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 of Hippo, *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 two short essays and one research paper/museum exhibition 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.

Henri Pirenne, Medieval Cities (1952)

Recommended texts (also on reserve)

Other recommended texts: (also on print reserve in the library):

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%
Attendance and participation 5%
Two essays 1. 3-5 pp, 2 5 pp (each 15%): total 30%
Exhibition and Catalog:
  - Initial question and literature review (5%)
  - Exhibition presentation (15%)
  - Catalogue 8-10 pp (30%)

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.

* popcorn provided
Details

1. **Attendance and Participation.** Please come to class on time and prepared. 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. I will check attendance periodically during the semester. If you have more than 3 unexcused absences, you risk a 0 for 5% of your grade.

2. **Group Discussion.** In addition to your weekly pithy remarks, you will also be individually responsible for generating 2-3 study questions for a particular session and leading a short discussion (15-20 minutes) with 1-2 other students. Your questions (8-10 group max) should be based on a careful reading of one of the text(s) for that particular class and should include connections you see to previous classes and/or the other readings for that class. Your group will meet with me before you send all your questions to the rest of the class. Please email your questions no later than 3:00 PM 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).

3. **Short essays.** For the first, you will write a book review of Henri Pirenne’s thesis in light of the primary and secondary sources we’ve read in addition to his work. 3-5 pages. For the second, you will analyze Gluckel of Hameln’s memoir in light of what it can tell us about households, families or work. I will hand out guidelines for both these assignments at least a week ahead of time.

4. **Exhibition and Catalogue.** You will design a small but sophisticated exhibit of images/objects and accompanying text for the (fabulous museum of your choice) on some aspect of the European city and urban life between the 13th and 18th centuries. Your project should begin with an historical question (i.e., something you want to really explore and understand better). It should be analytic rather than descriptive (not just what happened but also what it means). 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. The assignment breaks down into the following components:

   a. **Topic summary, due March 10 and literature review, due Monday April 18.** On April 7 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. **Presentation of your exhibition, between Tuesday, May 3 and Tuesday May 10.** You will choose approximately 5 images, texts or objects that will be mounted in your show and give the rest of the class a guided tour. Don’t forget to give it a good title! These images help elucidate your research question and develop a narrative (what story you are telling). They are also historical objects that themselves need to be situated/qualified. You may either use your computer or put your images on mine—we’ll talk make sure you can scan in color.
c. Accompanying catalogue essay due Friday, May 13 at 5PM 8-10 pages. In your essay, you will describe the topic and historical question you have answered, but also why it matters. What does your question tell us in light of what you've learned about cities and urban life in premodern Europe? The images in your museum exhibit and other primary and secondary sources you choose to use will provide the evidence of your point. Your catalogue should have appropriate citations and bibliography. Do not rely heavily on only 1 or 2 sources, neglecting others. Originality is a plus.*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 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. I can't stress this enough. 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: Introduction

2/8 The City in Europe

2/10 The Shape of an Ideal
What defines a city to these various authors, and on what criteria? To you? Is there an urban archetype?
Readings: (just this week, will be handed out; also on Blackboard)
Max Weber, The City, pp. 91-99; 104-107
Spiro Kostof, The City Shaped, pp. 29-41
Part I. THE URBAN REVIVAL

Week 2: From Rome to Venice

2/15 The End of the Pax Romana
Readings:
Pirenne, Medieval Cities, chapters 1-2

2/17 Fairs, Markets and Dusty Travelers
Pirenne, chapters 4-5
A Medieval Merchant’s Life (St. Godric) in Brian Tierney, The Middle Ages (1999) 168-170
Church Positions on Usury taken from the Internet Medieval Sourcebook

*Due in class: Go to the Internet Medieval Sourcebook, Selected sources on Economic Life under Trade and Commerce (http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook1j.html). Choose one source that looks interesting to you, read it (they are short) and bring it in to class.

Week 3: People and political movements

2/22 Growth in the south
Readings:
Louis Mumford, “Cloister and Community” pp. 248-261 ONLY
Nicholas, Chapter 2, pp. 52-58, Chapter 4, pp. 97-104

2/24 Privileges in the north
Readings:
Nicholas, Chapter 4, pp. 92-97, 104-110
Pirenne, chapter 7
People of Cologne Rebel Against their Archbishop, 1074
The Formation of a Commune at Laon, 1116, both in Medieval Towns

*2/28 Monday 4PM drop off at Rice Hall 307 Due: First essay evaluating Pirenne’s thesis

Part II THE MEDIEVAL CITY 1200-1500

Week 4: Space and urban identity

3/1 Walls, Neighbors and Streets
Readings:
Nicholas, Chapter 3, pp. 62-79, skim Chapter 6, pp. 154-167

3/3 Living Spaces
Readings:
Chiara Frugoni, “Inside the City,” in A Day in a Medieval City (1997), 49-69
Michel Camille, "Signs of the City," in *Medieval Practices of Space*, 1-36

**Week 5 Corporations as a way of life**

3/8 **Guilds**
Readings:
Nicholas, Chapter 5, pp. 121 (bottom)-128, 136-148
Louis Mumford, "Cloister and the City" 269-277 ONLY
*Regulations of the Guild of Skinners in Copenhagen*
*Dispute between Master Saddlers of London and their Journeymen, 1396* both in *Medieval Towns*

3/10 **The Ritual Center**
Readings:
Nicholas, Chapter 6, pp. 167-174
Keith Lilley, “Performing Bodies” in *City and Cosmos* (2009), 158-184
*Order of the Pageants of Corpus Christi Plays in York, 1415* in *Medieval Towns*

*Due at the beginning of class: 1 paragraph plan of museum exhibition topic*

**Week 6 Vulnerable Women**

3/15 **On the Margins**
Readings:
Nicholas, Chapter 5, pp. 129-136

3/16 (Wednesday) 6PM Movie Night! We will be watching *The Return of Martin Guerre*, a gripping film that recreates a 16th century trial (true story!) of a man accused of taking another man’s place.

3/17 **Because of movie, NO CLASS today!**
Reading:
Gluckel of Hameln* Books 1-3 (all)


**Week 7: Boundaries and Belonging**

3/22 **Discussion: women’s position in the city and the household**
Reading:
Gluckel of Hameln, Book 4 chapters 3, 14 and 15, Book 5, chapter 4, Book 7 (all) (meanwhile, Gluckel remarries someone in Metz; he then dies and leaves her with a load of debts...)

* Note: although this is not a medieval text (instead written in the late 17th-early 18th century), Gluckel’s experience of marriage, working and raising children does not differ greatly from a woman of the merchant class, Jewish or not, living in the late medieval period as well.
3/24 Legacies of the Medieval City or A New Cartography
No Readings

*Due at the beginning of class: Second Essay. 5-page analysis of Gluckel of Hameln

3/29-3/31 Spring Break!

Part III. EUROPEAN CITIES FROM 1500-1700

Week 8: Old Families, New Ventures
4/5
Reading:
Peter Burke, Venice and Amsterdam, a study of seventeenth-century elites (1974), selections

4/7 *Meet in Mudd: Research Session with Cynthia Comer

Week 9: Cities and states in formation
4/12 Political power: prince, state and citizen
Readings:
Nicholas, Chapter 4, pp. 110-118; Nicholas, Chapter 5, 143-148

4/14 Regulating People and Spaces
Readings:
Nicholas, Chapter 3, 84-91
John Evelyn, Fumifugium, or, The inconvenience of the aer and smoak of London dissipated together with some remedies humbly proposed by J.E., Esq., to His Sacred Majestie and to the Parliament now assembled (1661) stable url:

Week 10 Commerce and Technology

*4/18 Monday 5PM drop off Rice 307. Due: literature review for exhibition project

4/19 Printing Houses
Reading:

4/21 Caffeine is good
Reading:
Old Coffeehouses of London (1954) selections

Week 11 The Effects of Success

4/26 New Civility and New Anxiety
Readings:
Simon Schama, An Embarrassment of Riches (selections)

4/28 The City Triumphant or Going to the Dogs?
Readings:
Daniel Defoe, Some Considerations upon Streetwalkers, 1722

Week 12 Exhibition Presentations
5/3-5/5

Week 13 Exhibition Presentations
5/10

5/12 NO CLASS

5/13 Due at 5PM Final Exhibition and Catalogue