History 226
CITIES AND CULTURES
Fall 2018
MWF 9:05-9:55, ASC 505

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Description: A gateway to international urban history. Rather than a strict chronological survey, this course approaches urban history via case studies, the scrutiny of primary material, and the discussion of key themes (justice, health, worship, spectacle and entertainment, individual freedoms, city planning, and beauty).

The city provides a lens for investigating the human search for the good and the beautiful across time and space. How have people sought to achieve just societies while living in dense groups? How have their concepts of architectural beauty changed over time? We will discuss cities not only as catalysts for growth and invention, but also as generators of social problems that can lead to the absence of the good and the beautiful, or even their destruction.

The longer-term aims of the course are: to prepare you to think creatively about shaping the cities of the future; to ask how knowledge of the past may help us to make better choices on issues like the following. Do cities have environmental advantages? Are urbanization and the shrinkage of rural areas inevitable? Should cities become more dense or more sprawling? How can cities bridge social, political, cultural differences to become more inclusive and fair? The urban, as well as the natural, environment is in need of our care and attention.

Evaluation: You grade will be determined by five assessments over the course of the term: 1. a mid-term examination on Oct. 13; 2. a 5 page summary of what you have learned from the course due Dec. 8; 3. class participation; 4. an oral presentation (working in groups on an issue drawn from chapters in LeGates) whose text you will submit for grading; over the course of the term I will assign interim due dates for this project: topic, outline, evidence; argument/objectives; and 5. a final examination on Dec. 11. Each of these assessments will constitute 20% of your grade.

Electronic devices: You may not use them in the classroom without the permission of the instructor.

Plagiarism: is dealt with according to the guidelines set out in the Boston University handbook. See https://www.bu.edu/academics/cas/policies/academic-conduct/
Books: the two required texts for this course are available for purchase at Barnes and Noble. They are the Sixth Edition of The City Reader, edited by Richard T. LeGates and Frederic Stout (Routledge, 2016), referred to simply as “LeGates” in the assignments below, and Andrew Lees, The City, A World History (Oxford, 2015). All other readings have been scanned so they are available through Mugar Library. Occasionally additional short documents will be distributed in class.

Note that changes may sometimes be made to the below syllabus.

**INTRODUCTION**

September 6: *Welcome*: how urban are you? What is your dream city and why? What is your relationship to the city?


**THE PRE-MODERN CITY**

September 11: *The First Cities and the Temple (refs. to Uruk, Teotihuacan, Great Zimbabwe):* V. Gordon Childe, “The Urban Revolution,” in LeGates; Lees, ch. 1; selections from *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (handout)


September 15: *Rome 50-100 AD: What gave the city cohesion?:* Lees, ch. 2; Mary Beard, *SPQR*, chapter 11 (scanned)

September 18: *Medieval Cities: a stage for the monarch and the church (case studies of Notre Dame and Lincoln cathedrals):* Mark Girouard, Cities and People, A Social and Architectural History, chapter 3 “Church and State” (pp. 41-66, scanned); Lees, ch. 3; Pirenne, “European City Origins” and “Cities and European Civilization” in LeGates.


September 22: *Early Modern Cities and the birth of capitalism:* Lees, ch. 4


THE INDUSTRIAL ERA


October 11: *The Imperial City, at home and abroad (1)*: Jonathan Schneer, *London 1900 The Imperial Metropolis*, ch 2 pp. 16-36 (scanned); Lees, ch. 6.

October 13: MID-TERM


October 27: Field trip to West End Museum and other sites around Beacon Hill; this class will take place at another time than when our class normally meets, probably on Saturday the 28th. To read Kevin Lynch, “The City and its Elements,” in LeGates.


THE FUTURE OF THE CITY


November 8: Does historic preservation matter?: Guest visit by Prof. Daniel Bluestone


November 20: no class; DSW in Washington at MESA annual conference


November 29: *What does ‘sustainable’ really mean?*
Timothy Beatley, “Planning for sustainability in European cities,” and Peter Calthorpe, “Urbanism in the age of climate change” in LeGates

**APPLYING WHAT WE’VE LEARNED TO THE FUTURE**

December 1: Student presentations 1

December 4: Student presentations 2

December 6: Summing up: three to five page essay due (summing up what you’ve learned in this course) to discuss in class

December 8: review

December 11: Final examination in class