

Dr. R. H. Bayor
HTS 6105A
Spring 2005

Office hours: 212 D.M. Smith Bldg.
TTH 10-11am or by appointment
Phone: 404-894-6834
ronald.bayor@hts.gatech.edu

SEMINAR IN URBANIZATION

This course has been organized as a reading and research seminar that will concentrate on selected topics in the history of American cities. We will be reading a number of books that focus on race, class, neighborhood, city planning, housing, the environment and suburban development in such cities as Chicago, New York, Detroit, Los Angeles Minneapolis, and Portland. The goal of the course is to provide you with a good framework in this historical field as well as make you conversant with topics that are still pertinent in North America's cities today.

Requirements for the course are detailed below by week. Books should be read by class time, and students should be able to discuss the thesis, research approach and importance of the material as well as provide written analysis of the book.

Your writing assignment for each book will be twofold. First, you must determine what you perceived to be the key critical questions regarding the book. Your questions will serve as the framework for our discussions. Second, you must write a brief (one or two pages) justification of your questions (which should be turned in at the end of class).

Having read the book and thought hard about it, consider its merits. If you could have a discussion with the author, what critical questions would you ask of that author? Your questions might concern the use or misuse of sources, that author's interpretations of evidence, or the author's politics, methods, or theoretical assumptions. In formulating your central questions, you will, by necessity, determine *why* you think these are the central questions. This will require that you try to place the book in a larger historiographical context and assess its value as an historical monograph. Since this is a course in urban history as well as urban historiography, these books will also serve as models of how urban history has been studied.

Your research assignment is to develop **a research paper, at least 20 pages in length**, exploring some aspect of American urban history. This can be a comparative paper focusing on two cities or a discussion of an event or developmental factor in one city – e.g., transportation technology, housing issues, city planning, politics, city services, etc. Each student should meet with me at least once to discuss their topic. Papers are due April 26. You will also be required to make an oral presentation to the class regarding your research.

Grades in the class will be based on your weekly classroom discussions and writings, and your end of semester paper.

Readings:

Alex Marshall, *How Cities Work*
 Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*
 John Bauman, *Biles, and Szylvian, From Tenements to Taylor Homes*
 Sudhir Venkatesh, *American Project*
 Ronald Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth Century Atlanta*
 Edward Goetz, *Clearing the Way in Urban America*
 Owen Gutfreund, *Twentieth Century Sprawl*
 Gregory Hise, *Magnetic Los Angeles*
 Martin Melosi, *Effluent America*
 Adam Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside*
 Becky Nicolaides, *My Blue Heaven*
 Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*

Assignments per weekly meeting are as follows:

January 11 Introduction to course

Theme I: Urban Issues

January 18 Alex Marshall – How Cities Work: Suburbs, Sprawl, and the Roads Not Taken

January 25 Thomas Sugrue – The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit

Theme II: Race, Public Housing and Poverty

February 1 Bauman, Biles, and Szylvian - From Tenements to Taylor Homes

February 8 Sudhir Venkatesh - American Project: The Rise and Fall of a Modern Ghetto

February 15 Ronald Bayor – Race and the Shaping of Twentieth Century Atlanta

February 22 Edward Goetz – Clearing the Way in Urban America

Theme III: Sprawl

March 1 Owen Gutfreund – 20th Century Sprawl

March 8 Gregory Hise – Magnetic Los Angeles: Planning the Twentieth-Century Metropolis

March 15 Film on Sprawl and discussion

March 22 SPRING BREAK

Theme IV: Environment

March 29 Martin Melosi – Effluent America: Cities, Industry, Energy, and the Environment

April 5 Adam Rome – The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism

Theme V: Suburbia

April 12 Becky Nicolaides – My Blue Heaven: Life and Politics in the Working-Class Suburbs of Los Angeles, 1920-1965

April 19 Kenneth Jackson- Crabgrass Frontier

April 26 For this meeting, students will give the oral presentations of their research topic. This presentation should cover thesis, sources used, and major findings.