

HIST 9XXX
Urban America (3 credits)



Brooklyn Bridge, 1913. Library of Congress

HIST 9XXX
Urban America – ONLINE (3 credits)

Course Description

Urban history has come a long way since the 1960s when scholars first began the systematic exploration of the American urban experience. Influenced by the new social history and contemporary concerns about what was then called the “urban crisis,” younger historians began delving into the history of the city, exploring a wide variety of themes—immigration, migration, industrialization, urban politics, transportation, environmental concerns, the growth of the modern “ghetto” and suburbanization—and paying close attention to issues of class, race, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity. Many historians today no longer consider the field to be an independent subspecialty but rather an essential way to explore the development of the United States as a whole. To study the history of cities is essentially to study the creation and character of the modern and postmodern world. In this course we will read both “classic” and more recent works of urban history. My goal is to introduce you to both the rich field of scholarship on the city and the variety of interpretive approaches that characterize its study.

Course Objectives

- Understand the major social and political systems shaping American cities and suburbs, past and present.
- Analyze the built environment as both a product and shaping force of social life.
- Investigate significant problems, analyze sources, and verify claims with evidence.
- Read perceptively, write to be read by others, and write to reflect on one’s learning.

Required Technology & Texts

TECHNOLOGY: This course requires a high-speed internet connection and a computer device capable of word processing and streaming media. The course is administrated through Blackboard university email. Hence, you must have and use Fitchburg State Blackboard and email accounts. In order to access course documents, you must be able to view PDF files.

TEXTS: You are required to purchase and use for this course an anthology of American urban history and theory: Steven H. Corey and Lisa Krissoff Boehm, eds., *The American Urban Reader: History and Theory* (London: Routledge, 2010). ISBN# 0415803985. Copies are available from online booksellers from \$55 (new) to \$35 (used). Searching Amazon or other online booksellers using the ISBN is the best way to search for the book. You must obtain the text by the end of the first week of class in order to be prepared for upcoming assignments. You will also be required to read and view a variety of free online sources. These are identified in assignment handouts.

Instructional Design

METHOD: The method of instruction in this course emphasizes active, independent learning. You are expected to read for knowledge and write with the goal of exploring ideas, including those of your classmates.

FORMAT: This course is an ONLINE course. All work will be completed on-line using Blackboard and specified digital sites and resources. The course is not self-paced. You are responsible for knowing all deadlines and submitting assignments on time to keep up with the class.

INSTRUCTOR ROLE: My role as instructor of the course takes three forms: I grade all assigned work; I use the announcement function to comment on classwork; and I use email to provide individualized feedback. The best way to reach me is by email. If I am unable to respond immediately, I will endeavor to do so before the end of that day.

Expected Academic and Professional Behavior

CIVILITY: Everyone, including myself, is expected to show respect for others. In a course of this nature, that includes abiding by the rules of written English in all communication (including emails), and thoughtfully and respectfully engaging others in discussion following the rules of "[netiquette](#)."

PROFESSIONALISM: Everyone, including myself, is expected to behave in a professional manner. This means being punctual, meeting deadlines, being prepared, completing work diligently, using a polite, respectful tone for all communication, resolving issues in a mature and responsible manner, and behaving ethically.

LATE WORK: All coursework must be completed on time. You may request an extension if the circumstances truly warrant it. However, you must make this request ahead of time.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Academic integrity is an important subset of professional behavior. As I'm sure you're already aware, it is unethical to cheat, or to use the words or ideas of another person without proper acknowledgement. Use appropriate citations to indicate the source of any wording of ideas not your own, including that found on the Internet, or created by another student. There will be serious consequences for your grade in this course, and possibly for your academic standing at the university, if you are found guilty of cheating or plagiarism. Additional information about academic integrity can be found in the Academic Policies section of the Student Handbook.

Support Services

TECHNICAL SUPPORT: For assistance with Blackboard, FSU email, and other technical support contact the University's [technology help](#).

EXTENDED CAMPUS CENTER: Extended Campus students are encouraged to take advantage of the university's [online student resources](#), including an online "[Student Resource Center](#)."

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY: The library provides a full range of library services to students enrolled in distance learning and extended campus programs. Information on how to access these services is available on the library DL&EC [libguide](#).

ACADEMIC SUPPORT: Students who wish to deepen their understanding of course concepts, extend their skills, and improve performance in this course are encouraged to take advantage of the University's [Academic Support](#) services, which include an on-line tutoring service.

SPECIAL NEEDS: If you have a documented disability that may require accommodation, please communicate with me as soon as possible. Additionally, you will need to contact [Disability Services](#).

Assignments

There is no midterm or final examination in this course. Instead, course assignments consist of those outlined below. Detailed instructions and evaluation criteria are provided on Blackboard in separate handouts for each type of assignment. All assignments are graded on a 10-point scale translated into a percentage. The overall grade for each category of assignment is a straight average. You can keep track of your grades on Blackboard under "My Grades."

- *Reading Quizzes* There is an untimed multiple-choice quiz administered through Blackboard on each assigned reading.
- *Discussion Assignments* Discussion assignments are designed to extend your learning about specific problems relating to course material, and to allow you to learn from each other.
- *Final Assignment* There are two options for the final assignment. The first option, designed for in-service teachers, involves creating a unit of instruction on a course topic supported by historiographical and primary source research. The second option requires completing a 10-15 page historiographical review essay or research paper on a course topic.

ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES/TIMES: Provided as a separate document under "Course Information."

GRADE DETERMINATION: Overall course grades will be assigned according to the Fitchburg State grading scale. In calculating final grades, scores in each assignment category will be averaged and weighted as indicated. If you have any concerns about the evaluation of your work, please speak with me directly and refer to the grade appeal policy in the university catalog.

	<i>Percent of Grade</i>
Reading Quizzes	40%
Discussions	40%
Final Assignment	20%

final grades will be assigned according to the university graduate grade scale

A	4.0	95% - 100%	B-	2.7	80% - 82%
A-	3.7	92% - 94%	C+/B-	2.5	77% - 79%
B+/A-	3.5	89% - 91%	C+	2.3	74% - 76%
B+	3.3	86% - 88%	C	2.0	71% - 73%
B	3.0	83% - 85%	F	0.0	0% -59%

TOPICS

1. Critical Perspectives
2. Urban Roots: Colonial Settlement
3. Industry and Immigrants, 1820s-1920s
4. Life From the Bottom Up, 1860s-1940s
5. Managing the Metropolis
6. The Urban Environment
7. Transportation and Physical Mobility
8. Urban Migrations and Social Mobility
9. Race and the Post-War Metropolis
10. Exurbia and Postindustrial Cities