

History 429
Street Life: Urban Culture in Modern Europe
Fall 2011

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Office hours: Th: 1-2 and by appt.
Class Meeting: Th, 2-4:50: SOS B50

Course Description

One of the greatest transformations in European life was the rise of the city in the nineteenth century and twentieth centuries. Scholars have documented the flow of people out of the countryside and into urban centers. This course focuses on describing this new way of life for the majority of Europeans who eventually became urbanites. We will explore how cities developed and changed with an emphasis on the nineteenth century, mostly in London and Paris. In addition to studying social historical changes, we will also consider the city as an object of fascination and inquiry and explore the contemporaneous development of new modes of narrative construction employed to describe cities (ie: the social science inquiry, maps, the naturalist novel, film, etc.)

This fall 2011 there is also an enormous set of linked art exhibitions called “Pacific Standard Time” about art and Los Angeles. This seminar will take advantage of this unique set of exhibitions to consider the way urban history and urban representation is grounded in European experiences of city life and has been transformed in the particular context of the very different kind of city that Los Angeles represents. Students visit several of these exhibitions as part of the course requirements.

Readings:

Books for Purchase

Readings on the syllabus denoted by an * are on our Blackboard. There are a few instances where I have put a link to readings that can be found on-line.

Pike, Subterranean Cities
Harvey, Paris, Capital of Modernity
Balzac, History of the Thirteen
Schlor, Nights in the Big City
Schwartz, Spectacular Realities
Zola, L'Assommoir (The Drinking Den)
Koven, Slumming
Houlbrook, Queer London
Riis, How the Other Half Lives
Yochelson and Czitrom, Rediscovering Jacob Riis

Excerpts on the BB and on-line links

- *Schivelbusch, The Railway Journey, pp.1-70
- Marx, *The Communist Manifesto* (link <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm>: preamble and chapters one and two)
- Engels, *On the Condition of the Working Classes in England*, SECTIONS TO READ: All Prefaces, Introduction, Great Towns, Results, Attitudes of the Bourgeoisie towards the Proletariat. **Read on-line or print at** <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/condition-working-class/>
- *Harvey, Paris, Capital of Modernity (ch 3 prologue and ch 4)
- *Zola, chapter from The Ladies Paradise
- *Hall, *Cities in Civilization*, 700-745
- *Walkowitz, “Jack the Ripper” from *City of Dreadful Delight*

Course Assignments

Students must attend all classes. More than three missed classes (without medical cause) will result in a failure. Class participation constitutes 15% of your grade.

Each week students must post comments on the readings by Wednesday night at midnight. You must read the other students' comments before class.

Students will write one 5 to 7 page essay based on class material in the first half of the term. That paper will constitute 25% of your grade. Due October 13 to the Blackboard.

The final project consists of a class presentation, a 7-10 page paper and a final visual presentation. This work is worth 60% of your grade: 10%, 25% and 25%. Due December 9 at 9 am.

No late papers and exams will be accepted under any circumstances.

Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

UNIT ONE: The Emergence of the Modern City

Week One: Introduction to Urban History

Th, 8/25

Lecture: Why Study Cities? Why Europe?

Europe Industrializes: Railroads. Factories, New Cities

Read for next week:

*Schivelbusch, The Railway Journey, pp.1-70

Marx, *The Communist Manifesto* (link

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm>:

preamble and chapters one and two)

Week Two: What Does Modern Mean?

Th, 9/1

Discussion of readings of previous week

Lecture: The state, the capital, bureaucracy and capitalist space

Read for Next Week:

Balzac, *History of the Thirteen* (“Ferragus” and “The Girl with the Golden Eye”)

*Harvey, Paris, Capital of Modernity (ch 3 prologue and ch 4)

Week Three: Observing the Poor

Th, 9/8

Discussion: The Myth of Modernity

Lecture: Observing the Poor and the City as Laboratory

Read for next week:

Engels, *On the Condition of the Working Classes in England*, SECTIONS TO READ: All

Prefaces, Introduction, Great Towns, Results, Attitudes of the Bourgeoisie towards the

Proletariat. **Read on-line or print at**

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/condition-working-class/>

Week Four and Weeks Five: On Urban Infrastructure: Above and Below

Th, 9/15

Discussion: Seeing the Poor; Race in the 19th century

Lecture: Urban Improvements

Read for next week:

*Hall, *Cities in Civilization*, 700-745

*Zola, chapter from The Ladies Paradise

Pike, Subterranean Cities, Introduction, Chapter 1 and Chapter 3

Th, 9/22

Discussion of Money Above and Refuse Below

Lecture: Social Life as a Spatial Expression: Margins and Centers

Read: Zola, L'assommoir (The Drinking Den)

UNIT TWO: Life at the Margins

Week 6: And then there was night and day

Th, 9/29: Possible Re-Schedule: Rosh Hashana

Discussion of L'assommoir: “Below or at the Margins?”

Lecture: The City and Display: Exhibition Craze
Read for next week: Schlor, Nights in the Big City

Week 7: Slumming

Th, 10/6:

Discussion: Nightlife

Discussion: Summary of Unit One

Distribution of paper topics. Due 10/13

Week 8: PAPERS DUE

Th, 10/13: No Class. Schwartz out of town. Papers due via email and on BB at 2:00pm PST.

Read for next week:

Koven, Slumming, Intro, Chapters 1 and 2

*Walkowitz, "Jack the Ripper" from *City of Dreadful Delight Screen* "M"

Week 9: Sex and the City

10/20: discussion of slumming

Lecture: Introducing the "Is there really a PST Project?" LA art institutions far and wide will host many, many exhibitions about art in Los Angeles. One of the major questions for anyone seeing such a set of exhibitions is what role the actual place of LA played in the production of the art being exhibited and what is unique to LA as an artistic community. We are going to use what we have learned about London and Paris in the 19th century and try to answer these questions by making site visits to the exhibitions and then using them to inspire a final research project and presentation related to urban history in Europe. Each student will create a final project which includes a 7-10 page paper and a 5-7 minute visual presentation (in ppt, imovie, prezzi, keynote) that addresses a specific issue they wish to examine. Papers might use the exhibits as inspiration, as a jumping off point to learn more about some aspect of nineteenth or twentieth century European urban history, they might be counter-exhibitions showing the limits of the claims for a particular exhibit. This will become clearer as we visit the shows.

Read for next week: Houlbrook, Queer London

Screen: "Women of the Left Bank"

UNIT THREE: THE CITY AND REPRESENTATION: EUROPEAN CITIES AND PST

Week 10: The City as Image and the Image of the City

Th, 10/27:

Discussion: City and Sexual Subcultures

Lecture: Photography, Film and City Life

Read: Schwartz, Spectacular Realities

Week 11: Picturing Urban Life

11/3

Discussion: Schwartz: Urban Visual Representation

Lecture: How Europeans Defined American Urban Representation

European Modernism in US (1930s)

Read for Next Week: Riis, How the Other Half Lives

Yochelson and Czitrom, Rediscovering Jacob Riis

VISIT to the MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY EXHIBITION

Week 12: Discussion of Riis Material

Th, 11/10:

VISIT TO EXHIBITION: GETTY OR LACMA

Independent Visit to Exhibit

Week 13: PST Visit: MOCA: Naked Hollywood, Meet at MOCA

11/17: Project Proposals Due

Must attend Professor Schwartz event at MOCA, details TBA. May not be this week.

Possible Visit to San Diego show together.

Week 14: 11/24: THANKSGIVING: NO CLASS. Meet with Professor Schwartz early in the week about projects and visit one more PST show.

Week 15: 12/1: Visual Project Presentations

Final Papers and Presentations are due Friday, December 9 at 9am both via email and loaded onto the BB. Visual projects due on thumb drive or dvd if too large to mail.