HNRS 226: SHAPING THE FUTURE OF NEW YORK CITY
Macaulay Honors College at Queens College, CUNY, Spring 2014

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Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Article 26.

- (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
- (2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we will explore what it means for space to be public in the urban environment. We will consider the economic, social, political and cultural ideas in the idea of being 'public,' and the ways these are played out spatially. We will consider who counts as a member of "the public" in different times and places, and how these various groups interact in the contests over public space across institutions, particularly in contemporary New York City. We will examine government institutions of planning and policy that influence our experiences of public space. We will explore the city on foot both during class time and in independent assignments. By the end of this course, students will be able to describe what makes a place public (or not) in terms of *distribution, access, ownership and governance*. Students will have expanded understanding of disputes over public space in New York City.

Macaulay Seminar Goals:

The purpose of Seminar 4 is to analyze the ongoing interplay of social, economic, and political forces that shape the physical form and social dynamics of New York City. Throughout the semester, students engage in a team research project, , to be presented at a model academic conference.

In the seminar, students will:

1. Use primary sources, both qualitative and quantitative, especially in their research projects, to understand community institutions, the local economy, and the role of government.

2. Develop an understanding of how power differentially affects New York City's people, its built environment, and its institutions through site visits, case studies, or research projects.

3. Develop the ability to engage in key contemporary debates that shape the future of the city through in-class discussions, presentations, and colloquia.

4. Develop an understanding of the formal and informal institutions underlying decision making in the city by analyzing historical and contemporary planning and policy issues.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The requirements of the course are:

1. **Attendance and participation**
   Everyone, including your instructor, is expected to come to class on time, with readings completed, and notes and assignments in hand (or submitted online). In-class time will involve a good deal of active participation, in order to build a community of scholars who work through ideas together. Genuine participation includes participation in class discussion, posting weekly comments on the class blog, co-leading (with your group) a class session, presenting your research, and serving one week as co-leader of discussion.

2. **Communication: email and blackboard**
   I am most easily reached by email. That said, some class correspondence will take place via our course website; make sure that your email address attached to it is up to date, and that you check it regularly. Additionally, make sure to find a class partner who can fill you in if you have to miss a day of class.

3. **Readings**
   All readings can be found on the course website in a folder labeled with the week they are due. Plan on marking the text (highlighter, pen, post-its or digitally) as well as taking notes. This will help you come to class prepared, and will be extremely useful for writing assignments. Readings are indicated on the syllabus on the day they are due, though sometimes we may redivide the readings for the week under a particular topic. Some readings may be added or substituted during the semester. No changes will be made less than a week before the assignment is due.

4. **Writing Assignments**

Students must complete one book review, and a final paper (including draft and outline) as part of a group. **All writing must be submitted to a dropbox by the start of class the day it is due.** Sometimes I will ask you to bring a hard copy to class as well. You will have the opportunity to revise all writing assignments if you choose to do so. Grammar counts, spelling counts; these are parts of communicating clearly and effectively, and indicating attention and effort in the project.

The requirements of the course are as follows:

- a book review, 750 words (10%)
- a group project including
    - an annotated bibliography of 20 sources on your topic (10%)
    - 2 magazine-length articles (15% each)
    - a short (3 – 5 min) video on your topic, including images (10%)
    - an infographic (10%)
    - co-leading (with your group) a class session (5%) including choosing readings
    - a final presentation (10%)

  Each project will include a 'credits' section that describes each group member's contribution.
- class participation (15%), including participation in class discussion, and serving one week as co-leader of discussion.

Students will choose which issues they wish to address. Suggestions include:

1. Public-private partnerships (Parks budgets, conflicts over autonomy and ownership)
2. Bikes and bike lanes (infrastructure, Citibike, etc.)
3. The department of transportation and green streets
4. Privately owned public spaces (POPOs)
5. Environmental issues (How should we re-build after Hurricane Sandy? What are the most pressing environmental problems? Who do they affect?)
6. Libraries and the plan for the central library
7. Homelessness and public space
8. New funding structures (i.e. Brooklyn Bridge Park)
9. Surveillance and security in public space

CLASSROOM POLICIES

- If you want to take notes on your **laptop**, you may do so with the wi-fi turned off. If you choose to have your computer on, I ask that you sit in the front row. If your computer is being used for other than class purposes, I will ask you to put it away for the duration of the class. If this is a repeated problem, I will ask you not to bring your computer to class. **Cellphones** and other devices should remain off during class. If there is a pressing situation, and you need to be available by phone, please let me know before class.

- **Incompletes** will not be granted, except in extraordinary circumstances and with proper documentation. After-the-fact requests for extensions and incompletes will not be considered.

- **Grade Change Policy (for all assignments and exams)**: Students wanting clarification on a particular grade must submit a request in writing explaining their question and, if they are disputing an answer marked wrong, documentation of the grading error with evidence from the text.

Please note also the following:
People come to this class with different kinds of academic expertise, different life experiences, and different customs (both individual and cultural). These differences can, and hopefully will, contribute positively to the substance and quality of class discussion. However, because these differences are often related to social inequalities, they can also be a source of misunderstanding and frustration. It is thus important to keep in mind that active, respectful class participation is as much about listening to and engaging the ideas of others as it is about speaking one's own mind.

WRITING HELP AND CITATION GUIDELINES
If you need help with writing, I encourage you to take advantage of the Queens College Writing Center: Kiely Hall 229, 718-997-5676. You can get free writing help through regular appointments, drop-in tutoring or online tutoring. Their website is http://www.qc.cuny.edu/Academics/SupportPrograms/SupportCenter/Pages/WritingCenter.aspx

In this class, you are required to properly document the sources of your work. Choose a citation strategy consistent with your other courses. MLA is the most common, and structures can be found here: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/1/

OFFICE HOURS/CONTACT INFO

All students are required to come to office hours at least once during the semester. Contact information appears on the first page of this syllabus. Please feel free also to email me if you have any questions about course content or course policies.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND PLAGIARISM

Queens College takes cheating and plagiarism very seriously; if caught you may fail the course and/or be suspended from the college. Don't copy other people's work. This means that you should not take the words or ideas of another person and submit them without acknowledging the original author. Examples of plagiarism include copying from another student's homework assignment or taking phrases, sentences, paragraphs, or statistical findings from a variety of sources and piecing them together without citing them. Taking phrases, paragraphs or papers from course readings, the internet or other students and representing them as your own falls under this category. You must always indicate when you have used an idea from someone else's work; anything else constitutes stealing from others and violates both the ethics of this class and established academic standards. There are now sophisticated search engines that prove beyond a reasonable doubt when students have downloaded web-based material and submitted it as their own (CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity, adapted June 28, 2004). See http://web.cuny.edu/academics/info-central/policies/academic-integrity.pdf).

SCHEDULE

1. Friday, January 30: Introductions

- go over the syllabus
- assign reading presentations
- consider groups and topics
- discuss book reviews

Video: William Whyte, *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*

Read and discuss book reviews in class

Hand out book review assignment

→ **Event, February 5**: "How to Study Public Life" book talk

2. Friday, February 7: Theoretical underpinnings Stacey, Naomi

Miller, Kristine, F. 2007. The Private Life of New York's Public Spaces. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Introduction – What is Public Space?

Neal, Zachary. 2009. Seeking Common Ground: Three Perspectives on Public Space. *Proceedings of the Institute of Civil Engineers, Urban Design and Planning 000,* pp. 1 – 8.

West, Paige.2007. Review of Rethinking Urban Parks: Public Space and Cultural Diversity by Setha Low; Dana Taplin;Suzanne Scheld. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (N.S.) 13, pp. 477-522

Book review proposals due (150 words)

3. Friday, February 14 The Right to the City? (Adiv is away) **Alex, Serinna**
→ guest instructor: Lydia Pelot-Hobbes

Mitchell, D. 1995. The End of Public Space? People's Park, Definitions of the Public, and Democracy. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* (85:1), pp. 108 – 133.
Smith, Neil. 1992. Contours of a Spatialized Politics: Homeless Vehicles and the Production of Geographical Scale. *Social Text* (33), pp. 54 – 81.

Marcuse, P. 2009. From Critical Urban Theory to the Right to the City. *City* (13:2/3), pp. 185 – 197.

Chiao, Terri and Deborah Grossberg Katz. 2009. Private/Public: Rethinking Design for the Homeless. Urban Omnibus.

Hand out bibliography assignment
Library workshop

4. Friday, February 21: Privately owned public spaces (POPs) **Gaby, Iesha**

Kayden, Jerold. 2000. Privately Owned Public Space: the New York City Experience. New York: the Department of City Planning and the Municipal Art Society of New York

Miller, Kristine, F. 2007. The Private Life of New York's Public Spaces. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 71 – 116.

The Brian Lehrer Show. November 9, 2011. Privately Owned Public Spaces: POPS Report Wrapup.

Due: Book review
In class: intro to infographics

5. Friday, February 28: Sidewalks **Ben, Jose**

Ehrenfeucht, Robin and Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris. 2007. "Constructing the sidewalks: municipal government and the production of public space in Los Angeles, California, 1880–1920." Journal of Historical Geography, 33:1.

Watson, Sophie. 2006. City Publics: The (Dis)Enchantments of Urban Encounters. New York, Routledge. Chapter two: Symbolic spaces of difference – Contesting the eruv in Barnet, London and Tenafly, New Jersey.

Aaron, Brad. 2014. *Streetsblog.* Next Week: DOT to Preview Ped Safety Improvements for 96th and Broadway

Hand back Book reviews
Infographics work time

6. Friday, March 7: the NYPL – **Marina, Cassie**

"Lions in Winter, Part 1" by Charles Petersen, n+1 magazine, 5/9/12
http://nplusonemag.com/lions-in-winter

"Lions in Winter, Part 2" by Charles Petersen, n+1 magazine
http://www.nplusonemag.com/lions-in-winter-part-2

"In Defense of the New York Public Library," by Robert Darnton, the New York Review of Books, 7/12/12
http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2012/jun/07/defense-new-york-public-library/?pagination=false

"New York Public Library Dials Back Plan to Move Books" by Jennifer Maloney, Wall Street Journal, 9/19/12
http://blogs.wsj.com/metropolis/2012/09/19/new-york-public-library-backs-off-plan-to-move-millions-of-books/

"Undertaking Its Destruction" by Ada Louise Huxtable, Wall Street Journal, 12/3/12
http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323751104578151653883688578.html

"Firestorm on Fifth Avenue," by Paul Goldberger, Vanity Fair, December, 2012
http://www.vanityfair.com/culture/2012/12/new-york-public-library-re-model-controversy

"In Renderings for a Library Landmark, Stacks of Questions," by Michael Kimmelman, NY Times, 1/29/13
http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/30/arts/design/norman-fosters-public-library-will-need-structural-magic.html?ref=michaelkimmelman&_r=1&

Bowery Boys Podcast: the New York Public Library
http://theboweryboys.blogspot.com/2007/10/new-york-public-library-in-pictures.html

Due: Book review revisions

7. Friday, March 14: Parks Jennifer, Marilyn

Cranz, Galen. 1982. The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America. Cambridge: the MIT Press.

Katz, Cindi and Andrew Kirby. 1991. In the nature of things: the environment and everyday life. Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, pp. 259 – 271.

The Bowery Boys: Tompkins Square Park.

Due: readings for your groups teaching week
Due: annotated bibliography
Hand out magazine writing assignment #1 and #2

8. Friday, March 21 Parks conservancies Corin, Matt

Blackmar, Elizabeth. 2006. Appropriating "the Commons": The Tragedy of Property Rights Discourse. In Low, S. and Smith, N. *The Politics of Public Space.* (pp. 49 - 80)

Bovaird, Tony. 2004. Public-private partnerships: from contested concepts to prevalent practice. International Review of Administrative Sciences, 70:2, pp. 199 – 215.

Allen, John K. 1979. Rebuilding Central Park for the 1980s and Beyond: An Outline for a Restoration Plan. The New York City Department of Parks and Recreation & The Central Park Conservancy

In class: iMovie tutorial

9. Friday, March 28 Pools and Baths Wynton, Deborah, Chris

Gutman, M. 2008. Race, Place, and Play: Robert Moses and the WPA Swimming Pools in New York City. Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, 67, 532-561.

Renner, A. 2008. A Nation That Bathes Together: New York City's Progressive Era Public Baths. Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, 67, 504-531.

Parks' Swimming Pools website
http://www.nycgovparks.org/about/history/pools

In class: iMovie work time
Due: Magazine writing assignment #1 (clean copy and with edits)

10. Friday, April 4

Group one class session (readings TBA)
Hand back magazine writing assingment #1

11. Friday, April 11 (Adiv at AAG)

Group two class session (readings TBA)
Due: magazine writing assignment #1 revisions

Friday, April 18 (no class – Spring Break)

12. Friday, April 25
Group three class session (readings TBA)

Due: Magazine writing assignment #2

13. Friday, May 2
Group four class session (readings TBA)

Hand back magazine writing assignment #2

14. Friday, May 9 (last day of class)

Due: in-class presentations
Due: magazine writing assignment #2 revisions

Saturday/Sunday, May 10 – 11 Seminar 4 Conference

Friday, May 15
Due: final project with revised infographic and short video