

Grinnell College  
Department of History  
Spring 2009

**History 295: European Urban History**

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Mears 212

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Course meetings: T-TH 12:45-2:05, Science 1302  
Office Hours: M 10-11:30 a.m., W 1:15-2:15 p.m., TH 9:30-11 a.m.

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 (minimal) outside research on the assigned topic (see "Presentation Schedule"), and will then present your findings in 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 final paper, 8 to 10 pages in length and 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 necessarily a primary-source paper (although you have plenty of possibilities in the context of this course); you must, however, go beyond the readings on the syllabus to supplement our class readings. Your paper should give careful attention to previous historiographical approaches to the topic and offer your own analysis and argument about your chosen sources

You will also note that you must submit an (ungraded yet mandatory) paper proposal and preliminary biography four 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. You also must submit a two-page paper two weeks later detailing your argument, a sense of the historical “problem” you are approaching, and an outline for the rest of the paper.

## 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.

Colin Jones, *Paris: The Biography of a City* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004)

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

Francis Sheppard, *London: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 205-260

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), 88-138
- Peter Hall, *Cities in Civilization: Culture, Innovation and Urban Order* (London: Weidenfeld & Nelson, 1998), 239-278, 657-705
- Judith Walkowitz, "Jack the Ripper and the Myth of Male Violence," *Feminist Studies* 8 (3)(1982): 542-574
- Ellen Ross, ed., *Slum Travelers: Ladies and London Poverty, 1860-1920* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2007), 1-39, 45-71
- Ebenezer Howard, *Garden Cities of To-Morrow* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1965, orig. 1902), 29-57, 89-117
- 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
- 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
- Michael Minden and Holger Bachmann, eds., *Fritz Lang's Metropolis: Cinematic Visions of Technology and Fear* (Rochester, N.Y.: Camden House, 2000), 82-105
- Helmut Gruber, *Red Vienna: Experiment in Working-Class Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 45-80
- Laura Lee Downs, "Municipal Communism and the Politics of Childhood: Ivry-sur-Seine 1925-1960," *Past and Present* 166 (Feb. 2000): 205-241
- 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
- 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 20 Introduction: Theorizing the City (de Certeau, 90-110)  
January 22 The City in History (begin reading for next week)

#### *Readings:*

Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*

#### Week 2

- January 27 London and Paris: Enlightenment, Revolution and Industrialization  
(Jones, 173-262; Sheppard, 205-260)  
January 29 Manchester: Shock City of the Age (Engels, 68-109; Briggs, 88-133)

#### *Readings:*

Colin Jones, *Paris: The Biography of a City*; Francis Sheppard, *London: A History*; Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*; Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities*

#### Week 3

- February 3 Paris Reshaped (Jones 263-343)  
February 5 London, the “Utilitarian City” (Hall 657-705)  
**Presentation #1**

#### *Readings:*

Jones, *Paris*; Peter Hall, “The Utilitarian City,” in *Cities in Civilization*

#### Week 4:

- February 10 The Department Store and Haussmannized Paris (Zola, part I)  
February 12 Consumer Society in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Europe (Zola, part II)  
**Presentation #2**

#### *Readings:*

Emile Zola, *The Ladies' Paradise*

#### Week 5

- February 17 Vienna and the *Ringstrasse* (Schorske, 24-110)  
February 19 Politics in a New Key? (Schorske, 116-175)  
**Presentation #3**

**PAPER #1 DUE FEB. 20, MEARS 212, 5 P.M.**

#### *Readings:*

Carl Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*

**Week 6:**

February 24 Women in the Metropolis (Walkowitz, 542-574; Ross, 1-39 and 45-71)

***Part II: From Urban Management to Modernist Planning***

February 26 The Garden City and the Suburb (Howard, 29-57, 89-117; Horsfall, 1-34)

*Readings:*

Ellen Ross, *Slum Travelers*; Judith Walkowitz, "Jack the Ripper and the Myth of Male Violence"; Ebenezer Howard, *Garden Cities of To-Morrow*; T.C. Horsfall, *The Improvement of the Dwellings and Surroundings of the People*

**Week 7:**

March 3 WWI as Urban Experience (Healy, 31-121)

**Presentation #4**

March 5 Modernism, part I: Bauhaus (Gropius, 19-66)

**Presentation #5**

*Readings:*

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

**Week 8:**

March 10 Le Corbusier and the International Style (Le Corbusier, 90-142)

March 12 The European City in the Colonies (Celik, 58-77)

*Readings:*

Le Corbusier, *The Radiant City*; Zeynep Celik, "Le Corbusier, Orientalism, Colonialism"

**SPRING BREAK!**

**Week 9**

March 31 Interwar Berlin (Hall, 239-278; Jensen, 79-101)

**Presentation #6**

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

April 2 Discussion of Metropolis (Minden, 82-105)

**PAPER #2 DUE APRIL 3, MEARS 212, 5 P.M.**

Peter Hall, "The Invention of the Twentieth Century," in *Cities and Civilization*; Erik Jensen, "Crowd Control: Boxing Spectatorship and Social Order in Weimar Germany;" Michael Minden and Holger Bachmann, *Fritz Lang's Metropolis*

### **Week 10**

April 7

The “Red Belts” of Paris and Vienna (Gruber, 45-80; Downs, 205-241)

April 9

Authoritarian Urban Solutions (Miller Lane, 185-216; Benjamin, 217-251)

**Presentation #7**

**PROPOSAL FOR FINAL PAPER DUE IN CLASS**

#### *Readings:*

Helmut Gruber, *Red Vienna*; Laura Lee Downs, “Municipal Communism and the Politics of Childhood;” 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 14

World War II as Urban Catastrophe (Andreas-Friedrich, 1-78, 214-256)

April 16

Reconstructing Berlin, Reconstructing Europe

**Presentation #8**

#### *Readings:*

Ruth Andreas-Friedrich, *Battleground Berlin, 1948-1948*

### **Week 12**

April 21

Building Suburbia: From the HLM to May 1968 (Jones, 426-456)

**TWO-PAGE ARGUMENT/HISTORICAL “PROBLEM”/OUTLINE SECTION DUE IN CLASS**

April 23

Immigration and the Re-Definition of Suburbia (Charef)

**Presentation #9**

#### *Readings:*

Jones, *Paris*; Mehdi Charef, *Tea in the Harem*

### **Week 13**

April 28

Cold War Berlin Collapses (Till, 1-105)

April 30

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

#### *Readings:*

Karen Till, *The New Berlin*

### **Week 14**

May 5

Violence and Tension in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Metropolis (Silverstein/Tetrault; Jones, 456-474)

**FINAL PAPER DUE MAY 5, MEARS 212, 5 P.M.**

May 7

Conclusion/Review

*Readings*

Jones, *Paris*; Paul Silverstein and Chantal Tetreault, "Postcolonial Urban Apartheid"

**FINAL EXAMINATION DUE AT THE END OF THE NORMALLY-SCHEDULED EXAM PERIOD, AT 5 P.M. ON MAY 15.**

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.
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 receiving 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).