

# HIST 355: U.S. Urban History

## Messiah College

Fall 2016  
Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays  
Boyer 235  
11:00-11:50 a.m.

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office hours: Mon., Wed., & Fri., 10:00-11:00 a.m.;  
Tues., 2:00-3:00 p.m.;  
& by appointment

### 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.

**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

write 5-6 page paper (double-spaced) on Addams

write 5-6 page paper (double-spaced) on Waldie

write several quizzes

write 3 exams

**STANDARD OF EVALUATION:**

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

exams	60% (3 x 20%)
quizzes	10%
paper on personal experience with cities	5%
paper on Addams or Waldie	15%
participation and presentations	10%

**EXAMS:**

You will write three unit exams for this course. The ID section will ask you to identify and give the significance of several terms from the unit just studied. These might be names, places, organizations, pieces of legislation, etc. In identifying these terms, play the role of the journalist who always answers the five "W" questions: who, what, when, where, and why. After you have identified the term, explain its significance--where it fits in or contributes to major themes covered in the course. IDs need not be more than a few sentences, but they should not be merely a series of disjointed notes or phrases. Make sure you write in complete, grammatical sentences in all your work for this course, including IDs. The second section of each exam will ask you to write an essay on a major theme from the unit of the course just studied. Make sure that you answer this question completely. Your essay should be well-organized, persuasive, and draw on materials from all the different facets of the course--lectures, readings, and class discussions--for examples and evidence. Make-up exams will be offered only under extraordinary circumstances (i.e. to students with a note from the dean or a physician).

**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.

**PAPERS:**

2-3 page paper (double-spaced) on personal experience with cities due Fri., Sept. 9, 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?

5-6 page paper (double-spaced) on either Addams' *Twenty Years at Hull House* (due Wed., Sept. 28) or Waldie's *Holy Land* (due Wed., Oct. 19)

Prompt for Addams: 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 for Waldie: 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?

**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.

**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)

Wed., Aug. 31- Introduction

Fri., Sept. 2 - The American Urban Tradition

reading: Witold Rybczynski, *City Life*, chs. 1-4

Mon., Sept. 5 - The American Urban Tradition (cont.)

Wed., Sept. 7 - What Are Cities For?

reading: Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, introduction and part one

Fri., Sept. 9- What Are Cities For? (cont.); **papers on personal experience with cities due**

reading: Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, part four

Mon., Sept. 12 - Responding to Cities--Personally, Vocationally, Theologically

reading: Genesis 1, Jeremiah 29, Revelation 18, Revelation 21

Tim Keller, "A Biblical Theology of Cities"

[https://www.cru.org/content/dam/cru/legacy/2012/02/A\\_Theology\\_of\\_Cities.pdf](https://www.cru.org/content/dam/cru/legacy/2012/02/A_Theology_of_Cities.pdf)

Tim Keller, "Redemption and the City"

[http://www.redeemer.com/renew/redemption\\_and\\_the\\_city](http://www.redeemer.com/renew/redemption_and_the_city)

Eric O. Jacobsen, "Civic Engagement and the City," *Comment* (March 12, 2012)

<https://www.cardus.ca/comment/article/3138/civic-engagement-and-the-city/>

Andy Crouch, "A New Kind of Urban Ministry," *Christianity Today* (November 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>

Howard Freeman, "Why Every City Needs a Central Park--and why more Christians are needed in urban planning," *Christianity Today* (10/16/2012)

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/thisisourcity/newyork/common-grace-of-central-park.html?paging=off>

Keith Miller, "Why Do We Hate the Suburbs?" *Mere Orthodoxy* (May 7, 2013)

<http://mereorthodoxy.com/why-do-we-hate-the-suburbs/>

Wed., Sept. 14 - Responding to Cities--Personally, Vocationally, Theologically (cont.)

Fri., Sept. 16 - Building Industrial Cities

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

Mon., Sept. 19 - Building Industrial Cities (cont.)

Wed., Sept. 21 - Immigrants in Industrial Cities

Fri., Sept. 23 - African Americans in Industrial Cities

reading: Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture website on the African-American migration experience, esp. sections on the Great Migration

[<http://www.inmotionaame.org/migrations/landing.cfm?migration=8>] and the Second Great Migration [<http://www.inmotionaame.org/migrations/landing.cfm?migration=9>]

"Chicago's Black Ghetto 1910 to 2000" (interactive map)

<http://gangresearch.net/ChicagoGangs/gangsandghetto/chighetto20.htm>

Mon., Sept. 26 - Problems of Industrial Cities

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>

Wed., Sept. 28 - Reform in the Industrial City; **papers on Addams due**

reading: Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House*  
Witold Rybczynski, *City Life*, ch. 6

Fri., Sept. 30 - Reform in the Industrial City (cont.)

Mon., Oct. 3 - **Exam #1**

Wed., Oct. 5 - Student Presentations on the Harrisburg Area in the Early 20th Century

reading: Beers, *City Contented City Discontented*, chs. 1-4, 7-8, 12  
Digital Harrisburg website  
<http://digitalharrisburg.com/>

Fri., Oct. 7 - Student Presentations on the Harrisburg Area in the Early 20th Century (cont.)

Mon., Oct. 10 - Building Suburbs

reading: Witold Rybczynski, *City Life*, chs. 8-9  
"Up from the Potato Fields," *Time* (July 3, 1950)  
<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,812779,00.html>

Wed., Oct. 12 - A Suburban Society

Fri., Oct. 14 - Interpreting Suburban Life: Levittown, PA

reading: "Levittown, Pa: Building the Suburban Dream"  
<http://statemuseumpa.org/levittown/>

Mon., Oct. 17 - Interpreting Suburban Life: Lakeland CA

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

Wed., Oct. 19 - Interpreting Suburban Life: Lakeland CA (cont.); **papers on Waldie due**

Fri., Oct. 21 - Mid-Fall Recess; no class meeting

Mon., Oct. 24 - Suburban Life on Screen

Wed., Oct. 26 - Suburban Life on Screen (cont.)

Fri., Oct. 28 - Reading Recess; no class meeting

Mon., Oct. 31 - Student Presentations on the Harrisburg Area in the Mid 20th Century

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

Wed., Nov. 2 - Student Presentations on the Harrisburg Area in the Mid 20th Century (cont.)

Fri., Nov. 4 - Postwar Urban Policy

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

Mon., Nov. 7 - 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://city-journal.org/html/welcome-ny-12790.html>

"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/>

Wed., Nov. 9 - Urban Crisis and Decay (cont.)

Fri., Nov. 11 - **Exam #2**

Mon., Nov. 14 - Sunbelt Cities

Wed., Nov. 16 - Student Presentations on the Harrisburg Area in the Late 20th Century

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

Fri., Nov. 18 - Student Presentations on the Harrisburg Area in the Late 20th Century (cont.)

Mon., Nov. 21 - Race and Place in Contemporary America

reading: Readings on events in Ferguson and Baltimore selected by students. Suggested publications include: *The Atlantic* [<http://www.citylab.com/>], *City Journal* [<http://www.city-journal.org/>], *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Christian Century*, and *Christianity Today*.

Wed., Nov. 23 - Race and Place in Contemporary America (cont.)

Fri., Nov. 25 - Thanksgiving Recess; no class meeting

Mon., Nov. 28 - Race and Place in Contemporary America (cont.)

Wed., Nov. 30 - Open

Fri., Dec. 2 - The Future of America's Cities, Suburbs, and Other Places

reading: Witold Rybczynski, *City Life*, ch. 10

David J. Morrison, "A Vision for Harrisburg," *Harrisburg Patriot-News* (August 2, 1998)  
via *Patriot-News* database

Joel Garreau, "Edge Cities," *American Demographics* 16 (February 1994)  
via Academic Search Complete database

James Howard Kunstler, "Home from Nowhere," *The Atlantic* (September 1996):43-66  
via Academic Search Complete database

Edward J. Blakely and Mary Gail Snyder, "Places to Hide," *American Demographics* (May 1997)  
via Academic Search Complete database

Mon., Dec. 5 - The Future of America's Cities, Suburbs, and Other Places (cont.)

reading: "The Charter of the New Urbanism" (1996)

<https://www.cnu.org/who-we-are/charter-new-urbanism>

Sage Stossel, "Towards a New Urbanism," *The Atlantic* (April 2000)

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2000/04/towards-a-new-urbanism/6686/>

Matt Dellinger, "Road Worriers," *The Atlantic* (January/February 2009)

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2009/01/road-worriers/7204/>

Christopher B. Leinberger, "Here Comes the Neighborhood," *The Atlantic* (June 2010)

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2010/06/here-comes-the-neighborhood/8093/>

David Taylor, "The Good City," *Books & Culture* (March/April 2008)

via Academic Search Complete database

Michael Pollan, "The Triumph of Burbopolis," *New York Times* (April 9, 2000)

<http://www.nytimes.com/2000/04/09/magazine/the-triumph-of-burbopolis.html>

Robert Bruegmann, "Poor, Misunderstood Sprawl," *New York Times* (July 9, 2006)

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9901E3D81330F93AA35754C0A9609C8B63>

Wed., Dec. 7 - The Future of America's Cities, Suburbs, and Other Places (cont.)

reading: "The Pros and Cons of Gentrification," *New York Times* (April 13, 2014)

<http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2014/04/13/the-pros-and-cons-of-gentrification>

Janelle Harris, "11 Signs Your Hood Is Being Gentrified," *The Root* (12/23/2014)

[http://www.theroot.com/articles/culture/2014/12/11\\_signs\\_your\\_hood\\_is\\_being\\_gentrified.html](http://www.theroot.com/articles/culture/2014/12/11_signs_your_hood_is_being_gentrified.html)

Andres Duany, "Three Cheers for Gentrification," *The American Enterprise* (April/May 2001): 37-39.

via Business Search Premier database

Joel Kotkin, "The Progressives' War on Suburbia," *The Daily Beast* (11/16/2014)

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/11/16/the-progressives-war-on-suburbia.html>

Abby Scher, "Solidarity, PA," *Dissent* (Winter 2015)

<http://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/reading-pa-solidarity-economy>

Fri., Dec. 9 - Review

Wed., Dec. 14, 8:00 a.m. - **Exam #3**

## **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?
- 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]**