

AMERICAN URBAN HISTORY

History 13-246
Kauke 101
T R 1 - 2:20 PM
Spring Semester
2005

Alphine W. Jefferson
Office: Kauke 213
Hrs: M W 1- 2: T R 3-5 PM
By appointment @
330-263-2455

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

America is known by her big cities, those amazing congeries of people and houses, offices and factories, which constitute the nerve centers of our civilization, the ganglia of our collective being. America is dominated by her cities as they draw into them the brawn and wealth of the hinterland.¹

This course presents an intensive, though kaleidoscopic, examination of the emergence, development, growth and maintenance of America's urban areas. Throughout history, the city has been the seat of economic and political power as well as the principle arena for social change, reform movements and mass protest. Despite its reputation for tolerance, the city has been a bastion of reactionary manipulations, conservative control and corrupt politics. Conflict among the various urban constituencies creates the intensity of urban life. The intersection of race, class and gender are quite pronounced in metropolitan areas. Moreover, the city allows a personal anonymity, which fosters the emergence and preservation of distinct subcultures. These operate to define and redefine the essence of urban culture in America.

For every story of success and glory, there are innumerable sagas of empty dreams and shamed faces; yet, Americans continue their love affair with the city. It remains the arbiter of fashion, the architect's sandlot, the demagogue's nest, the media's source, the musician's beat, the people's fantasy, and the writer's mirror. This course asks simply: Why?

The interdisciplinary nature of Urban Studies specifically, and American Studies in general, necessitate that special attention be given to the development of critical reading, writing and thinking skills. Thus, several of the classroom exercises and writing assignments are designed to emphasize those skills. In order to achieve its goals, the course will employ a variegated format of class discussions, group exercises, short-lectures, student presentations, map tests, and papers. In addition, art, films, literature and music are utilized to explore the various dimensions of life in the city.

FORMAL REQUIREMENTS:

Daily attendance, high-level class participation and sustained evidence of superior preparation, through regular contributions to the intellectual life of the class, are expected of all students. Frequent absences will lower the final grade. **IF YOU ARE LATE, DO NOT COME TO CLASS. One letter grade (1.00) will be deducted for each day a paper is late. A paper is late if it is not on the desk before class begins at 1:00 PM. There will be no exceptions to this rule. NO NOT EMAIL YOUR PAPER. An explanation is not an excuse.** Make-up examinations will be given only with a Certification of Excused Absence from the Dean's Office.

1

1) St. Claire Drake and Horace R. Cayton, Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1945.

In addition, it is your responsibility to read, comprehend, and comply with "The Code of **Academic Integrity**" at the College of Wooster as delineated in **THE SCOT'S KEY**.

Each of the following will constitute ONE – THIRD of the final grade:

1. There will be FOUR (4) short (3 -5 pages) Papers.
2. There will be a Midterm Examination.
3. There will be a Comprehensive Final Examination.

The syllabus consists of a calendar of required readings, topics, and assignments. The following books are available for purchase at the Bookstore and are on Reserve in Andrews Library.

READINGS TO BE ASSIGNED:

Dennis Covington, SALVATION ON SAND MOUNTAIN
Paul Fussell, CLASS
Samuel Fussell, MUSCLE
Howard Chudacoff, EVOLUTION OF AMERICAN URBAN SOCIETY
David, Nasaw, CHILDREN OF THE CITY
John Reid, THE BEST LITTLE BOY IN THE WORLD
Philip Slater, THE PURSUIT OF LONELINESS
William Struck, THE ELEMENTS OF STYLE

FILMS FOR WHICH YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE:

BEEFCAKE
BLADE RUNNER
City of God
GANGS OF NEW YORK
THE GRAPES OF WRATH
THE IMMIGRANTS
ROSEWOOD

CALENDAR OF ASSIGNMENTS, REQUIRED READINGS, AND TOPICS:

JAN	18	Introduction to Urban History Perspectives and Interpretations
	20	Central Themes and Primary Issues in Urban History Bring a map of America, a Region or City Read: Slater, Chp. 1, 2
	25	The Meaning of Life in the Modern City Read: Slater, Chps. 3 - 5
	27	The Urban Ethos: We Work to Play and Consume to Live Read: Slater, Chps. 6, 7
FEB	01	Hot Pursuit: The Business of Being Busy and Lonely PAPER NUMBER ONE DUE TODAY (Be prepared to present your work.)
	03	From Rural Production to Urban Commerce Read: Chudacoff, Chps. 1, 2
	07	From Horse and Buggy to Train and Car

Read: Chudacoff, Chps. 3, 4

09 Immigrants, Migrants and Social Mobility

Read: Chudacoff, Chps. 5, 6

Read: Jefferson, Handout

15 Social Engineering, Planning and Reform

Read: Chudacoff, Chps. 7, 8

17 Growth: Core, Periphery and Suburbanization

Read: Chudacoff, Chps. 9, 10

22 **SEMESTER EXAMINATION NUMBER ONE
(Three essay questions.)**

24 The Children: Looking Up From Down Below

Read: Nasaw, Chps. 1, 2

MAR

01 Child Labor, Child Play and the Little Hustlers

Read: Nasaw, Chps. 3 - 5

03 Money for Love, Money for Junk

Read: Nasaw, Chps. 6 - 8

08 Work, Save, and Spend: Families in Need

Read: Nasaw, Chps. 9 - 11

10 The End of Innocence: The Beginning of Labor

Read: Nasaw, Chps. 12, 13

PAPER NUMBER TWO DUE TODAY

SPRING BREAK

29 The Economic and Culture Dynamics of Class

Read: P. Fussell, Chps. 1 - 3

31 What Counts: The House, The Car, The Kids, and The Toys

Read: P. Fussell, Chps. 4 - 6

APR

05 The Conspiracy of Silence about Class

Read: P. Fussell, Chps. 7 - 9

07 Salvation in Whiteness and Jesus

Read: Covington, Chps. 1 - 4

12 WHITESNAKE, Roots and Snakes: Folk Culture and Cures

Read: Covington, Chps. 5 - 8

14 Wal-Mart: Heaven in Appalachia, Hell on Earth

Read: Covington, Chps. 9 - 11

PAPER ASSIGNMENT NUMBER THREE DUE TODAY

19 The City and Subcultures: Hidden Identities

Read: Reid, Chps. 1 - 5

21 College Myths and the Underdevelopment of Youth

Read: Reid, Chps. 6 - 10

26 The City: A Place of Anonymity and Autonomy
Read: Reid, Chps. 11 - 15

228 Muscle and Masculinity: Beefcake at the YMCA
Read: S. Fussell, Chps. 1 – 5

MAY

03 Drugs, Needles and Deprivation: Escorts for Sale
Read: S. Fussell, Chps. 6 – 10

05 Urban Health Nuts, Gym Bunnies and Muscle Heads
Read: S. Fussell, Chps. 13 – 15

PAPER NUMBER FOUR DUE TODAY

10 FINAL EXAMINATION
Tues day 02:00 – 05:00 PM
(Three essay questions.)