AST 520
Metropolitan America: Urbanism + Landscape

Mondays, 7-9:30pm
Humanities Bldg. 244
Prof. Joseph Heathcott
heathcje@slu.edu
St. Louis University, Missouri
Office Phone: 977.3516
Office Hrs: T 10am-Noon,
W 1-4pm, or by appointment,
Office: Humanities Bldg. 113

"All that is solid melts into air."
--Karl Marx, Communist Manifesto

"A citizen of no mean city."
--Acts 21:39

Course Overview
This course will orient students to issues and themes in the study of American urban and suburban landscapes from the colonial period to the present. We will immerse ourselves in the examination of American cities, their cultures, and their designed and built environments. We will approach the American metropolis as a multiform landscape of socially and historically produced urban spaces, whose forms and contours are the result of negotiations at many levels. We will study cities as “texts,” as legible palimpsests upon which various groups attempt to inscribe power and resistance. At the same time, we will place the “textual” city within the broader context of political, material, and cultural forces that shape it over time.

Course Objectives
Students will become familiar with the literature on American urbanism as it emerges from disciplines such as history, geography, architecture, landscape studies, planning, and anthropology. The concept of “culture,” as a system of meaning and shared experience, will provide the rubric for organizing a common analytical framework. We will examine the ways in which culture shapes both the urban built environment and the perceptions of that environment across space and time. In addition, we will locate specific points of tension and conflict in the urban landscape in order to examine contests over urban space by various social groups. Students will develop a visual literacy for “reading” urban space, and for understanding the ways in which landscapes organize, reflect, and engender meaning. Finally, the course will challenge students to construct analytic and interpretive frameworks for future research.
**Course Work**

AST 520 is designed as a colloquium—that is, around a common roster of readings and assignments designed to forward knowledge on a collaborative basis. The course is neither a survey (it is, in fact, selective), nor is it a research seminar (students will not write research papers). Rather, it will introduce issues, theories, and sources in interdisciplinary urban research.

The success of the course depends on active engagement on the part of every student. Students will be responsible, on a rotating basis, for facilitating class meetings and for providing a general framework for discussion. Each class meeting will feature two or three facilitators, along with two primary source reports. Students will also submit short literature reviews (2-3 pages), assemble bibliographies, and write a final paper. Finally a series of tours will take us out of the classroom and onto the streets in order to evaluate the physical evidence of the urban landscape.

**Participation:** I take your participation in the life of the classroom very seriously. This means much more than simply reading the assigned materials. It also means coming to class prepared to share your insights and observations, and to engage your fellow students on a civil basis, in the spirit of collaboration and mutual respect. (10% of the final grade).

**Facilitation:** Each student will be responsible for facilitating two class sessions, usually in groups of 2-3. Facilitators will introduce the material, summarize the main arguments, and provide a framework for discussion. The best facilitating, of course, takes place when students coordinate their efforts in advance. Each group will submit a document with a list of five summary points, five discussion questions, and a bibliography of further readings. The group will provide a hard copy of this document for everyone. (10% x 2 = 20% of final grade).

**Critical Reviews:** Over the semester you will write two short book reviews, due on weeks other than those you facilitate. We will discuss in class the mechanics and strategy behind a good critical review. Each critical review should be three double-spaced pages in 12-point Times font, with 1.25” side margins. (10% x 2 = 20% of final grade).

**Primary Source Reports:** Every student will give two short presentations on a primary source. These presenters will NOT be the same people that facilitate that week’s meeting. The presentation should: describe the source; analyze its components; discuss the nature, contexts, and time period of its production; and assess its significance for research into urban cultures and landscapes. Each reviewer will write a short summary (one double-spaced page), attach a photocopied sample, and make a copy for every student. (10% x 2 = 20% of final grade).

**Final Project:** Each of you will select both the format and topic for your final project. You will produce either a broad synthetic essay, an in-depth literature review, or a detailed proposal for a research project. The research project may be academic in scope, or community-oriented. In any case, the project must cover a topic germane to the course, and should analyze or propose to analyze an aspect of the American urban landscape (30% of final grade).
Required Texts

• Eric Sandweiss, *St. Louis: The Evolution of an American Urban Landscape*
• Robert Campanella, *Time and Place in New Orleans*
• Gary Nash, *The Urban Crucible*
• John Reps, *Historic Lithographs of North American Cities*
• Christine Stansell, *City of Women*
• Daniel Bluestone, *Constructing Chicago*
• Nan Enstad, *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure*
• M. Christine Boyer, *Dreaming the Rational City*
• Maren Stange, *Bronzeville*
• Dana Cuff, *The Provisional City*
• Robert Self, *American Babylon*
• Sharon Zukin, *Landscapes of Power*

Class schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week One. Orientation to AST 593</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overview of the syllabus, materials, assignments. Consideration of the broader scope of the course within American and urban studies. Frank discussion about expectations of students and instructor. Scheduling of reports and facilitation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Two. Patterns in American Urban Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The City Made and Remade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Language of Landscape

**Reading:** Robert Campenella, *Time and Place in New Orleans*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Three. Ports, People, and Lines on the Land</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading: Gary Nash, <em>The Urban Crucible</em>; Eric Sandweiss, <em>St. Louis</em>, chs. 1-3; William Cronon, &quot;Lumber&quot; and &quot;Grain&quot; (reserve).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Week Four. Gender, City, Republic

Reading: Christine Stansell, *City of Women*; Joanne Meyerowitz, “Sexual Geography and Gender Economy in the Furnished Room Districts of Chicago” (reserve); Sean Wilentz, "Artisans in the Mercantile City" (reserve).

Due in class: Final project proposal and preliminary bibliography
First Tour: Old core neighborhoods and industrial sites in St. Louis

Week Five. The Antebellum City

Reading: Tim Gilfoyle, "Strumpets and Misogynists"; Mary Ryan, "The American Parade"; Gary Nash, "A City of Refuge"; Joel Tarr and Clay McShane, "The Centrality of the Horse in the Nineteenth Century American City" (all on reserve).

Week Six, 9.24. Nineteenth Century Urban Forms

Reading: John Reps, *Historic Lithographs of North American Cities*; Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar, "A Park Properly So Called" (reserve).

Week Seven, 10.1. Building the Industrial City

Reading: Dan Bluestone, *Constructing Chicago*; Eric Sandweiss, *St. Louis*, chs. 4-5; Daphne Spain, “Black Women as City Builders” (reserve); Roy Rosenzweig, "Workers in an Industrial City" (reserve).

Week Eight. The Leisured Landscape

Reading: Nan Enstad, *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure*; David Scobey, "Anatomy of the Promenade" (reserve); Catherine Cocks, "Tourist City and Tourist Citizens, 1876-1915" (reserve); Nancy Nenno, "Femininity, the Primitive, and Modern Urban Space: Josephine Baker in Berlin" (reserve).

Week Nine. The Emergence of Metropolitan America

Reading: M. Christine Boyer, *Dreaming the Rational City*; Eric Sandweiss, *St. Louis*, chs. 6-7; Clifford Clark, Jr., "The Bungalow Craze" (reserve).

Second Tour: Boom neighborhoods of the 1920s, inner ring suburbs, commercial strips
Week Ten. Civic Reform and the Progressive Impulse

Reading: Sarah S. Elkind, "Building a Better Jungle" (reserve); Gwendolyn Wright, "Americanization and Ethnicity in Urban Tenements" (reserve); Maureen Flannigan, "The Expansion of Women's Municipal Work" (reserve); Gail Radford, "The Politics of Housing in the 1920s" (reserve); Eric Sandeen, "The Design of Public Housing in the New Deal" (reserve).

Week Eleven. Race, Class, and the City in the 1940s and 1950s

Reading: Maren Stange, Bronzeville; Eric Sandweiss, St. Louis, ch. 8; Arnold Hirsch, "With or Without Jim Crow" (reserve); Tom Sugrue, "Detroit's Time Bomb" (reserve).

Due in class: Progress report, including draft outline and updated bibliography

Week Twelve. Constructing a Postwar Suburban Landscape

Reading: Dana Cuff, The Provisional City; Clifford Clark, "Ranch House Moderne" (reserve); Sharpe and Wallcock, "Bold New City or Built Up Burb?" (reserve).

Third Tour: Outer ring suburbs, edge cities, sprawl developments, shopping malls

Week Thirteen. Sunbelt Places, Exopolitan Spaces

Reading: Robert Self, American Babylon; Carl Abbott, "Through Flight to Tokyo" (reserve); Will Straw, "The Lurid Cities of the 1950s" (reserve); Raymond Mohl, "Race and Space in the Modern City" (reserve).

Week Fourteen. Metropolitan Cores and Peripheries since 1965

Reading: Sharon Zukin, Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World; Joseph Sciorra, "Return to the Future: Puerto Rican Vernacular Architecture in NYC"; John Rennie Short et al "The Reconstruction of a Postindustrial City" (all on reserve)

Week Fifteen. Saturday Symposium on the American Metropolis

Students will present papers in four sequential sessions. Faculty discussants are drawn from across the Humanities and from Planning and Public Policy.
In his new book Landscape as Urbanism, Charles Waldheim, the John E. Irving Professor and Chair of Landscape Architecture at Harvard University's Graduate School of Design, argues that in order to understand the twenty-first century metropolis, a traditional understanding of the city as an extrapolation of architectural models and metaphors is no longer viable given the prevalence of larger forces or.Â Built on a site that was once the largest wholesale meat market and slaughterhouse in northeast Paris, Parc de la Villette was a new typology for landscape design in that it did not preface nature or architecture, but instead generated hybrid forms that integrate the man-made with the vegetal. Landscape urbanism is a theory of urban planning arguing that the best way to organize cities is through the design of the city's landscape, rather than the design of its buildings. The phrase 'landscape urbanism' first appeared in the mid 1990s. Since this time, the phrase 'landscape urbanism' has taken on many different uses, but is most often cited as a postmodernist or post-postmodernist response to the "failings" of New Urbanism and the shift away from the comprehensive visions, and demands, for