

IHST 226 IH1
Urban History: the Preindustrial City
MICA - Spring 2010
Tues. 9-11:45 AM
Bunting 470

Course Syllabus



An American warplane flies over the great Ziggurat of Ur in 2004

Instructor: Michael Sizer

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COURSE DESCRIPTION & GOALS:

City living is literally synonymous with civilization: the root of the word civilization is the Latin word *civis*, meaning city. This course will trace the history of urban life back to its origins in the Middle East, to understand the roots of urban culture, its meaning, its significance, its varieties. This investigation will combine studies of particular cities - what they looked like, their inhabitants, their rituals - with an extensive look at theories of what cities are and how they have shaped the mentalities of those dwelling in them. Is there an urban personality? Are cities the zones of cultural and artistic dynamism? Do cities create freedom or restrictions on human life? What are the environmental impacts of cities?

This course is designed to complement courses in modern urbanism at MICA. We will be covering the global phenomenon of urbanism, from Babylon to Edo, Delhi to Tenochtitlan, Angkor Wat to Paris, Rome to Great Zimbabwe. At the end of the course it is hoped that students will 1) have comprehensive background in the basics of theories

and history of urban morphology and culture such that they can compare them formally and informally to modern and contemporary examples; 2) understand the deep-rooted historical importance of cities in human life and in the environment of the planet; 3) know how to do a large, individual research project culminating in a presentation and paper; 4) know various approaches to reading primary and secondary sources; and 5) appreciate the deep meaning and long legacy of the walls, streets, monuments, spires, symbols and crowds that surround them.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

This course will emphasize **class and small group discussion**. Your participation will be evaluated not only based on the quality of your comments in open discussion, but also on alertness, energy, and preparedness. Various organized activities will also provide an opportunity to participate in class ways other than in large- or small-group discussion. **Class participation is crucial to this course, constituting 20% of your grade.**

The **readings** are vital, as they will form the basis of our discussions and activities. The amount of readings varies, but at times is quite heavy. It is important not only that you do the readings thoroughly, but that you **bring them with you to class**, either printed out or on your computer screen (see below for comments on bringing laptops to class), to use as a basis for discussion. **Failure to do so will result in a grade of 'F' for your class participation for that day.**

There will be **5 short (1 page or so) mini-papers** due in class during the semester. You may choose to write in any 5 weeks of the semester (except for those days when another major assignment is due), **although at least one mini-paper is due on or before week 5 of the class**. These must be typed, but they are informal papers in which you respond to the source material. **You should spend no more than an hour on them**. They are meant to get your brain moving: to help you develop your analytical and writing skills, and for you to engage the material so that we can use them as a jumping-off point for class discussion. They will be graded according to effort and engagement, and less on your writing ability (although it helps to be able to express yourself well!), and the lowest graded paper will be dropped. **No make-up papers** will be allowed, and **only 1 paper may be submitted per week**. **These mini-papers constitute 20% of your grade.**

There are **2 short (2-4 pp.) papers** due during the first weeks of the semester (described below). The **first paper**, on the effects of the built environment on your personality, **is worth 10 % of your grade**. The **second paper**, in which you are asked to observe the traces of pre-industrial urbanism in modern Baltimore, **is worth 15% of your grade**.

For your **final project** in this class you will be asked to **choose a pre-industrial city and to study it in depth**. Your study **must use** at least **one primary source**, combine a **visual element** (a topography, building diagrams, monuments), and discuss a **cultural**

feature (an artist or writer or movement or form associated with the town or its ilk; or a depiction of everyday practices or cultural features, work, etc. of its inhabitants), in an **overall view analyzing larger reading of meaning of city**. More details will come soon in a separate hand-out. Topics must be chosen early (week 5). The final project will consist of a **presentation (15%)** and a **paper of 8-12 pp.**, due on the last day of class, and worth **20 % of your overall grade**.

LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY

Computer submissions of paper assignments are not allowed. The first (short) paper will be marked down a grade for each day late (A to A-, B- to C+, etc.) Once chosen, the date of your presentation cannot be changed. The final paper will not be accepted late - **NO EXCEPTIONS!**

ATTENDANCE POLICY

There are only 15 meetings in the semester and so we have to make the most of them. Any unexcused absence beyond 1 will result in a decrease of two grades from class participation (A to B+, B- to C, etc.). 2 late arrivals (> 10 minutes) equals 1 absence.

ADA Compliance Statement

Learning Resource Center ADA Compliance Statement Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss specific needs. Please contact the Learning Resource Center at 410-225-2416, in Bunting 458, to establish eligibility and coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: <http://www.mica.edu/LRC>

Health and Safety Compliance

From the Office of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS)

The Office works to provide EHS support for all members of the MICA community. The primary goal of the Office is to be proactive in establishing a culture of safety in which each member of the community shares ownership responsibility that allows each person to be involved in maintaining a healthy work and studying environment. EHS uses several methods to achieve this objective.

First, the EHS office looks at the totality of the EHS requirements by combining campus needs with state and federal requirements and clearly communicating the shared policies and procedures. Second, EHS identifies training needs and develops guidelines for the use of equipment, material and procedures. Third, we ensure compliance with policies through evaluations, inspections, and committees.

It is the responsibility of faculty and students to understand health and safety policies relevant to their individual activities and to review MICA's Emergency Action Plan, as well as to participate in training, drills, etc. It is also each faculty member's responsibility to coordinate with the EHS Office to ensure that all risks associated with their class activities are identified and to assure that their respective classroom procedures mirror the EHS and Academic Department guidelines. Each of the Academic Department's also publish EHS procedures and policies such as a dress code, the use of personal protective equipment, fire safety, training, and how to properly dispose of chemical waste. Each of these policies and procedures must be followed by all students and faculty. Most importantly, it is the responsibility of the faculty to review, test, and assess each student's awareness of basic safety procedures, such as evacuation routes, use of chemicals, fire prevention, and all other guidelines posted by the Environmental Health and Safety Office, (e.g., smoking policy, independent studio policies, pet policy, disposing of hazardous and chemical waste, etc).

To become a member of the Faculty EHS Committee or for any questions relating to EHS, please contact Denelle Bowser, EHS Manager, at dbowser@mica.edu or by calling 410.462.7593. You can also visit the department online at www.mica.edu/ehs

H1N1 Pandemic Information

From the Office of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS)

What to do if I get sick?

If you are sick consider the following:

- *Limit contact with other people as much as possible. DO NOT GO TO CLASS! Seek medical attention at Mount Royal Medial Assoc. (410) 225-8855 but please call ahead*
- *Students who are sick should self-isolate for at least 24 hours after any fever is gone.*
- *Make sure to get plenty of rest and drink clear fluids to keep from being dehydrated*
- *Avoid normal activities including work, school, travel, shopping, social events, and public gatherings*

Reporting Procedures

- *Contact the Office of Student Affairs at 410-225-2422 who will assist with plans for self-isolation, arranging for meals, and any other necessary support*
- *Contact any faculty whose class you anticipate missing and inform them of your illness. Work with them to make arrangements for catching up on any missed work. If you have difficulty reaching your faculty or if your illness lingers to the point where you will miss two or more of any one class contact the Office of Student Affairs.*

CLASSROOM LAPTOP & CELLPHONE POLICY

Because students in previous classes have abused the privilege of having laptops in class, I am going to set limits on their use in our class. **If there are no online or Blackboard readings, an open laptop is not permitted in class, unless you receive special permission from me to take notes on it or for some other purpose.** If there are online or Blackboard readings, you can have the computer open. However, if you are observed using the computer for anything not related to classroom activity, **you will get an F for the day and your laptop privileges will be revoked.**

Cellphones must be **stowed away and turned off** for the duration of the class.

READINGS

All course readings will be available online or accessible on Blackboard.

This is done partly to give you a wide array of readings, and also to save you money. **HOWEVER: you MUST print and bring all readings with you to class every meeting.** Failure to do so will result in an 'F' for the day.

COURSE SCHEDULE: TOPICS & ASSIGNMENTS- Subject to change if necessary.

Assignments are listed the day they are due, not the day they are assigned.

Week 1 - 1/19: Introduction to course

Week 2 - 1/26: What is a city and where did cities come from?

Assignments

- Jared Diamond, “Agriculture’s Mixed Blessings” from *3rd Chimpanzee*.
- Harold Carter, “Urban Origins: a Review of Theories”

Week 3 - 2/2: Cities and (Human) Nature; Gesellschaft & Gemeinschaft; the “Organic” city

Assignments

- Excerpts from Norman Crowe, *Nature and the Idea of a Man-Made World: An Investigation into the Evolutionary Roots of Form and Order in the Built Environment*.
- Louis Wirth, “Urbanism as a Way of Life”
- Ferdinand Tönnies, excerpts from *Community and Civil Society*
- Robert Redfield, “The Folk Society”
- IN-CLASS: We will be watching a bit of Lewis Mumford’s movie, “The City.”

Week 4 - 2/9: Mesopotamia: the Sacred Built Space, the City as Ceremonial Center; Mythical Origins & City Topographies

Assignments

- Joel Kotkin, “Introduction” and “Part One: Origins: the Rise of Cities in a Global Context” from *The City: a Global History* (pp. xix-xxvi; 3-18).
- The Founding of Rome (Romulus & Remus; the Rape of the Sabine Women), sections 1.1-1.13 in Livy’s *The History of Rome*, found at: http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbib/toccer-new2?id=Liv1His.sgm&images=images/modeng&data=/texts/english/modeng/parse_d&tag=public&part=1&division=div1
- The foundation of the new capital of the Wei people, from the Chinese *Book of Odes* (2 pp.)
- The Founding of Uruk: “Prologue” from the *Epic of Gilgamesh*; “Babylonian Genesis” taken from Gwendolyn Leick, *Mesopotamia: the Invention of the City* (each 1 pg.)
- PAPER: Write a short (2-3 pp.) paper describing the way that you think the built environment affects human modes of thought, using your own personal experience growing up in whatever background you were raised as an example. How was your personality shaped by the man-made spaces in which you grew up?

Week 5 - 2/16: Anti-city: The Axial Iron Age & Republican Farmer Virtue

Assignments

- NOTE: All final project topics must have been chosen/will be assigned by today.
- Bruce Lerro, “The Axial Iron Age: the Triumph of the Sky Gods” Ch. 10 of *From Earth Spirits to Sky Gods: the Socioecological Origins of Monotheism, Individualism, and hyperabstract Reasoning from the Stone Age to the Axial Iron Age* (pp. 267-295).
- Vergil’s 1st Eclogue, found at: <http://classics.mit.edu/Virgil/eclogue.1.i.html>
- Thomas Jefferson: miscellaneous writings on the evils of the city.
- Hebrew Biblical stories on cities: Genesis 4 (Cain & Abel); Genesis 11: 1-9 (Tower of Babel); Genesis 18: 16-33 & Genesis 19 (Sodom & Gomorrah) Any version of the Bible is fine; an excellent text online can be found at: <http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/KjvGene.html>

Week 6 - 2/23: Space of Democracy: the Agora in Athens

Assignments

- Peter Hall, “The Fountainhead: Athens 500-400 BC” from *Cities in Civilization: Culture, Innovation, and Urban Order*, pp. 24-68.
- Pericles’ Funeral Oration: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/pericles-funeralspeech.html>

Week 7 - 3/2: Space of Authority: Rome

Assignments

- CLASS WILL MEET UNDER THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT, AT 699 N. CHARLES ST. (10-minute walk from MICA) - *Weather permitting*.
- Richard Sennett, “The Obsessive Image: Place and Time in Hadrian’s Rome” from *Flesh & Stone: the Body & the City in Western Civilization*, pp. 87-123.
- Cecil D. Elliot, “Monuments & Monumentality” in the *Journal of Architectural Education* (1947-1974) 18 #4 (1964): 51-53.
- Excerpts from Vitruvius, *De Architectura*.

Week 8 - 3/9: The Christian City

Assignments

- Augustine, *City of God*: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/aug-city2.html>
- Bible, Book of Revelation on the Heavenly City: Revelation 21.
- Ammianus Marcellanus, “The Luxury of the Rich in Rome (c. 400): <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/ammianus-history14.html>
- Jill Harries, “Christianity and the City in Late Roman Gaul” in *The City in Antiquity*, ed. John Rich, pp. 77-98.
- THOUGHT PAPER: Baltimore as a pre-industrial city/the pre-industrial city’s mark on Baltimore. Write a short (2-3 pp.), informal paper describing the vestiges

of the culture of the pre-industrial city in Baltimore's current post-industrial landscape. How do religious sites, ceremonial centers, monuments, forum spaces, and other features we have discussed so far contribute to shaping the city? This will require you to go out in the city a bit, soak in the primordial forms among its modern, gleaming surface.

***** SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS 3/16 *****

Week 9 - 3/23: Alternate Urban forms? Sub-Saharan African cities; Angkor Wat

Assignments

- Chapurukha M. Kusimba, "Early African Cities: Their Role in the Shaping of Urban and Rural Interaction Spheres" from *The Ancient City: New Perspectives on Urbanism in the Old and New World*, ed. Joyce Marcus & Jeremy A. Sabloff, pp. 229-246.
- Paul Wheatley, "The Significance of Yoruba Urbanism" in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 12 #4 (1970): 393-423.
- Excerpts from Marilia Albanese, *Angkor: Splendors of the Khmer Civilization*.

Week 10 - 3/30: Ecology & the City: the example of the Maya; Pollution

Assignments

- Gideon Sjoberg, "Demography and Ecology" in *The Preindustrial City: Past and Present*, pp. 80-107.
- Jared Diamond, "The Maya Collapses" in *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, pp. 157-177.

Week 11 - 4/6: Commune Movement, Guilds and Capitalism; Bustling Marketplaces

Assignments

- Guibert de Nogent, "Revolt at Laon (1111): <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/guibert-laon.html>
- Charter of Lorris (1155): <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/lorris.html>
- Excerpts from medieval Paris street hawkers' cries.
- Karl Marx, selections from *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm (New York: International Publishers, 1964).

Week 12 - 4/13: The City as an Idea; the End of the Pre-Industrial City

Assignments

- Utopian space: Thomas Campanella *City of the Sun*.

- Ruth Eaton, “The City as an Intellectual Exercise.”
- Readings on Baron Haussmann and Paris.
- Look at cityscapes of Edo: <http://www.rekihaku.ac.jp/e-rekihaku/124/rekishi.html>

Week 13 - 4/20: Student Presentations Begin

Assignments

- NONE.

Week 14 - 4/27: Student Presentations

Assignments

- NONE.

Week 15 - 5/4: Student Presentations

ALL FINAL PAPERS DUE BY END OF CLASS TIME.