

American Urban History

Democracy, Community, Memory, and Visions of Order in the City!

UEP / History 205 Fall 2021

JOHNSON 203 Tu 7:30 – 10:25 PM

Occidental College

Come to each class having read and marked up all assigned texts. Be ready to discuss these readings within the context of the course.

Writing assignments will be distributed during the semester, but all papers should reflect careful thought, revision, and proofreading and must conform to ethical standards in citation, quotation, and other use of all sources.

Be prepared to synthesize a range of scholarly texts within a variety of different humanistic academic disciplines and with a careful attention to change over time.

During this exceptional period, all participants in our class must abide by the College's health and safety directives pertaining to vaccination, physical distancing, and masking throughout the semester.

Students will gain a detailed awareness of the major topics, debates, and historiography of American urban history and, through thoughtful writing, contribute their own informed analysis to this discourse.

Students will become familiar with social transformations in nineteenth and twentieth century American cities — including the reconfiguration of systems of prejudice, segregation, and displacement (along lines of race, class, gender, etc.) — which informed, shaped, and gave meaning to the built environment in major cities (and, to a lesser extent, smaller towns).

Students will learn about the relationships between the built environment and social contexts, the effects manifested in changes in the urban landscape, and the specific contexts of differing forms of city structure that emerge during the twentieth century, particularly in the context of ideologies of race, class, and gender.

Students will hone their skills at synthesizing academic interdisciplinary secondary source scholarship with techniques of cultural analysis gleaned from contemporary Critical Theory to produce their own original argumentative interpretations of American urban history.

As with many courses that meet the **United States Diversity Core Requirement**, this course focuses on periods of time rife with systemic racism — often extremely overt and pervasively expressed. **Many of the texts, images, and recorded materials we will encounter this semester will be disturbing**, depicting a historical period filled with violence, suffering, and naked prejudice, as well as the defiant struggle to make our society a more tolerant and humane place. Some of the language deployed in source materials we will examine was intended quite explicitly to intimidate as well as communicate and that rhetoric still carries oppressive force. Indeed,

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Urban, Suburban, Postsuburban:

Reconceptualizing the City in the 20th Century

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