HIST 565: Modern British History Seminar: British Urban History in the Long Nineteenth Century

M. 1.35-3.25
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In the late eighteenth century the vast majority of Britons spent their lives in a rural environment. Before the close of the nineteenth century by far the largest proportion of their descendants lived and died in towns and cities. Our perceptions of this transformation are filtered through a series of familiar images: the polite and patrician culture of Georgian Bath; the shock of the new at Manchester, the world’s first industrial city; Charles Dickens’ grimy Coketown; the urban pride of Joseph Chamberlain’s Birmingham; the slums of Charles Booth’s London; Robert Roberts’ deprived Edwardian Salford, and so on. Drawing on the insights of historians, historical geographers and urban sociologists, this course will examine both the objective realities and the subjective perceptions and rationalizations as men and women wrestled to live in and with the urban society and culture they were creating.

Requirements:

Fall Term
—**Paper 1**: Book review of Tristram Hunt, *Building Jerusalem: The Rise and Fall of the Victorian City* (London: Phoenix, 2005), (6 pages for undergraduates, 10 pages for graduates), **due Friday, 3 Oct., 4 p.m.**—25%.

—**Paper 2**: Review essay of the readings for one of the weekly topics (12 pages for undergraduates, 18 pages for graduates), **due Friday, 30 Nov., 4 p.m.**—50%.

—**Class participation and oral presentation**—25%.

Winter Term
—**Research Paper** (20-25 pages for undergraduates, 30-40 pages for graduate students), **draft due Friday, 22 Mar.; final paper due Friday, 12 Apr., 4 p.m.**—80%.

—**Class participation and oral presentation**—20%.

Readings: The weekly listings are intended as a guide to some of the most important books and articles in the field, and should be helpful for the writing of papers. Items will be selected from each list for weekly discussion. Tristram Hunt, *Building Jerusalem*, is available for purchase at The Word.

*In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.*
McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

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**Readings and Topics**

**Major collections of essays:**


Derek Fraser and Anthony Sutcliffe (eds.), *The Pursuit of Urban History* (London: Edward Arnold, 1983).


**Sept. 10:** Introduction

**Sept. 17:** Overview I

**Sept. 24:** Overview II

**Oct. 1:** Theoretical
—Ways of thinking about the city, the city in history, and urban space; contrasting approaches to the study of the city.

Readings:
Derek Fraser and Anthony Sutcliffe (eds.), *The Pursuit of Urban History*. Introduction.

Oct. 8: No classes: Thanksgiving

Oct. 15: The significance of the eighteenth-century town.
—Urban renaissance, polite and commercial culture, ancien regime society, patrician and plebeian polarization, or aristocratic century?

Readings:
______, *The Eighteenth-Century Town.*
Peter Clark (ed.), *The Transformation of English Provincial Towns 1600-1800*.
Peter Borsay and Lindsay Proudfoot (eds), *Provincial Towns in Early Modern England and Ireland: Change, Convergence, and Divergence* (Oxford: British Academy, 2002).

—The onset of industrialization; the demographic explosion; new types of town; the aristocracy and the towns; landownership and landowning influence.

Readings:
Faujas de Saint-Fond, *A Journey Through England and Scotland to the Hebrides in 1784*.
J. Aikin, *A Description of the Country from Thirty to Forty Miles Round Manchester* (1795).
David Cannadine (ed.), *Patricians, Power and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Towns* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982).
Oct. 29: **A physical profile: the building and patterning of towns and cities.**
—Class segregation and the significance of suburbanization; Scottish exceptionalism; Continental and North American comparisons; the forms of urban architecture; the impact of railways.

**Readings:**


______, “The Railway as an Agent of Internal Change in Victorian Cities,” in Morris and Rodger (eds.), *Victorian Cities*.


______, “Victorian Cities: How Different?” in Morris and Rodger (eds.), *Victorian City*.

(Social History, 2 (1977).)

Martin J. Daunton, “Housing,” in Thompson (ed.), *Cambridge Social History*, vol. II.


H. J. Dyos and M. Wolff (eds.), *The Victorian City*.


Nov. 5: **The bourgeoisie and the town.**
—Bourgeois ideology and order; bourgeois hegemony?; women and domesticity; public and private spheres; the variety and meaning of voluntary associations.
Readings:
_______, “Clubs, Societies and Associations,” in Thompson (ed.), *Cambridge Social History,* vol. III.
_______, “The Middle Class and British Towns and Cities of the Industrial Revolution 1780-1870,” in Fraser and Sutcliffe (eds.), *Pursuit of Urban History.*
_______, “A Year In the Public Life of the British Bourgeoisie,” in Colls and Rodger (eds.), *Cities of Ideas.*
Alan J. Kidd and David Nicholls (eds), *The Making of the British Middle Class?* (Stroud, Glos.: Sutton, 1998).
_______, *Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism: Middle-Class Identity in Britain, 1800-1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).
John Field, “Wealth, Styles of Life and Social Tone Amongst Portsmouth’s Middle Class, 1800-75,” in Morris (ed.), *Class, Power and Social Structure*.
Dror Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class: The Political Representation of Class in Britain, c. 1780-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

**Nov. 12:** The lower classes and the town.
—The working classes, artisans and the petite bourgeoisie; radicalism; the “dangerous classes.”

**Readings:**
———, “Urban Society and the Petite Bourgeoisie in Nineteenth-Century Britain,” in Fraser and Sutcliffe (eds.), *Pursuit of Urban History*.


David Gadian, “Class Formation and Class Action in North-West Industrial Towns, 1830-50,” in Morris (ed.), *Class, Power and Social Structure*. (Also in Morris and Rodger (eds.), *Victorian Cities*, and in *Historical Journal*, 21 (1978).)

Catherine Hall, “The Butcher, the Baker, the Candlestickmaker: the Shop and Family in the Industrial Revolution,” in Morris and Rodger (eds.), *Victorian Cities*.


**Nov. 19: Controlling the town.**
—Troops, police, prisons; the urban crowd.

**Readings:**


**Nov. 26: Perceptions of the town.**

—The rise of statistical investigation; the “condition of England” question.

**Readings:**

Charles Dickens, Sketches by Boz (1836); Hard Times (1854).


Benjamin Disraeli, Sybil (1845).
Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South* (1855).

Graeme Davison, “The City as a Natural System: Theories of Urban Society in Early Nineteenth Century Britain,” in Fraser and Sutcliffe (eds.), *Pursuit of Urban History*.

**Dec. 3:** Governing the town.
—Municipal and sanitary reform; health and disease; the town as graveyard; working-class housing.

**Readings:**
*R. C. on the State of Large Towns*, 1844.
*R. C. on the Housing of the Working Classes*, 1884-5.
——, “Public Space and Private Space: the Victorian City and the Working-Class Household,” in Fraser and Sutcliffe (eds.), *Pursuit of Urban History*.
Mary Poovey, *Making a Social Body: British Cultural Formation 1830-1864* (Chicago:
University of Chicago Press, 1995).

**Wed., Dec. 5:** Christianizing the town.
—Church-building; church paternalism; the churches and the working classes; denominational rivalry.
**Readings:**
Horace Mann, *The Religious Census of 1851*.
Jan. 7: The late Victorian and Edwardian city.
—Local government; town halls; civic pride; municipal socialism; the music hall; department stores; class structure; the city and sexuality.

Readings:
Joan Smith, “Class, Skill and Sectarianism in Glasgow and Liverpool, 1880-1914,” in Morris (ed.), *Class, Power and Social Structure*.
Anthony Sutcliffe, “In Search of the Urban Variable: Britain in the Later Nineteenth Century,” in Fraser and Sutcliffe (eds.), *Pursuit of Urban History*.
Hamish Fraser, “Municipal Socialism and Social Policy,” in Morris and Rodger (eds.), *Victorian Cities*.
Felix Driver and David Gilbert (eds.), *Imperial Cities: Landscape, Display and Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).
Jeffrey Weeks, “Inverts, Perverts and Mary-Annes: Male Prostitution and the Regulation of Homosexuality in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries,” *Journal of Homosexuality*, 6, 1/2 (Fall/Winter 1980-1).


**Jan. 14:** The late Victorian and Edwardian slum—and ways out.
——Outcast London; the rediscovery of urban poverty; the classic slum; town-planning and the Garden City movement.

**Readings:**


Ebenezer Howard, *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* (1902).


Peter Hall and Colin Ward, *Sociable Cities: The Legacy of Ebenezer Howard* (Chichester: John
Wiley and Sons, 1998).
Peter Hall, Urban and Regional Planning, 4th edn (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).
Helen Meller, European Cities 1890-1930s: History, Culture and the Built Environment (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 2001).
________, Towns, Plans and Society in Modern Britain (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
Anthony Sutcliffe, Towards the Planned City: Germany, Britain, the United States and France 1780-1914 (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1981).
Brian Lewis, ‘So Clean’: Lord Leverhulme, Soap and Civilization (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), chap. 3.