



University of Denver
Department of Geography & the Environment

Course Syllabus

GEOG 3940 *Urban Geographies of New York City*
(Urban Geography Seminar)

Autumn Interterm 2016 (August 21st 5pm – 26th 11am)

Instructor: E. Eric Boschmann, Associate Professor
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Course Description: Whether the “Big Apple”, “The City That Never Sleeps”, “Gotham”, or simply, “The City”, New York City not only captures global geographic imaginations of urban America culture, it emerged as a crossroads for individuals seeking a place to pursue their dreams of a new life. Behind this mystique is nearly 400 years of urban building that resulted in NYC becoming one of today’s major cities of the world. This travel course is intended to help students understand key themes in urban geography through on-the-ground experiences in New York City. Topics in this class will focus upon: historic urban evolution, urban growth and development, public transportation, urban design, architecture, spaces of memorial, economies of the city, tourism and culture, social geographies, and urban sustainability. With New York City as our classroom, this course will be conducted entirely in New York City over 6 days / 5 nights.

Course Goals: The purpose of this course is to:

- Develop an in-depth knowledge about major urban themes more broadly, and New York City more specifically, through on-the-ground experiences and observation, as well as readings and discussions;
- Practice skills of analyzing the city: its people, its spaces, its history, its networks and flows;
- See NYC beyond a tourist-level view, and speak intelligently about the evolution and current geographies of NYC;
- Practice and demonstrate important soft skills, including: organization, punctuality, preparedness, leadership, and responsibility/accountability.

Learning Objectives: By the end of this course students will be able to:

- Utilize several navigational tools to get around New York City and its public transportation system that can be applied in any large city of the world;
- Map and describe the local and regional geographies of NYC;
- Demonstrate knowledge about specific urban themes applied in NYC (themes include: historic urban evolution, urban growth and development, public transportation, urban design, architecture, spaces of memorial, economies of the city, tourism and culture, social geographies, and urban sustainability);
- Draw connections of explored urban themes to other cities.

Course Requirements

Participation and engagement (40%): Students are expected to actively participate in all scheduled sessions of this travel course. Please see the expectations (below) on Punctuality, Preparedness, and Participation. Participation and engagement will be assessed on a daily basis. Students are also expected to complete all the readings. However, the time in NYC should be spent exploring the city, participating in class activities, reflecting on the day's learnings, and resting for the next day. Therefore, not all readings can be completed while in NYC; to acquire the full academic experience of this course, assigned readings should be completed when possible.

Daily Field Journal (30%): Students are encouraged to actively keep a daily log/journal of their experiences. Photographic documentation is also encouraged. Each evening students will need to submit (via Canvas) a response to specific questions regarding the day's experiences. These should be 300-500 words in length, and demonstrate deep engagement with what they observe, discussion points, and any relevant reading materials.

Final Paper (30%): After the course is completed, students will write a Final Paper on a chosen topic related to New York City or urban geography in general. By the end of the week students will need to submit a brief summary of their proposed topic, as well as discuss their ideas with the whole class in the final session. Final Papers will be 6-8 pages double-spaced and are due within one month after completion of the course.

Graduate Students: Graduate student requirements include the above, with the following amendments: Grad students will be expected to lead one of scheduled sessions (including mini-lectures), and instead of a Final Report will write a 10-12 page research review paper (including ~10 academic sources) on a specific urban theme explored in the context of NYC.

Final course grading scale:

94 – 100% = A	73 – 76% = C
90 – 93% = A-	70 – 72% = C-
87 – 89% = B+	67 – 69% = D+
83 – 86% = B	63 – 66% = D
80 – 82% = B-	60 – 62% = D-
77 – 79% = C+	below 60% = F

Logistics:

Travel to/from New York City: Students are responsible for arranging their travel to and from New York City. Class begins Sunday, August 21st 5pm at the hotel, and is completed at 11am, Friday, August 26th. Students should make their travel arrangements such that they arrive and depart the hotel accordingly.

Hotel Accommodations: Hotel arrangements for 5 nights will be made for you. The hotel provides complimentary breakfast and WiFi. If you choose to stay in New York for extra days, making hotel arrangements is your responsibility. Our hotel is: Hampton Inn Manhattan / Times Square Central 220 West 41st Street, New York, New York 10036-7203 (212-221-1188)

Money:

Your paid program fees cover many expenses for your trip, including:

- Entrance to all course related events, tours, museums, a Broadway show, etc...
- A 7-day unlimited transit pass (given to you at the hotel)
- Two group meals
- A shared hotel room for 5 nights

You should bring extra money for:

- Transportation to/from airport to hotel
- All other meals (complimentary breakfast is available in the hotel);
- Any souvenirs or all personal purchases;
- **Tip Money.** It is customary to give hotel staff a tip, especially those who clean your room each day (\$1-\$3 per person, per room, each morning).
- Laundry service (the hotel may have coin operated laundry facilities)
- Expenses for any activities during free time
- Any taxi/Uber/Lyft rides

How to pack:

Please check the forecast for New York City, and pack clothes accordingly. Bring a variety for different types of weather. Generally, you will not need any dressy/formal clothes. For the Broadway show, pack something other than shorts and t-shirt. Bring several changes of clothes, and consider whether you will need laundry service. Ideally aim for traveling with one roller bag / suitcase and one personal backpack.

Required items:

- **Student ID:** tickets to various events are purchased at the college student rate. Your student ID might be required verification. Failure to bring your ID may result in full-adult fare charge, at your expense.
- **Rain jacket and/or umbrella:** we will explore the city rain or shine.
- **Tablet or Laptop:** to access readings and submit writings via Canvas, you will need some device with you. Please let me know if this will be a problem.
- **Small notebook** for taking notes while in the field. **Think small and convenient.** You can expand your notes at night on your computer or in a larger notebook.

- **Good walking shoes.** Be prepared for lots of walking (think: urban hiking). Flip-flops or high heels are NOT advisable for any of the scheduled class sessions.
- **An open and curious mind, and a positive attitude.**

Recommended items:

- Camera: smartphone or small point-and-shoot is preferred over large and expensive DSLRs
- Reusable water bottle
- A small day-pack
- Luggage locks

Class “rules” / Policies / Expectations

- **Respect** all others.
- Visual observation of the urban experience is a theme of this course. *We should constantly be looking around us, not at our devices.* While in the field, **smartphones** should be used sparingly: picture taking and occasional way-finding or information searching. Irresponsible use of your device while in the field will result in participation/engagement grade reduction.
- Underage and/or overconsumption of alcohol will not be tolerated. Use of any illegal drugs will not be tolerated. Instances of either will result in immediate dismissal from the course.
- The Three P’s: **Punctuality, Preparedness, Participation**
 - You are expected to **arrive on time** for all scheduled class sessions.
 - You are expected to **arrive prepared** for all scheduled class sessions. This not only includes preparing any assigned readings/tasks, but also physically and mentally prepared to explore and engage the city.
 - You are expected to **participate** in all scheduled class sessions. This includes staying on the assigned task, asking questions and contributing to discussions, listening to guest speakers, and using class session time fully and effectively. At times you may be asked to take a small leadership role of some kind.

READING LIST & CALENDAR

These will be made available separately.