IMAGINING THE MODERN CITY
MLA

Fall 2017
Saturdays, 9:30-12:30
Larry Rothfield
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Office Hours: T 3:30-4:30

DESCRIPTION
The rise of the modern city makes possible new modes of experience, new kinds of people, and new kinds of stories. To appreciate these novelties, we will start by looking at sociologist Georg Simmel’s “The Metropolis and Mental Life”. Then we will explore how writers and filmmakers have tried to capture this experience of city life in different genres (the detective story, romantic comedy, modernist poetry, realism), and from different social and disciplinary perspectives.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND FILMS
Conan Doyle, Adventures of Sherlock Holmes (Penguin)
Flaubert, Sentimental Education (Penguin Classics)
Stevenson, Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (Norton)
Films and TV episodes (marked with an asterisk), to be purchased or rented by you online
Plus additional material which will be available on the course website

ASSIGNMENTS
1. Active Participation and Convening (25%): Because this course is a seminar, its success depends on lively engagement from everyone. You are always expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings; you are also expected to serve as convener for one class, in which you will not only direct discussion of the readings on the syllabus but also present a new primary source for us to analyze.
2. Chalk posts (20%): On the day before the class, by 8 pm, you are required to post a comment/question to the discussion forum for that week on the chalk site. You should use these posts as an opportunity to float or test out an idea, apply a concept, challenge a view, or raise a question you would like us to take up in class. These should not be longer than a paragraph, and need not be highly polished, but should reflect some thought.
3. Final Paper Proposal, Bibliography, and Presentation (15%): This assignment will help you craft a top-notch final paper; in effect, it gives you the chance to present a draft of your thesis to me for feedback and advice. In approximately 250 words, you should lay out your argument, explain how you intend to prove it, and situate it in relation to existing scholarship (approximately 5 scholarly/secondary sources). I will provide written comments, but you should also feel free to meet with me as you prepare to write. You will submit these proposals on 5/30 and present a brief (5–10 min.) report on your research during class. If you are writing your final paper on a topic that develops from your “convening” presentation, then you must offer newly expanded and refined material in this instance.
4. Final Paper (40%): 15 pp., approximately 5 secondary/scholarly sources, MLA or Chicago format. We will discuss this paper extensively as the deadline approaches.

POLICIES

All written work must conform to the guidelines in the most recent edition of the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers or the Chicago Manual of Style.

Plagiarism is a serious offense with serious consequences that will be determined by the University.

Collaboration is permitted. You are encouraged to consult with your classmates on the choice of paper topics and to share sources. You may find it useful to discuss your chosen topic with your peers, particularly if you are working on the same topic as a classmate. However, you should ensure that any written work you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing and that it reflects your own approach to the topic. You must also adhere to standard citation practices in this discipline (MLA) and properly cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, etc. that have helped you with your work. If you received any help with your writing (feedback on drafts, etc.), you must also acknowledge this assistance.

Extensions are only granted in extenuating circumstances. Speak with me ahead of time if you feel you need an extension, and be prepared to provide a good reason. Late papers without an extension are penalized 1/3 of a letter grade (e.g. a B+ becomes a B).

SCHEDULE

9/30 STRANGERS ON THE STREET: SENSATION, CHAOS, ALIENATION, THRILL
Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life”
Woolf, from Mrs Dalloway
Joyce, from Ulysses
Wordsworth, book 7 from the Prelude (“Residence in London”)
Sartre on bad faith
Pound, “Kensington Gardens”
Pennebaker, “Daybreak Express”

10/7 CROWDING
Whitman, “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry”
Pound, “In a Station of the Metro”
King Vidor, The Crowd
Poe, “The Man of the Crowd”

[start reading Flaubert, Sentimental Education]

10/14 AMBITIONS/MAPPING
Flaubert, Sentimental Education, through chapter XIII
Mad Men, season 1, episode 1*
Working Girl*
Moretti, “Maps”, from *Graphs, Maps, Trees*

10/21 **WALKING/STALKING**
Benjamin, “Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century”
Conan Doyle, “A Scandal in Bohemia” and “The Red-Headed League” from *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*
*D.O.A. (1950 version)*

10/28 **TRANSGRESSION**
Debord, “The Dérive”
*The French Connection* *
Godard, *Breathless* *
Stevenson, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*

11/4 **HUMANIZING THE CITY: NEIGHBORHOODS AND MEMORIES**
Jane Jacobs, “Introduction” and “The Uses of Sidewalks” from *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*
De Certeau, “Walking in the City”
Scorsese, *Mean Streets* *
Lee, *Do the Right Thing* *

11/11 **HUMANIZING THE CITY: SCENES**
Blum, “Scenes”
Oldenburg, “The Third Place”
Baldwin, “Sonny’s Blues”
Flaubert, *Sentimental Education* to end
Manet, “A Bar at the Folies-Bergère” (image)

**CONVENERS #5**

11/18 **SUBCULTURE, GHETTO, AND ENCLAVE**
*The Wire*, episode TBD *
*Pepe Le Moko (1937)* *
Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, first half only

11/25 **THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASS**

11/30 Papers due from graduating students

12/2 **APARTMENTS**
Wilder, *The Apartment* *
Hitchcock, *Rear Window* *
Seinfeld*
student presentations on final papers in progress

12/9 GENTRIFICATION, COSMOPOLITANISM, DYSTOPIA
Woody Allen, Annie Hall* and Manhattan*
The Hudsucker Proxy*
Blade Runner*

12/10 FINAL PAPERS DUE by 5 pm to lary@uchicago.edu