
PLACE, SPACE AND THE AMERICAN CITY:

MAPPING CHANGE OVER TIME IN THE URBAN U.S.

HISTORY 283—PROF. SEAN DINCES

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, UW-MADISON—SPRING 2015



LOGISTICS

Seminars: Wednesdays, 5:30 - 7:30 PM, Helen C. White 2252A (Design Lab) Prof. D's contact information:

- Office number: 5118 Mosse Humanities - Office phone: (608) 263 - 1850

Office hours: email Wednesdays 10 AM - 12 noon, or by appointment

DESCRIPTION

This seminar digs into the history of “urban growth” in the modern U.S. — that is, the processes that have driven the expansion (and sometimes decline) of American cities. The course consists of two complementary elements. In the first half of each seminar meeting, we will discuss important case studies that make innovative use of “spatial analysis” (e.g. mapping and data analysis that sheds light on relationships across space) to better understand the history of cities including Boston, Chicago, and St. Louis. The second half will consist of a practicum in introductory geographic information systems (GIS) software skills that will allow students to create their own historical maps.

OBJECTIVES

Students in this course will:

- ✓ Become familiar with key works in American urban history that make use of “spatial” methods.
- ✓ Develop the ability to identify and evaluate historical argumentation.
- ✓ Develop an introductory knowledge of the use of GIS for historical research, including accessing and processing spatial data, and creating maps which depict change over time.
- ✓ Develop academic writing and public presentation skills.

COURSE TEXTS*

Clemmer, Gina. *The GIS 20: Essential Skills*. 2nd edition. Redlands, CA: Esri Press, 2013.

Cronon, Bill. *Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1992.

Gordon, Colin. *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009.

Warner, Sam Bass. *Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978.

REQUIREMENTS

Passing this course is contingent upon completion of *all* of the following requirements (further details will be provided in class):

- ✓ **Participation-** Your success in this class depends on consistent attendance (which is mandatory). Any unexcused absences beyond the first will result in an automatic 2.5 percentage point deduction from your final grade. Participation also entails timely completion of assignments, and active engagement with and contribution to in-class discussion (see “Policies” for deductions for late submissions). Peer feedback and review are essential components of the course; failure to participate fully will thus hold everyone back.
- ✓ **Reading Responses and Discussion Leadership-** Each week you will be responsible for submitting a very brief reading response on the assigned readings to Learn@UW (a simple template for the responses will be posted on Learn@UW). In addition, each week one student will take responsibility for giving a 5-10 minute

* Required texts are available for purchase at A Room of One’s Own Bookstore (315 W. Gorham St.).

introduction to the readings, including at least two discussion questions for the group to consider collectively.

- ✓ **Book Review-** Each student must write a 4-5 page academic book review on one of the assigned texts. The review will be due two weeks after we finish discussing the text in class. Additional details will follow later in the semester.
- ✓ **Mapping Project and Presentation-** Using the skills developed during our GIS practicums, each student (or pair of students) will create an original map series that shows some aspect of historical change in a city/time period of their choice. In the final seminar meeting you will present your maps to the rest of the class. Any theme is acceptable as long as the data is available. We will discuss the project requirements in much more depth over the course of the semester.

GRADING

Grades will be determined using the following weights:

- | | |
|---|-----|
| ✓ Participation | 50% |
| ✓ Reading Responses and Discussion Leadership | 15% |
| ✓ Book Review | 15% |
| ✓ Final Map Project and Presentation | 20% |

POLICIES

Plagiarism will result in failure of the course and referral to the Dean of Students. If you are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism or have questions about a particular issue, you can always come to me for clarification. A good rule of thumb is to err on the side of caution when it comes to source citation and attribution. The following web sites have additional information on identifying and avoiding plagiarism:

- ✓ <http://www.plagiarism.org>
- ✓ http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html

Late work will result in automatic deductions from your participation grade. For any assignment (regardless of weighting), each day of tardiness will result in a *one percentage point* deduction from your participation grade. Trust me, this will add up quickly! Anything submitted after the stated deadline is “one day” late. Anything submitted more than 24 hours after the stated deadline is “two days” late.

Attendance of class meetings is mandatory. Each unexcused absence will result in an automatic *2.5 percentage point* deduction from your participation grade. If you have a personal or medical emergency, please bring it to my attention before class if at all possible.

I am committed to making the classroom a **safe space** for different identities *and* perspectives. It can’t happen, however, without your active support and self-reflection. Creating a safe space for learning involves respect for other

students' right to express their opinion free from interruption, ridicule, or other adverse consequences. Students (and instructors) should express opinions in a civil fashion and without aggressive repetition. Everyone's goal should be to participate in—but not dominate—the discussion. In this regard, it is crucial to be sensitive to gender, race, sexuality, age, class, and ability. If any questions or concerns arise regarding issues of equity, diversity, and/or discrimination, do not hesitate to see me or the Dean of Students in the Division of Student Life (<http://www.students.wisc.edu/>). Information on official university policy concerning these issues is available through the UW-Madison Office of Equity and Diversity (<http://www.oed.wisc.edu/>).

For concerns related to accommodations for students with disabilities, please see me and/or visit the UW McBurney Disability Resource Center Site (<http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/>).

You are welcome to and encouraged to supplement the feedback from class and individual consultations by taking advantage of the resources available through the Writing Center. For more information, see: <http://www.writing.wisc.edu/>.

SEMINAR SCHEDULE

January 21st

Reading: *none*

GIS Practicum:

- ArcCatalog and basic GIS workflow (Prof. D)
- Downloading shapefiles and using essential ArcMap tools (Clemmer, Chapter 1)
- Creating basic maps and layouts (Clemmer, Chapter 2)

January 28th

Reading:

- Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, pp. 6 - 93

GIS Practicum:

- Projections workflow (Prof. D)
- Projecting shapefiles (Clemmer, Chapter 3)

February 4th

Reading:

- Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, pp. 97 - 147

GIS Practicum

- Preparing data for ArcMap (Clemmer, Chapter 4)
- Joining data to maps (Clemmer, Chapter 5)
- Creating thematic maps (Clemmer, Chapter 6)
- Working with data tables (Clemmer, Chapter 7)

February 11th

Reading:

- Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, pp. 148 - 206

GIS Practicum:

- Address mapping (Clemmer, Chapter 8)
- Manually formatting address tables in excel (Prof. D)
- Creating a categorical map (Clemmer, Chapter 9)

February 18th

Reading:

- Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, pp. 207-259

GIS Practicum:

- Creating attribute queries (Clemmer, Chapter 12)
- Creating location queries (Clemmer, Chapter 13)

February 25th

Reading:

- Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, pp. 263-340

GIS Practicum:

- Using geoprocessing tools (Clemmer, Chapter 14)

March 4th

Reading:

- Warner, *Streetcar Suburbs*, pp. 1-66

GIS Practicum:

- Creating geodatabases (Clemmer, Chapter 15)
- Review and Q&A

March 11th

Reading:

- Warner, *Streetcar Suburbs*, pp. 67-116

GIS Practicum:

- Joining boundaries (Clemmer, Chapter 16)

March 18th

****Presentations on Spatial History Resources****

Reading:

- Warner, *Streetcar Suburbs*, pp. 117-166

GIS Practicum:

- Working with aerial photography (Clemmer, Chapter 17)

March 25th- NO CLASS

April 1st- NO CLASS (*Spring Break*)

April 8th

Reading:

- Gordon, *Mapping Decline*, pp. 1-68

GIS Practicum:

- Creating reports (Clemmer, Chapter 18)
- Advanced labeling (Clemmer, Bonus 2)
- Working with multiple data frames (Clemmer, Bonus 7)

April 15th

Reading:

- Gordon, *Mapping Decline*, pp. 69-152

GIS Practicum:

- Enabling time (Clemmer, Bonus 8)

April 22nd

Reading:

- Gordon, *Mapping Decline*, pp. 153-228

GIS Practicum:

- Project updates
- In-class project lab

April 29th

GIS Practicum:

- In-class project lab

May 6th

Final presentations