

**CAS EN 128: REPRESENTING BOSTON**  
**BOSTON UNIVERSITY, FALL 2014**  
**TR 11:00-12:20, CAS 322**

**Instructor: W. H. Howell**

**Office Hours: W 12:00-2:00, Th 1:00-3:00 and by appointment**

**Office: English Department, 236 Bay State Road, Room #231**

**Office contact: 617.358.2523**

**e-mail: [whhowell@bu.edu](mailto:whhowell@bu.edu)**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course will focus on the literary and cultural geography of the city of Boston and its immediate suburbs. For nearly four hundred years, Boston has been a critical stage for the American experiment: in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it served as an exemplary “City on a Hill” for emigrating English Protestants and as a crucible for Colonial independence; in the nineteenth century, it was both an internationalist “hub of the universe” and a site for the development of an American “national” literature; in the twentieth century, it was a center of immigration and an important battleground in the struggle for civil rights. Each of these moments gives rise to its own varieties of expression; our job, in this course, will be to track and analyze these expressions and to understand our own role as participants in the city’s ongoing project. To do so, we will read and analyze a wide variety of historical and contemporary sources—from John Winthrop’s sermons to Dennis Lehane’s *Mystic River*; from Phillis Wheatley’s poems to Malcolm X’s *Autobiography*—and will undertake significant field work in the city itself. Required class trips will find participants wandering the galleries at the Museum of Fine Arts, walking the Freedom Trail, and basking in the majesty of Fenway Park. Exploratory diaries will be required in addition to more formal analyses of texts; final papers will require archival research.

**EVALUATION METHOD:**

Students will be evaluated on the basis of midterm and final examinations (15% each), a revised compendium of diary entries (5 pp; 15%), a prospectus/annotated bibliography (5 pp; 15%), a longer final paper (8-10 pp; 30%) and class participation (10%).

Plagiarism and other forms of dishonesty will not be tolerated. We will talk about what this means and how to avoid it in as the class progresses. Violations of this policy may result in a failing grade for the given assignment or for the course, as well as disciplinary action at the University level. For more information on BU’s policies about academic integrity, <http://www.bu.edu/cas/students/undergrad-resources/code/>

**ASSIGNMENTS:**

**City Diary (Ongoing, eventuating in 6-8 polished pp):** Throughout the course, students will be asked to record observations and impressions of their experiences of the City of Boston—based on their reading, their fieldwork and their own extracurricular activities. They will turn in fragments from these diaries at “checkpoints” throughout the course. Instructor will respond with comments and suggestions for further reading or investigation. Near the end of the

semester, students will select an entry or two for revision and expansion into a single, five-page personal essay.

**Prospectus and Annotated Bibliography/Oral Presentation (4 pp):** The prospectus will sketch a research problem or set of issues worthy of extended attention, speculate on what might be some good texts/moments/objects for working through such a problem, and offer a hint or two about the intellectual or cultural stakes of the investigation. The annotated bibliography will briefly survey the critical or historical landscape in which this investigation will unfold. Taken together, these will serve as the basis of a brief oral presentation (around 5 minutes; nothing terribly formal) of your work-in-progress.

**Final paper (8-10 pp):** The final paper will expand on the prospectus, integrating material from both primary and secondary (i.e.: critical or historical) sources.

#### **ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:**

Students are expected to attend every class meeting with their assigned materials and should be prepared to participate in all class discussions. Students will also be strongly encouraged to join the class on its scheduled weekend rambles about the city—if a student cannot, for whatever reason, make the trip with the group, she must make it on her own. Students who miss more than two meetings without prior consultation with the instructor put themselves in danger of failing the course. All cellphone ringers must be turned off for the duration of class meetings; text messaging is impolite (and potentially dishonest) and is therefore strictly forbidden. Unless extensions are granted by the instructor in advance, all due dates are firm. Late work will be penalized by 4 points (out of 100) per day. This includes weekends. If something is due on Thursday the first and not turned in until the morning of Tuesday the sixth, the highest grade that it could possibly receive would be 80 (ie: 100-20). In that the instructor has never in his life given a paper a 100, the actual grade would almost certainly be much lower.

#### **COMMUNICATION:**

It's typically easiest to reach me by email: [whhowell@bu.edu](mailto:whhowell@bu.edu). You might also stop by 236 Bay State Rd., Room 231; I'm often in my office.

#### **COURSE TEXTS:**

These are available at the BU Bookstore (a.k.a. Barnes and Noble) in Kenmore Square. You may also acquire them online (through [amazon.com](http://amazon.com), for example), but you must make sure that you are buying the appropriate edition.

#### **Required:**

Pauline Hopkins, *Contending Forces* (Oxford; ISBN: 978-0195067859)  
 Mary Antin, *The Promised Land*; Penguin; ISBN: 978-0143106777)  
 John P. Marquand, *The Late George Apley* (Back Bay; ISBN: 0316735671)  
 Dennis Lehane, *Mystic River* (Harper Perennial; ISBN: 978-0060584757)

#### **Recommended:**

Robert Allison, *A Short History of Boston* (Commonwealth Editions; ISBN: 978-1889833477)

**N.B.:** There will also be a great many readings and other course materials on the course's Blackboard website. These will be indicated in the syllabus by an asterisk (\*). In most cases, students should bring these texts with them to class sessions. Laptops and tablets are therefore permitted, but they should only be used for course-related purposes during classtime.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE:**

### **I. From Shawmut to Boston: The City in the Seventeenth Century**

**T 9/2**—Course Introduction: The Space of the City

**R 9/4**—**Required:** Penobscot Corn Mother story\*; Francis Higginson, “A Catalogue of Such Needful Things...”\*; John Cotton, “God’s Promise to His Plantations”\*  
**—Recommended:** Allison, Chapter 1

**T 9/9**—**Required:** John Winthrop, “A Model of Christian Charity”\* and selections from the *Journal of John Winthrop*\*; John Pond’s Letter from Massachusetts, 1631\*

**R 9/11**—**Required:** Anne Bradstreet, “The Author to Her Book”\*; “Before the Birth of One of Her Children”\*; “Here Follows Some Verses upon the Burning of Our House, July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1666”\*; “On My Dear Grandchild, Simon Bradstreet”\*; Samuel Sewall, from *The Diary of Samuel Sewall* (1676)\*  
**—Due: City Diary Checkpoint #1**

### **II. “Cradle of Liberty”: The City in the Eighteenth Century**

**T 9/16**—**Required:** Paul Revere, “The Bloody Massacre perpetrated in King Street...”\*; Paul Revere, “Memorandum on Events of April 18, 1775”; Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, “The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere”  
**—Recommended:** Allison, Chapters 2-3

**R 9/18**—**Required:** Boston Committee of Correspondence, “We the Subscribers...”\*; Anonymous, “Addresses to the Late Governor Hutchinson”\*; Anonymous, “The Following is a True List...”\*; Salem Committee of Safety, “The Recantations of Robert Hooper, John Pedrick,...”\*

**T 9/23**—**Required:** Phillis Wheatley, prefatory materials to *Poems on Various Subjects*; Wheatley, “On Being Brought from Africa to America”; Thomas Jefferson, from *Notes on the State of Virginia*\*; James Bowdoin, “A Rebus”; Wheatley, “An Answer to the Rebus”

**R 9/25**—**Required:** Phillis Wheatley, “On the Death of J.C., an Infant”; “To the Right Honourable William, Earl of Dartmouth”; “To S. M., A Young African Painter, Upon Seeing his Works”  
**—Due: City Diary Checkpoint #2**

**Sat. 9/27—Freedom Trail Visit**

**T 9/30—Required:** Judith Sargent Murray, “On the Equality of the Sexes”\*; Selected letters of John and Abigail Adams\*

**R 10/2—Required:** Selected letters of John Singleton Copley\*; selected Copley paintings\*  
**—Due: City Diary Checkpoint #3**

**Sat. 10/4—Museum of Fine Arts Visit****III. Common Cause: The City in the Nineteenth Century**

**T 10/7— Required:** Ralph Waldo Emerson, “The Fugitive Slave Law”\*; John Greenleaf Whittier, “The Hunters of Men”; William Lloyd Garrison, ed., *The Liberator* (1/1/1831)\*; Walt Whitman, “A Boston Ballad”\*; from David Walker, *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World*\*  
**—Recommended:** Allison, chap. 4.

**R 10/9—Required:** Emerson, “Beauty”\*; Winslow Homer, “The Boston Common”\*; “The Fountain at Boston Common”\*; “Skating on Jamaica Pond, near Boston”\*  
**—Due: City Diary Checkpoint #4**

**T 10/14—No Class (Monday Schedule)****R 10/16—Midterm Examination**

**T 10/21—Required:** Mary Antin, *The Promised Land*, chaps. 1-10

**R 10/23—Required:** Antin, *The Promised Land*, chaps. 11-20  
**—Due: City Diary checkpoint #5**

**T 10/28—Required:** Pauline Hopkins, *Contending Forces*, chaps. 1-7

**R 10/30—Required:** *Contending Forces*, chaps. 8-11

**T 11/4—Required:** *Contending Forces*, chaps. 12-22

**R 11/6—Required:** Selected Sacco and Vanzetti documents\*  
**—Due: City Diary Exposition**

#### IV. The Ground Beneath Our Feet: The City Today

**T 11/11—Required:** John P. Marquand, *The Late George Apley*, chaps. 1-15; John Singer Sargent, “The Daughters of Edward Darley Boit”\*

**R 11/13—Required:** Marquand, *The Late George Apley*, chaps. 16-31.

**Sat. 11/15—Back Bay/Fenway Park Visit**

**Recommended:** A. Bartlett Giamatti, “The Green Fields of the Mind”\*; John Updike, “Hub Fans Bid Kid Adieu”\*

**T 11/18—Required:** Selections from Malcolm X and Arthur Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*\*; NYT and SCLC materials for march on Boston Common\*

—**Recommended:** Allison, chap. 5

—**Due: Prospectus/Annotated Bibliography**

**R 11/20—Final Paper presentations Day One**

**T 11/25—Final Paper Presentations Day Two**

**R 11/27— Thanksgiving; NO CLASS**

**T 12/2—Required:** Dennis Lehane, *Mystic River*, chaps. 1-12.

**R 12/4—Required:** Lehane, *Mystic River*, chaps. 13-18

**T 12/9—Required:** Lehane, *Mystic River*, chaps. 19-28; course wrap and evaluations

—**Due: Final Paper**

—**Final Examination, TIME TBD, ROOM TBD**