

New York University
Media, Culture, and Communication
Spring 2024
MCC-UE 1038
Mon/Wed 11-12:15
181 Mercer St/Paulson Center 320

Professor Marita Sturken
Media, Culture, and Communication
239 Greene Street 8th Fl
email: marita.sturken@nyu.edu
tel: 212-992-9424
Office hours: Mondays 2-4

Visual Cultures of the Modern and Global City



Course description:

This course examines visual culture of the city, from the dynamics of visibility in the nineteenth-century modern cityscape to the mega cities of globalization. It addresses the visual dynamics, infrastructure, architecture, public art, and design imaginaries of urban spaces, taking New York City and Paris as primary case studies from the nineteenth century to the present. We will consider the rise of the modern city, the politics of urban design, the city as a site of immigration, division, disaster, and memory, and the contemporary digital landscape of the city. In tracing the history of the city as a site of visual culture, we can gain understanding into the complexities of global visual culture. As a Deans Global Honors Seminar, this course will have a one-week trip to Paris at Spring Break which will include site visits and field trips.

Required Texts:

All readings are posted in pdf/e-book on Brightspace.

Course Requirements:

Students are required to attend all seminars, to undertake the reading assignments seriously before each class, and to participate fully in seminar discussions and a class blog. Each week 2 students will be assigned to bring questions to class for discussion. We will do short exercises in relation to life in the city, which will take you out in the New York cityscape and which will feed into the blog.

The class will have a weekly blog on topics related to the course. Students will write one short paper mid-semester of 5-7 pages (due Week 7), and one more in-depth research paper due at the end of the semester.

Evaluation:

Paper 1 (due Week 7): 20%

Paper 2 (due Week 14): 30%

Class Blog: 30%

Participation: 20%

Weekly Schedule of Classes and Assignments***Week 1:*****Mon Jan. 22: Introduction****Wed Jan. 24: What Makes a City?**

Reading:

Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," excerpt

Lewis Mumford, "What is a City?" excerpt

Henri Lefebvre, "The Specificity of the City"

Recommended:

Dolores Hayden, "Urban Landscape History: The Sense of Place and the Politics of Space" from *The Power of Place*

Blog prompt: What is your history with cities before coming to NYU and how has it shaped your first year here?

Week 2:**Jan. 29: Modern Urban Geographies: Centers/Peripheries**

Reading:

Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, excerpt from *Practices of Looking* on modernity
 Nicholas Mirzoeff, "World Cities, City Worlds" section on Imperial City (pp. 159-74)

Jan. 31: Modern New York

Reading:

Ben Singer, "Modernity, Hyperstimulus, and the Rise of Popular Sensationalism"
 Max Page, "The Provisional City"

Recommended:

Christoph Lindner, "New York Vertical" excerpt

Watch: Robert Moses, the Man Who Built New York

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JvTky05FGS0>

Week 3:**Feb. 5: Paris as the Modern City**

Reading:

David Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity*, excerpt
 Walter Benjamin, "Paris, The Capital of the Nineteenth Century"

Recommended:

Vanessa Schwartz, Introduction to *Spectacular Realities* and Chapter 2: "Public Visits to the Morgue"

Feb. 7: The Arcades and Modern Ways of Seeing

Reading:

Anne Friedberg, *Window Shopping*, Chapter 2: "The Passage from Arcade to Cinema"

Recommended:

Tony Bennett, "The Exhibitionary Complex"

Week 4:**Feb. 12: The Vertical City and the Skyscraper**

Reading:

Stephen Graham, *Vertical*, "Skyscraper"

Michel de Certeau, "Walking in the City" excerpt

Colin Marshall, "A Defense of the Ugliest Building in Paris" *New York Times***Feb. 14: The Street and the Tenement**

Reading:

Jane Jacobs, "The Uses of Sidewalks" excerpt

Anna Greenspan, "The Road vs The Street" from *Shanghai Future: Modernity Remade***Paper 1 assignment given.***Optional visit to the Tenement Museum.***Week 5:*****Monday Feb 19, Presidents Day, no class*****Feb. 21: The City as Consumption: Department Stores**

Reading:

Emile Zola, *The Ladies' Paradise (Au Bonheur des Dames)*, 1883, excerptKristin Ross, Introduction to *The Ladies' Paradise* excerpt

Christoph Grunenberg, "Wonderland: Spectacles of Display from the Bon Marche to Prada"

Week 6:**Feb. 26: The City as Consumption: Street and Farmers Markets**

Reading:

Sharon Zukin, "A Brief History of Shopping"

Nicolle Aimee Meyer and Amanda Pilar Smith, *Paris is a Basket: Les Halles and Richard Lenoir Market*

Feb. 28: The City of Memory

Reading:

James Young, *The Stages of Memory*, Introduction
 Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History"

Recommended:

Clint Smith, *How the Word is Passed*, "New York City"

Week 7:**March 4: The Postindustrial City****Reading:**

Sharon Zukin, *Naked City*, "Destination Culture"
 The High Line, Interview with architects

Recommended:

Richard Ocejo, *Masters of Craft*, excerpt

March 6: The Colonial and Postcolonial City

Reading:

Laila Amine, *Postcolonial Paris*, Introduction, excerpts
 Sally Price, *Paris Primitive* excerpts

Paper 1 due**Week 8:****March 11: Cities of Immigration**

Reading:

Cole Stangler, "There is Another Paris" *New York Times*
 Anaya Roy, "Postcolonial Urbanisms"

March 13: Preparation for Paris trip***March 18 to 22, Spring Break Trip to Paris***

Week 9:**March 25: Trip to Paris debrief discussion****March 27: The Divided City: Division/Occupation**

Reading:

Nicholas Mirzoeff, "World Cities, City Worlds," section on Divided Cities (pp.175-92)

Recommended:

Eyal Weizman, *Hollow Land*, excerpt

Jonathan Bach, "The Berlin Wall After the Berlin Wall"

Week 10:**April 1: The Global City**

Reading:

Nick Mirzoeff, "World Cities, City Worlds" section on Global City (pp. 194-209)

Chad Haines, "Cracks in the Façade: Landscapes of Hope and Desire in Dubai"

Paper 2 assignment given**April 3: Global Finance and the City**

Reading:

Aiwa Ong, "Hyperbuilding: Spectacle, Speculation and the Hyperspace of Sovereignty" excerpt

Richard Florida, *The New Urban Crisis*, excerpt

Recommended:

Saskia Sassen, "Who Owns Our Cities?"

<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/nov/24/who-owns-our-cities-and-why-this-urban-takeover-should-concern-us-all>

Week 11:**April 8: Gentrification, Inequality, and the Real Estate State**

Reading:

Samuel Stein, *Capital City* excerpt**April 10: The Digital City and the Smart City**

Reading:

Christine Boyer, "The Smart City in the Twenty First Century" (in *Cities in Transition*)
Mobile Interfaces in Public Spaces, excerptsSmart Cities Readiness Guide <https://readinessguide.smartcitiescouncil.com/>**Week 12:****April 15: The Networked and Surveillance City**

Reading:

Ingrid Burrington, *Networks of New York***April 17: The DIY City**

Reading:

Shannon Mattern, "Post-It Note City"

<https://placesjournal.org/article/post-it-note-city/>Gordon Douglas, *The Help-Yourself City*, excerpt**Week 13:****April 22: Activism and Political Action in the City**

Reading:

Nicholas Mirzoeff, "Changing the World" from *How to see the World*David Harvey, *Rebel Cities*, excerpts**April 24: The Disaster City**

Reading:

Lynnell Thomas, *Desire and Disaster in New Orleans*, excerptHatim El-Hibri, *Visions of Beirut* excerpt

Week 14:

April 29: Climate Change and the City

Reading:

Eric Klinenberg, "Department of Urban Planning: Adaption"

Ashley Dawson, *Extreme Cities*, excerpt

May 1: The Future City

Week 15:

May 6: Presentations of papers and conclusion

Final papers due: May 10

Course Policies

Evaluation Rubric

A = Excellent

This work is comprehensive and detailed, integrating themes and concepts from discussions, lectures and readings. Writing is clear, analytical and organized. Arguments offer specific examples and concisely evaluate evidence. Students who earn this grade are prepared for class, synthesize course materials and contribute insightfully.

B = Good

This work is complete and accurate, offering insights at general level of understanding. Writing is clear, uses examples properly and tends toward broad analysis. Classroom participation is consistent and thoughtful.

C = Average

This work is correct but is largely descriptive, lacking analysis. Writing is vague and at times tangential. Arguments are unorganized, without specific examples or analysis. Classroom participation is inarticulate.

D = Unsatisfactory

This work is incomplete, and evidences little understanding of the readings or discussions. Arguments demonstrate inattention to detail, misunderstand course material and overlook significant themes. Classroom participation is spotty, unprepared and off topic.

F = Failed

This grade indicates a failure to participate and/or incomplete assignments

Absences and Lateness

More than two unexcused absences will automatically result in a lower grade. Chronic lateness will also be reflected in your evaluation of participation. Regardless of the reason for your absence you will be responsible for any missed work. Travel arrangements do not constitute a valid excuse for rescheduling exams. There are no extra credit assignments for this class.

Format

Please double-space your written work and number the pages. You can use any citation style as long as you are consistent. Here is the Chicago Manual of Style Guide:

http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

Send your work in Word or Pages or Google Doc (not pdf) and please name the file in the following format Yourlastname Assignment name.doc.

General Decorum

Slipping in late or leaving early, sleeping, text messaging, surfing the Internet, doing homework in class, eating, etc. are distracting and disrespectful to all participants in the course.

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism

http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/policies/academic_integrity

The relationship between students and faculty is the keystone of the educational experience at New York University in the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. This relationship takes an honor code for granted and mutual trust, respect, and responsibility as foundational requirements. Thus, how you learn is as important as what you learn. A university education aims not only to produce high-quality scholars, but to also cultivate honorable citizens.

Academic integrity is the guiding principle for all that you do, from taking exams to making oral presentations to writing term papers. It requires that you recognize and acknowledge information derived from others and take credit only for ideas and work that are yours.

You violate the principle of academic integrity when you cheat on an exam, submit the same work for two different courses without prior permission from your professors, receive help on a take-home examination that calls for independent work, or plagiarize. Plagiarism, one of the gravest forms of academic dishonesty in university life, whether intended or not, is academic fraud. In a community of scholars, whose members are teaching, learning, and discovering knowledge, plagiarism cannot be tolerated.

Plagiarism is failure to properly assign authorship to a paper, a document, an oral presentation, a musical score, and/or other materials that are not your original work. You plagiarize when, without proper attribution, you do any of the following: copy verbatim from a book, an article, or other media; download documents from the Internet; purchase documents; report from other's oral work; paraphrase or restate someone else's facts, analysis, and/or conclusions; or copy directly from a classmate or allow a classmate to copy from you.

Your professors are responsible for helping you to understand other people's ideas, to use resources and conscientiously acknowledge them, and to develop and clarify your own thinking. You should know what constitutes good and honest scholarship, style guide preferences, and formats for assignments for each of your courses. Consult your professors for help with problems related to fulfilling course assignments, including questions related to attribution of sources.

Through reading, writing, and discussion, you will undoubtedly acquire ideas from others, and exchange ideas and opinions with others, including your classmates and professors. You will be expected, and often required, to build your own work on that of other people. In so doing, you are expected to credit those sources that have contributed to the development of your ideas.

You can only learn from work you actually do. Unless otherwise stated, you should not use generative AI tools to create any part of an assignment in this course; every submission should be entirely your work.

Avoiding Academic Dishonesty

- Organize your time appropriately to avoid undue pressure, and acquire good study habits, including note taking.
- Learn proper forms of citation. Always check with your professors of record for their preferred style guides. Directly copied material must always be in quotes; paraphrased material must be acknowledged; even ideas and organization derived from your own previous work or another's work need to be acknowledged.
- Always proofread your finished work to be sure that quotation marks, footnotes and other references were not inadvertently omitted. Know the source of each citation.
- Do not submit the same work for more than one class without first obtaining the permission of both professors even if you believe that work you have already completed satisfies the requirements of another assignment.
- Save your notes and drafts of your papers as evidence of your original work.

Disciplinary Sanctions

When a professor suspects cheating, plagiarism, and/or other forms of academic dishonesty, appropriate disciplinary action may be taken following the department procedure or through referral to the Committee on Student Discipline.

The Steinhardt School Statement on Academic Integrity is consistent with the New York University Policy on Student Conduct, published in the NYU Student Guide.

Student Resources

- **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**
Students requesting reasonable accommodations due to a disability are encouraged to register with the Moses Center for students with Disabilities. You can begin the registration process by completing [Moses Center Online Intake](#). Once completed, a Disability Specialist will be in contact with you. Students requiring services are strongly encouraged to register prior to the upcoming semester or as early as possible during the semester to ensure timely implementation of approved accommodations.
- NYU Writing Center (Washington Square): 411 Lafayette, 4th Floor. Schedule an appointment online at <https://nyu.mywconline.com> or just walk-in.