

Urban Life: Social Justice and the Lived City

Social Sciences (NSOS3500)
Mondays 6:00pm-7:50pm
Building F, Room 301
The New School, Spring 2006

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In *The Republic*, Plato creates an ideal city, a *kallipolis*, in order to discover the nature and ends of justice. From ancient to modern times, justice has been a central question in the conception, design and lived experience of the city. And yet, more often than not, cities have enabled vast forms of injustice. In this course, we explore the cultural, political, and economic complexities of modern urban life. In our journey through the modern metropolis, we examine the following questions: What does the development of the modern city tell us about social conditions and the politics of class, race, gender, nation, and empire? What do modernist visions of the city reveal about its promise, its wonders, its pitfalls, and its inequalities? What are the different sites and strategies of inclusion and exclusion in the city? And how might we create socially and economically just cities in a postmodern world?

In the course of our study, we explore the ways that different disciplines approach the study of cities. If a novelist, an anthropologist, a historian, a sociologist, and an urban planner were dropped onto the same city street at the same moment, what would each of them see – social strife, buildings, art galleries, ethnic groups, class mobility? What questions would they ask of their experiences, and how would they arrive at those questions? How would they then register, document and record their responses? How would they talk to one another? Through an exploration of the possibilities for justice in the city, this course provides an introduction to the ways in which writers, sociologists, anthropologists, historians, and architects come to terms with the city in their respective disciplines.

REQUIRED READINGS

The following books are available at Shakespeare & Co. (716 Broadway at Washington Place). A course pack of required reading materials is available for purchase at Advanced Copy Center (552 Laguardia Place at 3rd Street). The texts and the course pack are also available on reserve at Fogelman Library (65 Fifth Avenue).

- Philippe Bourgois, *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003[1996]).
- Teresa P. R. Caldeira, *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).
- Charles Dickens, *Hard Times* (NY: Bantam Classic, 1991 [1854])
- Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (NY: Vintage, 1992 [1961])
- Plato, *The Republic* (NY: Hackett, 1992 [389-369 BCE])

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Weekly Journal (30%): Each week during which there are outside readings, credit students are required to submit 1-page of writing (typed, single-spaced). These weekly journals are a chance for you to process your thoughts on the week's readings before our class discussion. The first couple of paragraphs should summarize the authors' key ideas and arguments. The final paragraph(s) may either discuss links to other weeks' readings or explore connections between issues raised in the material and your own observations of urban life. Your grade for these short writings will reflect your critical engagement with the reading material. **Because the weekly journals are an opportunity to organize your thoughts *before* class, they will not be accepted after the date on which they are due.**

Class Participation (20%): Class participation is essential in this class. Your grade for class participation is not calculated by how much you speak, but rather by the ways in which you enable a lively and useful discussion. At times this means bouncing an idea off the group or bringing up something that is puzzling you. At other times this involves asking one of your peers to elaborate more fully on a thought that he or she is sharing. And sometimes this entails sitting quietly and holding onto an idea that can best be entertained at a later point in the discussion. It is important that everyone get the chance to participate fully in our class discussions. We will be learning as much from each other as we will from our readings and writing projects. All credit students are required to attend our weekly classes, so I expect you to let me know if you are unable to attend. **Extenuating circumstances aside, your grade for the course as a whole will be lowered upon more than 2 absences.**

Ethnographic Study: Students will be conducting an ethnographic research project on a topic about which they feel personally connected, passionate, or simply curious. You can dive deeper into an issue that we are reading about together in class or you can choose to explore another topic pertaining to struggles for social justice in the city. Students will meet with me early in the semester to discuss their project idea, which consists of two parts:

- **Midterm Paper (20%):** The first paper (6-8 pages, double-spaced) will involve *library research*, drawing on at least four sources (such as academic journals, books, newspapers, or magazines) that enable you to map out divergent political perspectives on the topic. On March 13th, we will be having a workshop with the head librarian. We will meet in one of the computer labs, where she will guide you through online resources for conducting research for your midterm papers.
- **Final Paper (30%):** The second part consists of ethnographic research, either through conducting an *interview* with someone directly involved with the issues or an *observation* of an organization or event pertaining to them. You will integrate your findings from your ethnographic research into your midterm paper, along with pertinent class readings. The culmination of the project will be a 10-15 page paper (typed, double-spaced).

Extenuating circumstances aside, papers will not be accepted late. All sources must be properly cited.

Other Important Information:

University Writing Center: The University Writing Center offers students individual tutoring sessions that cover every phase of the writing process. Students can meet with a tutor to revise a paper, develop a rough draft, or discuss how to approach and organize an assignment. The University Writing Center is located at 65 Fifth Avenue, Room 218. To find out more information or to make an appointment, go to <http://www.newschool.edu/admin/writingcenter>.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism will result in an F in the course in accordance with the University's policy on plagiarism (see Student Handbook). Students should purchase *A Writer's Reference* by Diana Hacker for information on proper citation format. Also keep in mind that self-plagiarism will not be tolerated. Self-plagiarism entails using the same paper for more than one class without approval from both instructors.

Students with Disabilities: Please let me know if you will need any academic accommodations. If you have not already done so, contact Tom McDonald (212-229-5472) in the office of Student Disability Services to figure out a plan that best suits your needs. Mr. McDonald's office is located in the Graduate Faculty building at 65 Fifth Avenue, Room 409. All conversations will be kept confidential.

CLASS SCHEDULE

I. Vivid Places and Spaces of (In)Justice

January 23: Introduction to the Study of Cities

- In-class exercise: Kevin Lynch, "The City Image and its Elements" in *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, M.A.: M.I.T. Press, 1960), 46-90: Paths, Edges, Districts, Nodes, and Landmarks.

January 30: Social Justice and Urban Utopias

- Plato, *The Republic* (New York: Hackett, 1992 ([389-369 BCE]), 31-121, 241-263 (Books 2-4, 9).
- Guest Speaker, Charles Oliver, Ph.D. in Philosophy, GF, New School for Social Research
- Recommended readings: Lewis Mumford, "Citizen Versus Ideal City" in *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects* (1961)

II. The Development of Modern Urbanism

February 6: The Industrial City, Urban Ills, and the Politics of Class in the 19th Century

- Charles Dickens, *Hard Times* (New York: Bantam Classic, 1991 [1854]).
- Recommended readings: Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (Stanford, C.A.: Stanford University Press, 1958 [1845]), 30-33, 53-75; Robert Fishman, "The Suburb and the Industrial City: Manchester," in *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia* (1987).

February 13: The Crowd: Masses, Urban Anxieties and Pleasures at the Fin de Siècle

- Baudelaire, "To a Woman Passing By;" in *The Flowers of Evil* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998 [1857]); "Crowds" in *Paris Spleen* (New York: A New Directions Book, 1970 [1869]); "The Artist, Man of the World, Man of the Crowd, and Child," in *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays* (London: Phaidon, 1964), 1-15.
- Edgar Allan Poe, "The Man of the Crowd," in *Thirty-Two Stories* (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett, 2000), 121-129.
- Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1952 [1895]), Book 1, 13-78.
- Recommended readings: Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* (New York: Free Press, 1950), 409-424; Walter Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," in *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 155-194.

February 20: No Class – President's Day

February 27: Cities-in-Miniature: World's Fairs, Arcades, and the Orientalist Gaze

- Timothy Mitchell, "Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order," in *Colonialism and Culture*, ed. Nicholas Dirks (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1992), 289-317.
- Walter Benjamin, "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century," in *Reflections* (New York: Schocken Books, 1978), 146-162.
- Recommended reading: Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (1988).

III. Modernist Visions

March 6: Architecture or Revolution: The Housing Question

- Le Corbusier, "Argument" and "Mass-Production Houses" in *Towards a New Architecture* (New York: Dover Publications, 1986), 1-8, 225-265.
- Ebenezer Howard, *Garden Cities of To-morrow* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1965), 41-57.
- Bruno Taut, "The Earth is a Good Dwelling (1919)," Martin Wagner, "Path and Goal (1920)," Bruno Taut, "The New Dwelling: The Woman as Creator (1924)," and Grete Lihotzky, "Rationalization in the Household (1926-1927)," in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, ed. Anton Kaes, Martin Jay, and Edward Dimendberg (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 454-465.

- Guest Speaker: Esra Akcan, Postdoctoral Lecturer, Departments of Philosophy & Architecture, Columbia University
- Recommended readings: Robert Fishman, *Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century: Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Le Corbusier* (1989); Gwendolyn Wright, *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism* (1991); Paul Rabinow, *French Modern: Norms and Forms of the Social Environment* (1995).

March 13: Expressionism, the Avant-Garde, and the Woman-Machine

- Film: Fritz Lang, *Metropolis* (1926).
- Recommended reading: Andreas Huyssen, “The Vamp and the Machine: Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis*,” in *After the Great Divide* (1986).
- ****In-Class Library Workshop****

March 20: No Class – Spring Break

March 27: Peer Review Workshop

- We will spend our in-class time workshopping your midterm papers in preparation for the research and writing of your final papers.
- ****Midterm Paper Due****

IV. Sites and Strategies of Inclusion and Exclusion

April 3: The Street and the Neighborhood

- Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1992 [1961]), 2-140.
- In-class film clips: “New York: A Documentary Film” (2001, Episode 7, selections)

April 10: The (Sub)urban

- Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 190-282.
- Recommended readings: Williams H. Whyte, “The New Suburbia: Organization Man at Home,” in *The Organization Man* (1956); Herbert J. Gans, *The Levittowners: Ways of Life and Politics in a New Suburban Community* (1967); Rosalynn Baxandall and Elizabeth Ewen, *Picture Windows: How the Suburbs Happened* (2000); Dolores Hayden, *Building Suburbia : Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000* (2003).

April 17: El Barrio

- Philippe Bourgois, *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003[1996]), selections.

April 24: Gentrification and the Militarization of Urban Space

- Smith, Neil. “‘Class Struggle on Avenue B’: The Lower East Side as Wild Wild West” and “Is Gentrification a Dirty Word?” in *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 3-47.
- Davis, Mike. “Fortress Los Angeles: The Militarization of Urban Space” in *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space*, ed. Michael Sorkin (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992), 154-180.

May 1: Cities of Walls

- Teresa P.R. Caldeira, *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo* (2000), selections.
- Recommended readings: Edward J. Blakely and Mary Gail Snyder, *Fortress America: Gated Communities in the United States* (1999); Donna M. Goldstein, *Laughter Out of Place: Race, Class, Violence, and Sexuality in a Rio Shantytown* (2003); Nancy Scheper-Hughes, *Death Without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil* (1993).

May 8: Public Space, Heritage Tourism, and the Development of Governors Island

- Guest speaker: Peter Fleischer, Senior Vice President, Governors Island Preservation and Education Corporation

May 15: Creating Socially and Economically Just Cities in a Postmodern World

- ****Final Paper Due****
- David Harvey, “Social Justice, Postmodernism, and the City,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 16 (December 1992): 588-601.
- Recommended reading: Gerald E. Frug, *City Making: Building Communities Without Building Walls* (1999).