

On the Train: Time, Space, and the Modern World

HI 073

Monday 3:00-5:50

Hamilton 570

Prof. Chad Bryant

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Office hours: M 2:00-3:00, W 1:30-3:30

Long before the first passenger train left Manchester for Liverpool, England in 1830, early railway promoters in Europe and the United States correctly predicted that train travel would affect radical transformations: industrial development, the mobilization of labor, urbanization, a more efficient government and mobile armed forces, and the rise of the tourist industry, to name just a few. But these were not the only changes brought about by the train—changes that historians have only begun to explore. Passengers accustomed to traveling by horse and carriage searched for words to describe the new experience of hurtling through space, in a straight line, at more than thirty miles per hour. Reduced travel time meant that distances seemed to shrink. The need for interchangeable train schedules inspired Americans and Europeans to coordinate local times and to establish the time zones that divide up the globe today. The train, in other words, created new ways of seeing, new ways of thinking about time and space, and new ways of conceptualizing an increasingly interconnected and mobile world. It was a technological innovation that had profound effects on nineteenth-century American and European culture—a culture that echoes in our world today.

With these themes in mind, our course will begin with a close reading of one book: Wolfgang Schivelbusch's *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century*. In the first half of the class we will discuss the book's structure, its arguments, and the sources used to make his arguments. We will look outside the text to ask what books might have inspired the author and how others have found different answers to the question that he posed. We will, in other words, think about the ways in which historians analyze a work of scholarship. We will also read the book as an "inspirational text," discussing various questions that the *Railway Journey* provokes and how we might go about answering them. To that end you will be asked to keep a journal in which you brainstorm ideas for a research project about trains and nineteenth-century culture. As a final project you and three of your fellow students will decide on one question that might be pursued. On the last day of class your group will present a poster that explains why your question matters and how one might go about addressing it.

To Purchase:

Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century* (Leamington Spa, New York: Berg, 1986 [originally published in German in 1977])

Moleskin Plain Notebook

All other reading assignments will be posted on blackboard

Grading:

Class participation: 35%

Short writing assignments of 1-3 pages each: 10%

First major writing assignment, 7-8 pages: 20%

Second major writing assignment, 7-8 pages: 20%

Poster and final presentation: 15%

Class Discussion

As the semester progresses, I will post discussion questions for each of our readings on blackboard.unc.edu. You are required to complete each session's reading assignment and to come to class with ideas, insights, and/or questions for the group. The success of the class depends upon everyone arriving prepared, remaining open to other's ideas, and offering arguments based upon a thorough understanding of the reading assignments. When it comes to class participation, quality is more important than quantity. The success of the class will also depend upon your willingness to offer constructive advice to your peers. Your presence in class, in other words, is crucial. Two unexcused absences will lower your participation grade by one-half a grade, three by a whole grade. Four unexcused absences will result in a "D" for participation; five will result in an "F" (This system seems more logical.) Even if you miss a class you will be responsible for any assignments due that day.

Writing and research assignments

I will post to blackboard short writing assignments related to each week's readings. The assignments, which will include response papers, argument summaries, a reading of primary source material, compare/contrast exercises, will be 1-3 pages in length each. They will build toward your first major writing assignment, a 7-8 page book review, which will be due on October 27.

I will also ask that you keep a journal with thoughts about a potential research project inspired by the questions raised—or ignored—in Schivelbusch's book. In these journal entries you are encouraged to be creative, giving priority to the development of raw ideas. They should, however, contain coherent thoughts about the questions that might be pursued.

On October 27 we will talk about your journal entries and brainstorm possible research topics that your questions might suggest. From there we will form working groups that will pursue a single research question. Each group will then work toward a common research prospectus that explains both the significance of their question and the primary and secondary sources that would help you pursue that question. At the end of the semester each group will talk about their research prospectus in the class and present a poster collage that contains images and texts related to your question.

You will also be expected to write a 7-8 page paper related to your common research question. You have two options. This paper can be either a book review of a secondary source or a close reading of one primary source related to your research project. Two students may not write about the same source. You must hand in a draft of this paper to your peer editors at the beginning of class on November 24. Your peer editors will provide comments on your draft the following week, on December 1. The final papers will due by 5:00 on Thursday, December 4th.

When evaluating these longer writing assignments, in particular, I will keep the following criteria in mind:

- 1) Argumentation - Does the author have a clearly defined thesis statement? Has the author supported her or his argument with examples from the text? Is his argument convincing?
- 2) Structure - Is the paper organized logically? Does it begin with an introduction and end with a clear conclusion? Does each paragraph in between move the composition forward? Does the paper have clear beginning, middle, and end? Does it feel complete?
- 3) Clarity and writing style - Is the presentation of ideas and reasoning clear? Does the paper use words economically and with precision? Does the writing style engage the reader? Does it make him/her want to read further? Are there grammatical problems like run-on sentences, overuse of the passive voice, subject-verb agreement errors, and typos?
- 4) Originality of thought - Does the paper show a willingness to go beyond a mere recitation of facts to offer ideas of their own? Does the reader learn something new, or think about an old question in a new way?

All written assignments must be handed in at the beginning of class or by the time stated in the “assignments” folder on blackboard. For each day that the assignment is late, that assignment’s letter grade will be lowered by one-third. (A “B” will become a “B-,” for example.)

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Remember that when writing, taking exams, or performing other assignments you are bound by the Honor Code. For details, see www.unc.edu/depts/honor/honor.html. We will be discussing what constitutes plagiarism in class. Please consult with me with any questions that you might have.

Finally, please do not hesitate to come to me with questions, concerns, or requests for help. I will hold office hours in Hamilton 468 on Mondays from 10:00 to 11:00 and on Wednesdays from 1:00 to 3:00. You can also contact me via email or schedule an appointment. Other sources of assistance are the the Writing Center (www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/); Learning Disabilities Services (www.unc.edu/depts/acadserv/lds.html); and Counseling and Wellness Services (<http://caps.unc.edu/>). I also strongly encourage you to help each other.

Class Schedule

Unless otherwise noted, each reading assignment refers to a chapter in *The Railway Journey*.

Aug. 25: Introductions and Examining the Book's Architecture: Cover, Table of Contents, and Index

Sept. 1: Labor Day – No Class

Sept. 8: Industrialization and the *Railway Journey*

Readings:

Selections from Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution, 1789-1848*

“Forward,” “The Mechanization of Motive Power,” “The Machine Ensemble,” xiii-32

Sept. 15: Making an Argument: Primary Sources

Readings:

“Railroad Space and Railroad Time,” “Panoramic Travel,” 33-44, 52-69

Selections from D. Lardner, *Railway Economy*

Charles Young, “Manchester to Liverpool”

Robert Lewis Stevenson, “From a Railway Carriage”

Sept. 22: American Trains, Your Questions

Readings:

“The Compartment,” “The American Railroad”

Sept. 29: Comparing Arguments, I

Readings:

“The Pathology of the Railroad Journey,” “The Accident,” “Railway Accident, ‘Railway Spine’ and Traumatic Neurosis,” and “Stimulus Shield: or, the Industrialized Consciousness,” 113-170

Selections from Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1914*

Oct. 6: Comparing Arguments, II

Readings:

“The Railroad Station: Entrance to the City,” “Tracks into the City,” and “Circulation,” 171-197

Selections from Jeffrey Richards and John M. MacKenzie, *The Railway Station: A Social History*

Ivan V. Nevgodine, “The Impact of the Trans-Siberian Railway on the Architecture and Urban Planning of Siberian Cities”

Oct. 13: Thinking Outside the Book: Or, What Schivelbusch was Reading

Readings:

“Bibliography”

Selections from Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilization*

Selections from Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*

Oct. 20: No Class

Work on your first 7-8 page paper. I will meet with students individually

Oct. 27: Towards a Research Project: Brainstorming Session

First 7-8 page paper due

Nov. 3: Discussion of Research-in-Progress – Groups 1-3 meet

Nov. 10: Discussion of Research in Progress – Groups 3-6 meet

Nov. 17: Poster Presentations – Groups 1-3

Nov 24: Poster Presentations – Groups 4-6

Hand in your paper drafts to your peer reviewers

Dec. 1: Peer review session and final goodbyes

Dec. 4: **Second 7-8 page paper due at 5:00 pm**