

HIUS 123/USP 167: History of New York City
Spring 2017 | Tues-Thurs 930-1050am | CSB 04
Prof. Kwak

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Office hours: Friday mornings 10-11am by appointment Office location: HSS 6086A

New York City breathes history. Whether it is in the music we listen to, the literature we read, or the architecture we admire, the city blends past and present with dynamism and meaning. It is our job as historians to explore these connections and spiritual legacies. In this class, we will be looking at the experiences of immigrant women, ambitious settlement workers, gay activists, avant-garde artists, young prostitutes, Chinese laborers, middle-class poets, and musicians; we will be looking for connections between cultural, political, and economic histories.

Grading

PROJECT 10%

PAPER 40% (including the OK paper)

COMPREHENSIVE FINAL EXAM 50% (of which 5% is your map)

PROJECT: GETTING TO KNOW NEW YORK. Imagine that you are part of a family living in New York City and that you are trying to figure out where to live in the city. You have four people total in your family – you, your partner, a four-year old, and an eight-year old. Your family income is \$125,000 (the median family income for NYC in 2010-12 is roughly \$51K). Both you and your partner work; you work full time at MoMA and your partner works part time at the 92nd Street Y. Sift through actual real estate listings and choose what you believe are three realistic possibilities (apartments or homes, rental or owner-occupied). In making this decision, you will need to figure out:

- schools including likelihood of actually enrolling
- commute time
- ownership vs. rental
- neighborhood quality of life issues (safety, access to amenities, proximity to playgrounds and other children's activities, etc.)
- number of bedrooms/square feet
- all other related factors

Write a 3-4 page essay explaining what you believe might be the most important factors shaping your decision. Your paper should be organized around a central argument about how you prioritize factors in selecting real estate; in putting forward your argument, you should compare the benefits and drawbacks of each home for someone in your circumstances. **You should turn in print outs of the three house/apartment listings, your essay, and a map of your daily commute with your commute outlined in red pen.**

PAPER (due in hard copy in lecture AND through turnitin.com)

Choice 1. PORTRAYAL OF A NEW YORK NEIGHBORHOOD. Find a film, novel, or history book that offers some sort of commentary on the historical evolution of at least one neighborhood in New York City. Your choice needs to be made/written/filmed prior to 1990. You must clear your choice with Prof. Kwak before you begin reading/watching. In addition to reading the entire book or watching the film in its entirety, find scholarly reviews of the source and read them carefully. When writing your essay, include an analysis of what the author/filmmaker chooses to include or exclude in their narrative. What do you believe is critically missing from this portrayal of this neighborhood and of the evolution of New York City as a whole? For this part, your job is not to talk about all aspects of New York City history not included in this source, but rather what historical aspects you found deeply relevant to the topic at hand and yet not included. (For instance, did a film about immigration in late-19th century Lower East Side omit non-European immigration? Did a book about Robert Moses and Jane Jacobs in Greenwich Village ignore questions of gender and class in comparable urban renewal battles in the South Bronx?) Write a 1,000-1,250 word paper first summarizing and explaining how your chosen film/novel/historical work tells a specific story about the chosen neighborhood (~250 words), then critique your source based on historical context (750-1,000 words).

Choices 2, 3. GENTRIFICATION (2) OR AFFORDABLE HOUSING (3). Find and read at least three different scholarly secondary sources (including one full-length monograph) on gentrification OR the affordable housing problem in New York City. Write a 1,000-1,250 word paper explaining where you believe the problem of gentrification or affordable housing is most acute and why. Remember, this should include an historical explanation as well as the more recent conditions leading to crisis.

Choice 4. Read the Robert Caro's *Power Broker*. Research some of the rich debates that have emerged in response to this bestseller, including responses by Hilary Ballon, Kenneth Jackson, Christopher Klemek, and more. Write a 1,250 word academic review of the book.

Choice 5. Customize your own mini-research project with Prof. Kwak. You must receive special approval to do this option.

FINAL EXAM. Your exam will consist of a set of critical questions about readings, films, soundtrack, and lectures. All rules about plagiarism and academic honesty apply. You must bring a blank blue book.

Policy on lecture notes:

I will not post or give out my lecture notes. Please do not ask for them. Powerpoints will always be posted 24 hours after the lecture. Lectures will not be podcast so it is up to you to attend class.

Academic honesty:

Academic honesty is expected at all times. Any instance of plagiarism will be dealt with according to university and departmental policies. Academic honesty covers a broad range of activities, including doing work for someone else, passing notes during an exam, and incorrect or missing citation(s) on a submitted paper or exam. If you are not sure about the academic honesty of an action, please ask before you do it.

Required:

The following materials will be used. They have been ordered at the bookstore; of course, you are also welcome to buy at the store of your choice.

1. Eric Homberger, *The Historical Atlas of New York City, Third Edition* (Henry Holt and Co., 2016).
2. "Hamilton" original soundtrack

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1.

- 4/3 Getting oriented, origin stories | *Native NY, Dutch, British NY*
 4/6 From colony to nation | *War for independence, slavery*

Readings for the week:

Listen to Lin-Manuel Miranda, "Hamilton," all.
 Homberger, ch. 1-2
 Craig Wilder, *Covenant with Color* (Columbia UP, 2000) ch. 2 pp. 21-42.

Week 2.

- 4/11 Building the capital of capital | *Trade, early 19th c. immigration, Central Park, Seneca Village*
 4/13 Immigrant NYC | *Five Points, Lower East Side, Chinatown, Tammany Hall*

Readings for the week:

Homberger, chs. 3-5

Week 3.

- 4/18 Race relations in the mid-19th century | *draft riots, tenements, political and social organizations*
 4/20 Modern NY | *skyscrapers, subways, Consolidation*

Readings for the week:

Homberger, chs. 6-7
 "The Rogarshevsky Family" in Jane Ziegelman, *97 Orchard: An Edible History of Five Immigrant Families in One New York Tenement* (Harper, 2011).

Week 4.

- 4/25 Cultural production and consumption | *Harlem Renaissance, Broadway, Bowery*
 4/27 Street life | *City Beautiful*

DUE 4/25: Project

Readings for the week:

George Chauncey, *Gay New York* (Basic Books, 1995) chs. 1, 9.
 Sánchez Korrol, Virginia E. *From Colonia to Community: The History of Puerto Ricans in New York City* (UC Press, 1994) ch. 2, pp. 51-85. **Online**

Week 5.

- 5/2 The city in Depression and war
 5/4 Urban flight

Readings for the week:

Homberger, chs. 8

Week 6.

5/9 Urban renewal | *Robert Moses, Jane Jacobs*

5/11 The gay rights movement

DUE on 5/9: Turn in a short paragraph explaining what you're planning to do for your paper. You will get an "OK" stamp back if you're cleared to go. You are required to turn in this "OK" paper with your final paper. You are welcome to turn this in earlier if you'd like.

Readings for the week:

Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (Vintage, 1992) ch. 2, 5 "Sidewalks" and "Neighborhood parks," pp. 29-55, 89-112.

Week 7.

5/16 Urban decline, hard times | *South Bronx, Crown Heights, Times Square*

5/18 Tourism | *Chinatown*

Readings for the week:

Watch "Do the Right Thing" (1989)

Week 8.

5/23 Gentrification, part 1

5/25 Gentrification, part 2: Watch all of "My Brooklyn" in class

Watch/read for this week:

Read Eric Tang, *Unsettled* (Temple UP, 2015) intro, chs. 1-2.

Week 9.

5/30 World Trade Center and 9-11

6/1 Globalizing NYC

Listen/read for this week:

Watch 9-11, New York City documentary.

Read "September 11" entry in Kenneth T. Jackson, Lisa Keller, and Nancy Flood, eds., *The Encyclopedia of New York City* (Yale UP, 2010).

Week 10.

6/6 **PAPER DUE**

Greening New York

6/8 Problems and promises of the future

Reading for the week:

Philip Lopate, "Above Grade," <https://placesjournal.org/article/above-grade-on-the-high-line/?gclid=C126za7bg9MCFRSPfgod1AUNCQ>

Final exam