The Second City. The Windy City. The City of Neighborhoods. Chi-Town. And, more recently, Chiraq. These metaphors and labels are often used to describe the city of Chicago. This first year seminar is designed to be an introduction to Chicago—its history as well as contemporary life. This course also focuses on the ways social scientists, historians, artists, journalists, and social reformers study and understand American cities more broadly. Using oral histories, ethnographies, film, and literature, this course examines 20th century Chicago with particular attention to race, housing, immigration/migration histories, education, and political economy. By focusing on one city, this seminar invites students to reflect on how doing so allows us to ask broader questions about power, inequality and community in American society. As political scientist Joel Rast notes, “American cities have long been symbols of our greatest potential and deepest failings as a society (1999: 3). The readings and assignments will provide students with analytical tools they can employ in order to understand and identify sources of Chicago’s greatest potential and its failings both in the past and in the present.

Course Goals:

- to help students identify the historical, structural, and individual forces that give shape to American cities
- to understand and apply key concepts in urban studies scholarship
- to develop students’ critical analytical skills for understanding spatialized inequality in cities
- to enhance students’ ability to evaluate scholarly and popular images of the city and urban life
- to strengthen critical thinking, listening, and visual analytical skills through listening activities, writing, visual analysis and seminar discussion
- to introduce students to liberal arts learning through the intensive study of the city of Chicago
REQUIRED READINGS

All textbooks can be purchased at the college bookstore. Additional articles are available on Blackboard.

I. SEMINAR POLICIES

Seminar Discussions
The success of this seminar is contingent on your thoughtful engagement with the texts and with the comments, critiques and issues raised by your classmates and your instructor. Therefore, your attendance, timely arrival, and informed participation in class are absolutely required and constitute 15% of your final grade.

Throughout the course, we will explore a number of controversial issues about race, immigration and inequality that may provoke heated debate, discomfort, and disagreement. My goal is not to smooth over these differences; rather it is for us to create a space for respectful, engaged and honest dialogue and to help you develop skills to articulate your positions and engage others respectfully. To that end, I ask that each member of the seminar respond thoughtfully and carefully with each other and with various course topics.

Please be aware that some issues in this course may be personally difficult for people to discuss. I cannot always anticipate what those difficult topics will be, but I will do my best to respond appropriately if these situations arise, and I encourage you to come and speak with me if you have any concerns.

Meetings Outside of Seminar
My office hours will be posted on my office door in King 141D. I encourage you all to come and speak with me often. Within the first two weeks, I ask that each of you sets aside time to meet with me to discuss the seminar and your first semester at Oberlin.

We are fortunate to have a Writing Associate for this course. Nora Kipnis is available to meet with you and help you throughout the course of this semester. Her assistance will be invaluable as you work on drafts of your essays, project proposal and final project. I strongly encourage you to speak with Nora and share your work with her as well as your peer review partners.
Course Readings
The readings for this course vary from week to week, and there will be moments in which the reading load will be significant. Rather than focus on reading every word for every reading, direct your efforts to understanding the key arguments, concepts, research methods and sources in the readings. Also try to make connections between the assigned texts and seminar discussions. Please come and talk with me and if you would like to discuss reading strategies for the semester.

Blackboard Postings
I firmly believe in the power of writing to enhance your learning. To that end, I ask that students post questions and/or comments to each seminar’s readings on Blackboard by 9pm the night prior to class. These postings are not graded but are required and are factored into your final participation grade. You may also feel free to use blackboard to continue conversations/debates from class time.

Attendance Policies
If you anticipate missing class, please inform me by email of your absence prior to class. Two unexcused absences will reduce your participation grade by 1/3 (from an A to an A-, for example).

I absolutely require students to arrive to seminar on time. This is essential for fostering a respectful learning environment. If you are arrive to class once class has begun, you will be considered absent.

Classroom Etiquette
Once you arrive to seminar, please turn off all cell phones. Texting is not permitted. Laptops are useful (and sometimes necessary) for taking notes and reading assigned articles, and, therefore, are allowed in class. I ask that you use your laptops for that purpose only. Students found to be using seminar time checking email, surfing the web, or engaging in social networking will be asked not to bring their laptops to class in the future.

Course Deadlines
All assignments must be completed on time. Papers not turned in at the specified time on the specified date will be considered late and will be penalized 1/3 grade for each day it is overdue. Late papers will not receive written comments, and must include on the first page the date you turned in the assignment. On the rare occasion I agree to grant an extension on an assignment, you must include a cover sheet stating that you were granted an extension and the new due date. If you fail to do so, the assignment will be regarded as late and penalized accordingly.

P/NP
If you are taking this course P/NP, you must fulfill all course obligations and complete all assignments in order to receive credit for the course.
**Academic Incompletes**  
Assignments will not be accepted past the end of reading period without an approved incomplete from the Dean of studies. Extensions of final projects need an approved incomplete from the Dean of Studies. These are College-wide policies and there are no exceptions.

**Honor Code**  
The policies described in the Oberlin College Honor Code and Honor System apply to this class. Written work must include proper citations and must be the product of your own work. You are also required to include the following statement on all written assignments: "I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment."

If you have any questions about how to properly cite sources or about the Honor Code, please feel free to approach me. For more information on the Honor Code, see http://www.oberlin.edu/students/student_pages/honor_code2.html

**Students Needing Special Assistance**  
Please speak with me if you need disability-related accommodations in this course. Student Academic Services is also an important resource for students needing academic assistance. Please contact Jane Boomer, Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities, Peters G27, extension 58467 for assistance developing a plan to address your academic needs.

**Student Athletes**  
If you are a student athlete and member of an Oberlin College sports team and your athletic schedule will cause you to miss a class, please come and speak with me.

II. COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

This course requires a number of written assignments designed to develop critical reading, writing and analytical skills. Papers will be evaluated according to the following criteria: critical analysis and understanding of texts; clarity of thought; the ability to synthesize texts and materials presented and discussed in class; and theoretical grounding of your arguments. All papers should be typed and remain within the page limits specified for each assignment.

**Essay #1 Due Friday September 26th 5pm (4-5 pages) First draft due in class 9/18**  
Each episode of *This American Life* is comprised of acts that foreground a particular story that relate to the larger theme for the week. For your first essay, please choose one act/story from either episode of “Harper High School” and write an essay explaining what the story can tell us about the city of Chicago. Discuss the strengths and limitations of audiodocumentaries for exploring issues of urban life, and pay particular attention to not only what they story can tell us about urban life, but focus on how the story is told. What kinds of techniques, strategies and choices does the person use to tell a story? How effective are these strategies? And how would you compare these story telling strategies to others narratives?
Essay #2 Due October 3rd 5pm Blackboard (4-6 pages)
Heap and Abrams discuss how Chicago became a living laboratory for Progressive Era social scientists and social reformers interested in understanding, theorizing, and improving city life. In this paper, explain why reformers and researchers regard Chicago as a social laboratory, and discuss how and why sexuality, race, and immigration were central concerns for Progressive Era social reformers and urban ethnographers.

Group Project In Class October 16
Presentations on play Clybourne Park. Students are required to watch the production staged at Le Chat Noir, Augusta, GA November 2013 prior to class.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBJvSSr0ixc

Clybourne Park is a play by Bruce Norris and was first performed in 2010. According to Norris, the play is in response to Lorraine Hansberry's play A Raisin in the Sun. The play has been staged across the United States and has been reviewed extensively in popular and scholarly venues. For this group project, watch the play online, read at least three different reviews of the play, and develop a presentation that explores the ways Clybourne Park is in dialogue with Raisin in the Sun and what new themes, concerns, and issues the play raises. Your presentation must include visual aids (either a PowerPoint presentation or handout, for example) and all members of your group must speak during the presentation. At the end of the presentation, you must submit to me a list of your bibliographic references.

Essay #3 Due Friday November 14th, 5pm, Blackboard (4-6 pages)
Gentrification and neoliberalism are terms that refer to specific political economic policies and strategies in urban centers like Chicago. They are also words that appear frequently in popular media, community activism, and scholarly and policy research. For this paper, choose one of these terms, define it clearly, and explore how it illuminates our understanding of a neighborhood or social problem in Chicago. While this is a scholarly piece of writing, I want you to keep a nonacademic audience in mind. How would you explain the term to your parents, friends, grandparents? What should they know in order to understand these complex social phenomena?

Final Project
The Final project consists of three required parts
1. Final Project Proposal (2-3pp) Due November 7, Blackboard Your proposal should article clearly the focus of your final project. If you do not have a clear thesis, you can identify questions guiding your project that you hope to answer. You must include a bibliography of at least 3 scholarly sources.
2. Final Project Presentation (10 minutes) Last week of class Your final presentation should be clear, succinct and utilize at least one visual/audio aid (powerpoint, podcast, audiodocumentary, handout). You should provide a clear statement of your argument and how you develop this in your final project.
3. Final Project Due December 19, 9am
SUMMARY OF KEY COURSE DEADLINES

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<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
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<tr>
<td>Essay #1 First Draft</td>
<td>September 18 (at the beginning of class)</td>
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<td>Essay #1 Final Draft</td>
<td>September 26, 5pm on Blackboard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay #2</td>
<td>October 3, 5pm on Blackboard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Oral Presentation</td>
<td>October 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Proposal</td>
<td>November 7, 5pm on Blackboard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay #3</td>
<td>November 14, 5pm on Blackboard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project Outline</td>
<td>November 25 (at the beginning of class)</td>
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<td>Final Project</td>
<td>Friday December 19, 11am</td>
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REQUIREMENTS

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<td>Project proposal</td>
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<td>Final project</td>
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CLASS SCHEDULE

Part I: The Most Studied City in America

*Sociologist John Kovol writes, “It was first said back in the 1880s: ‘Chicago is the most American of cities and to know America, you must understand Chicago.’” This truism certainly informed social scientists, social reformers, journalists, writers, and artists who were inspired by the city and were key in documenting its rich history and present. This first part of the course focuses on why Chicago is the most studied city in America and why it remains the object of mythical fascination and sobering realism. By focusing on the enduring challenges migration, race, labor, violence and community building pose to residents, policy makers, civic leaders, social reformers, literary figures and and academics, we create a solid foundation for understanding contemporary challenges and possibilities for Chicago’s future.

**Week 1: Introduction: How do you study a city like Chicago?**

September 2: Introduction to course, readings for Thursday, and visualizing Chicago

September 4: **Reading Chicago**

  Bennett, “The Third City”
  Koval and Fidel, “Chicago: The Immigrant Capital of the Heartland”
  Gibbs, “Attack on Chiraq”
Week 2: Listening to Chicago: Geographies of Violence and Education
September 9: This American Life, “Harper High School I”
September 11: This American Life, “Harper High School II” Access at:
http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/488/harper-high-school-part-two

*We will listen to Part I in class on Tuesday and students are required to listen to Part II on their own. We will discuss both audio pieces and the following two readings during our Thursday seminar.*

**READ:** Cashmere: “Disappointed in Harper High School Coverage”
Boyd, “Good Tape” access online at

Week 3: Representing and Deconstructing Chicago
September 16: Bennett, “Renditions of Chicago”
“The City of Neighborhoods”
September 18: Peer Review Writing Workshop
*First draft of Essay #1 due at start of class*

**Revised Essay #1 due Friday September 26th, 5pm, Blackboard**

Week 4: Chicago as the Living Laboratory: Researching and Reforming the City
September 23: Heap, “The City as a Sexual Laboratory”
September 25: Abrams, “Guardians of Virtue”

**Week 5: Race, Space, and the Color Line in Chicago, part I**
September 30: Baldwin, “‘Chicago Has No Intelligentsia’?”
Baldwin, “Mapping the Black Metropolis”
Baldwin, “Making Do”
October 2: Library research trip

**Essay #2 due Friday October 3rd, 5pm, Blackboard**

Week 6: Race, Space, and the Color Line in Chicago, part II
October 7: Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*
October 9: Museum Trip

**Week 7: Residential Segregation in Chicago, Past and Present**
October 14: Hirsch, “Massive Resistance in the urban north”
October 16: Group Presentations on Clybourne Park

*********************October 18—October 26 FALL Break*********************
Part II: Migration, Public Housing and Postindustrial Chicago

Chicago has long been regarded as the city of neighborhoods—a quaint concept that highlights face-to-face interactions, ethnic solidarity and cooperation, and multiculturalism. This notion elides, however, racial and class strife and the way in which public policy has shaped divisions along race and class lines in the city. This section of the course focuses on place-making and community in Chicago and provides students with tools to identify the historical forces and mechanisms of power that shape neighborhood formation and urban development in Chicago.

Week 9: Puerto Rican and Mexican Migration to Chicago
October 28: Fernández, Brown in the Windy City, pp. 1-205
October 30: Fernández, Brown in the Windy City, pp. 207-268

Week 10: Gentrification, Education, and Urban Political Economy
November 4: Lipman, “Neoliberal Urbanism and Education Policy”
  “Racial Politics of Mixed-Income Schools and Housing”
November 6: Bentacur, “Gentrification and Community Fabric in Chicago

Project proposals due Friday November 7th, 5pm, Blackboard

Week 11: Public Housing, Urban Development, and Stories of Displacement I
November 11: High Rise Stories, 11-123
November 13: High Rise Stories, 175-269

Essay #3 due Friday November 14th, 5pm, digital drop box

Weeks 12: Public Housing, Urban Development, and Stories of Displacement II
November 18: Bennett, “The Rebirth of Bronzeville”
  Flores-González, “Paseo Boricua”
  Spirou “Urban Beautification”
November 20: Film, Dislocation (50 minutes in class)

Week 13: Urban Research Peer Workshop
November 25: Students will bring in the first drafts of their final projects to exchange with peer review partner
November 27: THANKSGIVING

Week 14: Ethnography, Class and Community

Week 15: Final Projects
December 9: Student presentations
December 11: Student presentations
FINAL PROJECTS DUE FRIDAY DECEMBER 19, 11AM, BLACKBOARD
Bibliography


