

HI 398 Boom Cities: Urban Histories of a Modernizing Age, 1870-1914

Fall 2013

Hamilton 423

Tuesdays 2:00-4:50

Professor Chad Bryant

History Department

468 Hamilton Hall

Office Hours: W 1:30-3:30

and by appointment

Cities around the world boomed in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The number of people living in New York City skyrocketed from 1.9 million people in 1875 to 4.2 million in 1900. Budapest and Berlin's respective populations more than tripled in that same time period. But these demographic changes reflect only a fraction of the radical transformations that took place in cities around the world from 1870 to 1914. Cities, to paraphrase the great urban historian Lewis Mumford, acted as magnets in a modernizing world. Cities also contained, within a relatively confined space, a vast diversity of people, economic activity, and ideas that together constituted the modern experience. Cities attracted vast numbers of immigrants and others looking for work, resulting in conflicts among various social classes and ethnic groups. Demographic changes led to the formation of new neighborhoods and, eventually, the creation of suburbs surrounding the city center. Planners tore down city walls and whole neighborhoods to improve circulation within the city. Subway trains shot underground. Above ground, trams sped along street rails. Cities such as Bombay, London, and Chicago became crucial nodes for trade and a worldwide banking system. Cities also became crucial nodes for radical new ideas and thinkers from around the world. Paris and Prague became centers of the cubist movement. A ground-breaking avant-garde movement took form in St. Petersburg. Peking University in Beijing provided the space for anti-Western activists to initiate the Boxer Rebellion of 1898. In 1913 Vladimir Lenin, Sigmund Freud, and Adolf Hitler each enjoyed a drink at the Café Central in Vienna.

Our common readings will include a mix of primary and secondary sources, which we will read and discuss during the first half the semester. In the first few weeks short lectures will provide background information on the region's history and the readings. Your main task, however, will be to write a 20- to 25-page research paper, based on primary resources, that sets out to address a question of your own design. As the course progresses, we will discuss strategies for creating a research question, researching your topic, constructing an argument, and finally organizing and writing the paper. What city would you like to learn more about? What modern transformation would you like to study? How will your study, in turn, contribute to an historical debate and add to our knowledge of this exciting period in urban history?

Required Texts:

William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*

Carl Schorske, *Fin de Siècle Vienna: Culture and Politics*

These books are available on reserve at the undergraduate library. The other reading assignments are available on Sakai and as hard copies at the reserve desk in the undergraduate library.

Course Requirements and Percentage of Final Grade:

Class discussion: 30%

Research question and annotated bibliography: 5%

Introduction and outline: 5%

Five pages of text: 5%

Rough draft: 5%

Oral presentation of topic: 10%

Final research paper: 40%

The seminar has two components. The first is class discussion of various primary and secondary sources listed on the syllabus. The second relates to your research paper.

Class Discussion

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. The success of everyone's papers will also depend upon your willingness to offer constructive advice to your peers. Your presence in class, in other words, is crucial. Missing three classes will result in your participation being lowered by one grade level. (A "B" will become a "C," for example.) Missing four classes will result in an "F" for participation. Even if you are absent, you will be responsible for any assignments due that day.

As the semester progresses, I will post discussion questions for each of our readings on Sakai. For each reading assignment, however, ask yourself the following questions: What questions do the readings inspire? How do the readings relate to larger historical themes? How do they relate to previous readings? If the assignment was a secondary source, what is its argument, and how was it made? How might you criticize it? If it is a primary source, what kind of source is it? What can we learn from the document? What are the weaknesses of the document as an historical source?

Research Paper:

Your final goal is to write a 20- to 25- page research paper based on primary resources. Every few weeks you will be asked to hand in a written assignment demonstrating progress toward that end – research questions, annotated bibliographies, outlines, introductions, and rough drafts. The criteria by which I will grade the assignments will be listed on Sakai.

All written assignments must be handed in at the beginning of class or by the time stated on the syllabus. 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.)

As the semester progresses you will be asked to give a 10- to 15-minute presentation on your research findings. This will be followed by a brief discussion, which should include suggestions on how to go about writing your paper.

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 Wednesdays from 1:30-3:30. You can also contact me via email or schedule an appointment. Other sources of assistance are 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

The following schedule, along with my contact information and course requirements, can also be found in your Sakai folder marked “syllabus”. Assignments, announcements, and other information relating to the course will appear on blackboard as the semester progresses. Although I am eager to answer questions, you alone are responsible for knowing the information listed here and on the blackboard site.

Aug. 20: What is a City? What is Urban History?

Aug. 27: People and Spaces in the Modern City
Selections from Lewis Mumford, *The City in History*
Selections from William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*

Sept. 3: Cities as Cultural Cauldrons
Selections from Carl Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*
Selections from Maderthaner and Mussner, eds., *Unruly Masses: The Other Side of Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*
Mark Twain, “Stirring Times in Austria” – available at <http://www.h-net.org/~habsweb/sourcetexts/twain1.htm>

Sept. 10: Cities and Marginality
Selections from Deborah Epstein Nord, *Walking the Victorian Streets : Women, Representation, and the City*
Selections from Ashwini Tambe, *Codes of Misconduct: Regulating Prostitution in Late Colonial Bombay*

September 17: Working with primary sources
Rampolla. “Primary Sources”
A selection of primary sources about turn-of-the-century Prague
Three sample HI 398 papers

Sept. 24
Individual consultations with Professor Bryant during normal class hours

Oct. 1: Primary source presentations

Oct. 8: First writing workshop + how and when to footnote

Reading: George Orwell, "Why I Write"

Research question and annotated bibliography due

Oct. 15: Presentations of Works-in-Progress I

Outline and introduction due

Oct. 22: Presentations of Works-in-Progress II

Five pages of text and revised versions of your outlines and introductions must be posted to Sakai by 5:00 pm on Thursday, October 24

Oct. 29: First writing workshop

Nov. 5: Individual meetings with Professor Bryant; work on rough drafts

Nov. 12: Individual meeting with Professor Bryant; work on your rough drafts

Rough drafts must be posted to Sakai by 5:00 pm on Thursday, November 14

Nov. 19: Second writing workshop; discussion of rough drafts

Nov. 26: Individual meetings with Professor Bryant; work on your final papers

Dec. 3: Final papers due + farewells