

ART + CITY

The New School
NHIS3815
Spring 2013
Mon. 4-5:50; Rm 602

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All great art is born of the metropolis. -- Ezra Pound

Cities are hubs of artistic activity. People are drawn to cities because of their artistic offerings and they are the place where the majority of artists live and work. But how and why did this intertwining of art and cities come about? And what effects has it had on cities and on the arts? This course investigates the art of urban life (such as the development of bohemia); genres of art that arose in and of the city (photography, the Broadway musical, hip hop); spaces of the city that become identified as an arts enclave (SoHo, “museum mile”); and the municipal policy and politics that both support and confound the arts in cities (public art). We read first-hand and historical accounts of artists in the city and analyze artworks for their portrayals of the ties between urban life and artistic vision.

Throughout the course we will be relating ideas about art and the city to specific artists and artworks. We will consider the topic of each week in light of an artist or artwork and we will be paying attention to one artist in particular – Theaster Gates – who is the recipient this year of a prize from the Vera List Center for Art and Politics. The final project will be a letter or artwork to him that puts his artwork into the context of the class, that of art and urbanization. (Please see theastergates.com for pictures and descriptions of his work.)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand the ways in which many arts are bound to the social, political, economic, and demographic forces of cities.
- Build a historical understanding of the forces that intertwine the arts and urbanization.
- Compare scholarly, creative, and more popular understandings of urban life.
- Connect readings and discussions to experiential knowledge of the city.
- Write papers that convey analytical thinking, a command of the readings, original ideas, and accurate acknowledgement of sources.

READINGS AND FILM

The required reading materials are available on Blackboard (under the Resources tab). They are compiled by week. The one required movie is accessible via ereserves with the password “@rtinc1ty” (without the quote marks). This password is for use by students enrolled in this course and should not be shared with anyone else. Ereserves is accessible via the link below directly to our class or via Blackboard (at the bottom of the menu on the left).

<http://ereserves.newschool.edu/eres/coursepass.aspx?cid=1135>

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Relate Reading to Artist, Artwork, or Place (25%): At three times during the semester, write a brief analysis (2-3pgs) that applies the readings to the related artist, artwork, or place for the week. Consider how the related artist, artwork, or place explains, contradicts, or expands the readings. How does your understanding of the readings change when you consider the artist, artwork, or place and vice-versa? **All three reports must be done by April 15.**

Dérive (20%): Conduct a Situationist walk through the city and record it in a mental map of your journey. Detail the map in either written or visual form with explanatory comments. What kind of knowledge of the city do you gain from this walk and the documentation of it in a map? **Due February 25.**

Monument Study (25%): Pick a monument in the city. Research its making, both the physical creation and the political process. Look out at the city from its vantage point. What has changed – in the city, about the monument, about the relation between the two? Write a report that conveys that research and analysis (5-7pgs). **Due April 29.**

Letter to Theaster Gates (30%): Write a letter to Theaster Gates that considers three aspects of his work: 1) historical themes that influence his artwork; 2) comparison and analysis of his work to that of three other artworks or readings from the class; and 3) issues to consider in his next projects. This should be a substantial work (i.e., 7-10pgs) that can contain visual or creative responses in addition to written analysis. Letters will be given to Gates and posted on the Vera List Center's blog about the prize. **Due May 20.**

CLASS POLICIES

Attendance: All credit students are required to attend class each week. Your grade for the course as a whole will be lowered one step upon 2 absences (i.e., from B to B-). Three or more absences will result in an automatic failure of the class.

Lateness: If you are more than ten minutes late to a class it will count as an absence. Late papers will not be accepted and no incompletes given.

Cell Phones + Laptops: Cell phone and laptop use is prohibited at all times in the classroom. Turn them OFF before class. The exception to the laptop rule is students who can provide documentation of a learning disability that requires the use of their laptops.

Academic Honesty. Plagiarism -- the use of another person's words or ideas in any academic work -- or any other form of academic dishonesty will result in serious academic penalties, from a failing grade in the class to expulsion from the university. For information on avoiding plagiarism through proper acknowledgements, including expectations for paraphrasing source material and forms of citation in research and writing, students should visit The New School Writing Center (see <http://www.newschool.edu/writingcenter/virtual-handout-drawer/>).

Please note that students must receive prior permission from instructors to submit the same or substantially overlapping material for two different assignments. Submission of the same work for two assignments without prior permission is plagiarism.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Libraries. The New School Library offers frequent research workshops for students, the day, time, and location of which are posted to the Library webpage (<http://library.newschool.edu/events/>) each semester. The library also provides one-on-one support for students who want additional assistance in conducting research. Students can contact the library about scheduling a one-on-one appointment with a reference librarian at the following link:
<http://library.newschool.edu/reference/request.php>

Writing Center. Students are highly encouraged to take advantage of the university writing center, located at 71 Fifth Avenue, 9th floor (Between 14th and 15th Streets). To make an appointment, you can e-mail the writing center at writingcenter@newschool.edu or call 212.229.5121. For further information, please visit the Writing Center web site: www.newschool.edu/admin/writingcenter/

Academic Honesty. Plagiarism (the use of another person's words or ideas in any academic work) or any other form of academic dishonesty will result in serious academic penalties, from a failing grade in the class to expulsion from the university. For information on avoiding plagiarism through proper acknowledgements, including expectations for paraphrasing source material and forms of citation in research and writing, students should consult the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing* (2nd edition), Chapter 6, on documentation. The Bachelor's Program provides useful online resources to inform students of correct forms of research and writing. To access these resources, go to <http://www.newschool.edu/ba/> and click on the link "Resources for Current Students."

The New School Writing Center also provides online resources about avoiding plagiarism. (See <http://www.newschool.edu/admin/writingcenter/index.html>.)

Please note that students must receive prior permission from instructors to submit the same or substantially overlapping material for two different assignments. Submission of the same work for two assignments without prior permission is plagiarism.

Disabilities. In keeping with the university's policy of providing equal access for students with disabilities, any student with a disability who may need academic accommodations should contact the office of Student Disability Services. Students requesting any accommodations will need to meet with Jason Luchs, who will conduct an intake and, if appropriate, provide an academic accommodation notification letter. All conversations will be kept confidential. Mr. Luchs's office is located at 80 Fifth Ave, 3rd Floor (luchsj@newschool.edu, 212.229.5626 x3135). You may also access more information at <http://www.newschool.edu/student-services/disability/>.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1 Introduction
28 Jan

Week 2 Art in the City
4 Feb Jane Kramer, *Whose Art is It?*
 Related Artist: Jenny Holzer

The Art of Urban Life

- Week 3
11 Feb Bohemians
Edgar Allen Poe, "The Man of the Crowd" (1840)
Henri Murger, *La Vie de Bohème* (1851): ch. 1
Charles Baudelaire, "The Painter of Modern Life" (1860): 1-15
Jerrold Seigel, *Bohemian Paris* (1986): chs. 1-2
Related Artwork: *Rent* (1994)
- 18 Feb No Class -- Presidents Day
- Week 4
25 Feb Situationists
Georg Simmel, "Metropolis and Mental Life" (1903): 11-19
Guy Debord, *Naked City* (map; 1957)
Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967): chs. 7-8
Simon Sadler, *The Situationist City* (1999): ch. 2
Related Artwork: Eve Mosher, High Water Line
Dérive due
- Saturday
2 Mar Presentation of Vera List Center Prize for Art and Politics
Theaster Gates, "The Dorchester Project"
- Week 5
4 Mar Seeing and Dancing in the City
Rebecca Zurier, *Picturing the City: Urban Vision and the Ashcan School* (2006): chs. 3, 8
Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961): ch. 2
Related artist: Joseph Cornell

Arts of the City

- Week 6
11 Mar Photography and the White City
Peter Bacon Hales, *Silver Cities: Photographing American Urbanization, 1839–1939* (rev. ed. 2006): ch. 6
Eric Gordon, *The Urban Spectator: American Concept Cities from Kodak to Google* (2010): ch. 1
Joseph Heathcott, "Surface Moments, Marrakech: A Photographic Series," *Camera Obscura* (2011)
Related Artist: Jacob Riis
- Week 7
18 Mar Broadway
Lorraine Hansberry, "A Raisin in the Sun" (1959)
Bruce Norris, "Clybourne Park" (2010)
Related Artwork: Creative Time's 42nd Street Project (1993-94)
- 25 Mar No Class – Spring Break
- Week 8
1 Apr Graffiti and Hip Hop
Susan A. Phillips, *Wallbangin': Graffiti and Gangs in L.A.* (1999): ch. 1
Watch: *Exit Through the Gift Shop* (2010)
Related Artwork: Philadelphia Mural Arts Program

Arts Districts

- Week 9 Museum Mile
8 Apr Jeffrey Trask, *Things American* (2012): ch. 2
 Steven Conn, *Do Museum Still Need Objects?* (2010): ch. 6
 Related Place: Lincoln Center
- Week 10 Greenwich Village
15 Apr Malcolm Cowley, *Exile's Return* (1934): 48-73
 Anatole Broyard, *Kafka was the Rage* (1993): chs. 1-4
 Christine Stansell, *American Moderns* (2000): ch. 2
 Related Place: SoHo
- Week 11 Field Trip: Bushwick
22 Apr Robert Anasi, *The Last Bohemia: Scenes from the Life of Williamsburg, Brooklyn* (2012): chs. 3, 5
 Related Place: Wicker Park, Chicago

Policy and Politics

- Week 12 Monuments in the City
29 Apr Michelle Bogart, *The Politics of Urban Beauty* (2006): ch. 3
 Jena Osman, *Public Figures* (2012): 1-11
 Related Artwork: Richard Serra, *Tilted Arc* (1981)
 Monument Study Due
- Week 13 Cultural Policy
6 May Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002): ch. 12
 Bill Ivey, *Arts, Inc.* (2008): introduction
 Mark Stern, "The Arts and Social Inclusion" (2011)
 Related Policy: Percent for Art Program
- Week 14 Art and the City in the 21st Century
13 May Martha Rosler, "Culture Class: Art, Creativity, Urbanism, Part III," *e-flux journal* (May 2011)
 Gregory Sholette, *Dark Matter: Art and Politics in the Age of Enterprise Culture* (2011): 186-88
 Pick your favorite artist or artwork of the moment
- Week 15 Presentation of Letters to Theaster Gates
20 May Letter Due

New books/articles

- Wells, Susan. San Francisco: Arts for the City: Civic Art and Urban Change, 1932-2012. Berkeley, CA: Heyday, 2013.
- Johnson, Amy E. "Crooked and Narrow Streets: Photography and Urban Visual Identities in Early Twentieth Century Boston." *Winterthur Portfolio* 47:1 (2013): 35-64.
- Brown, Timothy Scott. "The Sixties in the City: Avant-gardes and Urban Rebels in New York, London, and West Berlin." *Journal of Social History* 46:4 (2013): 817-842.

Foster, Robin. Article about So St Seaport JUH 2013 39:5

Shkuda, Aaron. "The Art Market, Arts Funding, and Sweat Equity: The Origins of Gentrified Retail." *Journal of Urban History* 39:4 (2013): 601-619.