

NEW YORK CITY PAST PRESENT FUTURE

The New School
UURB/NSOS3501, Spring 2019
Tuesdays, 4-5:50pm
Rm. 458, 65 W. 11th St.

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New York City exists as a physical and imaginary place, both a dense concrete maze and a blowzy personality. This course examines the many contours of this phenomenon by looking at the city across time; we explore specific historical moments for the intertwining force of politics, economics, social struggles, and artistic and cultural flowering, and consider those dynamics in planning for the future. We explore how to know the city; how artists create the city; and what it means to live here.

We complement our broad overview of New York City in time by conducting a semester-long individual project of interest to you. The project should mirror the themes that we discuss about the city overall, which offers us the opportunity to think about and relay how a large-scale understanding of the city relates to smaller-scale changes.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand changes – geographic, political, social, and cultural – in New York City across time.
- Develop attentiveness to the different kinds of information and analysis in primary, secondary, and artistic sources.
- Research the city using both quantitative and qualitative data and provide synthetic interpretations of that research.
- Write papers that convey analytical thinking, a command of the readings, original ideas, and accurate acknowledgement of sources.
- Develop a final project based on personal interest that builds on the materials of the course.

READINGS AND FILMS

The required reading and materials are available on Canvas and are compiled under “Modules” by week. To access the materials directly, log on to canvas.newschool.edu with your New School user name and password.

The following are recommended texts:

Delirious New York, by Rem Koolhaas (Monacelli Press, 1994)

Empire City, eds. Kenneth Jackson and David Dunbar (Columbia University Press, 2002)

(collection of excerpts from historical documents and famous writings about NY since 1609)

Nonstop Metropolis: A New York City Atlas, Rebecca Solnit and Joshua Jelly-Schapiro, eds. (University of California Press, 2016)

Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898, by Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace (Oxford University Press, 1999)

Greater Gotham: A History of New York City from 1898 to 1919, by Mike Wallace (Oxford University Press, 2017)

Writing New York: A Literary Anthology, ed. Phillip Lopate (Washington Square Press, 2000)

ASSIGNMENTS

Journal Entries (25%): Please buy a journal for the course that will include your musings throughout the semester as well as responses to questions. The purpose of the journal is to pull together in one place the variety of thinking you have about New York, from specific exercises in the class to general reactions of living here. Entries can be written, drawn, or a combination. I will collect the journals at three points during the semester and they should include responses to the specific questions from that period of class *as well as two entries on a topic of your choice*. **Journals due in class on February 12, March 12, and April 16.**

Artwork Analysis (25%): We will visit an exhibition at the New York Public Library of the Performing Arts called “Voice of My City: Jerome Robbins and New York.” Taking Jerome Robbins as an inspiration, pick an artist of your choosing and analyze an artwork for what it reveals about New York. The paper should be 5pgs, double-spaced, well structured, clearly written, and reference at least two assigned readings. **Papers due March 26.** *No late papers accepted.*

Research Project (35%): This project comprises of steps throughout the semester to build a distinct project based on a personal interest. The outcome can be creative (a performance, e.g.) or academic (a research paper) or a hybrid (a website or a grant proposal). Each project will be worked out with me throughout the semester. **Research project due April 30.** *No late projects accepted.*

Reflection (15%): Write a 3pg paper that picks one of the essays from the “Here is New York” readings and use it as a reflection on what you have learned over the semester. **Reflection due May 7.** *No late reflections accepted.*

CLASS SCHEDULE

Wk 1 **Introduction**

Jan 22 Reading: Rebecca Solnit, from *NonStop Metropolis: A New York City Atlas* (2016)

I. **Knowing the City**

Wk 2 **Here is New York 1**

Jan 29 Readings: E.B. White, “Here is New York” (1949)
Alfred Kazin, from *A Walker in the City* (1951)
Joan Didion, “Goodbye to All That” (1967)

Journal: Pick one characteristic of the city described in these essays and connect it to a personal experience.

Wk 3 **Mapping**

Feb 5 Readings: Luc Sante, from *Low Life* (1991)
Kevin Lynch, from *The Image of the City* (1960)
Rem Koolhaas, from *Delirious New York* (1994)

Journal: Find a map of NYC and bring it into class (perhaps paste it into your journal). Consider it both as a physical marker of the city as well as a mental one. What does the map tell us about how the city is constructed? And what does it tell us about how we might experience the city?

Wk 4 Governing

Feb 12 Readings: Bruce Berg, *NYC Politics: Governing Gotham* (2007): intro
Richard Sennett, *Building and Dwelling: Ethics for the City* (2018): ch5
Journal: Identify a possible topic you would like to research for your final project.
Turn in journal in class

Wk 5 Observing

Feb 19 Watch: [“How to Look at a City”](#) (1964)
Reading: Ricardo Montez, “Virtuosic Distortion, Nelson Sullivan’s Queer Hand” (2017)

Wk 6 Here is New York 2

Feb 26 Readings: Vivian Gornick, “On the Street,” from *Approaching Eye Level* (1996)
Colson Whitehead, from *The Colossus of New York* (2003)
Koolhaas, “Waning Space: I __ NY” (2003)
Zadie Smith, “Find Your Beach” (2014)
Journal: Pick one characteristic of the city described in these essays and connect it to a personal experience.

II. Creating the City

Wk 7 “Voice of My City: Jerome Robbins and New York”

Mar 5 Class visit to the New York Public Library of the Performing Arts
Meet at Lincoln Center fountain at 4pm
Reading: Olivia Liang, *The Lonely City*: ch. 2 (2016)
Journal: Pick an artwork that reveals New York to you and explain why.

Wk 8 Central Park

Mar 12 Readings: Rosenzweig & Blackmar, *The Park and the People* (1992)
Edward Albee, *The Zoo Story* (1959)
Journal: Provide an update of your work on your research project: what research will you conduct, what sources will you consult (5-7 items), and what you expect the final outcome to be (e.g. performance, website, film, paper).
Turn in journal in class

Mar 19 **Spring Break—No Class**

Wk 9 Brooklyn

Mar 26 Readings: Truman Capote, “A House on the Heights” (1959)
Lewis Mumford, “The Brooklyn Bridge” (1981)
Paintings of the Brooklyn Bridge
Artwork Analysis due

Wk 10 Subways

Apr 2 Readings: LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka), *Dutchman* (1964)
Paul Theroux, “Subway Odyssey” (1982)
Pictures of Graffiti
Journal: What does graffiti reveal about governance in the city?

III. Living in the City

Wk 11 **The Highway v. the Street**

Apr 9 Readings: Robert Caro, from *The Power Broker* (1974)
Jane Jacobs, from *The Death and Life of American Cities* (1961)
Marshall Berman, from *All that is Solid Melts into Air* (1982)
Journal: Identify a challenge that you are having with your research project.

Wk 12 **Renewal/Preservation**

Apr 16 Readings: Max Page, *Why Preservation Matters*: ch. 4 (2016)
Kenneth Jackson, "Gotham's Towering Ambitions," *New York Times* (29Aug2013)
Journal: Visit the Place Matters [website](#) and figure out what view of preservation this organization holds. Find a place in the website's census that relates to your research project and explain its significance.
Turn in journal in class

Wk 13 **Gentrification**

Apr 23 Readings: Sharon Zukin, "Whose Culture, Whose City?" (1995)
Jeremiah Moss, from *Vanishing New York: How a Great City Lost Its Soul* (2017): ch2

Wk 14 **The Future of New York**

Apr 30 Readings: Shannon Mattern, "[Instrumental City: The View from Hudson Yards](#)" (2016)
Alan Weisman, from *The World Without Us* (2008): ch. 3
Research Project due

Wk 15 **My New York**

May 7 **Reflection due**

CLASS POLICIES

Attendance: All credit students are required to attend class each week, and there is no difference between an excused and an unexcused absence. *All absences are treated the same.* 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 University Learning Center. The university's Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy can be found at

<https://www.newschool.edu/about/university-resources/policies/>. The Intellectual Property Rights Policy can be found at <https://www.newschool.edu/provost/accreditation-policies/>.

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 (<https://library.newschool.edu/>).

The University Learning Center. The University Learning Center (ULC) provides individual tutoring sessions in writing, ESL, math, and economics, and time management. Sessions are interactive, with both tutor and student participating. Appointments can be scheduled via [Starfish](#) or stop by for a walk-in session. The ULC also offers several academic and skill-building workshops. The ULC is located on the 6th floor of 66 West 12th Street. For more information, please visit www.newschool.edu/learning-center/

Disabilities. In keeping with the university's policies of providing equal access for students with disabilities, any student with a disability who needs academic accommodations is welcome to meet with me privately. All conversations will be kept confidential. Students requesting any accommodations will also need to contact Student Disability Services (SDS). SDS will conduct an intake and, if appropriate, the Director will provide an academic accommodation notification letter for you to bring to me. At this point, I will review the letter with you and discuss these accommodations in relation to this course. You may access more information at <https://www.newschool.edu/student-disability-services/>.