

History 270A
CITIES IN THE NORTH AMERICAN WEST, 1840-1940
Stanford University
Autumn 2003
Tuesday 3:15-5:05

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This colloquium explores the histories of the urban centers of the western United States between the California Gold Rush and the beginning of World War II. Readings, assignments, and class discussion will examine these cities as centers of economic, social, technological, and political change. We will examine the way in which people lived and worked in these cities, and we'll explore the crucial interconnections between city and hinterland and how the extraction of the West's natural resources – gold, silver, timber, water, and agriculture – fueled the growth of the urban West. The requirements for this class are weekly readings and active class participation; co-leadership of one week of class discussion; one short paper and one longer final paper; and a group presentation.

COURSE MATERIALS

Your required readings come from three sources.

First, **BOOKS** available at the Stanford Bookstore and on reserve in Green Library.

1. Roger Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846-1856: From Hamlet to City*
2. William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*
3. Donald Worster, *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity, and the Growth of the American West*
4. Kathleen Brosnan, *Uniting Mountain and Plain: Cities, Law, and Environmental Change along the Front Range*
5. George Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945*

Second, **ONLINE** primary and secondary source documents. These are relatively short. URLs for these documents are in this syllabus and may also be accessed through the class web site. Hard copies of all of these short readings are also on two-hour reserve.

Third, selected chapters of **BOOKS ON TWO-HOUR RESERVE** in Green.

There also will be several short documents handed out in class. If you have any difficulties or concerns about accessing or printing the online or reserve material, please talk to me about this well in advance of class. You should arrive at class each week having read the materials listed for that date (e.g., come to class on October 7 having read Lotchin et al.).

REQUIREMENTS

Each element is worth a certain number of points; the class grade will be based on how many points earned out of a possible 1000, e.g., grades in the “A” ranges require 900+ points, in the “B” ranges require 800+ points, etc.

Participation (400 points) that consists of:

Active engagement in class discussion, reflecting completion of assigned readings (225).

Co-leadership of discussion during one week of class (75).

Group Urban Biography Project (300 points), consisting of two, independently graded components:

A 3-5 page paper that you write, independently of your group, on one aspect of the historical development of a Western city (150 points).

A twenty-minute group presentation on that city that synthesizes the findings of the individual papers and incorporates additional source material (150 points).

Final Paper (300 points), 8-10 pages in length, due exam week.

A **one-time bonus credit (up to 30 points)** may be earned through a 2-3 page book review, accompanied by an informal in-class presentation. The text reviewed should be one of the items listed at the end of the syllabus as *additional reading*.

Details of each assignment and grading standards are at the end of this syllabus.

The success of this seminar depends on you. Your preparation, active participation, and intellectual engagement with this material and with your fellow students will make these hours worthwhile for all of us. **Attendance is mandatory**, and your participation grade will suffer if you are not in class every week. Please contact me immediately about anticipated conflicts. In addition, **I do not give extensions**. The course has been designed to give you some flexibility in choosing when to turn in written assignments, and to help you avoid facing simultaneous deadlines in multiple classes. I expect you to manage your workload in a way that will allow you to submit all assignments on time.

COURSE SCHEDULE

9/30 Introduction and Overview

10/7 Making the West Less Wild

NOTE: Today you will sign up for group projects and choose the week you will lead class discussion.

BOOK: Lotchin, *San Francisco*, 3-30, 164-340

ONLINE: M.G. Upton, “The Plan of San Francisco,” *The Overland Monthly* 2 (February 1869): 131-136

<http://www.library.cornell.edu/Reps/DOCS/upton.htm>

Joseph Smith, “The Plat of the City of Zion,” 1833 (3 pp.)

<http://www.library.cornell.edu/Reps/DOCS/smith.htm>

Claudia L. Bushman and Richard Lyman Bushman, “A View from Graveside: Salt Lake City,” *Common-Place* 3: 4 (July 2003) (7 pp)

<http://www.common-place.org/vol-03/no-04/salt-lake-city/>

10/14 City and Hinterland**BOOK:** Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, 5-259**ONLINE:** Henry George, "What the Railroad Will Bring Us," *Overland Monthly* 1 (October 1868), 297-306.
http://www.cooperativeindividualism.org/george_railroads.html**10/21 Urban Hierarchies****BOOK:** Brosnan, *Uniting Mountain and Plain* (197 pp.)**HANDOUT:** Louise M. Palmer, "How We Live in Nevada," *Overland Monthly* 5 (May 1869)William H. Dixon, "City of the Plains: Denver," *New America*, Philadelphia, 1867, 95-100.**10/28 Mastering Nature (?)****BOOK:** Worster, *Rivers of Empire*, 63-188**RESERVE:** Gray Brechin, "Water Mains and Blood Lines," in *Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power, Earthly Ruin*, 71-117**ONLINE:** John Muir, "The Hetch Hetchy," *Sierra Club Bulletin*, January 1908
http://california.sierraclub.org/hetchhetchy/hetch_hetchy_muir_scb_1908.htmlWilliam Willard Howard, "The Rush to Oklahoma," *Harper's Weekly* 33 (May 18, 1889): 391-94
<http://www.library.cornell.edu/Reps/DOCS/landrush.htm>**11/4 Closed Frontiers and Cities Beautiful****DEADLINE FOR URBAN BIOGRAPHY PAPER #1 (PLACE & NATURE)****BOOK:** Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, 341-369**RESERVE:** Philip J. Ethington, "Progressivism as the Politics of Needs" in *The Public City: The Political Construction of Urban Life in San Francisco, 1850-1900*, 345-407**ONLINE:** John Coleman Adams, "What a Great City Might Be: A Lesson from the White City," *New England Magazine* New Series 14 (March 1896): 3-13<http://www.library.cornell.edu/Reps/DOCS/adams.htm>Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," from *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1921)<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/TURNER/>*Sunset Magazine*, "New San Francisco Emergency Edition," 17:1 (May 1906) (8 pp.)<http://www.sfmuseum.net/sunset/index.html>**11/11 Ethnic Identities and Urban Space****DEADLINE FOR URBAN BIOGRAPHY PAPER #2 (PEOPLE)****BOOK:** Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 17-107, 129-206

- RESERVE:** Quintard Taylor, "Blacks and Asians in a White City," in *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle's Central District from 1870 through the Civil Rights Era* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), 106-134
- Arnold Genthe and John Kuo Wei Tchen, *Genthe's Photographs of San Francisco's Old Chinatown* (New York: Dover, 1984)

11/18 Making the Modern West

DEADLINE FOR URBAN BIOGRAPHY PAPER #3 (PUBLIC & PRIVATE)

- BOOK:** Worster, *Rivers of Empire*, 191-256
- ONLINE:** Roger W. Lotchin, "The City and the Sword: San Francisco and the Rise of the Metropolitan-Military Complex, 1919-1941," *Journal of American History* 65: 4 (March 1979), 996-1020
<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0021-8723%28197903%2965%3A4%3C996%3ATCATSS%3E2.0.CO%3B2-E> [Stanford Libraries JSTOR Database]
- Matthew Roth, "Mulholland Highway and the Engineering Culture of Los Angeles in the 1920s," *Technology and Culture* 40:3 (1999), 545-575.
http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/technology_and_culture/v040/40.3roth.html [Stanford Libraries Project Muse Database]
- HANDOUT:** William Faulkner, "Golden Land" from *Collected Stories* (New York, 1934), 701-26.

11/25 **NO CLASS MEETING; REQUIRED GROUP MEETINGS TO ORGANIZE PRESENTATIONS**

12/2 GROUP PRESENTATIONS

Each presentation will be 20 minutes long with 5-10 minutes of Q&A afterward. This means that our class session will run overtime; please alert me to any scheduling conflict this may create.

12/12 FINAL PAPERS DUE BY 3:00 P.M. IN THE HISTORY MAIN OFFICE

Papers received after 3pm will be downgraded by a third of a letter grade (e.g. B to B-) for every 15 minutes they are late.

DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

Facilitation of Class Discussion (75 points)

At our second meeting, you will sign up to co-lead class discussion one week during the quarter with one or two other classmates. You and your partner(s) will be responsible for developing questions on the week's readings and helping the instructor lead discussion during class. You may prepare handouts or visual aids if you wish, but not electronic presentations such as PowerPoint and overheads (I do not want you to spend your time and energy on elaborate presentations). Creativity encouraged, as long

as your facilitation plan will ensure substantive discussion of the readings. Discussion questions and a plan for seminar facilitation should be emailed to the instructor no later than 2:00 p.m. on the Monday before the class meeting.

Group Project: Urban Biography (300 points total)

At our second meeting, you will sign up to be part of a three-person team researching the nineteenth and early twentieth century history of a city in the North American West. The cities in this assignment were selected to demonstrate the sub-regional diversity of the West and the different political, economic and cultural traditions shaping urban growth in each of these regions. The cities you can choose from are:

Portland, Oregon
Butte, Montana
Salt Lake City, Utah
Santa Fe, New Mexico
Omaha, Nebraska

The project has two independently graded components:

1. Urban Biography Paper (150 points)

When you sign up for your group in week two of class, you also will negotiate with your group members and choose to do one 3-5 page paper. You will research and write this paper independently, turn it in to the instructor on the due date assigned, and simultaneously provide copies to your other group members. The papers are:

PAPER #1: PLACE & NATURE. Due November 4.

This paper situates the city within the natural landscape and shows how this environment shaped the city and vice versa. It tells us about the geographical, geological, and ecological features of the place, showing why they gave rise to human settlement and why they enabled a city to grow. It explores whether the growth of urban space was enabled or constrained by these natural features. It shows how the natural setting was manipulated to accommodate urban needs, and the environmental consequences of this manipulation.

PAPER #2: PEOPLE. Due November 11.

This paper tells us who lived in the city, why they came there and what they did for a living, and what kinds of political and social hierarchies emerged among different groups. It explores the racial and ethnic makeup of the city and how this changed over time. It explains patterns of immigration, showing the forces that drew particular individuals and groups to a city and the institutional and social networks they created when they got there. It shows which people had power, which ones didn't, and the economic, political, and spatial mechanisms used to enforce this power structure.

PAPER #3: PUBLIC & PRIVATE. Due November 18.

This paper shows us how public policy – federal, state, and local – affected Western urban growth and urban economies. It explores how federal land and resource

management decisions positively or negatively affected the economic growth of the city. It examines whether economic policies emanating from Washington helped the city's industries grow. It addresses the interplay of public and private on the local level as well, exploring how and why urban infrastructure (like roads, water supply, and sewers) and services (like fire and police) came to be publicly supported and what this meant for urban growth.

2. Urban Biography Presentation (150 points)

This is a twenty-minute team presentation; time limits will be strictly enforced. To create the presentation, you should use the information found by each of the individual group members in their papers, as well as incorporate additional material that further contextualizes these findings and links them together. The presentation should effectively communicate:

- the “what”: judiciously selected facts and figures about the city and its growth, its landscape, ecology, design;
- the “who”: the people who lived in the city, the power structures they created;
- the “why”: how industries and populations came to be, how and why they changed over time, and what this has meant for the city; and
- the “why this matters”: how the city's history relates to larger issues in Western urban history, how it relates to other cities, how it typifies (or does not typify) the sub-region of the West in which it is located, how it reinforces what we've learned in class – or how it counters our conclusions and assumptions.

Audiovisual accompaniments are encouraged, but not required, and should be chosen carefully so that they complement, but do not overpower, the rest of the presentation. Each group needs to alert me to any audiovisual needs by the Wednesday before Thanksgiving.

Final Paper (300 points)

This is an 8-10 page paper based on the class readings and discussion. You may choose one of three topics, to be handed out in class on November 18 and subsequently posted on the class web site. The paper is due the Friday of exam week.

Bonus Opportunity (up to 30 points)

This is a 2-page review of one of the texts listed as *additional reading* at the bottom of this syllabus. You will be asked to write a narrative analysis (not a summary) of the text, and give a very short (5 minute) presentation of your review in class. I also will post reviews on the class web site as a resource for your classmates.

GRADING STANDARDS

Class Discussion. In small colloquia such as this one, your consistent, thoughtful, and respectful engagement in discussion is key to your success in this class. To receive high marks for discussion, you must be both a thoughtful commentator and a good listener. This is discussion, not oration; I grade on quality of commentary, not quantity. An “A”-range student comes to class with an understanding of the readings and how they relate to

one another, and with discussion points already in mind. She actively and consistently contributes to discussion, but she also knows when to let others speak and responds to their comments with respect. Obviously, if you are not in class you cannot show off your mastery of the material and your penetrating analysis of the issues at hand; an unexcused absence will lower your class discussion mark by one third of a letter grade.

Discussion Leadership. The week that you will help design and lead class discussion is an important component of your participation grade. It also is your opportunity to hone in on issues in the reading that you find particularly interesting and provocative, and for you and your co-discussants to set our agenda for the day. An “A” grade for discussion results from discussion leadership that reflects solid preparation and in-person collaboration among the discussion leaders prior to class. Discussion questions should cover the key themes of the reading(s) and link these texts to the other readings and larger thematic issues addressed in the class. The discussion plan should also, however have a built-in flexibility that allows for class discussion going off in unexpected directions, and that enables discussion leaders to bring the conversation back on track if these tangents are not particularly fruitful.

Papers. You will write one short paper and one long paper for this class. The standards for both are the same.

Grade Ranges

	A	B	C	D	F
Has cogent and incisive analysis that reflects full understanding of source material. Shows original insight and creative thinking. Tells us not only “what” and “why” but also “why this matters.”	–				
Well-written and well-organized, with a clear statement of thesis at the beginning and consistent and clear references throughout to how the evidence and analysis relates to main thesis.	–	–			
Clearly and consistently footnoted using a widely recognized style, such as MLA or Chicago.	–	–			
Demonstrates that you have read the source material and understand its main arguments, but lacks analytic rigor and does not provide new insights into the material.		–	–		
Sub-par writing and sloppy organization.					
Demonstrates partial or no mastery of the material.				–	–
Fails to meet the basic length and topic requirements of the assignment.					–

Group Presentation. This assignment is slightly different from the usual group project in that it builds upon original research that each group member has done independently, and written up in an individually graded paper. But the team presentation that synthesizes this material and adds new sources to it is a crucial component of your grade. An “A” presentation is one that is clearly organized and that makes creative use of the source material in order to educate your audience. This presentation involves all group members and reflects extensive collaboration and preparation among the group. It has been rehearsed so that it falls within its time limit. It effectively communicates the four key elements of the presentation assignment: what, who, why, and why this matters. It brings together a range of information and turns it into one coherent story.

Book Review. For maximum bonus credit, reviews should be clear, concise, and well-written. The written review and the in-class presentation should cover:

- a brief but thoughtful summary of the text’s main argument(s);
- a general description of the contents of the book; and
- your evaluation of the effectiveness of the text’s arguments and its relation to the other readings assigned and themes discussed in this class.

The review should not be an exhaustive summary of everything in the text, but a brief critical document that conveys main themes and contextualizes the book within the literature. For a useful online guide, see

http://library.usask.ca/ref/howto/book_review_write.html.

ADDITIONAL READING

This includes some books that are excerpted in the required class readings; they are starred (). The maximum that can be awarded for a review of the starred books is 20 points. The maximum for all other book reviews is 30 points.*

Barth, Gunther. *Instant Cities: Urbanization and the Rise of San Francisco and Denver*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975.

*Brechtin, Gray. *Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power, Earthly Ruin*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.

Deverell, William. *Railroad Crossing: Californians and the Railroad, 1850-1910*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

Emmons, David M. *The Butte Irish: Class and Ethnicity in an American Mining Town, 1875-1925*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989.

*Ethington, Philip J. *The Public City: The Political Construction of Urban Life in San Francisco, 1850-1900*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

Fiege, Mark. *Irrigated Eden: The Making of an Agricultural Landscape in the American West*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999.

- Frank, Dana. *Purchasing Power: Consumer Organizing, Gender, and the Seattle Labor Movement, 1919-1929*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Goldman, Marion S. *Gold Diggers and Silver Miners: Prostitution and Social Life on the Comstock Lode*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1981.
- Hise, Greg and William Deverell. *Eden by Design: The 1930 Olmsted-Bartholomew Plan for the Los Angeles Region*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.
- Issel, William and Robert W. Cherney. *San Francisco, 1865-1932: Politics, Power, and Urban Development*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.
- Jameson, Elizabeth. *All that Glitters: Class, Conflict, and Community in Cripple Creek*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998.
- *Lotchin, Roger. *Fortress California, 1910-1960: From Warfare to Welfare*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992.
- MacDonald, Norbert. *Distant Neighbors: A Comparative History of Seattle and Vancouver*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987.
- Mullins, William H. *The Depression and the Urban West Coast, 1929-1933*. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1991.
- Rodgers, Daniel T. *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- Rose, Mark H. *Cities of Light and Heat: Domesticating Gas and Electricity in Urban America*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995.
- Ryan, Mary P. *Civic Wars: Democracy and Public Life in the American City during the Nineteenth Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.
- Schultz, Stanley K. *Constructing Urban Culture: American Cities and City Planning, 1800-1920*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989.
- Schuyler, David. *The New Urban Landscape: The Redefinition of City Form in Nineteenth-Century America*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986.
- *Sitton, Tom and William Deverell, eds. *Metropolis in the Making: Los Angeles in the 1920s*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
- * Taylor, Quintard. *The Forging of a Black Community: Seattle's Central District from 1870 to the Civil Rights Era*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994.

- Taylor, Quintard and Shirley Ann Wilson Moore, eds. *African American Women Confront the West 1600-2000*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003.
- Wilson, William H. *The City Beautiful Movement*. Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989.
- Yung, Judy. *Unbound Feet: A Social History of Chinese Women in San Francisco*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.