

COURSE SYLLABUS
THE HISTORY OF NEW YORK CITY REAL ESTATE
Fall, 2017

Thursdays, 4:00-6:00 pm, 200 Fayerweather

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Office hours: Fayerweather 324M, Thursdays, 10 am-12 pm and 2-4 pm (*by appointment*)

I. Course Description

The History of New York City Real Estate offers a historical survey of the last four centuries of real estate development in New York City, with a primary focus on Manhattan. It relies not only on existing sources held by Columbia libraries and others, but also on material from the collection of Seymour Durst – the patriarch of one of New York’s foremost real estate families and a passionate collector of the City’s historical memorabilia. His collection was recently gifted to Avery Library and has been catalogued and digitized there for future public access.

The course is structured primarily as a series of lectures, many of which draw on original material in the Durst collection. Because of the size of the class, where possible this original material will be reproduced and made available on *Courseworks* for students. In situations where that is not possible, and for the mid-term assignment, students will be encouraged to pursue materials available at Avery or digitally and will receive guidance to do so. In addition, students will be required to make walking tours to locations we are studying.

The course will be organized chronologically, and will cover the period from the original Dutch settlement of New Amsterdam through the present time. However, each presentation will also contain thematic elements, using real estate developments to examine social and economic forces of the period. The readings supplement and add color to the lectures, to give a feel for the issues and people involved at the time.

In the first half of the course, these topics range from the earliest systems of landholding and the evolution of the Manhattan street grid through the development of the nation’s first public housing projects and the construction of the world’s tallest skyscrapers. The latter

part of the course will touch specifically on modern themes that continue to shape the real estate environment of the city today. These include the continued regeneration of a once-industrial waterfront, the ever-evolving nature of public-private partnerships in development, and the seminal connection between civic places, like transportation hubs and parks, and real estate.

II. Course Requirements and Assignments

Students will be expected to attend all classes and complete assigned weekly readings. Short assignments on selected topics from these readings may also be requested. In addition, walking tours will be assigned. As key deliverables, students will be asked to prepare a term paper on a subject of their choosing and will be expected to use the Durst archive in preparing that paper. Students will also sit a final exam.

III. Course Grading Criteria

Course grading criteria are as follows:

- Completion of readings and assignments: 20%
- Attendance and in-class participation: 20%
- Term paper: 30%
- Final exam: 30%

Only exceptional performers will receive a High Pass. Those who fall short on more than one major assignment will receive a Low Pass.

IV. Readings

There is one required textbook for the course, which is available in the bookstore or may be ordered on-line:

Ballon, Hilary, editor, The Greatest Grid: The Master Plan of Manhattan 1811-2011, Columbia University Press, 2012.

Students will be expected to complete readings in advance of class. With the exception of those from the required textbook, **readings will be posted one week in advance on Courseworks.**

Please purchase the textbook and complete the specified readings before the first class.

V. Course Outline

**Starred items come from the Durst collection and will be posted each week alongside the other materials.*

Class 1 | Sept 7: Course Overview and Origins

- Dutch and British rule
- Land ownership patterns
- The Commissioners' Plan
- Early development of the grid

Required readings:

Ballon, Hilary, editor, The Greatest Grid: the Master Plan of Manhattan 1811-2011, 2012, Chapters 2, 4 and 5.

Pound, Arthur, The Golden Earth, 1975, Chapters 3, 4 and 6.

*Oldboy, Felix, The Island of Manhattan: A Bit of Earth.

Optional readings:

Bonner, William, New York: The World's Metropolis, 1924, I-IV

*Brooks, Thomas R., The Night Wall Street Burned, 1966. pp. 1-7, 17-20.

Shorto, Russell The Island at the Center of the World, 2004, Chapter 3, pp. 37-66.

Class 2 | September 14: The Evolution of East and West

- Growth of the east side
- Early development on the west side
- Central Park

Required readings:

Ballon, Hilary, editor, The Greatest Grid: The Master Plan of Manhattan 1811-2011, 2012, Chapters 7, 8, 9 and 10.

Kinkead, Eugene, Central Park: The Birth, Decline and Renewal of a National Treasure, 1990, Chapter 2, pp. 11-21.

Class 3 | Sept 21: The Rise of Multi-Family Housing

Grid assignment due

Chris Sala, Avery Library, intro to research project

- The tenement house
- The rise of the NYC apartment
- The brownstone

Required readings:

Rachlis, Eugene, The Land Lords, 1970, pp. 3-30.

Anbinder & Tyler, Five Points, 2001, pp. 72-106.

Hawes, Elizabeth, New York, New York: How the Apartment House Transformed the Life of the City, 1993, Chapter 4 (“French Flats and Other First Thoughts”), pp. 35-52 Chapter 5 (“The Cooperative Experiment”), pp. 53-67.

*Wood, George W., The Growth of New York, 1865, pp. 28-49.

Optional readings:

Hood, Clifton, 722 Miles, 1993, Chapter 4, pp. 91-112.

Hawes, Elizabeth, New York, New York: How the Apartment House Transformed the Life of the City, 1993, Chapter 7 (“Two Communal Palaces”), pp. 92-112. Chapter 10 (“Building the Upper West Side”), pp. 151-173. Chapter 11 (“Selling Apartments”), pp. 174-187.

*Cohen, Elias, Real Estate Stories of Old New York.

*Edward Ewing Pratt, Industrial Causes of Congestion and Pollution in New York City, 1911.

*Deforest & Veiler, The Tenement House Problem, pp. 3-10, 38-46, 58-68.

*Home Builders Club, The Housing Crisis of Greater New York, 1921.

Class 4 | Sept 28: The Evolution of the Skyscraper

- The first zoning laws
- Corporate skyscrapers and the race for height
- The Chrysler and Empire State Buildings

- Rockefeller Center

Required readings:

Keith D. Revell, *Building Gotham*, (2003) “City Planning vs. the Law”, pp. 185-208.

Willis, Carol, *Form Follows Finance* (1997), pp. 19-48, 67-89.

Page, Max, *The Creative Destruction of Manhattan*, “Fifth Avenue’s Restless Renewals”, 1999, pp. 21-35, 44-67.

Weiss, Mark “Skyscraper Zoning: New York’s Pioneering Role”, *APA Journal*, Spring 1992, pp. 201-210.

* Rockefeller Center Inc., *The Story of Rockefeller Center*, 1942.

Optional readings:

Krinsky, Carol Herselle, *Rockefeller Center*, 1978, pp. 30-69

* Empire State, Inc., *Empire State Building: A History*, 1931.

* Chrysler Tower Corporation, *The Chrysler Building: A Brief History*, 1930.

Giorgio Ciucci, Manfredo Tafuri, et. al., *The American City: From the Civil War to the New Deal*, 1973, “Rockefeller Center,” pp. 461-483.

Walking Tour #1: Lower Manhattan, the Lower East Side, and Stuy Town

Class 5 | October 5: Public Housing and Urban Renewal

Submission of walking tour reflections

Submission of final paper topic by October 4

- the rise of public housing
- declining inner cities and suburban growth
- Stuyvesant Town
- Robert Moses and urban renewal

Required readings:

Max Page, *The Creative Destruction of Manhattan*, “The Foul Core of New York” 1999, pp.

69-110.

Samuel Zipp, The Rise and Fall of Urban Renewal in Cold War New York, 2010. Stuyvesant Town, pp. 73-113.

Ballon, Hilary and Jackson, Kenneth T., editors, Robert Moses and the Modern City: The Transformation of New York, 2007, Gutfreund, Owen, “Rebuilding New York in the Auto Age”, pp. 86-93 and Ballon, Hilary “Robert Moses and Urban Renewal”, pp. 94-115.

*Harlem River Houses, Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, 1930’s.

*City Planning Commission, Master Plan of Sections Containing Areas for Clearance, 1949.

Optional readings:

Fogelson, Robert M. Downtown: Its Rise and Fall 1880-1950, “Inventing Blight: Downtown and the Origins of Urban Redevelopment”, pp. 317 – 380.

Teaford, Jon C. The Rough Road to Renaissance: Urban Revitalization in America, 1940-1985, 1990, Chapter 3 (“Progress or Decay”) pp. 82-121.

Caro, Robert, The New Yorker, Annals of Politics: The Power Broker: I and II, “The Best Bill Drafter in Albany” and “If the Ends Don’t Justify the Means, What Does?”

Eugene Rachlis & John E. Marqusee, The Land Lords, 1963, “The White-Collar Cities of Fred French”, pp. 164-193, “William Zeckendorf’s Many Splendored Cities”, pp. 257-295.

*Triborough Bridge Authority, Joint Study of Arterial Facilities, 1955.

Class 6 | October 12: The Making of Midtown

- Lever, Seagram
- Rockefeller and the UN
- Avenue of the Americas

Readings:

* Avenue of the Americas Association, Inc., The Saga of Avenue of the Americas. 1974

* New York Chapter of the AIA. East Midtown Manhattan., pp. 1-72

Stern, Robert A. M., Thomas Mellins, and David Fishman. New York 1960: Architecture and Urbanism between the Second World War and the Bicentennial. New York, NY: Monacelli, 1995. pp.330-639.

* Rockefeller Center Inc., The Story of Rockefeller Center, 1942.

Optional readings:

Koolhaas, Rem. Delirious New York. "How Perfect Perfection Can Be The Creation of Rockefeller Center", 1994

Nash, Eric Peter., and Norman McGrath. Manhattan Skyscrapers. New York: Princeton Architectural, 2010. pp. 93-131.

Stern, Robert A. M., Thomas Mellins, and David Fishman. New York 1960: Architecture and Urbanism between the Second World War and the Bicentennial. New York, NY: Monacelli, 1995. pp.324-330.

Class 7 | October 19: Communities and Power: Jacobs and Moses

- Lincoln Square
- The battle for Washington Square
- Jane Jacobs
- The Lower Manhattan Expressway

Required readings:

Fortune magazine, ed. Exploding Metropolis, Jane Jacobs, "Downtown is for People", pp. 157-184.

Samuel Zipp, The Rise and Fall of Urban Renewal in Cold War New York, 2010, "Lincoln Center", pp. 157-182, 201-239.

*Lincoln Square Project, Committee on Slum Clearance, July 1956.

Gratz, Roberta, The Battle for Gotham: New York in the Shadow of Robert Moses and Jane Jacobs, Introduction, pp. xxi-xxxix.

Optional readings:

Flint, Anthony, Wrestling with Moses, 2009, "The Battle for Washington Square Park", pp. 61-92 and "The Lower Manhattan Expressway", pp. 137-178.

Mumford, Lewis "The Sky Line: Mother Jacobs' Home Remedies", The New Yorker, December 1, 1962.

Caro, Robert, The New Yorker, “Annals of Politics – the Power Broker IV: Point of No Return.”

Walking Tour #2: World Trade Center, Battery Park City, Hudson River Park, the High Line

October 26: NO CLASS (ULI week)

Class 8 | November 2: Lower Manhattan: The World Trade Center and Battery Park City

Submission of walking tour reflections

- Industry and infrastructure on the waterfront
- Containerization and its impact
- The World Trade Center
- Battery Park City

Required readings:

Gillespie, Angus Kress, The Life of New York City’s World Trade Center, “Political Background”, pp. 16-53.

Gordon, David L.A., Battery Park City: Politics and Planning on the NYC Waterfront, 1997.

- Introduction, pp. 1-6
- The City and State Negotiate, pp. 23-31
- The 1969 Master Development Plan, pp. 33-48
- Stalling Out pp. 49-56
- The 1979 Master Plan pp. 65-75.

*City Planning Commission, The Lower Manhattan Plan, 1966.

Optional readings:

*Annual Report, Battery Park City, 1974.

The NYS Chamber of Commerce Committee on Lower Manhattan Redevelopment, 1957.

Class 9 | November 9: Remaking Midtown: Times Square

- Early partnerships
- Development corporations
- Case studies: Times Square

Required readings:

Taylor, William, editor, Inventing Times Square, Hammack, David, “Developing for Commercial Culture”, pp. 36-50, and Blackmar, Betsy, “Uptown Real Estate and the Creation of Times Square”, pp. 51-65.

Sagalyn, Lynne, Times Square Roulette: Remaking the City icon, 2001, Chapters 3,4,5, pp.69-168 (skim).

*Fainstein, Susan S, “The Redevelopment of 42nd St” City Almanac, Vol. 18, Summer 1985, pp. 2-28.

Optional readings:

Sagalyn, Lynne “Public/Private Development: Lessons from History, Research and Practice”, Journal of the American Planning Association, Vol. 73, No. 1, Winter 2007.

Pierre, Jon, editor, Partnerships in Urban Governance, Beauregard, Robert A., “Public-Private Partnerships as Historical Chameleons: The Case of the United States,” pp. 52-70.

Class 10 | November 16: Transportation and Real Estate

Term Paper *due*

- Transportation gateways
- Grand Central and Penn Station
- NYCT #7 extension

Required readings:

Schlicting, Kurt C., Grand Central Terminal: Railroads, Engineering and Architecture in New York City, 2001, Chapter 4 (“New York’s Grand Central”), p. 155-193.

Wood, Anthony, Preserving New York, 2008, “The Myth of Pennsylvania Station”, pp. 1-20.

Jonnes, Jill, Conquering Gotham, 2007, Chapter 26 (“Coda”), pp. 296-315.

Hudson Yards reading TBD

Walking Tour #3: Penn Station, Times Sq, Bryant Park, Grand Central, Rock Center

NOVEMBER 23: NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)

Class 11 | November 30: Parks and Real Estate

Submission of walking tour reflections

Required readings:

Berens, Gayle and Garvin, Alexander, Urban Parks and Open Space, Bryant Park”, pp. 44-57.

Garvin, Alexander Public Parks: The Key to Livable Communities, “Quantifying Value”, pp. 49-55.

Optional readings:

Crompton, John “The Impact of Parks on Property Values: A Review of the Empirical Evidence”, Journal of Leisure Research, Vol 33, No. 1, pp 1-31, 2001.

Class 12 | December 7: In-Class Final Exam
