

Department: HIST

Course No.: 241W

Title: The History of Urban America

Credits: 3

Contact: Nancy Shoemaker

WQ: W

Catalog Copy: History 241W. The History of Urban America (Also offered as URBN 241W.) Either semester. Three credits. Prerequisite: ENGL 105 or 110 or 111 or 250.

The development of Urban America with emphasis on social, political, physical, and environmental change in the industrial city.

W Criteria: The W component of the course includes a term paper on some aspect of American Urban History; each student will select a topic from a list of recommendations, or will obtain permission to undertake another topic. For instance, one potential recommended topic might be a study of the changing uses of a specific city block over time; another might be “Controlling Stray Pigs in Nineteenth Century New York.” The paper will be no less than fifteen (revised) pages and otherwise in conformity with the University of Connecticut W guidelines. The paper must be submitted for criticism and then revised at least once.

The instructor will devote significant class time to examining the structure of a successful essay, using examples from the assigned readings and student papers (subject, of course, to the permission of the student who wrote the paper).

In grading and commenting on the first drafts of papers, the instructor will pay attention to the quality of composition, including the fluidity and logic of paragraphs and sentences. The main focus, though, will be on strengths or weaknesses of the essay's argument. Is the argument clear, logical and consistent? Is it adequately supported by evidence? Does the writer carefully consider a range of evidence and ideas?

Each student's revision of the first draft should go further than a mere correction of minor errors. Students will be expected to sharpen fuzzy thinking, improve the organization of their essays, and consider additional source material or ideas. Each student will be expected to meet with the instructor to discuss a specific plan for improving the paper after the first draft.

Additional homework/writing projects may include two shorter papers (around three or four pages in length) on assigned topics based on the required reading. For instance, one potential topic might be an examination of mid-19 th century understandings of urban epidemics, to be based on primary and secondary sources provided in a course packet or reader. The major paper and the shorter writing projects will enhance learning the content of the course by engaging

students with specific intellectual problems drawn from distinct moments of American urban history. Taken together, the term paper and smaller writing projects will count 50 per cent of the grade. The student cannot pass the course without passing the W component. The syllabus will clearly state these requirements.