

Imagin(ing) Cities

Cities exert a substantial degree of control over American life. Throughout the 20th and early years of the 21st Century they have been centers of industry, of social change, of political change. And in part because of their status, scholars have begun to theorize about cities. The purpose of this class is to interrogate these theories through a filmic lens. Students will be exposed to readings and then in the second half of the semester, to films about cities that implicitly and explicitly speak to and about these theories.

Because this seminar is based primarily on peer-led discussions, regular attendance and active participation are essential.

There are three main requirements. You are required to email two questions on the readings/viewings the day before class. You are required to write 4 short essays (2-3 pages double-spaced)—also circulated via email at least one day before class. Two of these essays should deal with the theoretical readings, two of the essays should deal with the films. Finally, you are required to write an approximately 20-double-spaced page paper dealing with the core themes of the course. While the primary medium with which we explore the various imaginings of the city will be the film/movie, I am open to other media (music, photography, etc).

Paper proposals—either a 1 page outline or abstract—will be due on the fifth week of class.

Due to advances in media technology I will only show *one* movie in class (Blade Runner, the first week). The rest will be available to you either through Swank (Johns Hopkins has an account that enables you to watch streamed Swank movies) or in two cases through the library's media center.

Hackworth, Jason. 2007. *The Neoliberal City: Governance, Ideology, and Development in American Urbanism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Wilson, William J. 1996. *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor*. New York: Knopf.

Anderson, Elijah. 1999. *Code of the Street: Decency, Violence, and the Moral Life of the Inner City*. 1st ed. New York; London: W.W Norton.

Florida, Richard L. 2002. *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Khatib, Kate, Margaret Killjoy, and Mike McGuire, eds. 2012. *We Are Many: Reflections on Movement Strategy from Occupation to Liberation*. Baltimore: AK Press.

Davis, Mike. 2006. *City of Quartz Excavating the Future in Los Angeles*. New York: Verso.

Blade Runner
Menace II Society
How to Make it In America
Escape from New York
The Dark Knight Rises
District 9
The Truman Show

WEEK ONE 1.28.13

Introduction

WEEK TWO 2.4.13

Georg Simmel, "Metropolis and Mental Life," in Donald N. Levine (ed.), *Georg Simmel on Individuality and Social Forms*, pp. 324-339

Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 44 (July 1938), pp. 1-24

Claude S. Fischer, "Toward a Subcultural Theory of Urbanism," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 80 (May 1975), pp. 1319-1341

WEEK THREE 2.11.13

Florida, Richard L. 2002. *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

The Neoliberal City

WEEK FOUR 2.18.13

When Work Disappears

Code of the Street

WEEK FIVE 2.25.13

City of Quartz

WEEK SIX 3.4.13

We Are Many (chapters)

The New American Revolution (Chapter 4)

"The City is the Black Man's Land"

WEEK SEVEN 3.11.13

The Suburb Reader (chapters)

WEEK EIGHT 3.25.13

Escape from New York

WEEK NINE 4.1.13

Menace II Society

WEEK TEN 4.8.13

How to Make it In America (episodes)

WEEK ELEVEN 4.15.13

District 9

WEEK TWELVE 4.22.13

The Truman Show

WEEK THIRTEEN 4.29.13

The Dark Knight Rises

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