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 exhibition project (see below). Written work includes two short essays and one 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.

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**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)

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**Recommended texts (also on reserve)**


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**Course requirements**

All work must be turned in to receive credit for the course. The breakdown of grades is as follows:

- **Attendance and participation** 5%
- **Group exhibition** 15%
- **Two essays 1. 3-5 pp. (10%) 2. 5-7 pp. (20%):**
- **Research Paper** total 30%
  - Initial question and literature review (10%)
  - Meeting with Jake, our writing associate, and rough draft excerpt turned in (5% full credit if both completed!)
  - **Final Paper 10-12 pp. (35%)**

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.

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* popcorn provided

† The Evelyn reading is printed in a 17th-century font—be aware that what looks like an f is often an s!
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 Exhibition.** You and 2-3 others will design a small but sophisticated exhibit of images/objects for the (fabulous museum of your choice) on that aspect of the European city and urban life between the 13th and 18th centuries that we are discussing that class. Your presentation will show us the objects/images themselves, either through a handout or powerpoint, and analyze them for us in light of the general topic/readings. This project entails choosing the angles you want to pursue and assigning responsibility to members of the group in a way that distributes the burden of work fairly and gives each person a measure of individual responsibility. Your group will meet with me before you present your exhibition to the rest of the class. Images cannot just be cherry-picked from some random website—I will give you a list of good websites to use and possible secondary sources. **Bonus points for using paintings, sculpture, prints, etc. from the Allen Memorial Art Museum or Special Collections in Mudd.** We will sign-up the second week of the term.

3. **Short essays.** The first essay, due 2/28, is a primary source analysis that delves into the economics of medieval cities; the second, due 3/20, is a creative but realistic guidebook to a (real or imagined) medieval European city. I will hand out guidelines for both these assignments at least a week ahead of time.

4. **Research paper.** Using a combination of primary and secondary sources, you will complete a 10-12 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 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?) 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. **Brief topic summary, due 3/22**
   b. **Literature review, due 4/17.** Just after Spring Break we will work with Cynthia Comer, a very knowledgeable 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.
   c. **Meeting with our writing associate, Jake Purcell, after you turn in your literature review and before you write your rough draft.**
   d. **Rough draft excerpt (8 pages or more) due 5/8.** The rough draft excerpt will not be graded but if turned in (and in prose), you will automatically get full credit for it.
   e. **Final paper, due 5/16 at 3PM.** The essay should have appropriate citations and bibliography, turned in to my office Rice 207 (not emailed).
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 or Jake Purcell, our writing associate.

*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

2/7 The City in Europe

2/9 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:
Bb. Spiro Kostof, The City Shaped, pp. 29-41

Week 2: Economic Revival

2/14 The End of the Pax Romana
Readings:
Pirenne, Medieval Cities, chapters 1-2
Kowaleski, no. 50 pp. 118-120

2/16 Fairs, Markets and Dusty Travelers
Pirenne, chapters 4-5
Bb. Louis Mumford, “Cloister and Community" pp. 253-261 ONLY
Kowaleski, no. 51, pp. 121-23; no. 55, pp. 133-35

Week 3: Politics, Violence, and Law

2/21 Communes in the south
Readings:
Lauro Martines, Power and Imagination: city-states in Renaissance Italy (selections on communes)
Louis Mumford, “Cloister and Community” pp. 261-65 ONLY
Kowaleksi, no. 24, pp. 54-59

2/23 Privileges in the north
Readings:
Pirenne, chapter 7
Kowaleksi, no. 17, 18, 21, p. 37-42; 49-50; no. 93, p. 236

Week 4: Space and urban identity

2/28 Living Spaces
Readings:
Bb. Chiara Frugoni, “The Road that leads to the City,” and “Inside the City,” in A Day in a Medieval City (2006), 21-69
Kowaleski, Medieval Towns, no. 138, 139 and 144, pp. 350-2, 362; no. 151, pp. 376-79

*Due: First paper on economic life in medieval cities

3/1 Walls, Neighbors and Streets
Readings:

In class we will work on the theses of these articles. Please bring Kowaleski to class as well.

Week 5 Corporations as a Way of Life

3/6 Guilds: the organizing principle
Readings:
Louis Mumford, “Cloister and the City” 269-277 ONLY
Kowaleski, no. 57-63, pp. 137-152.

3/8 Universities: Scholars and Drinkers
Readings:
Optional: Bb. Michael Shank, “A Female University Student in Late Medieval Krakow,” in *Sisters and Workers in the Middle Ages*, ed. Bennett et al. (1989), 190-197

**Week 6: Sharing Space and Controlling Ideologies**

3/13  **The Church**
Readings:
Bb. Mumford, “Cloister and the City,” 265-269, 277-280 ONLY
Katherine Lynch, “Church, family, and bonds of spiritual kinship,” in *Individuals, Families and Communities in Europe, 1200-1800* (Cambridge, 2003), 68-102

*We will begin watching Natalie Zemon Davis’ *The Return of Martin Guerre* in class. It is a gripping film that recreates a 16th century trial (true story!) of a man accused of taking another man’s place.*

3/13  **Tuesday Movie night!** We will watch the exciting denouement of *Martin Guerre* and then have a brief discussion of the film afterwards (1 ½ hours total).


3/15  **On the Margins**
Readings:
Bb. Sharon Farmer, “Adam’s Curse,” in *Surviving Poverty in Medieval Paris* (2002), 39-73 (her introduction is included if you want to read it first)
François Villon, *Lais* (the Legacy)
Chiara Frugoni, *A Day in a Medieval City*, Chapter 3, pp. 69-80

**Week 7: Life and Death**

3/20  **Class Visit to the Allen Memorial Art Museum**

**Due:** Second paper, or your guidebook to a real or imagined medieval city.

3/22  **Plague and Economic Downturn**
Readings:
Bb. Chiara Frugoni, Chapter 3, pp. 93-116;

**Due:** 3-4 sentences describing your research project: topic, what question/s you want to answer, and what kinds of primary sources you think will help you. Kowaleski’s *Medieval Towns* is a great way to get a sense of different possible topics.

**Week 8: 3/27-3/29 Spring Break!**
Week 9: The Renaissance: an urban phenomenon

4/3 Ideology for urban living...and ruling
Readings:
Bb. Lauro Martines, “Humanism: a program for the ruling classes,” in *Power and Imagination*, pp. 191-217
Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, 1486

4/5 Power shaped through space and gender
Readings:
Gregorio Dati, *Diary*

Week 10: New technologies and orientations

4/10 Westward Bound
Readings:

4/12 Cities as High-Tech Centers
Readings:

Week 11: Divisions

4/17 Catholic/Protestant
Readings:

Due: Literature Review for research paper

4/19 Popular/Elite
Readings:
Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker, *The Roaring Girl* (1610): selections

*If you have not done so already, please meet with our writing associate, Jake Purcell, sometime in the next two weeks. It is a course requirement.
Week 12: **Cities and states in formation**

April 24 **Political power: prince, state and citizen**  
Readings:  

April 26 **Political tensions: the Dutch Revolt**  
Readings:  

Week 13: **Regulating People and Spaces**

5/1 **Architecture of power**  
Readings:  

5/3 **Ordering the Environment**  
Readings:  
Bb. John Evelyn, *Fumifugium, or, The inconveniencie 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)†

Week 14: **A Taste of the Modern**

5/8 **No CLASS** (there will be extra office hours this week to discuss drafts of final papers)  
**Due at 10AM:** At least 8 pages of rough draft. Comments will be returned by Friday 5/11.

5/10 **Coffee, Slaves, and Stock Jobbers**  
Readings:  

**Turn in Final Paper, in a hard copy, at 3PM on Wednesday, May 16 to Rice 307**

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