History 209: The City in Europe
Spring 2010

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Class meets Tues-Thurs. 9:30-10:50

We see then that the two cities were created by two kinds of love: the earthly city was created by self-love reaching the point of contempt for God, the Heavenly City by the love of God carried as far as contempt of self...In the former, the lust for domination lords it over its princes as over the nations it subjugates; in the other both those put in authority and those subject to them serve one another in love, the rulers by their counsel, the subjects by obedience. the one city loves its own strength shown in its powerful leaders; the other says to its God, ‘I will love you, my Lord, my strength.’
Augustine City of God, book XIV, chapter 28

Course Description and Goals

Augustine was not alone, the nature and significance of cities in history have long generated profound disagreement. Were they keepers of culture or dens of iniquity? Creators of a unique political community, or hotbeds of civil discontent? Capitalist havens or polluted victims of industrial growth? This course explores the changing role of cities in Europe, from the rebirth of urban life in the Middle Ages to the creation of capital cities in the eighteenth century and draws on both sociological theories of urbanization and historical accounts. We will examine European cities as units within economic networks and state systems but also as diverse communities whose boundaries shifted over time to embrace some members and exclude others. Trends that are central to our understanding of modernity: the birth of commercial capitalism, the civilizing process, state and empire formation, the gendering of the household and the shaping of the natural and built environment, all arose within European cities and in turn redefined urban populations and their experiences. The course will mainly focus on a few key cities and regions of western Europe; not that they serve as examples of all others, but that they reflect ideals and problems prevalent in a number of cities at different periods in history.

Over the course of the semester we will encounter a range of primary sources and some important historical literature; it is hoped that these will become tools for your own interpretation of medieval and urban European cities. No background in history or urban studies is required for this course, but you are asked to actively attend to lectures, and above all READ all course assignments in advance of the class meeting. You are also responsible, as part of a group, for one short discussion (see below). Written work includes one take-home exam, one 3-5 page primary source analysis and one 7-10 page research paper on a topic of your own choosing and in consultation with the instructor. There will also be one movie shown outside of class time (pp).*

**Bring readings to class and be prepared to share your informed findings and your questions.

Required texts:
These texts are available for purchase at the Oberlin Bookstore and also will be on print reserve in the library. Except for these texts, all readings will be available on Blackboard under Course Materials.


* popcorn provided

Recommended general European textbooks:

Other recommended texts (also on print reserve in the library):
Paul Hogenberg and Lynn Lees, *The Making of Urban Europe, 1000-1994*
Katharine Lynch, *Individuals, Families, and Communities in Europe, 1200-1800*
Alexander Cowan, *Urban Europe 1500-1700*
Christopher Friedrichs, *The Early Modern City 1450-1750*
John Mundy and Peter Riesenberg, *The Medieval Town*
Maryanne Kowaleski, ed. *Medieval Towns: a reader*
Henri Pirenne, *Medieval Cities*
Martines, Lauro, *Power and Imagination, city states in Renaissance Italy*
Richard Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence*

Course requirements
All work must be turned in to receive credit for the course. The breakdown of grades is as follows:
Group questions and discussion 15%
Primary source analysis 20%
Midterm take home essay 25%
Research Project:
  Initial question and literature review (5%)
  Research paper (30%)
  Roundtable discussion (5%)
Research Project total 40%
Grading based on the following: A+ 100-97; A 96-93; A- 92-90; B+ 89-87; B 86-83; B- 82-80; C+ 79-77; C 76-73; C- 72-70; D 65-69, F below 65.

Details:
1. Discussion and student presentations. Although I will provide weekly lectures with background/historical information, we will have discussion either every class or at least once during the week. During discussion, I expect you to do the lion’s share of the talking, in a meaningful, well-informed way. This means that you have prepared all the reading for that class, brought the reading to class, and have marked any pertinent passages and page numbers that you want to discuss or question.

In addition to your weekly pithy remarks, you will also be individually responsible for generating 3 study questions for a particular session and leading a short discussion (15-20 minutes) with two other students. Your questions (9-10 group total) should be based on a careful reading of the text(s) and may include connections you see to previous classes. Your group will send all your questions to the rest of the class and post them on Blackboard no later than noon of the day before we discuss those readings. We will begin after the second week of class. (sign-up the first week of the term).

2. 3-5 page primary source analysis, due Friday March 5 at 4PM. I will hand out guidelines for this assignment next week.

3. Take home midterm essay, due Thursday, March 26 at the beginning of class. I will hand out an essay question a week ahead of the due date. Your exam will require you to discuss and evaluate a number of the perspectives we will have laid out in the first half of the semester.
4. Research paper, which includes three parts:
a. Topic summary, due Thursday, March 25 and literature review, due Monday April 19. Your research project should begin with an historical question that is related to medieval and early modern cities. It may be something we discussed in class or another topic that you want to explore and must be analytic rather than descriptive (not just what happened, what does it mean?) If you are a history major, this might be the basis of your senior thesis or capstone work, so choose carefully. On April 8 we will work with Cynthia Comer, a research librarian at Mudd, to find relevant primary and secondary sources. The literature review will demonstrate that you have located the major articles and books for your given topic and also provide your preliminary assessment of their value for your work.

b. Roundtable discussion of your research, between Thursday, May 6 and Thursday May 13. By this point you should have done your research and come to your preliminary conclusions about your topic without necessarily having written it all out in a final paper. The presentation will hopefully help you see what you still have to clarify before you do your final write-up, and thus can serve as a kind of rough draft moment.*

c. Final paper, due Thursday, May 20 at 4PM. Using a combination of at least 5 primary and secondary sources, you will complete a 8-10 page research paper with appropriate citations and bibliography. Do not rely heavily on only 1 or 2 sources, neglecting the others and do be original. Your grade for the entire project is based on the timeliness of each step, your clarity of presentation and your command of the topic, all of which demonstrate that you've done your research and assessed its validity.

*I am more than happy to read drafts of your final papers, at least 3 days before the paper is due.

Guidelines for all written work: There are only a few simple rules. 1. Be clear in your writing, specific rather than general in your claims, and faithful to the sources themselves. 2. Proofread!! 3. Please, please, please number your pages! 4. Papers should be one and a half or double-spaced, with at least 1” margins but not more. 5. When you are using primary sources and other historians’ work, you will need to include footnotes and a bibliography. To do this, refer to some of the reference guides from the Oberlin History Department that I have posted on Blackboard. When in doubt, get in touch with me.

*I take these precepts to heart and evaluate students’ work on the basis of form as well as content.

Disabilities: If you have specific physical, psychiatric or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please let me know early in the semester so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. You will need to provide documentation of your disability to Jane Boomer in the Office of Disability Services in Peters G-27/G-28.

Lateness: Unexcused late assignments will be penalized by dropping 3 points from your grade every day a paper is late.

Plagiarism: All work turned in for this course must be your own. The College requires that students sign an "Honor Code" for all assignments. This pledge states: "I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment." For further information, see the student Honor Code which you can access via Blackboard>Lookup/Directories>Honor Code. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, especially in the context of group assignments, please see me or raise it in class.
Schedule of Classes and Assignments

Week 1:
2/9 Introduction
In class readings:
Aristotle, Politics, Chapters 1-2
Augustine, City of God, Book XIV, Chapter 28, Book XV Chapters 1, 4, 5

2/11 The City in Europe: the shape of an ideal
Readings: (just this week, will be handed out; also on Blackboard)
Max Weber, The City, pp. 91-101
Spiro Kostof, The City Shaped, pp. 29-41
Bonvesin dell Riva, Description of Milan in 1288 in Lopez and Raymond, ed. Medieval Trade in the Mediterranean World, pp. 60-69

Background: Nicholas, Chapter 1

Part 1. European cities from 1100-1450

Week 2: The world in 1000 and the rise of the medieval town

2/16 Fairs, Markets and Merchants
Readings:
Frugoni, Chapters 1 and 2
Church Positions on Usury
A Medieval Merchant’s Life (St. Godric)
Letter from Genoa branch of Datini Company, 1393 pp. 133-135 (Kowaleski) SCAN

2/18 Political Movements
Readings:
Nicholas, Chapter 2, pp. 52-58, Chapter 4, pp. 92-110
Galbert of Bruges, Murder of Charles the Good (selections)
Giovanni Villani, Magnates and the Rise of the Popolo and Guilds in Florence, 1207-1328
Lubeck is Made an Imperial City, 1226

Week 3: The Space of the Medieval City

2/23 Walls, Neighbors and Streets
Readings:
Frugoni, Chapter 3, pp. 45-69
Nicholas, Chapter 3, pp. 62-79, skim Chapter 6, pp. 154-167
Daniel Smail, “Linguistic Cartographies,” Medieval Practices of Space, 37-63

2/25 Architecture and Identity
Readings:
Frugoni, Chapter 7

**Week 4: Communities that Work and Love**

### 3/2 Organized Labor
Readings:
- Nicholas, Chapter 5, pp. 119-148
- *Regulations of the Guild of Skinners in Copenhagen*  
  *Women in Parisian Craft Guilds, c. 1270*  
  *Dispute between Master Saddlers of London and their Journeymen, 1396*

### 3/4 Families, Partners
Readings:
- *Magdalen and Balthasar, the letters of a Nuremberg Husband and Wife*, Steven Ozment, ed. (selections)

3/5 by 4PM Due: 3-5 page primary source analysis on women and work

**Week 5**

3/8: Monday is movie night! We will watch *The Return of Martin Guerre*, Time and Place TBA. Because of the movie, we will not have class on Thursday.

### 3/9 Communities that pray and learn
Readings:
- Frugoni, Chapter 5  
  *Nicholas*, Chapter 6, pp. 174-181  
  Katherine Lynch, “Church, family, and bonds of spiritual kinship,” in *Individuals, Families and Communities in Europe, 1200-1800* (Cambridge, 2003), 68-102  

3/11 NO CLASS

**Week 6 Drawing Boundaries**

### 3/16 Marginalized and excluded
Readings:
- Frugoni, Chapter 3, pp. 69-80  
- Nicholas, Chapter 5, pp. 148-153  

3/18 In sickness and in health
Frugoni, Chapter 3, pp. 93-116
Medical Faculty of the University of Paris, Consultation, 1348
Gentile da Foligno, Short Casebook, 1348

Ferdinand Tonnies, Community and Society (1957). Skim Part I, 33-105 for definitions of gemeinschaft and gesellschaft (dense but useful). These concepts will be important for your midterm essay.

Handout: Take-home midterm essay

Week 7: The Festive/Ritual City

3/23 Performance and Power
Readings:
Nicholas, Chapter 6, pp. 167-174

3/25 Urban Renaissance
Readings:
Nicholas, Chapter 6, pp. 181-88
Lauro Martines, “Humanism: A Program for Ruling Classes,” in Power and Imagination: City-States in Renaissance Italy (1979), 191-217

Due at the beginning of class: Take-home midterm essay.

3/30-4/1 Spring Break!

Part II. European cities from 1450-1750

Week 8:
4/6 Urban reformation and conflict
Readings:
Barbara Diefendorf, Beneath the Cross (all)

4/8 Class meets in Mudd Library for a workshop with Cynthia Comer, reference librarian

Week 9: City and state formation

4/13 Political power: prince, state and citizen
Nicholas, Chapter 4, pp. 110-118
Peter Burke, “From Entrepreneurs to Rentiers,” in *Venice and Amsterdam, a study of elites* (1974), 125-139

4/15 The Baroque City: beautifying the urban fabric
Nicholas, Chapter 3, 84-91

Week 10 Capitalism and colonialism

4/19 Due: literature review for final research project

4/20 Commerce and Production
Readings:
Simon Schama, *An Embarrassment of Riches* (selections)
Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees, 1714* (selections)

4/22 Consumption and Sociability
Readings:
Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World* (selections)
Daniel Defoe, *Some Considerations upon Streetwalkers, 1722*

Week 11

4/27 Science, philosophy and art
Readings:

4/29 Visit to Special Collections

Week 12

5/4 Conclusion: How the 18th century views the city-and the middle ages?

5/6: Roundtable discussion of research topics (2 panels of 5 discussants)
Week 13
5/11 Roundtable discussion of research topics

5/13 Roundtable discussion of research topics

End of semester: final research paper due