

Grinnell College  
Department of History  
Spring 2008

**History 295: European Urban History**

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Mears 212

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Course meetings: T-TH 12:45-2:05, Science 3821  
Office Hours: Monday 10:15-12 p.m., Thursday 2:30-3:30 p.m., or by appointment

While the existence of cities stretches back to antiquity, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are fundamentally associated with urban life. This course analyzes the transformation of the European urban landscape and European urban life from the nineteenth-century explosion of urbanization and industrialization to the present day. We will concentrate on London, Paris, Vienna, and Berlin, although the course is not a comprehensive history of any of these cities. Particular attention will be devoted to several key themes: the emergence of urban planning, from Baron Haussmann's work in mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century Paris to the "New Towns" of post-World War II England and France; the aesthetics of urban life, from the historicism of the Ringstrasse in Vienna to the twentieth-century triumph of the "International Style" and the particular aesthetics of Fascism; the advent of urban "modernity" (and "modernism") as expressed in politics, art, and a nascent mass consumer and leisure culture; the personal experience of war, poverty, and immigration in the city; and the connection between the urban landscape, political legitimacy, and memory.

Course Requirements

1. Discussion (20%)

All students are expected to do all of the course readings at the time they are indicated on the syllabus, and to actively participate in class. Our class meetings are mandatory. While you may miss two meetings for any reason, any further failure to attend will have a negative impact on your participation grade unless this absence occurs due to a medical condition or a family emergency. In addition, I reserve the right to not issue a passing grade to any student who misses more than six class sessions (again barring medical or family emergencies).

As part of your participation grade, you will – in groups of three – be responsible for one 15-minute oral presentation over the course of the semester, on dates indicated on the syllabus. Your group will do outside research on the assigned topic (see "Presentation Schedule"), and will then present your findings at the beginning of class. (You can be as creative as you would like with the form of the presentation, as long as you all speak and address the topic at hand).

## 2. Papers (60%: 15% for the two 5-page papers, and 30% for the 8-10 page paper)

You will submit three essays over the course of the semester. The first two will be 5-page papers, in response to one of several designated questions distributed several weeks in advance. The second is an 8-to-10-page paper, due near the end of the semester, intended to give you the opportunity to write about a particular topic or question encountered during the course that you found most particularly engaging. This is not a primary-source paper, but you must base it on secondary sources outside of the syllabus to supplement our class readings.

You will also note that you must submit an (ungraded yet mandatory) paper proposal three weeks ahead of the final paper due-date; this consists of a two-paragraph statement of what you intend to write about and the sources you plan on using for the project.

## 3. Final Exam (20%)

You will have a take-home final examination dealing synthetically with the overall themes from the course.

## Texts and Readings

The following books are available for purchase at the Grinnell College Bookstore. While I will attempt to place a copy of each on reserve at Burling Library, I would strongly recommend that you purchase them for your own convenience and to look incredibly well-read when you carry them around campus or display them prominently on your bookshelf.

Roger V. Gould, *Insurgent Identities: Class, Community, and Protest in Paris from 1848 to the Commune* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995)

Emile Zola, *The Ladies' Paradise* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) [*Au Bonheur des Dames*]

Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna. Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980)

Mehdi Charef, *Tea in the Harem* (London: Serpent's Tail, 1989)

Karen Till, *The New Berlin: Memory, Politics, Place* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005)

The following readings are required and available on PioneerWeb:

Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1984), 90-110

Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (London: Penguin Books, 1987, orig. 1845), 68-109

Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1993, orig. 1963), 59-138

Lewis Mumford, *The City in History* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1961), 446-474

Judith Walkowitz, "Jack the Ripper and the Myth of Male Violence," *Feminist Studies* 8 (3): 1982, 542-574

Sally Ledger and Roger Luckhurst, eds., *The Fin de Siècle: A Reader in Cultural History c.*

- 1880-1900 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 27-38
- Ebenezer Howard, *Garden Cities of To-Morrow* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1965, orig. 1902), 29-57
- T.C. Horsfall, *The Improvement of the Dwellings and Surroundings of the People: The Example of Germany* (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 1901), 1-34
- Walter Gropius, *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus* (Boston; Charles T. Branford Company, 1955), 19-66
- Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 31-121
- Charles-Edouard Jeanneret-Gris (Le Corbusier), *The Radiant City* (London: Faber and Faber, 1964, orig. 1933), 90-142
- Janet Abu-Lughod, *Rabat, Urban Apartheid in Morocco* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 131-173
- Zeynep Celik, "Le Corbusier, Orientalism, Colonialism," *Assemblage* No. 17 (April 1992), 58-77
- Erik Jensen, "Crowd Control: Boxing Spectatorship and Social Order in Weimar Germany," in *Histories of Leisure*, ed. Rudy Koshar (Oxford: Berg, 2002), 79-101
- Siegfried Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995, orig. 1963), 74-86
- Michael Minden and Holger Bachmann, eds., *Fritz Lang's Metropolis: Cinematic Visions of Technology and Fear* (Rochester, N.Y.: Camden House, 2000), 1-45
- Barbara Miller Lane, *Architecture and Politics in Germany, 1918-1945* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), 185-216
- Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 217-251
- Helmut Gruber, *Red Vienna: Experiment in Working-Class Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 45-80
- Tyler Stovall, *The Rise of the Paris Red Belt* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1990), 9-40, 109-144
- Patrick Abercrombie, *Greater London Plan 1944*, TBA
- Ruth Andreas-Friedrich, *Battleground Berlin: Diaries 1945-1948* (New York: Paragon House Publishers, 1990, orig. 1949), 1-78, 214-256
- Paul Silverstein and Chantal Tetreault, "Postcolonial Urban Apartheid," [http://riotsfrance.ssrc.org/Silverstein\\_Tetreault/](http://riotsfrance.ssrc.org/Silverstein_Tetreault/)

## **Schedule of Readings and Assignments**

### ***Part I: Industrialization, Urbanization, and the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century City***

#### **Week 1**

- January 22            Introduction: Theorizing the City (de Certeau, 90-110)
- January 24            The City in History

#### ***Readings:***

Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*

## Week 2

January 29 Industrial Shocks and Urbanization in England (Engels, 68-109)  
January 31 The Victorian City: Critics and Defenders (Mumford, 446-474; Briggs, 59-138)

### *Readings:*

Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*; Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities*;  
Lewis Mumford, *The City in History*

## Week 3

February 5 Haussmannization in Paris (Gould, 1-95)  
February 7 The Paris Commune of 1871 (Gould, 153-206)  
**Presentation #1**

### *Readings:*

Roger Gould, *Insurgent Identities*

## Week 4

February 12 From the Morgue to the Department Store (Zola, part I)  
February 14 Consumer Society in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Europe (Zola, part II)  
**Presentation #2**

### *Readings:*

Emile Zola, *The Ladies' Paradise*

## Week 5

February 19 Vienna and the *Ringstrasse* (Schorske, 24-110)  
**Presentation #3**  
**FIVE-PAGE PAPER DUE FEB. 19, MEARS 212, 5 P.M.**

February 21 Politics in a New Key? (Schorske, 116-175)

### *Readings:*

Carl Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*

## Week 6

February 26 Outcast Cities and Social Reformers (Walkowitz, 542-574; Luckhurst and Ledger, 27-38)  
**Presentation #4**  
February 28 Garden Cities and Town Extension Planning (Howard, 29-57, Horsfall, 1-34)

### *Readings:*

Judith Walkowitz, "Jack the Ripper and the Myth of Male Violence"; Sally Ledger and Roger Luckhurst, eds., *The Fin de Siècle*; Ebenezer Howard, *Garden Cities of To-Morrow*; T.C. Horsfall, *The Improvement of the Dwellings and Surroundings of the People*

## ***Part II: Modernist Fantasies***

### **Week 7**

- March 4                    WWI as Urban Experience (Healy, 31-121)  
**Presentation #5**  
March 6                    Modernism, part I: Bauhaus, Mies and the Berlin Style (Gropius, 19-66)

#### *Readings:*

Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire*; Walter Gropius, *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus*

### **Week 8:**

- March 11                    Le Corbusier and the International Style (Le Corbusier, 90-142)  
March 13                    The European City in the Colonies (Celik, "Le Corbusier, Orientalism, Colonialism," 58-77; Abu-Lughod, 131-173)

**PAPER #2 DUE MARCH 14, MEARS 212, 12 P.M.**

#### *Readings:*

Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City*; Zeynep Celik, "Le Corbusier, Orientalism, Colonialism"; Janet Abu-Lughod, *Rabat, Urban Apartheid in Morocco*

## **SPRING BREAK!**

### **Week 9**

- April 1                    Culture in Interwar Berlin (Jensen, 79-101; Kracauer, 74-86; Minden, 3-45)  
**Presentation #6**

**APRIL 1                    FILM NIGHT: *METROPOLIS* (Dir.: Fritz Lang, 1927),  
7 p.m., venue TBA**

- April 3                    Discussion of Metropolis (Minden, 82-105)

#### *Readings:*

Erik Jensen, "Crowd Control: Boxing Spectatorship and Social Order in Weimar Germany"; Siegfried Kracauer, "The Mass Ornament"; Michael Minden and Holger Bachmann, *Fritz Lang's Metropolis*

### **Week 10**

- April 8                    The "Red Belts" of Paris and Vienna (Stovall, 9-40, 109-144; Gruber, 45-80)  
April 10                    Authoritarian Urban Solutions (Miller Lane, 185-216; Benjamin, 217-251)  
**Presentation #7**

*Readings:*

Helmut Gruber, *Red Vienna*; Stovall, *The Rise of the Paris Red Belt*; Barbara Miller Lane, *Architecture and Politics in Germany, 1918-1945*; Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"

***Part III: The Implementation of Modernist Fantasies (the Postwar City)***

**Week 11**

April 15 World War II as Urban Catastrophe (Abercrombie, all)  
**FINAL PAPER PROPOSAL DUE APRIL 15 IN CLASS**

April 17 Reconstructing Berlin (Andreas-Friedrich, 1-78, 214-256)  
**Presentation #8**

*Readings:*

Patrick Abercrombie, *Greater London Plan 1944*; Ruth Andreas-Friedrich, *Battleground Berlin, 1948-1948*

**Week 12**

April 22 Building Suburbia: The Modernist Triumph  
**Presentation #9**

April 24 Immigration and the Re-Definition of Suburbia (Charef)

*Readings:*

Mehdi Charef, *Tea in the Harem*

**Week 13**

April 29 Cold War Berlin Collapses (Till, 1-105)

May 1 Commemoration and Commerce in the New Berlin (Till 161-228)

*Readings:*

Karen Till, *The New Berlin* (1-105, 161-228)

**Week 14**

May 6 Violence and Tension in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Metropolis (Silverstein/Tetreault)  
**FINAL PAPER DUE MAY 6, MEARS 212 5 P.M.**

May 8 Conclusion/Review  
**FINAL EXAM HANDED OUT IN CLASS**

*Readings*

Paul Silverstein and Chantal Tetreault, "Postcolonial Urban Apartheid"

[http://riotsfrance.ssrc.org/Silverstein\\_Tetreault/](http://riotsfrance.ssrc.org/Silverstein_Tetreault/)

**FINAL EXAMINATION DUE AT THE END OF THE NORMALLY-SCHEDULED EXAM PERIOD, AT 5 P.M. ON MAY 16.**

Additional Ground Rules:

1. Deadlines are to be taken most seriously. I will automatically grant you one extension on any of the three papers. You must e-mail me 48 hours before the paper is due; you do not need to explain the circumstances necessitating the extension. The extension will be for 72 hours. Barring exceptional emergency circumstances, I will not grant you an extension on another paper. Normally, I take off 1/3 of a letter grade for every 24 hours a paper is overdue.
2. Papers must be double-spaced and have one-inch margins, and should not employ anything larger than 12-point font. E-mailed papers will not be accepted.
3. All written work at Grinnell College is subject to the Student Handbook. If you have questions as to how a particular assignment relates to the Student Handbook, please consult with me in advance of that assignment's due date.
4. All written work submitted for a grade must be completed in order to pass the course. In addition, any student who misses more than six classes (again, barring exceptional emergency circumstances) will not receive a passing grade.
5. If you have specific physical, psychiatric or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please let me know early in the semester so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. You will need to provide documentation of your disability to the Dean for Student Academic Support and Advising, Joyce Stern, located on the third floor of the Rosenfield Center (x3702).