

## **From the Country to the City: The Experience of Urbanization in the Modern World**

Summer 2017 | University of Chicago Arts and Sciences, Summer in Chicago | Monday to Friday, 10am-3pm | Room: 5757 South University, Room 141

**Instructors:** Joshua Craze & Lucas Pinheiro

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**Office:** Gates-Blake Hall Room 305

**Office Hours:** 3.15-4.30pm daily, after class, in Plein Air café (5751 S Woodlawn Ave, Chicago, IL 60637)

### **Course Description**

Increased urbanization has been a source of momentous change in the history of the modern world. During the industrial revolution in Europe, thousands of people were forced to leave rural areas for urban spaces. In the last hundred years, urbanization has continued apace: the world's urban population was 746 million in 1950, and is now 3.9 billion, with much of that growth taking place in Africa and Asia.

This course will examine what happens when the world becomes increasingly urban, and how people understand the way their lives change as they move from rural areas to cities. It will look at how new waves of urbanization change our sense of belonging, and pose challenges both architectural and political. We will study urbanization through a wide variety of disciplinary approaches. This course will include readings from classic texts in political economy, sociology, and philosophy, such as Georg Simmel's 'The Metropolis and Mental Life' and excerpts from Karl Marx's *Capital*, Volume One. We shall also delve into architecture, art, literature, and film from Africa, Asia and Europe that investigates the stakes of contemporary urbanization. Our material shall include short stories by Ben Okri, the films of Abbas Kiarostami and Michael Haneke, and photography from Lagos, Paris, and Juba.

Students will also have a chance to think through some of the ideas we are discussing outside of the classroom: we will visit the Art Institute and an old factory, and think about our experiences of living in Chicago.

## **Texts**

Only one text is required for purchase for this class. John Berger's *A Seventh Man* (Verso, 2010). This text is available from the Seminary co-op bookstore. You must use this edition of the text in class; otherwise it becomes difficult to share page references during discussion, as everyone is referring to page numbers in different editions.

All other texts for class will be available via Canvas, in the Modules folder for the respective week. Please print out the texts for discussion in class, and bring them with you. In the syllabus, texts referred to as '*Assigned Readings*' are to be read the day before class, and you should come to class ready to discuss these texts. Texts referred to as '*In Class Reading*' should be printed out, but you don't need to read them before class – we will go over them together. If you wish, of course, feel free to read them before class too; it would make things easier!

All of the readings for class are short (around thirty pages). Because of this, it is important to read these texts very closely before class begins.

Often, the texts you shall read for class will be difficult. Give yourself time to read them slowly. Skim reading Simmel or de Certeau won't help you to understand these amazing authors.

As a rough guide, for difficult texts, like Marx or Simmel, you should be spending ten minutes reading each page. Don't worry if you don't understand everything – working through these difficult texts collectively is precisely the purpose of this class.

## **Class structure**

Aside from two scheduled field trips, each day will be divided into a morning and an afternoon session, with a one-hour break for lunch. Morning sessions will normally begin with a short lecture, introducing you to the theme of the day's texts. Sometimes, this lecture will be conducted via a photograph or an artwork. Following that initial group conversation, we will begin exploring the assigned reading in a seminar-style discussion. While Joshua and

Lucas will be there to give guidance, the emphasis of the class shall be on you, the students, coming to grips with these amazing texts on your own terms.

In the afternoon session, after lunch, we will continue discussing the pre-assigned reading, and then turn to a second reading. This will be a very short text, that you will read in groups, and that shall complicate our initial reading of the pre-assigned reading. Sometimes, films and other exercises will take the place of either a morning or afternoon (consult the class schedule below for further information).

## **Requirements and Grading**

### **A. Participation & Attendance 40%**

This course is intended to be a seminar that gives you a sense of university-level education. Everyone should participate. The texts we shall read are hard, but they are also often exhilarating, and even, yes, life-changing. Let yourself get excited!

Active class participation is essential. This doesn't mean dominating the conversation, but learning a rare and valuable skill: how to think with others. It takes courage, perseverance, and seriousness. We are looking forward to thinking with you all this summer.

Participation presumes your physical presence. The summer session is short and concentrated. We will allow only one unexcused absence – beyond that, each unexcused absence will lower your grade. Lateness will also count against your grade, so please be on time. Participation also assumes that you come to class prepared, so please do the readings.

### **B. Short Papers & Project 60%**

In each of the first two weeks of the summer sessions, we will go on a field trip related to the themes of the course. After the two trips, you will be asked to write a short paper (1000-2000 words). The second writing assignment is collaborative. There will be one additional writing assignment. The three assignments are as follows:

\* After the first week, Professor Craze shall take you on a guided tour of the Art Institute in Chicago. Through looking at a number of important (and lesser known) modernist paintings and sculptures, we shall understand how a variety of artists explored the rapid changes that urbanization brought about in the world in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. I will then ask all of you to wander through the wonders of the Art Institute, and find a single work (it could be a painting, a sculpture, or something else entirely), which makes you think of one of the themes we have explored thus far in the course. Over the weekend (for the tour shall occur on a Friday), I want you to write an essay, exploring the relationship between your object and the themes of the course.

\* At the end of the second week, we will visit Joliet Iron and Steel Works, once the second largest steel works in the USA, and now a ruin. In *Capital, Volume I*, Marx asks us to be archaeologists of social form. By this he means that we should investigate, in the technology of a given period, the forms of social relation that they engender and structure. When Marx looks at ten different types of hammer, he doesn't see ten different uses, but ten jobs. We will ask you to be Marxist archaeologists of Joliet Iron and Steel Works. On the field trip, and over the weekend that follows, we will form you into groups, and ask you to write a short collaborative essay about urbanization and social form in relation to the week's reading, and the archaeological structures you see on the field trip.

\* In addition, we will watch a number of films during the course. You will have the opportunity to choose one film to review, with reference to the course themes, in 1000 words.

Each short paper will be worth 20% of your grade.

### **Class Rules**

- \* Do not come to class without a printout of the texts we are reading on that particular day.
- \* No laptops, phones, recorders, etc. in class. No electronic equipment of any sort is permitted in class, unless I announce otherwise during class, for the purposes of group work.
- \* Plagiarism of any sort will not be tolerated and may result in a failing grade for the course and other actions as the university deems appropriate. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or academic honesty please speak with me and I will be happy to help you.

## The Work

### **Week One: The Experience of the City**

Monday 19 June: An introduction to the study of urbanization

*Morning:* An introduction to the class & in class reading: 'The Man of the Crowd' by Edgar Allen Poe.

*Afternoon:* In class study of a selection from Aristotle's *The Politics*

As this is the first class, there is no assigned reading.

Tuesday 20 June: Trying to define a city

*Assigned Reading:* 'The City (Non-Legitimate Domination)' by Marx Weber

*In Class Reading:* Excerpts from Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*

Wednesday 21 June: Entering the city, learning to count

*Assigned Reading:* 'The Metropolis and Mental Life' by Georg Simmel

*In Class Reading:* Charles Baudelaire 'To a Passerby' (poem) & Excerpts from Walter Benjamin's 'On Some Motif's in Baudelaire'

Thursday 22 June: Ways of navigating the city

*Assigned Reading:* 'Walking in the City' by Michel de Certeau, from *The Practice of Everyday Life*

*Film:* Chungking Express by Wong Kar Wai

Friday 23 June: The city through the artwork

\* Field trip to the Chicago Art Institute

### **Week Two: The Structure of the City**

Monday 26 June: The expropriation of the agricultural population

*Assigned Reading:* Friedrich Engels, 'The Great Towns' (from *The Conditions of the Working Class in England*) and excerpts from Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*

*In Class Reading:* Excerpts from Karl Marx, *Capital, Volume I*

Tuesday 27 June: 'Putting the people to work'

*Assigned Reading:* Henri Lefebvre, 'Industrialization and Urbanization.'

*In Class Reading:* Excerpts from Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*

Wednesday 28 June: The slum as an extension of the factory

*Assigned Reading:* Mike Davis, 'Planet of the Slums'

*In Class Reading:* Ben Okri, excerpted short story from *Stars of the New Curfew*.

Thursday 29 June: Life in the factory, and after it

*Assigned Reading:* E.P Thompson, 'Time, Work Discipline and Industrial Capitalism'

*In Class Reading:* Studs Terkel, *Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do*

Friday 30 June

\* Group trip to Joliet Iron and Steel Works

### **Week Three: The Structure of Experience & The Experience of Structure**

Monday 3 July

Presentation of group projects.

*Assigned Reading:* John Berger, *A Seventh Man*, Part One: Departure

*Film:* *Mediterranea* by Jonas Carpignano

Tuesday 4 July – American Holiday, day of independence, no class

Wednesday 5 July

*Assigned Reading:* John Berger, *A Seventh Man*, Part Two: Work

*Film:* *Code Inconnu* by Michael Haneke

Thursday 6 July

*Assigned Reading:* John Berger, *A Seventh Man*, Part Three: The Return

*Film:* *Carla's Song* by Ken Loach

Friday 7 July

*Assigned Reading:* Jim Lewis 'The Exigent City' & Excerpts from Michel Agier, *Managing the Undesirables: Refugee Camps and Humanitarian Government*

*In Class Reading:* Henri Lefebvre, 'The Right to the City'