According to Thomas Jefferson, America was to be an “agrarian Republic” — a pastoral farmland, a different world from the dirty and decaying cities of monarchical Europe. Yet, by Jefferson’s day, it was already too late. North America had been dotted with great metropolises and minor towns for thousands of years, and new waves of European and African settlers founded hundreds of new ones as well. Indeed, for many early migrants, America was itself a “city on the hill” — an urban image for a new society.

In this course, we will survey American urban history from those early days to the present, focusing in the second half specifically on Los Angeles, where new forms of decentralized urbanism took form in the twentieth century. We will explore not only suburbia and freeways, Disneyland and other quasi-urban outposts, but also the changing character of the inner city in the mid-twentieth century, as well as radical efforts to reform existing American cities. In the process, we encounter the American city of today — multicentered, privately planned, decentralized, and multiethnic. We will conclude by asking whether contemporary developments in urbanism — the changing character of public space, the battle between privatism and common good, the neglect of public transport infrastructures, and resurgent challenges to democracy and equality — are ultimately compatible with the American dream of the “city on the hill” for the twenty-first century.

REQUIREMENTS

This course combines extensive discussion, some lecture, and a substantial amount of reading and writing. You will be required to write two 6-7 page argumentative essays as well as a more substantial 12-15 page final paper. In addition to these essays, you will submit brief analyses of a pertinent quotation from each reading ahead of each class.

All essays must all be submitted via Moodle on their due date. Note that papers turned in late without explicit permission will be penalized as much as 10% per day, so please talk to me in advance if an emergency begins to arise that might jeopardize your ability to complete any assignment on time.

Attendance & Participation .......................................................... 25%
Reading Analyses ......(due by 3pm before each class session)..... 25%
Two Shorter Essays ............. (due during weeks 4 & 9)..... 25%
Final Longer Essay .................. (due during Finals)..... 25%

In order to develop an environment where constructive thinking and collegial interaction can develop, attendance and participation in our class sessions will be mandatory. More than two class absences will result in a lowering of your participation grade, as will failure to come to class adequately prepared.

As a four unit course, you should expect to spend at least twelve hours a week (including in-class time) on this course. Be aware as well that this course contains a strong Historical component in its methodology, so be prepared for a substantial amount of primary/secondary source reading. It would be greatly to your advantage to develop strategies to help you read and process these texts efficiently. If you need advice on this, or anything else arising from the course requirements and assignments, please talk with me — I will be happy to help.
CLASS EXPECTATIONS

① Come to each class having read and marked up all assigned texts. Be ready to discuss these readings within the context of the course.

② Writing assignments will be distributed during the semester, but all papers should reflect careful thought, revision, and proofreading and must conform to ethical standards in citation, quotation, and other use of all sources.

③ Be prepared to synthesize a range of scholarly texts within a variety of different humanistic academic disciplines and with a careful attention to change over time.

④ During this exceptional period, all participants in our class must abide by the College’s health and safety directives pertaining to vaccination, physical distancing, and masking throughout the semester.

COURSE GOALS & OUTCOMES

① Students will gain a detailed awareness of the major topics, debates, and historiography of American urban history and, through thoughtful writing, contribute their own informed analysis to this discourse.

② Students will become familiar with social transformations in nineteenth and twentieth century American cities — including the reconfiguration of systems of prejudice, segregation, and displacement (along lines of race, class, gender, etc.) — which informed, shaped, and gave meaning to the built environment in major cities (and, to a lesser extent, smaller towns).

③ Students will learn about the relationships between the built environment and social contexts, the effects manifested in changes in the urban landscape, and the specific contexts of differing forms of city structure that emerge during the twentieth century, particularly in the context of ideologies of race, class, and gender.

④ Students will hone their skills at synthesizing academic interdisciplinary secondary source scholarship with techniques of cultural analysis gleaned from contemporary Critical Theory to produce their own original argumentative interpretations of American urban history.

A NOTE ON THE STUDY OF THE PAST

As with many courses that meet the United States Diversity Core Requirement, this course focuses on periods of time rife with systemic racism — often explicitly overt and pervasively expressed. Many of the texts, images, and recorded materials we will encounter this semester will be disturbing, depicting a historical period filled with violence, suffering, and naked prejudice, as well as the defiant struggle to make our society a more tolerant and humane place. Some of the language deployed in source materials we will examine was intended quite explicitly to intimidate as well as communicate and that rhetoric still carries oppressive force. Indeed, some students may well find that events and expressions of the past resonate with them today in powerful ways. No one in this class bears any individual responsibility for the choices other people made long ago, yet we all inherit the consequences of that history and an obligation to open our own eyes to the prejudices, ideas, and struggles that continue to shape us.

In this class, each of us will be expected to express respect, support, and explicit kindness toward our peers at all times, especially when disagreeing on a point of fact or interpretation, and to be particularly sensitive to our peers’ intellectual and emotional reactions as they encounter and grapple with the effects of our shared historical legacy. If you have an idea how to improve the way we treat the powerful and charged historical material in this course, or perceive a way to make our shared discussions and investigations more inclusive and compassionate, please share those insights and concerns with me right away.

IMPORTANT ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

The last day to add this course is 10 September 2021 and the last day to drop is 8 October 2021.

Students with documented disabilities and learning differences who are registered with Disability Services are required to present their accommodation letter to the instructor at the beginning of each semester or as soon as possible thereafter. Any student who has, or thinks they may have, a physical, learning, or psychological disability may contact Disability Services at accessibility@oxy.edu to learn about available services and support. More information is available at http://www.oxy.edu/disability-services.

Academic dishonesty will result in the most severe repercussions. Using someone else’s words — or even ideas — without attribution is plagiarism. For Oxy students, plagiarism constitutes a violation of the Occidental College codes of academic integrity (see http://www.oxy.edu/student-handbook/academic-ethics/academic-ethics), which will result in disciplinary proceedings and almost certainly failure of the course. Fortunately, plagiarism is easily avoided merely by clearly citing all your sources. Use quotation marks and footnotes or in-text references to fully identify any ideas, sentences, or even phrases that are not your own invention. If you are ever unsure about the ethical use of sources or ideas, simply ask me — I am here to help.

The Writing Center (located on the Ground Floor of the Academic Commons) offers opportunities to work on all forms of writing for any class or other writing tasks such as personal statements, proposals, senior comprehensives, etc. We offer peer-to-peer consultations with knowledgeable Writing Advisers and sessions with Faculty Writing Specialists. For Fall 2021, most of our appointments will be synchronous in-person sessions, with some availability for Zoom virtual meetings and asynchronous feedback. See the Writing Center website for more information about our hours and how to sign up for appointments: https://www.oxy.edu/writing-center. Please contact the Writing Center Director, Prof. Prebel (jprebel@oxy.edu; x1307) for more information on how the Writing Center can work with you.

Accommodations for Reasons of Faith and Conscience: Consistent with Occidental College’s commitment to creating an academic community that is respectful of and welcoming to persons of differing backgrounds, we believe that students should be excused from class for reasons of faith and conscience without academic consequence. While it is not feasible to schedule coursework around all days of conviction for a class as a whole, faculty will honor requests from individual students to reschedule coursework, to be absent from classes that conflict with the identified days. Information about this process is available on the ORSL website: https://www.oxy.edu/office-religious-spiritual-life.

Title IX: It is important for you to know that all faculty members are mandated reporters of any incidents of sexual misconduct. That means that I cannot keep information about sexual misconduct confidential if you share that information with me. In the event that you choose to write or speak about having experienced sexual misconduct, including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, sexual exploitation or any other form of sexual and/or gender-based harassment, as a designated Responsible Employee, I must notify the Title IX Office. They will contact you to let you know about accommodations and support services at Oxy and reporting options both on and off-campus. You have no obligation to respond to the Title IX Office or to meet with them to discuss support services and reporting options. If you do not want the Title IX Office notified, instead of disclosing this information to your instructor, either through conversation or a class assignment, you can speak confidentially with the following people on campus: Oxy’s Survivor Advocate, Project SAFE (survivoradvocate@oxy.edu); Emmons Counseling (for appointments, call: 323-259-2657); Rev. Dr. Susan Young, Office of Religious and Spiritual Life (young@oxy.edu). The sexual misconduct policy, along with additional resources, can be found at http://www.oxy.edu/sexual-respect-title-ix/policies-procedures. If you would like to contact the Title IX Office directly, you can email Title IX Coordinator Alexandra Fulcher at afulcher@oxy.edu or call 323-259-1338.
The books listed below are required for this course. (Digital/online books are available for several of these texts.)

DeL Upton. Another City (Yale, 2008).


**REQUIRED READING PACKET**

The readings listed below are all in PDF format and will be available on Moodle. Please bring a well-read copy with you to class each day.


**FOUCAULT 1967**: Michel Foucault. “Of Other Spaces.” 22-27 in Diacritics 16 (Spring 1986) [original: 1967].


**BLUMIN 1989**: Stuart M. Blumin. “‘Things are in the Saddle’: Consumption, Urban Space, and the Middle-Class Home.” 138-191 in The Emergence of the Middle Class (Cambridge University, 1989).


**PROVISIONAL SCHEDULE OF CLASSES & ASSIGNMENTS**

*All reading should be completed in time for the class meeting indicated* (all are required unless indicated otherwise) — our discussion will depend upon comprehension of the reading material. Similarly, all written assignments are due at the beginning of the class indicated. Please also note that specific topics shown here are provisional and may change as the class develops.

### Week 1
**The Big Picture**

**Looking at Urban America’s Past, Present, and Future**

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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tu</td>
<td>Intro</td>
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<tr>
<td>31 Aug</td>
<td>Images of the City in American History</td>
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<td>Turner 1893 “The Significance of the Frontier…”</td>
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<td>Mundigo/Crouch 1977 &amp;B “The City Planning Ordinances…”</td>
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### Week 2
**New York**

**The Messy Emergence of the Democratic City**

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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tu</td>
<td>The Changing Social Order of the New Republic</td>
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<td>7 Sep</td>
<td>Blackmar 1989 “The Formation of Urban Tenancy”</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Warner 1968 “The Environment of Private Opportunity”</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>Wilentz 1994 “By Hammer and Hand”</td>
<td>35</td>
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<td>Anbinder 2001 “How They Lived”</td>
<td>40</td>
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<td>Harris 2003 “Rulers of the Five Points”</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>Foucault 1967 “Of Other Spaces”</td>
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### Week 3
**New York**

**The Development of an Urban Sensibility**

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<tr>
<td>Tu</td>
<td>The City of the Senses: Neighborhood and Order in the Developing Metropolis</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 Sep</td>
<td>Stansell 1986 “Women in the Neighborhoods” &amp; “Women and Men”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Upton 2008 Another City (Chapter 1-5)</td>
<td>95</td>
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<td>Lefebvre 1967 Selections from <em>The Right to the City</em></td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>Axelrod 2006A Theory Toolset: The Carnivalesque</td>
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### Week 4
**The Big Picture**

**High and Low: The Rise of the Middle Class**

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<th>Day</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tu</td>
<td>First Essay Due on Sunday Sep 26</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 Sep</td>
<td>The City of Planned Reform: Middle Class Manners and Morés</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Blumin 1989 “Things Are in the Saddle…”</td>
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<td>Kasson 1990 “Venturing Forth…”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Upton 2008 Another City (Chapter 6)</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jackson 1985 Crabgrass Frontier (Chapters 2-5)</td>
<td>85</td>
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### Week 5
**CHICAGO**

**Core & Hinterland: Transportation, Empire, and the Great West**

#### 28 Sep
**TU**
- **Metropole and Metropolis:** Microcosms of Order

  - Cronon 1991 *Nature's Metropolis* (Chapters 1-3) [Book to Buy](#) 120
  - Abelosn 1989 "Urban Women and the Emergence of Shopping"
  - Gilbert 1991 "Second City: Our Town" 35

  - [Recommended Reading] Cronon 1991 *Nature's Metropolis* (Chapter 5 & 8) 0

### Week 6
**The Big Picture**

**Playtime in the Modern Metropolis: Divergent Amusements**

#### 5 Oct
**TU**
- **Tripping the Light Fantastic:**
  - Playtime for the Millions

  - Ryan 1990 "Everyday Space..." 35
  - Peiss 1986 *Cheap Amusements* (Chapters 1-5) [Book to Buy] 130

### Week 7
**Road Trip**

**Fall Break**

#### 12 Oct
**TU**
- **Fall Break**
  - **No Class Meeting Today**
  - **No Office Hours This Week**

### Week 8
**The Big Picture**

**Legibility and Neighborhood**

#### 19 Oct
**TU**
- **How Do People Use Cities?**

  - Lynch 1960 *From the Image of the City* 45
  - Jacobs 1961 *From the Dead and Left...* 30
  - Axelrod 2006 *Theory Toolkit: Panopticism* 25

### Week 9
**The Big Picture**

**Reading the Twentieth Century Metropolis**

#### 26 Oct
**TU**
- **Second Essay Due on Sunday Oct 30**

  - Twentieth Century Urban Planning in a Nutshell:
    - Community, Neighborhood, and Systemic Racism

  - Venkatesh 2000 *American Project* [Book to Buy] 275
### Week 10

**Los Angeles**  
**Making Sense of Modern Urbanism**

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<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tu</td>
<td>Urban, Suburban, Postsuburban: Reconceptualizing the City in the 20th Century</td>
<td>Axelrod 2007 <em>Keep the 'L' Out of Los Angeles</em></td>
<td>35</td>
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<td>Mclenahan 1929 <em>The Changing Urban Neighborhood</em></td>
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### Week 11

**Los Angeles**  
**Making Sense of Modern Urbanism**

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<tr>
<td>Tu</td>
<td>“White Flight”: The Design of Post-Urban America</td>
<td>Jackson 1985 <em>Chars Papal Frontier</em> (Chapters 11 &amp; 13)</td>
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<td>Clark 1989 <em>Ranch House Suburbia</em></td>
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**PAMLA Conference (IN LAS VEGAS WED-SUN)**

No Office Hours this week

### Week 12

**Los Angeles**  
**Finding Meaning amidst the Sprawl**

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<tr>
<td>Tu</td>
<td>The Architecture of Privacy and Community: Responses to the Sprawling Urban Frontier</td>
<td>Fowler 1956 <em>Los Angeles</em></td>
<td>5</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Waldie 1996 <em>Holy Land</em></td>
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### Week 13

**Los Angeles**  
**The Centrifugal Society Flies Apart**

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<tr>
<td>Tu</td>
<td>Happy Thanksgiving on Thursday</td>
<td>Pynchon 1966 <em>A Journey into the Mind of Watts</em></td>
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<td>From Watts to Postindustrial Urbanism: The Return of the Repressed</td>
<td>Sides 2004 <em>Straight into Compton</em></td>
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<td>Davis 1989 <em>Fortress LA</em></td>
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### Week 14

**The Big Picture**  
**The Lived Legacies of American Urban History**

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<tr>
<td>Tu</td>
<td>Conclusions</td>
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<td>From Housing Bubble to Gentrification to Pandemic: American Urbanism Today and Tomorrow</td>
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### Final Exam

**Moving Forward**  
**Wrapping Up**

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<td>Final Essay Due</td>
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