History 396-05: History of New York City
Stony Brook University

Instructor: Adam Charboneau
Office and Hours: SBS Building, S306 (T/Th, 4-5pm)
Classroom and Meeting Time: Melville Library W4550 (5:30-6:50pm, T/Th)
email: adam.charboneau@stonybrook.edu

Course Description: This course evaluates New York’s ascendancy as America’s financial and cultural capital. While the class will quickly discuss New York’s place in American society during the antebellum period, this course will mainly be concerned with Gotham’s tremendous growth following the Civil War, its eventual decline during the late-1960s and 1970s, and its spectacular, if flawed, “comeback” since the 1980s. The “winners” and “losers” in each of these shifts will be heavily examined. We will discuss New York’s distinctive features as well as analyze the ways in which the Big Apple can be used as a guide to understanding modern urban society. Main topics will include, but not be limited to: immigration, ethnicity and race, Progressivism and bossism, youth culture and gangs, spatial changes, housing and employment, the “Great Migrations,” suburbanization, urban renewal and urban liberalism, community action/activism, urban decline and abandonment, local reclamation, hip hop, the fortress city, privatization and the rise of neo-liberalism, gentrification and the return of the new urban pioneers.

Learning Goals for the Course: Understand the trajectory of New York City’s political, economic, social, and built environment over the course of the twentieth century; Grasp how policy decisions affect everyday people and how, in turn, everyday people affect—and sometimes creatively adapt to and change—policy; Learn the complicated relationship which exists between NYC and the nation at large.

Course Grades:
*Two short papers (~3pgs) based on required texts (see below) and prompted questions. While there are three required books for this course, students may choose to write papers for whichever two they desire. These papers will NOT be synopses; rather, the assignments will be analytical in nature, requiring individuals to incorporate larger themes discussed during class lectures. **Worth 40% (each worth 20%)**

*Three exams—these will be blue book in nature and NOT cumulative. Essay questions should be answered as thoroughly as possible, making all relevant connections. Answers must be coherent and organized. Students should stress large trends while incorporating specific examples. **Worth 60% (each worth 20%)**

*Participation: Students who actively participate—i.e., those present, prepared, and completely engaged—may earn up to a half-letter grade “bonus,” to be added when tallying final grades. Those who simply come, even if dutifully, will not be rewarded. Exams are heavily based on in-class discussions. Thus consistent attendance is necessary.

Readings and Required Texts: There are three (3) required books for this course, along with numerous smaller readings available on blackboard. Blackboard readings will usually consist of primary sources
and/or chapter-length texts. Readings are to be read prior to the class meeting for which they are assigned.

Required books: NOTE—while students only have to write essays on two of the following, all three will make appearances on exams!
* John F. Kasson, *Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century*
* Ron Chepesiul, *Gangsters of Harlem: The Gritty Underworld of New York's Most Famous Neighborhood*
* Jagna Sharff, *King Kong on 4th Street: Families and the Violence of Poverty on the Lower East Side*

**How the Class Works:**
This course is roughly broken into three periods: New York City’s ascendancy as the nation’s corporate headquarters—as well as a manufacturing powerhouse in its own right—during the Gilded Age through the chaos and reforms of the Progressive Era; the era of Robert Moses and large scale urban renewal through the “reinvention”—and concurrent urban crisis—of the Big Apple under Mayor John Lindsay; and the city’s implosion during the Fiscal Crisis of the 1970s through New York’s tremendous, if flawed, “come back” since the 1980s. This course rounds out with the ending of the twentieth century. While these periods are not mutually exclusive, they are distinct and demonstrate fundamental shifts in the ways NYC was envisioned by policy-makers and everyday citizens. Exams and required books/essays correlate with these three periods.

**Blackboard and Emails:** Remember, most class readings will be available via blackboard (everything aside from the 3 required books). Do check emails, as I post hints and/or adjustments (“adjustments” will never add to the workload—sometimes I nix readings!).

**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT**
If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services, ECC (Educational Communications Center) Building, room 128, (631) 632-6748. They will determine with you what accommodations, if any, are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**
Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty are required to report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary website at [http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary/](http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary/)

**CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT**
Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Judicial Affairs any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students’ ability to learn.

Class Schedule

Week One: Introduction to the Course and the Rise of New York City as a Corporate Command Post
* Tuesday, January 28—No readings.
* Thursday, January 30—Read: “Manhattan, Inc.” from Burrows and Wallace’s *Gotham*.

Week Two: Immigration and City Life at the Turn of the Century
* Tuesday, February 4—Read: “Embryo Courtezans and Felons—NYC Police Report” and “The Bend” from Riis’ *How the Other Half Lives*
* Thursday, February 6—Read: *Amusing the Million*, pgs. 11-54.

Week Three: Taming the Disorderly—Gotham During the Progressive Era
* Tuesday, February 11—Read: “Bosses and Reformers” from Chudacoff, Smith, and Baldwin’s *The Evolution of American Urban Society*
* Thursday, February 13—Read: *Amusing the Million*, pgs. 57-112. Video: Portions of *Coney Island*.

Paper One Due!!!!!!!

Week Four: The Roaring Twenties and Exam One
* Tuesday, February 18—Read excerpts from Ann Douglass’ *Terrible Honesty: Mongrel Manhattan in the 1920s*.

* Thursday, February 20—Exam One

Week Five: New York City during the Great Depression and Early Postwar Period
* Tuesday, February 25—Begin reading *Gangsters of Harlem*. Video: *New Deal/New York*

* Thursday, February 27—Read: Excerpts from Eric Schneider’s *Vampires, Dragons, and Egyptian Kings* and selection’s from R.D.G. Kelley’s “Riddle of the Zoot Suit.”

Week Six: Urban Renewal and its Discontents—Robert Moses as New York’s Power Broker
* Tuesday, March 4—Read: “One Mile” from Robert Caro’s *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*
* Thursday, March 6—Read: Continue *Gangsters of Harlem*. Video: *On the Waterfront.*

**Week Seven: John Lindsay and “the Reinvention of New York”**
* Tuesday, March 11—Read: “Adventure Playground” from Sam Robert’s *America’s Mayor: John V. Lindsay and the Reinvention of New York*

* Thursday, March 13—Read: Read “Power to the Rest of the People” from Robert’s *America’s Mayor.* Video: *Eyes on the Prize* (on school decentralization). **Paper Two Due!!!!!!**

**Week Eight: SPRING BREAK, NO CLASSES (March 17-23)**

**Week Nine: A Schizophrenic Apple: Lindsay’s “Fun City” during an Urban Crisis and Exam Two**
* Tuesday, March 25—Read: Excerpts from Vincent Cannato’s *The Ungovernable City: John Lindsay and his fight to Save New York City.*

*Thursday, March 27—Exam Two*

**Week Ten: The Fiscal Crisis and the Rise of the EFCB**
* Tuesday, April 1—Read: “The Fiscal Crisis” from Joshua Freeman’s *Working Class New York*


**Week Eleven: Community Responses to Abandonment**
* Tuesday, April 8—Read: Excerpts from Jeff Chang’s *Can’t Stop/Won’t Stop.*

*Thursday, April 10—Read: Begin *King Kong on 4th Street.*

**Week Twelve: Community Responses to Abandonment Continued**
* Tuesday, April 15—Read: Excerpts from Malve Von Hassell’s *The Struggle for Eden* and scanned newspaper articles.

* Thursday, April 17—Read: Continue *King Kong on 4th Street.*

**Week Thirteen: The 1980s—A Divided World**
* Tuesday, April 22—Read: Excerpts from Christopher Mele’s *Selling the Lower East Side*

* Thursday, April 24—Read: Excerpts from Philippe Bourgois’ *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio.* **Paper Three Due.**

**Week Fourteen: Giuliani and New York’s Quality of Life**
* Tuesday, April 29—Read: Excerpts from Mitchell Duneier’s *Sidewalk.*
* Thursday, May 1—Read: Excerpts from Julie Sze’s *Noxious New York*

**Week Fifteen: The Big Apple Today—From New Immigration Patterns to a Post-9/11 World**

* Tuesday, May 6—Read: Excerpts from Robert Smith’s *Mexican New York*

* Thursday, May 8—Read: “Tourism and ‘Sacred Ground’: The Space of Ground Zero”

**Final Exam, TBA**