

**SPRING, 2007**

**History 6389**

## **AMERICAN URBAN HISTORY**

**Monday, 5:30 – 8:30 pm**

**AH549**

**Martin V. Melosi**

**AH 556**

**Office Hours: By Appointment**

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**This course focuses on the growth and development of American cities in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. The major goals are: (1) to make students familiar with the major issues and themes of American urban history; (2) to introduce students to some of the most important historical literature in the field; and (3) to provide an environmental perspective on urbanism.**

**Meetings of the seminar--with the exception of our first meeting--will consist of a historiographical overview of key books on a variety of topics, and a discussion of common readings. Each week one or two students will begin the class session with a brief talk (no more than 30 minutes) about key books on selected topics; the remainder of the time will focus on themes in the common readings, usually consisting of a book, and possibly some articles. (Articles will be provided each week for the subsequent week=s class.) Many of the books selected for common readings provide an environmental perspective on urban growth and development--a perspective that should stimulate wide-ranging discussion about the nature of American cities and urbanization in general. Other books focus on key additional themes that will complement the majority of the works.**

## Reading List

Tarr, *Devastation and Renewal*  
Warner, *Streetcar Suburbs*  
Bodnar, *The Transplanted*  
Tomes, *The Gospel of Germs*  
Rosenzweig and Blackmar, *The Park and the People*  
Colten, *An Unnatural Metropolis*  
Cronon, *Nature=s Metropolis*  
Self, *American Babylon*  
Rome, *The Bulldozer and the Countryside*  
Davis, *Ecology of Fear*  
Gutfreund, *20<sup>th</sup>-Century Sprawl*  
Hurley, *Environmental Inequalities*

## Weekly Assignments

Jan. 22: Introduction

29: Cities, Industrialism and Post-Industrialism (Tarr)

5: Mass Transit, Radial Expansion, and Housing (Warner)

12: Immigration and the Peopling of Cities (Bodnar)

19: Municipal Services: Fire, Police, and Utilities (articles)

26: Public Health and Sanitation (Tomes)

Mar. 5: Urban Greenspace (Rosenzweig and Blackmar)

12: SPRING BREAK

19: Cities and Nature (Colten)

26: The City and Its Hinterland (Cronon)

2: The Inner City and the “Urban Crisis” (Self)

9: Suburbs, Exurbs, and Edge Cities (Rome)

- 16: Disasters and Rampant Development in Urban America (Davis)
- 23: Metropolitanism and Sprawl (Gutfreund)
- 30: Race and Environmental Justice (Hurley)

### Class Presentation

Each student will make a no more than 30-minute class presentation on the historiography of a topic central to urban history. Each presentation will incorporate the following:

(1) a typed list of 10 key books (full citations: author(s), title, pub. date, place of publication) for distribution to all of the students and the professor

Note: These books should be the most significant books on the topic and especially reflect recent scholarship.

(2) a general discussion of the most important themes raised in the literature as a whole, not a book-by-book synopsis

(3) a critical appraisal of the state of the field and areas of potential future study

Note: You should consult bibliographic essays on the subject to help set the context for your presentation.

### Written Assignments

Each student will prepare a 20-25 page research or historiographical paper and five critical book reviews.

Upon consultation with me, each student will write a 20-25 page paper. Some students may wish to write an original piece of scholarship based on primary sources; others may wish to write a historiographical study on a key theme in urban history. (Historiographical papers cannot duplicate the class presentation or the book reviews.) While I will give you great latitude in choosing a topic, I will want a concrete proposal early in the course. Each student will provide me with a one-paragraph paper proposal and a brief bibliography of key sources and/or books by Feb. 5. The date when the papers are due will be the date set for the final in the course.

A completed draft of the paper—final form with complete notes—will be do on

**Apr. 23. I will return it the following week and you will present a revised version during finals week (date to be set).**

**Each student also will prepare five critical book reviews on any topic relevant to American urban history. They can be on a single subject or different subjects. I also would like this list by Feb. 5.**

**Each review should be 1,250 to 1,500 words in length. The reviews are due according to the following schedule:**

<b>review #1</b>	<b>Feb. 12</b>
<b>review #2</b>	<b>Feb. 26</b>
<b>review #3</b>	<b>Mar. 19</b>
<b>review #4</b>	<b>Apr. 2</b>
<b>review #5</b>	<b>Apr. 16</b>

### **Grades**

**Grades will be based on the following:**

<b>Class Participation</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Major Paper</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Class Presentation</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Book Reviews</b>	<b>25%</b>