

**Scripps College – Fall 2010**

**American Studies 126**  
**Race in U.S. Urban/Suburban History, 1900 to Present**  
**Tuesday & Thursday, 2:45 – 4:00**  
**Humanities 202**

**Instructor: Professor Matt Delmont**

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**Office Hours: Wednesday 1-3pm (or by appointment)**

**Office: Balch 211**

**Course Description:**

This course explores urban social and cultural history in the United States from 1900 to the present, focusing on the experiences of communities of color. Looking at case studies from San Francisco, Los Angeles, Detroit, Oakland, and other cities, we will examine: immigration and labor; public health; suburbanization and housing discrimination; multi-ethnic neighborhoods; urban popular culture; urban poverty; civil rights organizing; and the growth of the prison system.

**Course Aims:**

- 1) Introduce students to central themes in urban history and the importance of race and ethnicity therein.
  - Students will be able to identify the important developments in twentieth century urban history
  - Students will be able to recognize similarities and differences among cities in the same historical periods.
  - Students will be able to differentiate among the experiences of communities of color across geographic locations and historical periods.
- ✓ This course aim will be accomplished through reading assignments, class discussions, and reading reviews.
  
- 2) Give students a better understanding of what historians do, and the importance of method and interpretation for these urban scholars.
  - Students will be able to read, write, and speak critically about historical evidence and methods
  - Students will be able to identify some of the historiographic trends and debates in urban history
  - Students will be able to compare and contrast historical and sociological methods in urban studies
- ✓ This course aim will be accomplished through reading assignments, class discussions, and reading reviews.

- 3) Connect the themes of the course with the metropolitan area with which students are most familiar.
- Students will be able to locate and synthesize a range of historical research related to a specific theme and metropolitan area
- ✓ This course aim will be accomplished through the “hometown histories” reading and review.

**Books:**

📖 The following books are required for this course. All of these books are available in the bookstore. Reading assignments are outlined in detail on the following pages.

- Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown* (2001)
- George Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (1993)
- Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (1996)
- Robert Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (2003)
- Ruth Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* (2007)

🎬 In addition to the reading assignments, we will watch selections from films in class.

**Assignments/Grading:****Assigned Reading (30%)**

The daily readings are an extremely important part of this course and are weighted accordingly. You are expected to complete the reading assignments outlined below and to attend every class prepared to be a thoughtful contributor and active listener in class discussions. Each day for which there is a reading assignment, we will start class with a short writing assignment. You will be asked to write for five minutes on a question related to that day's reading. The questions will ask you to explore one of the main themes, terms, and/or examples in that day's reading (e.g., what does Sugrue mean by "defensive localism"?) These will not be trick questions and should be accessible if you have done the reading. Your responses will be graded as 1, 0.5, or 0 and will be handed back at the start of the next class. If you are sick or miss a class, you will need to e-mail me a 250-word summary of that day's reading before the next class. If you received a 0.5 or 0 for a particular day and would like to improve your score, you may also write a 250-word summary of the reading. These 250-word summaries will be graded using the same scale as the in-class responses. There are 17 days with reading assignments, so the maximum number of points available will be 17. The final grading scale for the assigned reading will look like this: 17=A, 16=A-, 15=B+, 14=B, 13=B-, 12=C+, etc., with half-points rounded up.

**Independent Reading Review and Oral Presentation (20%)**

I have listed a number of books related to the five assigned books. You will be asked to select one of these books for independent reading. All books should be available at the library or through Link+. After you have read the book you will be asked to write a short review and prepare a brief oral presentation on the book. Your review should do four things: 1) Identify the thesis of the book; 2) Identify the evidence the author uses to support her/his thesis; 3) Make a specific connection between this book and the book that was assigned for that week; and 4) Identify at least one topic the book addresses about which you would like to learn more. Examples of good book reviews will be provided on Sakai. Your book review should be 750-1000 words. You should upload your book review to your Sakai drop box before coming to class on your assigned day.

In addition, you will be asked to give a brief 5-minute oral presentation on your book. The point of these presentations is to provide your classmates with an informative and engaging overview of a book related to the assigned text for that week. You should not simply read your book review. Rather, you should explain in your own words what the book is about, what you liked/disliked about the book, and how it relates to the assigned text. Ideally, your brief presentation will make people eager to learn more about your project.

There are five classes dedicated to these independent reading assignments (9/16; 9/30; 10/14; 11/4; and 11/18). You will only be reading/presenting on one of these dates. For the other four classes you should come to class prepared to listen to, and ask questions of, your classmates.

**“Hometown History” Final Paper (50%):**

One of the goals of this class is that you’ll be able to connect the course themes to your hometown. To this end, your final project will be to do research on the area where you grew up. Your paper should use at least five secondary sources (i.e., scholarly books or articles), different from those we have read in this class. You are also encouraged to use primary sources (e.g., newspapers, magazines, photographs, reports, letters, speeches, autobiographies, music, etc.) where appropriate. We will discuss how to find sources in class, and I am happy to meet with you individually as well. You should upload a draft list of possible sources to your Sakai drop box by Friday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>. Final papers should be 10-12 pages (12pt. font, double spaced). Final papers should be uploaded to your Sakai drop box by Friday, December 10.

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**Week 1****Tuesday (Aug 31)**

Course introduction

**Thursday (Sept 2)**

- ☰ Paula Moya and Hazel Rose Markus, “Doing Race: An Introduction,” in *Doing Race: 21 Essays for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (2010), pp. 2-102 (PDF on Sakai)

**Week 2****Tuesday (Sept 7)**

- ☰ Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown*, Introduction & Ch. 1, pp. 1-44

**Thursday (Sept 9)**

- ☰ Shah, *Contagious Divides*, Ch. 2-5, pp. 45-157

**Week 3****Tuesday (Sept 14)**

- ☰ Shah, *Contagious Divides*, Ch. 6-9 & Conclusion, pp. 158-258

**Thursday (Sept 16)**

Wrap-up discussion of Shah, *Contagious Divides* and student oral presentations on books related to *Contagious Divides*:

- Natalia Molina, *Fit to Be Citizens?: Public Health and Race in Los Angeles, 1879-1939* (2006)
- Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (2007)

- Charlotte Brooks, *Alien Neighbors, Foreign Friends: Asian Americans, Housing, and the Transformation of Urban California* (2009)
- Scott Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race: Black and Japanese Americans in the Making of Multiethnic Los Angeles* (2008)
- Linda Espana-Maram, *Creating Masculinity in Los Angeles's Little Manila: Working-Class Filipinos and Popular Culture, 1920s-1950s* (2006)

#### Week 4

##### Tuesday (Sept 21)

- 📖 George Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945*, Introduction & Ch. 1-3, pp. 1-83

##### Thursday (Sept 23)

- 📖 Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, Ch. 4-9, pp. 87-206

#### Week 5

##### Tuesday (Sept 28)

- 📖 Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, Ch. 10-12 & Conclusion, pp. 209-274

##### Thursday (Sept 30)

Wrap-up discussion of Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American* and student oral presentations on books related to *Becoming Mexican American*:

- Gabriela Arrendondo, *Mexican Chicago: Race, Identity, and Nation, 1916-1939*
- Matt Garcia, *A World of Its Own: Race, Labor and Citrus in the Making of Greater Los Angeles, 1900-1970* (2001)
- Vicki Ruiz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives: Mexican Women, Unionization, and the California Food Processing Industry, 1930-1950* (1987)
- Mark Wild, *Street Meeting: Multiethnic Neighborhoods in Early Twentieth-Century Los Angeles* (2005)
- Luis Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot: Youth Culture and Resistance during World War II* (2009)

#### Week 6

##### Tuesday (Oct 5)

- 📖 Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (1996), Introduction & Ch. 1-3, pp. 3-88

##### Thursday (Oct 7)

- 📖 Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, Ch. 4-6, pp. 89-177

**Week 7****Tuesday (Oct 12)**

☰ Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, Ch. 7-9 & Conclusion, pp. 179-271

**Thursday (Oct 14)**

Wrap-up discussion of Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis* and student oral presentations on books related to *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*:

- Megan Taylor Shockley, *We, Too, Are Americans: African American Women in Detroit and Richmond, 1940-54* (2003)
- Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (2006)
- Josh Sides, *L.A. City Limits: African American Los Angeles from the Great Depression to the Present* (2006)
- Adam Green, *Selling the Race: Culture, Community, and Black Chicago, 1940-1955* (2009)
- Suzanne Smith, *Dancing in the Street: Motown and the Cultural Politics of Detroit* (2001)

**Week 8****Tuesday (Oct 19)**

**FALL BREAK – NO CLASS**

**Thursday (Oct 21)**

☰ Robert Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland*, Introduction & Ch. 1-2, pp. 1-95

**Week 9****Tuesday (Oct 26)**

☰ Self, *American Babylon*, Ch. 3-5 pp. 96-214

**Thursday (Oct 28)**

☰ Self, *American Babylon*, Ch. 6, pp. 215-255

**Week 10****Tuesday (Nov 2)**

☰ Self, *American Babylon*, Ch. 7-8 & Conclusion, pp. 256-334

**Thursday (Nov 4)**

Wrap-up discussion of Self, *American Babylon* and student oral presentations on books related to *American Babylon*:

- Matthew Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (2006)

- Matthew Lassister, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Charlotte & Atlanta) (2007)
- Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (2002)
- Kevin Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (2007)
- Patrick Jones, *The Selma of the North: Civil Rights Insurgency in Milwaukee* (2009)

## Week 11

### Tuesday (Nov 9)

- 📖 Ruth Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*, Prologue & Ch. 1-2, pp. 1-86

### Thursday (Nov 11)

- 📖 Gilmore, *Golden Gulag*, Ch. 3-4, pp. 87-180

## Week 12

### Tuesday (Nov 16)

- 📖 Gilmore, *Golden Gulag*, Ch. 5-6 & Epilogue, pp. 181-251

### Thursday (Nov 18)

Wrap-up discussion of Gilmore, *Golden Gulag* and student oral presentations on books related to *Golden Gulag*:

- Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (2010)
- Glenn Loury, *Race, Incarceration, and American Values* (2008)
- Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (1998)
- Daniel Martinez HoSang, *Racial Propositions: Ballot Initiatives and the Making of Postwar California* (October 2010)
- William Julius Wilson, *More than Just Race: Being Black and Poor in the Inner City* (2010)

## Week 13

### Tuesday (Nov 23)

Intro to Geographic Information System (GIS) Workshop at Library

### Thursday (Nov 25)

THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS

## Week 14

### Tuesday (Nov 30)

TBD

**Thursday (Dec 2)**

TBD

**Week 15**

**Tuesday (Dec 7)**

Course wrap-up and evaluations and wrap-up