If all cities are a mix of raw unregulated development, precise professional master plans and unexpected local anomalies, this dynamic has defined American cities – their commonalities and differences --for more than 300 years. As such, they have long embodied the allure and the shock of the modern metropolis. This is not so much a stylistic idiom as a multiplicity of contested forces. Traditions and inventions, elite and popular culture, are inscribed in physical settings and still resonant in our contemporary lives.

This class explores such spatial forms, both generic and unique creations. While we focus on historical patterns and variations, each session takes up key questions for the present. Who decides where “downtown” is located? How have Americans envisioned homes – and housing? How do new sites influence existing social patterns and natural environments? How does infrastructure affect the efficiency and equity of a city? The past affects both what is possible in the present and what people can imagine about the future.

Lectures and readings juxtapose chronology with analyses of particular spatial patterns and cultural themes. These include: the use and distortions of maps; changing sites and purposes for civic centers; edge cities, suburbs and exurbs; the power and transience of commerce; the collective necessity of urban infrastructure; the appeal and neglect of nature.

Regular class attendance is required, as are weekly readings: both primary (historical) sources and diverse contemporary analyses. We’ll talk about them in class. Read each week’s assignments before class to give you some background. Three 1-page analyses of various kinds of sources are also required (on time) -- plus a research paper (or another approved final project). There is no exam--- except for students who miss 3 or more classes.
WEEK 1 (Sept. 8). PATTERNS OF COMMUNITY AND CONFLICT
Histories and futures; the myth of American 'exceptionalism'; transnational influences; inscribing beliefs on the landscape; colonial towns and origin myths. BACKGROUND:

“Timeline,” Settlement Patterns: Perspecta 30 (1999), 7-9

Architectural history is an essential underpinning for urban history. You might try:
Gwendolyn Wright, USA: Modern Architectures in History (London & Chicago, 2008)

A good background history of American urbanism and urban design:

Recommended texts on Native American, Spanish, British & other colonial-era cities:

WEEK 2 (Sept. 15). MANUFACTURING CIVIC & COMMERCIAL CULTURE
The meanings and deceptions of maps; urban plans and their patrons; dissemination of the grid and the town square; urban boosterism; producing industrial space.

Dell Upton, Another City: Urban Life and Public Space in the New American Republic (New Haven, 2008), 281-94
What Is a City? Remaking the Urban after Hurricane Katrina (Athens, 2008), 172-185

Recommended:
Bill Hubbard, Jr., American Boundaries: The Nation, the States, the Rectangular Survey (Chicago, 2009)
WEEK 3 (Sept. 22). THE “CITY BEAUTIFUL” & THE PROGRESSIVE CITY
American visions of modern urban growth; Civic centers and neighborhood reforms; creating ‘downtown’; the ‘new woman’; social sciences & regional modernisms.

*** First Assignment Due

Daniel Burnham and Edward Bennett, Plan of Chicago (1909; Chicago, 1997), 99-109
Max Page, The Creative Destruction of Manhattan, 1900-1940 (Chicago, 1999), 52-67

Recommended:
Jessica Ellen Sewell, Women and the Everyday City: Public Space in San Francisco, 1890-1915 (Minneapolis, 2011)
Howard Gillette, Between Justice and Beauty: Race, Planning and the Failure of Urban Policy in Washington DC (Baltimore, 1995)
Jan Ciglioano and SB Landau, eds., The Grand American Avenue, 1850-1920 (SF, 1994)

WEEK 4: (Sept. 29). THE ‘HOUSING CRISIS’ IN CITIES AND SUBURBS
Modern “projects” as ideal or dystopian environments; the elusive “Perfect Home”; affordable housing; the role of site plans in urban and suburban development.

Tenement House Department of the City of New York, For You (New York, 1917)
D.J. Waldie, Holy Land: A Suburban Memoir (New York, 1996), 1-14
Ellen Dunham-Jones and June Williamson, Retrofitting Suburbia: Urban Design Solutions for Redesigning Suburbia (Hoboken, 2009), viii-xiii, 2-13

Recommended:
John Bauman et. Al., From Tenements to the Taylor Homes: In Search of an Urban Housing Policy in 20th-Century America (University Park, PA, 2000)
Andrew Blauvelt, ed., Worlds Away: New Suburban Landscapes (Minneapolis, 2008)
Becky Nicolaides and Andrew Wiese, eds., The Suburban Reader (NY & Lond, 2006)
Barry Bergdoll Reinhold Martin, Foreclosed:Rehousing the American Dream (NY, 2012)
WEEK 5 (Oct. 6). COMMERCIAL CULTURE IN AMERICAN URBAN LIFE
‘The world-as-exhibition’ from department stores to shopping centers; the rise and demise of Main Streets; the audacious Strip and the monotonous Mall; cyber shopping

**Second Assignment due**

Victor Gruen, “Cityscape and Landscape,” Arts and Architecture (Sept. 1955)
Anna Klingmann, Brandscapes: Architecture in the Experience Economy (2007), 312-29

Recommended:
Alex Wall, Victor Gruen (Barcelona, 2005), esp. pp. 58-72, 107-13
Ann Satterthwaite, Going Shopping: Consumer Choices & Community Consequences (New Haven, 2001)
John Chase, Glitter Stucco and Dumpster Diving: Reflections on Building Production in the Vernacular City (New York, 2002)

WEEK 6 (Oct. 13): THE NEW DEAL, PRAGMATISM & INFRASTRUCTURE
Modernisms and modernities; soft and hard infrastructure services; traditions of American pragmatism; the legacy of the New Deal; Robert Moses as urban czar

Mitchell Schwartzer, Zoomscape: Architecture in Motion and Media (NY, 2004), 12-25, 100-111
Keller Easterling, Organization Space: Landscapes, Highways, Houses (1999), 98-111

Recommended:
Kazys Varnelis, “Invisible City: Telecommunication,” in Varnelis,ed. The Infrastructural City (Barcelona, 2008), 118-129
Tim Culvahouse, ed., The Tennessee Valley Authority (New York, 2007)
Jameson Doig, Empire on the Hudson: Entrepreneurial Vision and Political Power at the Port of New York Authority (New York, 2009)
WEEK 7 (Oct. 20). URBAN CENTER & EDGE CITY IN THE POST-WAR ERA
Urban renewal downtown; slum clearance, luxury apartments and convention centers; expressionism and "new humanism" in design; new-towns-in-town and beyond.

** Research Proposal due

Catherine Bauer, “Do Americans Hate Cities?” (1956) rpt. Architecture California, 1994
Louise Mozingo, Pastoral Capitalism: A History of Suburban Corporate Landscapes (Cambridge, 2011), 61-91

Recommended:
Alan Shulman, ed., Miami Modern Metropolis: Paradise and Paradox in Midcentury Architecture and Planning (Miami Beach, 2009)
Peter Galison, “War against the Center” in Antoine Picon and Alessandra Ponte, eds. Architecture and the Sciences: Exchanging Metaphors (NYork, 2003), 197-227
Reinhold Martin, Organizational Complex: Architecture, Media and Corporate Space (Cambridge, 2003)
Max Page and Timothy Mennel, eds., Reconsidering Jane Jacobs (New York, 2011)
Samuel Zipp, Manhattan Projects: The Rise and Fall of Urban Renewal in Cold War New York (New York, 2010)

WEEK 8 (Oct. 27). ENVIRONMENTALISM AND URBANISM
American sensibilities about and disdain for natural environments; the legacy of urban parks; rediscovering green design; Earth Day & its aftermath; environmental justice

Frederick Law Olmsted, “Public Planning and the Enlargement of Towns” (1870) in S.B. Sutton, ed., Civilizing American Cities (NY, 1997), 52-99 (selections)
Reyner Banham, Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies (NYotk 1971),137-60

Recommended:
Eugenie Birch and Susan Wachter, eds., Growing Greener Cities (Philadelphia, 2008)
William Ramroth, Planning for Disaster: How Natural and Man-Made Disasters Shape the Built Environment (New York, 2007)
Matthew Klingle, Emerald City: An Environmental History of Seattle (New Haven, 2007)
WEEK 9 (Nov 3). ELECTION DAY HOLIDAY

WEEK 10 (Nov. 10). URBAN CRISES, URBAN SPECTACLES
Community design and spaces of identity politics; Rustbelt and Sunbelt cities in a post-Fordist economy; urban design; tourism, tax revenues and cities as “growth machines”

*** Third Assignment due

Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, Learning from Las Vegas (1972), 3-20, 128-139, 160-63

Recommended:
Richard Bernard and Bradley Rice, Sunbelt Cities: Policy and Control since WWII (Austin, 1985)
Alan Altshuler and David Luberoff, Mega-Projects (Washington, DC, 2003)
Aron Vinegar & Michael Golec, eds., Relearning from Las Vegas (Minneapolis, 2009)

WEEK 11 (Nov 17). THEORY, SCIENCE, HISTORY & POSTMODERNISM
Historic preservation and contextual design; the rise of theory; the “LA School” on gentrification, controls & inequalities; design guidelines/regulations


Recommended:
Era Ben-Joseph and Terry Szold, eds., Regulating Place (New York/London, 2005)
David Grahame Shane, Recombinant Urbanism (Chichester, GB, 2005)
Randall Mason, The Once and Future New York: Historic Preservation and the Modern City (Minneapolis, 2009)
Michael Lariace & Elizabeth Macdonald, eds., The Urban Design Reader (NY 2007)
Alex Krieger and William S. Saunders, eds., Urban Design (Minneapolis, 2009)
WEEK 12 (Nov. 24): THE LURE OF THE FUTURE and RETURN OF THE REPRESSED

Neo-traditional v. neo-avant-garde; “experience” in the resurgence of information technology, environmentalism and historic preservation; local and global urbanism

Stephen Graham and Simon Marvin, Splintering Urbanism: Networked Infrastructures, Technological Mobilities and the Urban Condition (L & NY, 2002), 203-216

Recommended:
Mindy Thompson Fullilove, Urban Alchemy: Restoring Joy in America’s Sorted-Out Cities (New York, 2013)
Kelly Shannon and Marcel Smets, The Landscape of Contemporary Infrastructure (Rotterdam, 2010)
Roger Sherman, L.A. under the Influence (Minneapolis, 2010)
Paloma Pavel, Breakthrough Communities: Sustainability and Justice in the Next American Metropolis (Cambridge, 2009)
Aseem Inam, Planning for the Unplanned: Recovering from Crises in Megacities (New York, 2005)
John Thackara, In the Bubble – Designing in a Complex World (Cambridge, 2005)