great Lake,” *New York Times*, July 7, 2021; Primary sources
- Activity: Debate Discussion Thread

Module 11 April 25-May 1 – The Urban Future

- Read: Dolores Hayden, “What Would a Non-Sexist City Look Like? Speculations on Housing, Urban Design, and Human Work,” in *Gender Space Architecture: An Interdisciplinary Introduction*, Jane Rendell et. al., eds. (New York: Routledge, 2000): 268-271; Primary sources

- Watch: Excerpts of *Blade Runner*, *The Jetsons*, *Escape from New York*
- Activity: 3-4 page paper

Module 12 May 1-May 6 – Urban History as US History

- Read: Primary sources and recent news articles
- Activity: Collaboratively synthesize the semester’s major themes with the course learning objectives

Participation Rubric

| Excellent (90-100) | Good (80-89) | Competent (70-79) | Inadequate (60-69) | Fail (0-59) |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| -Mastery over readings and previous discussion -Explores questions rigorously -Comes to class with interpretations and questions -Engages others | -Knows readings well -Consistent preparation and involvement -Offers analysis of texts in class | -Basic grasp of reading -Mostly offers facts or surface-level interpretations -Contributes when called upon but not actively engaged | -Insufficient command of reading -Attempts to contribute facts or interpretations when called but unable to offer substance | -Uninvolved -Unexcused -Disruptive |