Representing the Metropolis

Spring Semester 2010
Monday and Wednesday 2:15-4:05
Goodnow Hall #105

COURSE INFORMATION
Dr. Kelly J. Maynard, Grinnell College Department of History
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Office Hours: M/W 10-11 a.m. at the Grill, M 4:15-6:15 p.m. in Mears #211, and by appointment
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COURSE DESCRIPTION
This seminar takes as its starting point the explosion of large cities in Europe from the mid-nineteenth through the early twentieth centuries. As the narrative goes, parallel political and economic revolutions made possible – even inevitable – the blossoming of entirely new spaces characterized by unprecedented population density and diversity, radical shifts in architecture and infrastructure, and vertiginous social and cultural developments. We will examine this phenomenon with a kaleidoscopic approach, concentrating upon the ways that artists and intellectuals in London, Paris, Vienna, and Berlin (and occasionally elsewhere) grappled with the idea and the experience of the metropolis. Our investigations will include political developments, social theory, the visual arts, film, literature, architecture, consumer culture, and music. Among the myriad of qualities and tensions inherent in the modern urban experience, we will consider community and alienation, the fluidity of the self, spectacle and entertainment, disease and criminality, gender and class.
COURSE TEXTS
All course readings will be available on the course website on PioneerWeb or at stable web addresses. You are expected to come to class with hard copies of each week’s readings in hand.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING
This course is a seminar. It is your responsibility to attend each and every meeting, except in case of dire emergency. Three unexcused absences will earn you an F for the course. Your participation in our discussions should reflect your careful, detailed attention to and engagement with all course materials. The quality, frequency, and collaborative nature (or not) of your contributions to our conversations in seminar are absolutely fundamental to the learning process for everyone. Additionally, each student will be called upon to lead discussion of one common reading and one outside reading over the course of the semester. For common readings, you will be required to circulate comments or questions for discussion by email to the seminar participants by 7:00 p.m. the evening before class. Presentations of outside articles will involve a roughly 5-10 minute explanation of the work you read including the overall topic, author’s argument, use of sources, and relevance to class materials.

Between January and late March you will be required to frame and develop a research topic stemming from the materials and issues addressed in the class, in consultation with the professor. All course time after spring break will be spent on the careful and logical development of your research into a fully-fledged final paper of roughly 25 pages. Students will also make 20-minute, formal research presentations of their findings at the end of the term. These presentations will be peer-reviewed by the members of the class and the professor, and the accompanying text and images will be submitted in hard copy to the professor.

Your grade will be calculated according to the following formula:

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\text{Your grade} = 0.4 \times \text{class participation} + 0.1 \times \text{research project components} + 0.1 \times \text{research project presentation} + 0.4 \times \text{final research paper}
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COURSE SCHEDULE
Please note that this schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.
• indicates common readings for class
* indicates readings for individual presentations

January 25
INTRODUCTION
PART I: CONSTRUCTING THE METROPOLIS

January 27  Case Study I: London
• Charles Dickens, Chapters V, X, and XI from Hard Times (1854)

February 1  Case Study II: Paris
• David Pinkney, “Paris in 1850” and “Paris in 1870 and After” in Napoleon III and the Rebuilding of Paris (1958), 3-24, 210-221
• Charles Baudelaire, “The Painter of Modern Life” (1863) and Fleurs du Mal and Paris Spleen (excerpts)
• Walter Benjamin, “Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century” (1935)

February 3  Case Study III: Vienna
• Camillo Sitte, The Art of Building Cities (1889), excerpts
• Arthur Schnitzler, The Road into the Open (1908), excerpts

February 8  Case Study IV: Berlin
• Émile Durkheim, “anomie” in Division of Labor in Society (1893), excerpts
• Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life” (1903)

PART II: METROPOLITAN SPECTACLE
Consumption, Leisure, and Entertainment

February 10  • Zola, The Ladies’ Paradise (1883), excerpts
http://www.jstor.org/stable/3787239

February 15  • Mary Louise Roberts, Introduction to Disruptive Acts: The New Woman in Fin-de-Siècle France (2002)
February 17
• Vanessa Schwartz, “Setting the Stage: The Boulevard, the Press and the Framing of Everyday Life” in Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-siècle Paris (1998), 13-44
• Peter Fritzsche, “The Word City” and “The City as Spectacle” in Reading Berlin 1900 (1996), 12-50 and 127-169

February 22
• Peter Jelavich, “Cabaret as Metropolitan Montage” in Berlin Cabaret (1993), 10-35
* Temma Kaplan, “Popular Art and Rituals” in Red City, Blue Period: Social Movements in Picasso’s Barcelona (1992), 37-57
* FILMS: Moulin Rouge (1952), Bob Fosse, Cabaret (1972)

February 24
PRELIMINARY PROJECT PROPOSALS DUE in class
A two-page, double-spaced sketch of your project in prose addressing five points:
1) the geographical and chronological range of your project, 2) the basic question you will be pursuing, 3) the position of your project vis-à-vis the extant historiography, 4) the pool of primary sources you will be using in pursuit of the topic, and 5) your initial discoveries regarding the content of these sources.

PART III: THE DEGENERATE METROPOLIS
Disease, Anti-Semitism, and the Crowd

March 1
• T. Clifford Allbut, “Nervous Diseases and Modern Life” (1895), excerpts
• Max Nordau, Degeneration (1892), excerpts
• Hake, James, Shaw responses to Nordau in Ledger and Lockhurst, The Fin-de-Siècle: A Reader in Cultural History, c. 1880-1900 (2000) 17-24
• H.B. Donkin, “Hysteria” in A Dictionary of Psychological Medicine (1892)
March 3
* Paul Mendes-Flohr, “The Berlin Jew as Cosmopolitan” 14-31 and
• Peter Paret, “Modernism and the “Alien Element” in German Art” 32-37 in Berlin Metropolis: Jews and the New Culture, 1890-1918

March 8
• Gustave Le Bon, The Crowd: Study of the Popular Mind (1895/6) (excerpts)

TUESDAY
March 9
FILM VIEWING: Fritz Lang’s Metropolis (1927)

March 10
Discussion of Metropolis
• Anton Kaes, “Metropolis: City, Cinema, Modernity” in Expressionist Utopias: Paradise, Metropolis, Architectural Fantasy (UCPress/LACMA, 2001), 146-165

PART IV: METROPOLITAN UTOPIA/DYSTOPIA
March 15
• Le Corbusier, The City of Tomorrow and Its Planning (1929), excerpts
• Wright, “Broadacre City: A New Community Plan” in Architectural Record (1935)
• “When Democracy Builds (1945), excerpts
• FILM: Steiner + Van Dyke, The City (1939)

March 17
PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHIES DUE
No class - Individual meetings re: spring break strategies for projects
SPRING BREAK
Please note that we will not meet again as a class until May for presentations.

Week of:
April 5    PROJECT PROPOSALS DUE
April 12   INTRODUCTIONS DUE
April 19   OUTLINES DUE
April 26   WRITE WRITE WRITE!

May 3     Research Presentations Group I
May 5     Research Presentations Group II

FRIDAY
May 7     COMPLETED RESEARCH PAPERS DUE at noon, Mears #211

May 10    Research Presentations Group III
May 12    Research Presentations Group IV

FRIDAY
May 14    PAPERS RETURNED WITH COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR REVISION

WEDNESDAY
May 19    FINAL RESEARCH PAPERS DUE at NOON, MEARS #211