History 201: The Historian's Craft
The Suburb in American History

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Schedule 1-on-1 Meetings @ https://calendly.com/faigin
Office Hours Tuesday/Thursday 3:30-4:30 @ 5265 Humanities

Course Description

This course is designed to explore the development of the suburb in 20th century American history. We will consider major social, cultural, and political developments as they took form in suburban spaces. We will focus on the connections between suburban, urban, and rural spaces and the way that race and space take form in different kinds of environments. This course is particularly focused on the way that suburban spaces—so often peripheral and decentralized—became central to the story of American history, and in fact, world history in the postwar period. This course considers a variety of sources as historical documents, including traditional monographs and articles, as well as literature and film. As we contemplate the past, we must set aside time to contemplate the historical contingencies that shape our own lives, and the historical memories that we in turn shape.

Learning Goals

- Analyze primary and secondary sources for historical content and argument.
- Produce written assignments that demonstrate attentive revision, thoughtful analysis, clarity of thought, historical accuracy, and logical consistency.
- Develop clear communication skills both inside and outside of the classroom.
- Use library resources, including online databases and archival materials, to answer research questions.
- Appreciate the historical contingencies of the world that we live in, particularly as they relate to racial, spatial, and cultural structures.
- Recognize the historical relationship between suburban, urban, and rural spaces.

Credit Statement

The credit standard for this course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit), which include in class seminars, reading, and writing as described in the syllabus.

Assignments and Late Policy

As a Comm-B course, the assignments in this course will foster the development of critical reading, thinking, and evidence-based writing. Assignments emphasize revision, review, and improvement. Grades are weighted to reward growth. Students will complete two 3-page primary source analyses, one 5-page historiography, and one 8-page research paper. In addition, students will prepare two 5-minute presentation on the subject of their choice.

For more detailed information, and rubrics for all assignments, please consult the Assignments module on Canvas.

<u>Grade Distribution</u>

Weekly Participation – 5%
Weekly Reading Reflections – 10%
3-Page Analysis – 10%
2-Page Precis – 10%
5- Page Historiography – 15%
“The Swimmer” Analysis – 10%
Presentation – 5%
Annotated Bibliography – 5%
Research Paper (incl. Peer Review) – 30%

<u>Weekly 3-2-1 Reading Reflections</u> (10%)

Every week, you will be asked to complete a reading reflection which will be shared with a reading partner. Each reading reflection should contain three new ideas from the reading, two

ways in which the reading expanded or deepened knowledge you already had, and one question for your peer. Each reading reflection should be approximately 250-300 words. To receive full credit for your own assignment, you must evaluate and respond to your peer's questions in Canvas by Sunday. One reading reflection will be dropped at the end of the semester.

Three Page Primary Source Analysis (10%)

In this assignment, you will think historically about one of the assigned primary sources. Your analysis should contextualize the document and make a claim about its historical significance. Analysis may be framed by one of the central course themes: suburbanization, colonization, racial formation, or environmental change.

Two Page Precis (10%)

In this assignment, you will be asked to summarize one of the assigned secondary sources. Students should identify the argument of the text and the evidence used to support said argument. Students should incorporate feedback from this assignment into the 5-page historiography due two weeks hence.

"The Swimmer" Analysis (10%)

During the third week of the course, we will be reading "The Swimmer" by John Cheever. For this assignment, you will be asked to identify the way that suburban space shapes the lives of the central characters of the novel. To answer this question, you will need to consider the broader processes of suburbanization and masculinity. Your responses should be approximately 500 words.

Five-Page Historiography (15%)

In this assignment, you will be asked to identify how historians have thought about the suburbs, and how the professional consensus on suburban life has changed over time. This paper should build from the secondary source evaluated in the two-page precis. Successful papers will account for the historical context that has shaped developments in historical thought.

Oral Presentation (5%)

To fulfill the Comm-B requirement, students must share two oral presentations.

1) During the first week of class, students will be asked to select a reading to present on. During their selected week, students should offer some brief comments on the selected reading and offer questions for discussion.
2) Students are expected to prepare a brief 5-minute oral presentation about their research project in the final week of class.

Annotated Bibliography (10%)

In preparation for your research paper, you will compile an annotated bibliography. Your annotated bibliography should contain at least two secondary sources and four primary sources. At least two of your primary sources should be from online archival sources or the UW Library. Each source should be accompanied by a brief statement (150-200 words) that summarizes the document and explains its relevance to your research.

Eight Page Research Paper (30%)

As your final project, you will produce a 1,500-to-2,000-word research paper on a topic of your choosing. The paper should explicitly address one of the following course themes: suburbanization, racial formation, colonization, or environmental change. You need not draw from the assigned reading, though you may find it helpful to do so. Papers will be evaluated for clarity, accuracy, coherence of logic, organization, and lastly, correct mechanics and grammar. Papers should have an original thesis and should not repeat the arguments of the secondary literature cited therein.

Late Policy

Assignments that are turned in late with no prior communication will lose 1/3 grade for every day that they are late. Extensions will be granted on a case-by-case basis. Extensions must be requested at least twenty-four hours before the assignment is due and students must specify the desired length of the extension in their request.

History Lab

Students are encouraged to use the History Department's own writing center, The History Lab. The History Lab is staffed by graduate students in the History Department, available to help you with brainstorming, research, revisions, and even those pesky citations. In addition to in person services, they have several helpful writing guides, many of which we will be interacting with throughout the semester.

To schedule an appointment at the History Lab, click here.

Accessibility

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 (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform me of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. I will work either directly with the you or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

The McBurney Disability Resource Center
Phone: (608) 263-2741
Address: 702 W. Johnson Street, Suite 2104
Email: mcburney@studentlife.wisc.edu

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

By virtue of enrollment, you agree 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.

For detailed information, please see https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-misconduct/

Required Texts

All texts and course materials will be made available on Canvas.

Reading Schedule

Unit A – The Suburban Emergence

Week 1 – Thinking Historically

9/8 Readings:

- "Cities and Their Suburbs." In Douglas, Harlan. *The Suburban Trend.* New York and London: The Century Co., 1926. 3-38. Link
- "Introduction." In Jackson, Kenneth. *Crabgrass Frontier*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987. eBook.
- Forsyth, Ann. "Defining Suburbs" *Journal of Planning Literature,* vol. 27 no. 3 (2012): 270-281 PDF

9/8 HC: What does it mean to ask an historical question?

Week 2 – Historicizing Suburbs

9/13 Readings:

- "The Outskirts of Town: The Geography of Black Suburbanization Before 1940," in Wiese, Andrew. *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982. Accessed September 20, 2021. ProQuest Ebook Central. eBook

- Farm Security Administration Photos. Link
    - Choose 3 search terms related to the reading. Do the photos match the analysis in the argument? How do they differ? What kind of search terms do you think Wiese used?
- Blumberg, Leonard, and Michael Lalli. "Little Ghettoes: A Study of Negroes in the Suburbs." *Phylon (1960-)* 27, no. 2 (1966): 117–31. https://doi.org/10.2307/273955.
- 1940 Census. Link

9/15 HC: What is a primary source? How can we use primary sources to understand the past?

Week 3 – Making the Suburban from the Hinterland

9/20 Readings:

- "Prologue." In Cronon, William *Nature's Metropolis.*
- "Introduction" and Notes for Introduction. In Needham, Andrew. *Power Lines: Phoenix and the Making of the Modern Southwest*, 1-19, 261-268. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014. https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/10.1515/9781400852406-004

9/22 HC: What is a secondary source? How do historians use secondary sources as evidence to support their arguments?

Due 9/22 (via Canvas): 3-Page Primary Source Analysis
Due by 9/22: Schedule first in-person meeting via Calendly

Week 4 – Making the Suburban from the Hinterland, pt. 2

9/27 Readings:

- Needham, Andrew, and Allen Dieterich-Ward. "Beyond the Metropolis: Metropolitan Growth and Regional Transformation in Postwar America." Journal of Urban History 35, no. 7 (November 2009): 943–69. https://doi.org/10.1177/0096144209347741.

9/29 HC: What is historiography? How do historians evaluate scholarly debates?

Unit B – Suburban Cultural Space

Week 5 – Cold War Consumerism

10/4 Readings:

- Mennel, Timothy. "Victor Gruen and the Construction of Cold War Utopias," *Journal of Planning History,* 2004-5, vol. 3 (2): 116-150.
- Review Library Guide: https://libguides.mnhs.org/southdale/ov

10/6 HC: How can we use the library catalog to identify potential sources? How do researchers construct thoughtful queries?

Due 10/6 (via Canvas): 2-Page Precis

Week 6 – Streetcar Suburbs become Autopias: The Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956
10/4, 10/6

10/11 Readings:

- "Suburban Nation" and Notes (p. 364-) in Wells, Christopher W., and William Cronon. *Car Country: An Environmental History.* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012. muse.jhu.edu/book/22359.
- Normile, John and Robert M. Jones. "$50,000 Worth of Ideas in a Low-Cost Home: Better Homes Gardens Five Star Program Brings You." *Better Homes and Gardens*, 08, 1949, 37-41, 142-147, https://ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/login.
- Moses, Robert. "HIGHWAYS AND MEANS: CAR, BUS, AND TRUCK AGAINST RAILROAD." *Town & Country*, 04, 1953, 35-38, 83, 85, 90, 93, https://ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/login.
- Women's Magazine Archive
    - Search "Levittown" (or another key term from the article). Identify **one source cited** and **one source not cited** in the notes of *Car Country.*

10/13 HC: How can we use newspaper and periodical databases to find primary sources? What other kinds of databases do historians use?

Week 7 – Ethnoburbs in the Age of Immigration Reform

10/18 Readings:

- Chapter 3. Fong, Timothy. *The First Suburban Chinatown: The Remaking of Monterey Park, California.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010. muse.jhu.edu/book/9750.
- Monterey Park Oral History Project. Pick one cited by Fong and listen.
- Online Archive of California

10/20 HC: What is an archive? How do historians use archives to identify primary sources?

Due 10/20 (via Canvas): 5-Page Historiography

Unit C – Suburban Politics: Local and National

Week 8 – Cold War Suburbs

10/25 Readings:

- "A Feeling of Crisis." James Gilbert, *Men in the Middle* (University of Chicago Press, 2005).
- John Cheever, "The Swimmer"

10/27 HC: Using Literature as a Primary Source

Week 9 – Public, Private, Politicized Space

11/1 Readings:

- Meyerowitz, Joanne. "Beyond the Feminine Mystique: A Reassessment of Postwar Mass Culture, 1946- 1958." *The Journal of American History* 79, no. 4 (1993): 1455–82. https://doi.org/10.2307/2080212.
- Excerpts. Feminine Mystique.

11/3 HC: Visit to WHS

Due 11/3 (via Canvas): "The Swimmer" Analysis

Week 10 –Suburban Warriors and Suburban Saints

11/8 Readings:

- "'A Sleeping Giant is Awakening': Right Wing Mobilization, 1960-1963." In McGirr, Lisa. *Sububan Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001. https://hdl-handle-net.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/2027/heb.02237
- John Birch Society Film Clips (archive.org)

11/10 HC: Annotated Bibliographies

Week 11 – Taxpayers Revolt and NIMBYism

11/15 Readings:

- Connor Dougherty, "Twilight of the Nimby." *The New York Times,* June 5, 2022. https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/05/business/economy/california-housing-crisis-nimby.html
- "5. A Question of Size," E. F. Schumacher, *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*, 1973.

11/17 HC: The Chicago Manual of Style

Due 11/17 (via Canvas): Annotated Bibliography

Unit D – The Suburban Decline?

Week 12 – Thanksgiving

HC: Individual Meetings

Week 13 – Global Capital shapes All-American Cities

11/29 Readings:

- Piggot, William. "Globalization from the Bottom Up: Irvine, California, and the Birth of Suburban Cosmopolitanism," *Pacific Historical Review,* vol. 81, no. 1 (2012): 60-91.

12/1 HC: How to provide thoughtful feedback in a peer-review environment.

Due 12/1 (via Canvas): Drafts for Peer Review

Week 14 – The Shrinking Suburbs

12/6 Readings:

- Davis, Mike "Ozzie and Harriet in Hell: On the Decline of Inner Suburbs." In Saunders, William. *Sprawl and Suburbia: A Harvard Design Magazine Reader.* First edition ed., Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005. muse.jhu.edu/book/32386.
- Ian Bogost, "Revenge of the Suburbs," *The Atlantic* (June 2020) https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2020/06/pandemic-suburbs-are-best/613300/
- Olivia Rodrigo "drivers license" https://youtu.be/ZmDBbnmKpqQ
- Billie Eilish "Therefore I Am" https://youtu.be/RUQl6YcMalg

12/8 HC: How to Give a Presentation

Due 12/8 (via Canvas): Peer Review Comments on Drafts

Week 15 – Final Presentations

Due 12/13 (in class): Oral Presentation
Due 12/21 (via Canvas): Final Papers