Urbanization and the Environment: A Historical Approach to the Impact of Cities on Natural Systems, from Antiquity to the 19th Century

Syllabus
TCSIIN 438 Autumn 2005

T-Th 10:30 AM - 12:45 PM GWP220
Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences, University of Washington, Tacoma
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The scope of the course will address the environmental impact of ancient, medieval, and modern cities. Topics include the evolution of urban infrastructure and relations between city and countryside. More info, including revised versions of this syllabus can be found at http://courses.washington.edu/tande/urb/

Since the earliest civilizations, cities have had a profound impact on their natural environment. This course will examine those impacts through history. Students will learn important skills such as how to synthesize historical approaches and scientific data to place problems of urbanization in a larger context. Students will participate in class discussions and perform several shorter writing assignments including précis, primary source analyses, and book reviews. Students who complete this course will be able perform historical research, integrate information from the sciences and history, and use their knowledge to think critically about future policy decisions concerning cities and suburbs. This course fills a unique niche in the IAS curriculum by linking issues of technology, environment, and urbanism across a wide temporal and geographic scope.

Course objectives: Through historical inquiry students will gain an understanding of many of the complex factors significant in the development of the environmental impacts of urbanization. These include economics, technology, and culture. Equally important to the class will be the development of research, writing, and critical thinking skills as well as study habits through written assignments including essays and research papers.

Required Texts:

  ISBN:0415200784
  0393961885
  ISBN:0393308731
- Articles on http://www.jstor.org (You will need to access it through the UW Library gateway if you are off campus)
- E-reserves at UW Tacoma Library.http://ereserves.tacoma.washington.edu/

Recommended Texts:

- Strunk and White, The Elements of Style. (any edition will be fine, widely available used)
Grading and Evaluation:

- Class Participation, Preparation, & Presentations (includes précis and pop quizzes) 30%
- Essay #1 (5 pp.) 15%
- Essay #2 (5 pp.) 15%
- Book Review (5 pp.) 15% see http://courses.washington.edu/tande/book_reviews.htm
- Research Paper (15 pp.) 25%

Note: each written assignment will be given two grades of equal weight: one for the quality of your writing, the other for its content. Exceptional work will earn an A; work above average a B (3.0); average work a C (2.0); below average a D (0.7). Work that fails to meet minimum standards for written work or which is not turned in on time will yield an F. One of the objectives of this course is to learn good study habits, therefore, timely completion of work is essential. The take-home essay will cover all readings, discussions, and presentations. You are responsible for finding out from other students what happened during any class you miss.

Class Preparation and Participation:
This is not a lecture course. The success of the class for each student will depend on how well he or she is prepared and to what extent each student contributes to furthering the class discussion. The quality of preparation and participation will be as important as the quantity. Attendance of class discussion is mandatory, but coming to class unprepared will count as a zero for the day. Preparation includes not only a précis of one of the day's readings, but also making your own notes on all the readings and a list of points you wish to discuss. These notes and discussion questions will be collected at the instructor's discretion and can be graded as a pop-quiz. Each précis will count toward your class preparation & participation grade. You may skip two of them, but you may not hand in late ones as their primary purpose is to propel class discussions forward.

Maps:
Because many of the places will be unfamiliar to you, you will keep a list of any place name that occurs more than once in the readings. A quiz could require you to find any of the places on your list on a map. This exercise will allow you to become familiar not only with the geography of the Mediterranean Basin, but also to become comfortable with the UWT library's excellent collection of maps and atlases. You will be asked to turn in your list of place names occasionally (but not maps).

Quizzes:
If I notice a lot of students are unprepared any week I may offer a pop quiz for your enjoyment. If everyone is always prepared there will be no quizzes. Mapping places mentioned in the readings would be a great pop-quiz topic.

Writing Assignments:

Précis:
For each class you will select one of the day's readings and write a brief précis, of four sentences comprising a single, well written paragraph), in which you summarize the author's thesis, the nature of the supporting evidence; and the significance of the reading. These are not "response" papers. The use of the first-person singular is forbidden. Each précis will be graded check, check-plus, or check minus depending upon the quality of your work. You may use the Peterson model for "treatments" at http://courses.washington.edu/tande/tmw/treat.htm

Book Reviews:
Each student will analyze two books from the course bibliography during the course. You will write a 5
page analysis of the author's sources and discuss the methods by which the author uses those sources to make an argument. You will also have the opportunity to make a brief presentation of your analysis to the whole class. You are responsible for obtaining your books in a timely manner so you can submit your analysis on the due date. These analyses are intended to get you to think critically about the ways in which other authors write history. Books must be from the course bibliography or be approved in advance. Detailed instructions can be found at: http://courses.washington.edu/tande/book_reviews.htm

**In General:**

All assignments will be graded for clarity of composition and grammar as well as content. All assignments must be typed, double-spaced, with at least one-inch margins, in 12-point Roman type. Sources will be cited in footnotes or endnotes using *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15ed. (available in the UWT Library on the Writing Resources shelf near the reference desk) or contact the Writing Center. All assignments must be turned in on time. Late assignments will be dropped one grade for each week late, except in extreme circumstances (death certificates must be notarized, with raised seals). No extensions will be granted except for a written medical excuse presented before the due date of the assignment.

I will not accept work that has not been thoroughly proofread. A "Spell check" on your word processor may be the first step, but it does not constitute proofreading. Failure to proofread your work will automatically drop your grade. Work returned for failure to proofread will be counted as late. If you have any doubts about the need to proofread your writing consult the UW Writing Center. The consultants at the Writing Center will not proofread your paper, but they can tell you if your writing needs it and they can provide instruction about how to proofread your work yourself.

**General Evaluation of Written Work:**

Writing effectively means writing clearly and concisely and using correct grammar. Excellent papers will meet all of the following criteria:

1. The paper addresses all of the questions and issues posed in the assignment.

2. You avoid the use of the words "I," "me," or "myself."

3. The paper draws upon relevant readings and class discussions. The paper applies what you have been learning.

4. The paper adds your own insights to the analyses. The quality of your own ideas is important. Show your own independent thinking as much as possible.

5. The paper is convincing. You have the responsibility to justify your arguments. You must back up your points and conclusion. Support your argument by using evidence from the class readings or other sources. Use explicit examples to illustrate what you say. Do not assume anything on the part of the reader.

6. The paper is well organized. It has an introduction with a thesis (argument), it has a body supporting this thesis, and it ends with a conclusion summarizing the main points.

7. The paper is meticulously documented.

8. The paper has no spelling or grammatical errors.

9. SKIP THE COVER SHEETS, PLASTIC BINDERS, HOLOGRAPHIC ART WORK ETC. YOUR
NAME, DATE, AND A STAPLE WILL SUFFICE.

**Miscellaneous:**
All terms of the UW code of conduct apply. Please familiarize yourself with this document. If you choose to drop the course, you are responsible for reporting the change to the registrar's office. If you stop coming to class and do not contact the registrar, you will end up receiving a failing grade—even if you attended only once.

If you would like to request academic accommodations due to a temporary or permanent disability, contact Lisa Tice, Manager for Disability Support Services (DSS) in the Mattress Factory Bldg. Suite 206. An appointment can be made through the front desk of Student Affairs (692-4400), through Student Services (692-4501), by phoning Lisa Tice directly at 692-4493 (voice) or 692-4413 (TTY), or by e-mail ltice@u.washington.edu Appropriate accommodations are arranged after you've conferred with the DSS Manager and presented the required documentation of your disability to DSS.

"Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech. . . ."
The right to free speech applies in our classroom as well as in your written work. In light of the potentially controversial topics we will be studying, let me assure you that you will not be graded on your opinions, but on the quality of the evidence and the cogency the argument with which you support your position. Members of the class will probably disagree often, but we will strive to remain polite and respectful to each other. Heated discussions can enliven a class, but they are only worth it when conducted with the utmost courtesy to our classmates.

Questions? Please email me at: kucher at u dot washington dot edu

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