

# HIST 355: U.S. Urban History

## Messiah College

Fall 2012  
Tuesdays & Thursdays  
Boyer 336  
1:20-2:35 p.m.

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Tues., 2:45-3:45 p.m.  
Wed., 10:00-11:00 a.m.;  
& by apt.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Over the last three hundred years or so, America has moved from a society characterized by small farms and villages to one dominated by large cities and sprawling suburbs. This course examines the history of these villages, towns, cities, suburbs, and other urban forms. It also looks at their far-reaching influences on American society, culture, politics, and economics during this time. Thus, this course views cities and other urban places both as subject and as a lens the use of which can help us understand American history more fully. We'll see that hopes for freedom and opportunity and various notions of the "good life" (whether emphasizing individualism or community) all had important geographical dimensions and have been shaped by the different ways that Americans have organized their lives together. In the end, this course will enable you to become more knowledgeable about the built environment around you--how it has emerged, and what its implications are for your life, your community, and your nation.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES--AS A HISTORY COURSE:

- 1) Historical Knowledge: Students will have a better historical understanding of political, social, cultural, economic, and religious practices and structures.
- 2) Historical Methods: Students will demonstrate an understanding of historical causation, an ability to conduct basic historical analysis of primary and secondary sources, and an ability to communicate that analysis in effective written and oral communication.
- 3) Historical Interpretation: Students will use texts and other cultural resources to make sense of the past, understand ways in which the past influences the present, and consider how the present influences our study of the past.
- 4) Historical Convictions: Students will become more thoughtful, curious, and empathetic due to their evaluation of the historical complexity of human identities, cultures, and societies from the perspective of Christian faith.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES--AS A PLURALISM COURSE:

- 1) To help students understand contemporary issues that arise out of the pluralism of race, ethnicity, social class, gender, and religion.
- 2) To help students examine contemporary society from diverse viewpoints and, through these, to increase self-knowledge.
- 3) To help students explain some of the effects of inequality, prejudice, and discrimination.
- 4) To help students articulate and practice an informed and faithful Christian response to diversity.

PARAMETERS FOR ALL WRITING-ENRICHED (“W”) COURSES:

- 1) Students in these courses will complete at least ten pages of finished, transactional (as opposed to reflective or poetic) writing.
- 2) Helpful intervention (conferencing, tutoring, peer collaboration, professor comments on ungraded drafts, etc.) will be used in the writing processes of at least two distinct writing assignments.
- 3) Students must earn a passing grade in the writing portion of the course in order to pass the course.

REQUIRED READINGS:

Rybczynski, Witold. *City Life: Urban Expectations in a New World*. Simon and Schuster, 1995. ISBN 0684825295.

Beers, Paul B. *City Contented, City Discontented: A History of Modern Harrisburg*. Harrisburg: Midtown Scholar Press, 2011. ISBN 9780983957102.

Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Vintage Books, 1992 (reprint; first edition 1961). ISBN 067974195X.

Addams, Jane. *Twenty Years at Hull-House*. Putnam, 1999 (reprint; first edition 1910). ISBN 9780451527394.

Waldie, D. J. *Holy Land: A Suburban Memoir*. St. Martin’s, 1996. ISBN 0312168640.

Online readings listed below.

REQUIREMENTS:

read all required readings listed above

participate regularly in class discussions

write 2-4 page paper (double-spaced) on personal experience with cities (paper #1)

write 2-4 page paper (double-spaced) on experience in Harrisburg (paper #2)

write 4-6 page paper (double-spaced) on Addams--with first draft evaluated by the writing center (paper #3)

write 4-6 page paper (double-spaced) on Waldie--with first draft evaluated by the writing center (paper #4)

complete a Harrisburg history project as part of a group

write several quizzes

write take-home exam

STANDARD OF EVALUATION:

The final grade for the course will be derived as follows:

participation	5%
paper #1 on personal experience with cities	5%
paper #2 on experience in Harrisburg	5%
paper #3 on Addams	15%
paper #4 on Waldie	15%
Harrisburg history project	20%
quizzes	15%
take-home exam	20%

**PARTICIPATION:**

It goes without saying that you must attend class regularly in order to participate. You are expected to attend every class meeting. Beyond this minimal participation in the class (which will earn you only a minimal participation grade), you can gain participation points by regularly asking or answering questions, and by responding to readings and lectures when given the opportunity.

**PAPERS:**

Assignment for paper #1: 2-4 page paper (double-spaced) on personal experience with cities due Tues., Sept. 11 in class:

Write about your experiences with urban geography. What sorts of places have you lived in--large cities, small towns, old suburbs, new suburban developments, rural areas? What have been the particular benefits and drawbacks to the places you've lived? Have the places you lived tended to emphasize more the public or the private dimension of life? How do you think Witold Rybczynski and Jane Jacobs would respond to the types of places you've lived?

Assignment for paper #2: 2-4 page paper (double-spaced) on experience in Harrisburg due Tues., Sept. 25 in class:

Write about your experience in Harrisburg on the class trip using relevant ideas, themes, and categories addressed and in our readings and noted in our class discussions.

Assignment for paper #3: 4-6 page paper (double-spaced) on Addams' *Twenty Years at Hull House*, with first draft evaluated by the writing center, due Tues., Oct. 9 in class:

What did Jane Addams think about industrial-era Chicago and its immigrant inhabitants? What changes did she propose for Chicago's immigrants? What is your opinion about her proposed changes?

Assignment for paper #4: essay of 4-6 double-spaced pages on Waldie's *Holy Land*, with first draft evaluated by the writing center, due Thurs., Nov. 1 in class:

According to D. J. Waldie, how did mid-20<sup>th</sup> century suburbanization in places like Lakeland, California shape American values and beliefs at the time? In what ways do you think suburbanization changed America either for the better or the worse?

**HARRISBURG HISTORY PROJECT:**

As a member of a group, you will research and make a presentation on a particular aspect of Harrisburg's history (i.e. an interesting event, organization, neighborhood, time period, etc.). The project is due Tues., Dec. 4.

**QUIZZES:**

Several unscheduled quizzes covering assigned readings will be given throughout the semester. Make-up quizzes will not be offered; instead, your lowest quiz grade will be dropped in arriving at your total quiz score.

#### NOTE ON ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND CLASSROOM COURTESY:

Electronic devices can be a source for both good and ill in education. On the one hand, the proliferation of the internet and portable computers have made vast amounts of information available to more people at more places in more places. The operating hours of libraries and archives no longer pose a barrier to study and research. This is certainly a good thing. On the other hand, the proliferation of electronic devices has also produced what some have called the “problem of divided attention.” Although some people can truly and effectively multi-task, many others find themselves permanently distracted by ringtones, twitter feeds, incoming emails, and the like. And since a class such as ours is a community that hopefully cares about our neighbor’s opportunity to learn as well as our own, this problem of divided attention is not just an individual problem, but a corporate one, as well. As a result, I’d ask that you observe the following classroom rules out of courtesy both for your classmates and for me.

Regarding cell phones: Please turn off your cell phone before coming into the classroom. Do not answer the phone or text during class. If you are expecting a very important call, please put your phone on vibrate (silent), and let me know about the situation before class begins.

Regarding laptop computers: You are welcome to bring your computer to lecture to take notes and to seminar to take notes and access online readings, but while in lecture and seminar, please use your computer only for purposes related to this course. Do not use computers for entertainment (i.e. surfing, gaming, chatting, messaging, emailing, etc.) during class. If you use your computer to take notes, please email them to me following class.

#### NOTE ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Personal integrity is a behavioral expectation for all members of the Messiah community: administration, faculty, staff, and students. Violations of academic integrity are not consistent with the community standards of Messiah College. These violations include:

Plagiarism: Submitting as one’s own work part or all of any assignment (oral or written) which is copied, paraphrased, or purchased from another source, including on-line sources, without the proper acknowledgment of that source. Examples: failing to cite a reference, failing to use quotation marks where appropriate, misrepresenting another’s work as your own, etc.

Cheating: Attempting to use or using unauthorized material or study aids for personal assistance in examinations or other academic work. Examples: using a cheat sheet, altering a graded exam, looking at a peer’s exam, having someone else take the exam for you, using any kind of electronic device, communicating via email, IM, or text messaging during an exam, etc.

Fabrication: Submitting altered or contrived information in any academic exercise. Examples: falsifying sources and/or data, etc.

Misrepresentation of Academic Records: Tampering with any portion of a student’s record.

Example: forging a signature on a registration form or change of grade form on paper or via electronic means.

Facilitating Academic Dishonesty: Helping another individual violate this policy. Examples: working together on an assignment where collaboration is not allowed, doing work for another student, allowing one’s own work to be copied.

Unfair Advantage: Attempting to gain advantage over fellow students in an academic exercise.

Examples: lying about the need for an extension on a paper, destroying or removing library materials, having someone else participate in your place, etc.

Penalties for Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy - A faculty member may exercise broad discretion when responding to violations of the Academic Integrity Policy. The range of responses may include failure of the course to a grade reduction of the given assignment. The typical consequence for violations will be failure of the assignment. Some examples of serious offenses which might necessitate the penalty of the failure of the course include cheating on an examination, plagiarism of a complete assignment, etc. The academic integrity policy in its entirety can be found in the student handbook and should be reviewed by every student, as the primary responsibility for knowledge of and compliance with this policy rests with the student.

**NOTE ON AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT:**

Any student whose disability falls within ADA guidelines should inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester of any special accommodations or equipment needs necessary to complete the requirements for this course. Students must register documentation with the Office of Disability Services. Contact [DisabilityServices@messiah.edu](mailto:DisabilityServices@messiah.edu), (717) 796-5382.

## SCHEDULE

(NOTE: ALL DETAILS SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

### PART ONE

Tues., Aug. 28 - Introduction

Thurs., Aug. 30 - The American Urban Tradition  
reading: Witold Rybczynski, *City Life*, chs. 1-2

Tues., Sept. 4 - The American Urban Tradition (cont.)  
reading: Witold Rybczynski, *City Life*, chs. 3-4

Thurs., Sept. 6 - What Are Cities For?  
reading: Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, introduction and part one

Tues., Sept. 11 - What Are Cities For? (cont.); **paper #1 on personal experience with cities due**  
reading: Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, part four  
"Urban Visionary Jane Jacobs Dies" (2006)  
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5362409>  
Edward Glaeser, "What a City Needs" (2009)  
<http://www.tnr.com/article/books-and-arts/what-city-needs?page=0,1>  
John Buntin, "Is It Time to Retire Jane Jacobs' Vision of the City?" (2011)  
<http://www.governing.com/topics/economic-dev/is-it-time-to-retire-jane-jacobs-vision-city.html>  
Lloyd Alter, "Walking Home: Ken Greenberg On How Jane Jacobs Was Right" (2011)  
<http://www.treehugger.com/culture/walking-home-ken-greenberg-on-how-jane-jacobs-was-right-book-review.html>  
Anthony Flint, "Jane Jacobs and the Book that Inspired a Revolution" (2011)  
<http://grist.org/cities/2011-11-15-jane-jacobs-and-the-book-that-inspired-a-revolution/>

Thurs., Sept. 13 - Introduction to Harrisburg  
reading: Beers, *City Contented City Discontented*, chs. 1-4, 7-8, 12  
City of Harrisburg Historic District Design and Preservation Guide, pp. 9-17  
<http://pl1462.pairlitesite.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Historic-District-Design-Guide.pdf>  
Map: City of Harrisburg Historic Districts  
<http://pl1462.pairlitesite.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/MHD-and-National-District-Map.pdf>  
Map: Municipal Historic Districts  
<http://pl1462.pairlitesite.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/MHD-Map.pdf>  
Harrisburg's Old 8<sup>th</sup> Ward website  
<http://www.old8thward.com/home.htm>  
Digital Durham  
<http://digitaldurham.duke.edu/>

### ***Sat., Sept. 15 - Class trip to Harrisburg***

Tues., Sept. 18 - Responding to Cities--Personally, Vocationally, Theologically  
reading: Genesis 1, Jeremiah 29, Revelation 18, Revelation 21  
Tim Keller, "A Biblical Theology of the City" (2002)  
<http://www.e-n.org.uk/p-1869-A-biblical-theology-of-the-city.htm>  
Eric O. Jacobsen, "Reclaiming the City" (2003)  
via Academic Search Complete database  
Andy Crouch, "A New Kind of Urban Ministry" (2011)  
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2011/november/urbanministry.html>  
James K. A. Smith, "How (Not) to be Worldly: Tracing the Borders of the Earthly City" (2012)  
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/thisisourcity/7thcity/tracing-borders-of-earthly-city.html>

## PART TWO

Thurs., Sept. 20 - Building Industrial Cities

reading: Witold Rybczynski, *City Life*, ch. 5

Tues., Sept. 25 - Immigrants in Industrial Cities; **paper #2 on experience in Harrisburg due**

Thurs., Sept. 27 - African Americans in Industrial Cities

reading: "Things That Should Be Considered" (1917)

[http://condor.depaul.edu/~chicago/primary\\_sources/defender2.html](http://condor.depaul.edu/~chicago/primary_sources/defender2.html)

*The Negro in Chicago: A Study of Race Relations and a Race Riot* (1922), excerpts

[http://dev.prenhall.com/divisions/hss/app/BW\\_TEST/Western\\_History/documents/Chicago\\_Commission\\_on\\_Race\\_Relations\\_The\\_Negro\\_in\\_Chicago\\_A\\_Study\\_of\\_Race\\_Relations\\_and\\_a\\_Race\\_Riot\\_.htm](http://dev.prenhall.com/divisions/hss/app/BW_TEST/Western_History/documents/Chicago_Commission_on_Race_Relations_The_Negro_in_Chicago_A_Study_of_Race_Relations_and_a_Race_Riot_.htm)

Tues., Oct. 2 - Problems of Industrial Cities; **topic for Harrisburg History Project due**

reading: Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives* (1890), ch. 3 "The Mixed Crowd"

<http://www.bartleby.com/208/3.html>

Lincoln Steffens, "Philadelphia: Corrupt and Contented" (1903), excerpt

<http://explorepahistory.com/odocument.php?docId=1-4-2A6>

"Triangle Factory Fire"

<http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/trianglefire/>

Ebenezer Howard, *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* (1902), excerpt

<http://www.library.cornell.edu/Reps/DOCS/howard.htm>

Thurs., Oct. 4 - Reform in the Industrial City

reading: Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House*

Witold Rybczynski, *City Life*, ch. 6

Tues., Oct. 9 - Reform in the Industrial City (cont.); **paper #3 on Addams due**

*Oct. 11-14 - Mid-Fall Recess; no class meetings*

Tues., Oct. 16 - Film: *New York: A Documentary Film, episode 4: The Power and the People*

Thurs., Oct. 18 - Harrisburg in the Industrial Era

reading: Beers, *Contented City Discontented*, chs. 19-20, 23-28, 33-35, 54-60, 82-87, 92

### PART THREE

Tues., Oct. 23 - Building Suburbs

reading: Witold Rybczynski, *City Life*, chs. 8-9

"Up from the Potato Fields" (1950)

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,812779,00.html>

Thurs., Oct. 25 - Interpreting Suburban Life: Levittown, Pennsylvania

reading: "Levittown, Pa: Building the Suburban Dream"

<http://edisk.fandm.edu/tim.brixius/levittown/>

Tues., Oct. 30 - Interpreting Suburban Life: Lakeland, California

reading: D. J. Waldie, *Holy Land*

Thurs., Nov. 1 - Suburban Life on Screen; **paper #4 on Waldie due**

Tues., Nov. 6 - Postwar Urban Policy

reading: Witold Rybczynski, *City Life*, ch. 7

Thurs., Nov. 8 - Urban Crisis and Decay

reading: Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis* (1996), introduction

<http://press.princeton.edu/chapters/i8029.pdf>

Norman Podhoretz, "My New York" (1999)

via Academic Search Complete database

Editors of *City Journal*, "Welcome to NY" (1990)

<http://www.city-journal.org/article02.php?aid=1634>

"Saving the City: An Interview with Brian Anderson" (2010)

<http://www.theatlantic.com/special-report/the-future-of-the-city/archive/2010/06/saving-the-city-an-interview-with-brian-anderson/57479/>

Tues., Nov. 13 - Harrisburg in the Era of Suburbanization and Urban Decay

reading: Beers, *City Contented City Discontented*, chs. 61-81

Thurs., Nov. 15 - Sunbelt Cities

## PART FOUR

Tues., Nov. 20 - The Future of America's Cities, Suburbs, and Other Places

- reading: Witold Rybczynski, *City Life*, ch. 10  
 David J. Morrison, "A Vision for Harrisburg" (1998)  
 via *Patriot-News* database  
 Joel Garreau, "Edge Cities" (1994)  
 via Academic Search Complete database  
 James Howard Kunstler, "Home from Nowhere" (1996)  
 via Academic Search Complete database  
 Edward J. Blakely and Mary Gail Snyder, "Places to Hide" (1997)  
 via Academic Search Complete database

*Nov. 21-25 - Thanksgiving Recess; no class meetings*

Tues., Nov. 27 - The Future of America's Cities, Suburbs, and Other Places (cont.)

- reading: "The Charter of the New Urbanism" (1996)  
[http://www.cnu.org/sites/files/charter\\_english.pdf](http://www.cnu.org/sites/files/charter_english.pdf)  
 Sage Stossel, "Towards a New Urbanism" (2000)  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2000/04/towards-a-new-urbanism/6686/>  
 Matt Dellinger, "Road Worriers" (2009)  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2009/01/road-worriers/7204/>  
 Christopher B. Leinberger, "Here Comes the Neighborhood" (2010)  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2010/06/here-comes-the-neighborhood/8093/>  
 David Taylor, "The Good City" (2008)  
<http://www.booksandculture.com/articles/2008/marapr/15.31.html>  
 Randal O'Toole, "A Response to Philip Bess and the New Urbanism" (2005)  
<http://www.claremont.org/projects/pageid.2033/default.asp>  
 Michael Pollan, "The Triumph of Burbopolis" (2000)  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2000/04/09/magazine/the-triumph-of-burbopolis.html>  
 Robert Bruegmann, "Poor, Misunderstood Sprawl" (2006)  
<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9901E3D81330F93AA35754C0A9609C8B63>

Thurs., Nov. 29 - The Future of America's Cities, Suburbs, and Other Places (cont.)

- reading: "Gentrified – Save our communities! Harlem fights back" (2008)  
 via Academic Search Complete database  
 Andres Duany, "Three Cheers for Gentrification" (2001)  
 via Business Search Premier database  
 Heather MacDonald, "Chicago's Real Crime Story" (2010)  
[http://www.city-journal.org/2010/20\\_1\\_chicago-crime.html](http://www.city-journal.org/2010/20_1_chicago-crime.html)  
 John Petro, "An Illegitimate Response to Chicago's Youth Violence" (2010)  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/john-petro/an-illegitimate-response\\_b\\_438978.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/john-petro/an-illegitimate-response_b_438978.html)  
 Heather MacDonald, "Same Old Drumbeat" (2010)  
<http://www.city-journal.org/2010/eon0128hm.html>  
 PRRAC, "Building Sustainable, Inclusive Communities," pp. 1-3 only  
<http://prrac.org/pdf/SustainableInclusiveCommunities.pdf>  
 Stanley Kurtz, "Burn Down the Suburbs?" (2012)  
<http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/312807/burn-down-suburbs-stanley-kurtz>

Tues., Dec. 4 - Student presentations; **Harrisburg History Project due**

Thurs., Dec. 6 - Student presentations (cont.)

**Wed., Dec. 12, 1:30 p.m. - Take-home exam due**

**APPENDIX: READING QUESTIONS FOR BOOKS**

**reading questions for Jacobs' *The Death and Life of Great American Cities***

- 1) For Jacobs, what are the characteristics of a good city?
- 2) What would be the advantages and disadvantages of living in the type of neighborhood Jacobs praises in her book?
- 3) Why does Jacobs praise cities' population density?
- 4) Why does Jacobs believe sidewalks make for good cities?
- 5) What would Jacobs say about the neighborhood where you grew up?
- 6) What does Jacobs suggest is responsible for poverty and social problems in cities?
- 7) What would Jacobs suggest is the solution to urban slums?
- 8) At one point in her book, Jacobs writes that many urban problems have resulted from peoples' ignorance about "how cities work." After reading Jacobs' book, do you agree with her about how cities work or not?
- 9) Which of Jacobs' tactics for revitalizing cities, discussed in part four, do you find most persuasive or compelling?
- 10) At the time when Jacobs lived and wrote (the 1950s and 1960s) what was considered "orthodox" urban planning?
- 11) What is Jacobs' opinion of urban planning? Do you agree or disagree with her opinion? Why?
- 12) How do you think Jacobs' book will affect how you will look at the urban space and built environment around you?

**reading questions for Addams' *Twenty Years at Hull House***

- 1) What does Addams tell us about her life prior to starting Hull House (i.e. her childhood and young adulthood) and why?
- 2) What types of people does Addams view as heroes? Does she eventually succeed in emulating them?
- 3) What does Addams think about missionaries and missions work?
- 4) How would you describe the theology or philosophy Addams presents in chapter 6?
- 5) What was wrong with industrial cities such as Chicago, according to Addams?
- 6) In what ways were cities such as Chicago at the turn of the century unorganized? Why did Addams think unorganized cities were a problem?
- 7) What was Addams' approach to alleviate poverty and suffering in industrial cities? What other possible approaches could you imagine? Why do you think Addams pursued the particular approach she did?
- 8) According to Addams, what was the proper role of government / the state in an industrial city like Chicago?
- 9) According to Addams, how should duties and responsibilities change in the shift from rural to urban industrial life?
- 10) What did Jane Addams think about industrial-era Chicago and its immigrant inhabitants? What changes did she propose for Chicago's immigrants? What is your opinion about her proposed changes? **[prompt question for essay]**
- 11) What was Addams' opinion about diversity?
- 12) What's the meaning of democracy for Addams?
- 13) What's your personal opinion about Addams, Hull House, and the broader settlement house movement within industrial American cities?

**reading questions for Waldie's *Holy Land: A Suburban Memoir***

- 1) What does Waldie think about the residents of Lakewood, California? What does he see motivating them? How does he describe them? To what social class does he say they belong?
- 2) Where did the early residents of Lakewood come from?
- 3) Where did the early residents of Lakewood work?
- 4) How does Waldie address the basic question: "Why suburbs?"
- 5) What does Waldie suggest about the "American Dream"?
- 6) What seems to be similar and what seems to be dissimilar when comparing Lakewood to other types of communities that we've studied in class?
- 7) How does Lakewood compare to the places you've lived? What are Waldie's thoughts on his "suburban childhood"? If you spent some of your life in the suburbs, what are your thoughts on your suburban childhood?
- 8) Was there community in Lakewood?
- 9) What was the effect of the "grid" in Lakewood?
- 10) According to D. J. Waldie, how did mid-20th century suburbanization in places like Lakewood, California shape American values and beliefs at the time? In what ways do you think suburbanization changed America either for the better or the worse? **[prompt question for essay]**