

**HTS 3011-A: The City in U.S. History**  
Georgia Institute of Technology (Spring 2018)

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**Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12-1 pm and by appointment**

Course Overview:

Through a combination of lectures, readings, and discussion, this course examines the nature of urban life throughout U.S. history. It explores how cities have arisen, declined, and changed over time due to economic, demographic, cultural, and political developments as well as shifts in ideas about how to manage urban and later metropolitan affairs. It also examines how cities have served as engines of cultural and artistic production as well as why cities have been a perennial source of political controversy. Above all, it contends that the struggle to make cities livable and sustainable remains one of the most pressing issues of our time and that understanding the past is an indispensable tool for moving toward a better urban future.

Students are expected to complete all assignments on time and to take seriously their part in building a classroom community committed to civil debate and ongoing discovery -- a classroom in which all students feel comfortable stating their opinions and asking questions and do so constructively and often.

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*This course fulfills the Area E (Social Science) Approved Learning Outcome.* Students in this course will demonstrate the ability to describe the social, political, and economic forces that influence social behavior.

*How This Course Satisfies the Area E Learning Outcome.* Students in this course learn to analyze, describe, and compare how a series of critical turning points in the social, political, and economic history of American cities shaped social behavior. Students will demonstrate their ability to describe, analyze, and compare these patterns through a series of essay exams and through a brief research project and poster presentation.

*Course Objectives Related to the Area E Learning Outcome.* Students in the course will be able to:

- 1) analyze, describe, and compare how the economic and social changes related to the capitalist transformation of the antebellum period, the industrial revolution, and recent transformations in the U.S. and global economies have shaped social behavior in U.S. cities.
- 2) describe and analyze how social, political, and economic forces gave rise to protest and reform movements that in turn shaped government policy focused on U.S. cities and metropolitan areas.
- 3) describe and compare the economic, social, and political forces that have driven both domestic and international migration to U.S. cities and the rise of new cities and suburban areas throughout U.S. history.
- 4) describe the various social, political, and economic forces that have shaped the spatial layout of cities, with particular attention to racial and economic segregation, issues related to gentrification and displacement, city and regional planning, and efforts to foster environmental sustainability.

This course is also part of Georgia Tech’s Serve-Learn-Sustain (SLS) initiative, uniting classroom learning with community action. SLS works with all six colleges to offer courses and programs connecting sustainability and community engagement with real-world partners and projects, allowing students to use their disciplinary expertise related to science and technology to help “create sustainable communities” where humans and nature flourish, now and in the future, in Georgia, the U.S., and around the globe. More information about SLS can be found at [www.serve-learn-sustain.gatech.edu](http://www.serve-learn-sustain.gatech.edu). Visit the website to sign up for the [SLS Email List](#), view the full list of [affiliated courses](#), and find links to Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. This course will especially focus on the following SLS-related learning outcomes: 1) “Students will develop and manifest personal values and beliefs consistent with their roles as responsible members of local, national, international, and/or professional communities; and 2) “Students will be able to describe how their actions impact the sustainability of communities.

Required Readings:

- 1) Rebecca Burns, *Rage in the Gate City: The Story of the 1906 Atlanta Race Riot*
- 2) Peter Dreier, et al, *Place Matters: Metropolitcs for the Twenty-First Century, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*
- 3) Victor M. Rios, *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys*
- 4) Assorted articles, book chapters, and other readings posted on T-Square.

*All books listed above are available for purchase at the Engineer’s Bookstore and the Barnes & Noble on Tech Square. Most are available in e-reader formats as well.*

Assignments and Grading:

- 1) Brief Reading Quizzes (15%)

*Classes dedicated solely to discussion will begin with a brief quiz consisting of basic questions related to the assigned reading for that day’s class. The purpose of the quiz is to confirm that you have done the reading.*

- 2) Participation in Class Discussions (15%)

*See the evaluation criteria on the final page of this syllabus.*

- 3) Brief Project on Atlanta’s Recent History or on Urban Environmental Sustainability (15%)

*Working in small groups over the course of the semester, students will complete a brief research project on a facet of Atlanta’s recent past or on an issue related to urban environmental sustainability. You will sign up for a topic from a list of pre-circulated options. Together with your small group, you will compose a poster presentation that will enable your classmates to learn about your topic efficiently. Further information about this research project will be distributed at an appropriate point in the course.*

- 4) Mid-Term I (15%)

- 5) Mid-Term II (20%)

Assignments and Grading (Continued):

6) Final Exam (20%)

*Exams in this course are designed to be tools to help you synthesize the material discussed during the term and to show the instructor your mastery over the topics at hand. In that spirit, they will consist solely of essay questions, which will be distributed at least one week before each exam. You may collaborate with one another when preparing your answers. Doing so will help you learn. You will be allowed to bring the pertinent readings to each exam as well as a one-page outline (and I mean outline), double-spaced, in a 12-point font with one-inch margins to assist you in constructing your answers. You will hand these outlines in along with your essays. Since you will have the questions beforehand, the clarity of your writing and the organization of your essays will be especially important factors in your exam grades.*

Course Schedule:

Jan. 9 – Course Overview

Jan. 11 – Lecture: The Pre-colonial and Colonial American City

Jan. 16 – Discussion

Reading: Gary B. Nash, “The Social Evolution of Preindustrial Cities, 1700-1820,” article on T-Square.

Jan. 18 – Lecture: Capitalist Transformations: The American City from the 1820s through the Civil War

Jan. 23 – Discussion

Reading: Tyler Anbinder, *Five Points: The Nineteenth-Century New York Neighborhood That Invented Tap Dance, Stole Elections, and Became the World’s Most Notorious Slum*, pp. 1-5, 111-140, 207-234, posted on T-Square.

Jan. 25 – Lecture/Discussion: Urban Reform in Antebellum America

Reading: Katz, “The Origins of Public Education,” book chapter on T-Square

Jan. 30 – Lecture: The Industrial Metropolis, An Overview, 1870-1930

Feb. 1 – **Midterm I (Covers material through Jan. 25)**

Feb. 6 – Discussion

Reading: Lincoln Steffens, “Philadelphia: Corrupt and Contented,” Magazine Article on T-Square.

Feb. 8 –Lecture: Reforming the Industrial Metropolis, 1890s-1930s, Part 1: Urban Planning and Architecture

Feb. 13 – Discussion -- Reforming the Industrial Metropolis, Part 2: The Urban Working Class and the Problem of Economic Security

Reading: Michael B. Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America, Tenth Anniversary Edition*, pp. 192-212, 242-255, posted on T-Square.

Feb. 15 – Lecture: The Southern City, 1870-1930

Feb. 20 – Discussion

Reading: Rebecca Burns, *Rage in the Gate City*

Feb. 22 – Workshop on Brief Research Projects

Feb. 27– **Midterm II (Covers material through Feb. 20).**

Mar. 1 – Workshop on Brief Research Projects

Mar. 6 – Lecture: The American City after World War II, An Overview

Mar. 8 – Discussion

Reading: Raymond A. Mohl, “Planned Destruction: The Interstates and Central City Housing,” book chapter on T-Square.

Mar. 13 – Discussion

Reading: Arnold R. Hirsch, “Choosing Segregation: Federal Housing Policy between *Shelley* and *Brown*,” book chapter on T-Square.

Mar. 15 – Discussion

Reading: Kevin Kruse, “The Politics of Race and Public Space: Desegregation, Privatization and the Tax Revolt in Atlanta,” article on T-Square.

**\*\*\*March 16 -- Annotated bibliography for research project due by 11:59 pm.**

**To complete this assignment fully, your group must hand in a document in MS Word or comparable format (no PDF's please) that lists at least four of the sources that you plan on using for your project. After each entry on this list, you must provide a paragraph description of the source and how it will help you successfully execute your research project. One volunteer from each group should upload a copy of an annotated bibliography to the Assignments page on T-Square.**

**Failure to complete this assignment fully will result in a full letter-grade deduction in your final grade for your group's research project.**

Mar. 20 – **No Class, Spring Break**

Mar. 22 – **No Class, Spring Break**

Mar. 27 – Lecture: The “New” American City, An Overview

Mar. 29 – Discussion: Metropolitan America in the Contemporary United States, Part 1

Reading: Dreier, et al, *Place Matters*, Chapter 2 and 3.

April 3 – Discussion: Metropolitan America in the Contemporary United States, Part 2

Reading: Dreier, et al, *Place Matters*, excerpts from Chapters 5 and 6.

Apr. 5 – Workshop on Poster Presentation

Apr. 10 – Discussion: Metropolitan America in the Contemporary United States, Part 3

Reading: Dreier, et al, *Place Matters*, Chapter 9.

April 12 – **Poster Presentations on Brief Research Projects, Part 1**

April 17 – **Poster Presentations on Brief Research Projects, Part 2**

April 19 – Discussion

Reading: Victor M. Rios, *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys*, preface, pages 34-35 (on mass incarceration), chapters 3-5, and chapter 7.

April 24 – Lecture/Discussion: Conclusions

**\*\*\*Final Exam: Monday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2:50-5:40 pm in our normal classroom.\*\*\***

## Criteria for Evaluating Class Participation

Class participation is worth 15% of your final grade. You will be evaluated on a scale of 0 through 6 in each of the following five categories.

- 1) Attendance – Students may miss up to **TWO classes that are solely discussion-based** during the semester without impacting their class participation grade. Any absence thereafter, no matter the reason, will result in a **1.5-point** deduction for a solely discussion-based class. Exceptions will only be made for documented illnesses and family emergencies. ***In addition, a student who misses more than four discussion-based classes cannot receive full credit in any of the categories listed below.***
  
- 2) Engagement – Students should be clearly engaged in all aspects of classroom discussion through active listening, note-taking, direct engagement with the written material (**they must bring the readings to class**) and offering their own reflections and constructive commentary. They should contribute to small group discussions multiple times whenever they occur. They should also strive to contribute to larger group discussions multiple times whenever they occur, although their ability to do so might understandably be limited to a degree by the size of the class. Comments made in front of the entire class are not “worth more” than participation in smaller discussions. Nonetheless, to receive the highest grade in this category, students should clearly strive to make regular contributions to our larger discussions during the semester.
  
- 3) Quality of Comments – Student questions and comments should show serious engagement with the material. This applies to both smaller and larger discussions. Student comments do not have to be “right.” Indeed, in many cases there won’t be a “right” answer. But they should be on topic (make sense in terms of the question posed) and show a sincere attempt to grapple with the material at hand.
  
- 4) Use of Evidence – Students should strive to support their comments using appropriate material presented in the lectures and especially from the readings. In most cases, the more specific the evidence, the better.
  
- 5) Respect for Others – During discussions and debates, all students are expected to show respect for the opinions of others. No one should feel worried about asking basic questions or about stating his or her beliefs. Disagreements may and should occur but should be voiced with kindness and civility. When attempting to right a classmate’s misunderstanding of the material, this should be done kindly and with respect.

In some cases, class participation will include written exercises. The above criteria, where applicable, will be used to judge those as well.