

Race, Class and Politics in New York City
Syllabus
Spring 2020

Texts to Purchase:

Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

Joshua B. Freeman, *Working Class New York* (New York: New Press, 2001).

Richard Riordan, *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall* (any edition).

Learning Outcomes:

- You will analyze and examine demographic change and the relationship between such change and political and economic conflict.
- You will evaluate the manner in which immigrant groups were incorporated into economic, social and political life in New York.
- You will analyze how the categories of race, class and gender have interacted as mechanisms of both exclusion and inclusion.
- You will conduct primary source research on New York City history.
- You will employ a comparative framework to analyze New York City history alongside the histories of other American cities.

Course Objectives:

The objectives of this course are: to gain familiarity with the major themes of New York History since 1898, to learn to think historically, and to learn to think and write critically about arguments that underlie historical interpretation. We will also examine and analyze the systems and structures that have shaped life in New York, while seeking to understand how social groups have pursued change inside and outside of such structures.

Course Requirements:

Class Attendance and Participation (25% of grade)

Paper #1, Historical Newspapers Essay, 6 to 8 pages, due March 11 (25% of grade)

Paper #2, Comparative Urban History Paper, 6 to 8 pages, due April 29 (25% of Grade)

Take Home Final Exam, 7 to 10 pages (25% of grade)

Schedule of Classes

Wed. 1/22– **Introduction**

Mon. 1/27 – **The Draft Riots and the Dynamics of Race and Class in New York City.**

Wed. 1/29 – **Class Formation in Gilded Age New York.**

Mon. 2/3– **Consolidation of the Five Boroughs and the Politics of 1898** – Reading: “Barry J. Kaplan, “Andrew Green and the Creation of a Planning Rationale: The Formation of Greater New York City, 1865-1890,” *Urban Past and Present*, Summer, 1979. Documents: For and Against Consolidation.

Wed. 2/5 –**The Machine** – Reading: *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall*, by Richard Riordan; Daniel Czitrom, “Underworlds and Underdogs: Big Tim Sullivan and Metropolitan Politics in New York, 1889-1913,” *Journal of American History*, September, 1991.

Mon. 2/10 – **Immigration, Life and Labor in the Early Twentieth Century** – Reading: Richard A Greenwald, “The Burning Building at 23 Washington Place: The Triangle Fire, Workers and Reformers in Progressive Era New York,” *New York History*, vol. 83, no. 1 (Winter 2002); “The Irish American Worker in Transition, 1877-1914,” by John R. McKivigan and Thomas J. Robertson, from *The New York Irish*, eds. Bayor and Meagher; “The Coney Island Excursion,” from *Cheap Amusements* by Kathy Peiss; “The Committee of Fourteen and Saloon Reform in New York City, 1905-1920,” *Business and Economic History*, Winter, 1997; “New York City’s Public Baths: A Case Study in Urban Progressive Reform,” *Journal of Urban History*, November, 1980.

Wed. 2/12 – **The Great Migration and the Growth of Harlem** – Reading: Stephen Robertson et. al., “This Harlem Life: Black Families and Everyday Life in the 1920s and 1930s,” *Journal of Social History*, vol. 44, No. 1 (Fall 2010); Gilbert Osofsky, “A Decade of Urban Tragedy: How Harlem Became a Slum,” *New York History*, vol. 46, no. 4, (October 1965); Michael L. Goldstein, “Black Power and the Rise of Bureaucratic Autonomy in New York City Politics: The Case of Harlem Hospital, 1917-1931.” *Phylon*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (2nd QTR, 1980); “Playing the Numbers: Madame Stephanie St. Clair and African American Policy Culture in Harlem,” *Black Women, Gender and Families* (Fall 2008).

Mon. 2/17 – **Prohibition, Jimmy Walker and New York in the 1920s.**

Wed. 2/19 – **Depression in New York City** – Reading: Suzanne Wasserman, “Our Alien Neighbors: Coping with the Depression on the Lower East Side,” *American Jewish History*, June, 2000.

Mon. 2/24 – Paper Conferences

Wed. 2/26 – **Fiorello LaGuardia and the Politics of Reform** - Reading: Thomas Kessner, “Fiorello H. LaGuardia,” *The History Teacher*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Feb. 1993)

Mon. 3/2 – **The New Deal and New York City** – Reading: Marta Gutman, “Race, Place, and Play: Robert Moses and the WPA Swimming Pools in New York City,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, December, 2008.

Wed. 3/4 - **Life and Labor During the Second World War** - Reading: Freeman, chaps. 2-4; Kirsten Fermaglich, "What's Uncle Sam's Last Name? Jews and Name Changing in New York City During the World War II Era," *Journal of American History*, December 2015.

Mon. 3/9 – **Race, Residential Segregation, and Postwar Activism** – Reading: *To Stand and Fight* by Martha Biondi.

Wed. 3/11 – **The Automobile and the Flight from the City. PAPER 1 DUE**

Mon. 3/16 – Spring Break

Wed. 3/18 – Spring Break

Mon. 3/23 – **Puerto Rican Migration to New York** – Reading: New York Welfare Society Report (handout); Regina Bernard Carreno, "Puerto Ricans in New York," *Counterpoint*, 2010; Selected Chapters, *Down These Mean Streets*, by Piri Thomas

Wed. 3/25 – Labor Days - Reading – Freeman, chaps. 6-9

Mon. 3/30 – **Mayor Wagner: Liberalism, Machine Politics and Reform** – Reading: Robert W. Snyder, "A Useless and Terrible Death: The Michael Farmer Case, Hidden Violence and New York City in the Fifties," *Journal of Urban History*, February 2010.

Wed. 4/1 – **Policing, Civilian Review, and a Crisis of Authority** – Reading: Michael Flamm, "Law and Order at Large: The New York Civilian Review Board Referendum of 1966 and the Crisis of Liberalism," *The Historian*, 2002; Marilyn Johnson, "The Career Girl Murders: Gender, Race, and Crime in 1960s New York," *Women's Studies Quarterly*, Summer 2011; Mandi Isaacs Jackson, "Harlem's Rent Strike and Rat War: Representation, Housing Access and Tenant Resistance in New York, 1958-1964," *American Studies*, Spring 2006; Felicia Shpritzer, "A Case for the Promotion of Policewomen in the City of New York," *The Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science*, November 1959.

Mon. 4/6 – **The Lindsay Administration and the Boundaries of Liberalism** – Reading: Freeman, chap. 13; Themis Chronopoulos, "The Lindsay Administration and the Sanitation Crisis of New York City, 1966-1973," *Journal of Urban History*, April 2014.

Wed. 4/8 – **Longhairs, Hardhats and the Cultural Dynamics of Class in 1970s New York** – Reading: Freeman, chap. 14; Marc Levinson, "Container Shipping and the Decline of New York, 1955-1975," *The Business History Review*, Spring, 2006; Film – *Saturday Night Fever* directed by John Badham.

Mon. 4/13 – **Fiscal Crisis and the New York Blackout** – Reading: Freeman, chap. 15.

Wed. 4/15 – **Real Estate Ideology and Ed Koch** – Reading: Alex A. Merdjanoff, “The Fight for Affordable Rental Housing in 1980s New York,” *Journal of Urban History*, October 2018; Dolores Greenberg, “Reconstructing Race and Protest: Environmental Justice in New York City,” *Environmental History*, April 2000; Jess Bird, “Fire in the Bronx: Austerity, Quality of Life, and Nightlife Regulation in New York City Post-1975,” *Journal of Urban History*, March 2019.

Mon. 4/ 20 – **Airplane Immigration** – Reading: Nancy Foner, “Then and Now or Then to Now: Immigration to New York in Contemporary and Historical Perspective,” *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Winter-Spring 2006; Nancy Foner, “Race and Color: Jamaican Migrants in London and New York City, Winter 1985; Francois Pierre-Louis, “A Long Journey From Protest to Incorporation: The Political Development of Haitians in New York City,” *Journal of Haitian Studies*, Fall 2011; Paul Stoller, “Spaces, Places, and Fields: The Politics of West African Trading in New York City’s Informal Economy,” *American Anthropologist*, December 1996; Chou Li, “Commercialism and Identity Politics in New York’s Chinatown,” *Journal of Urban History*, January 2015.

Wed. 4/22 – **Race, Community and Conflict in the 1980s and 90s** – Reading: Wilbur C. Rich, “Racial Events, Diplomacy and Dinkins’s Image,” in *Civil Rights in New York City*, ed. Clarence Taylor (2011); Pedro Regalado, “The Washington Heights Uprising of 1992: Dominican Belonging and Urban Policing in New York City,” *Journal of Urban History*, December 2018; Film – *Do the Right Thing*, directed by Spike Lee.

Mon. 4/27 – **Rudy Giuliani and His Dead End Job** – Reading: Themis Chronopoulos, “The Making of the Orderly City Since the 1980s,” *Journal of urban History*, May 2017; Jerald Podair, “One City One Standard: The Struggle for Equality in Rudolph Giuliani’s New York,” in *Civil Rights in New York City*, ed. Clarence Taylor (2011).

Wed. 4/29 – **Mike Bloomberg and the Luxury City** – Reading: Ryan Ruby, “The Eighteenth Brumaire of Michael R. Bloomberg,” *The Baffler*, 2010; “Fences and Piers: An Investigation of a Disappearing Queer Community Space,” from *The Beach Beneath the Streets* by Benjamin Shepard and Greg Smithsimon (2011); Kevin Baker, “The Death of a Once Great City: The Fall of New York and the Urban Crisis of Affluence,” *Harpers*, July 2018. **PAPER 2 Due**

Mon. 5/4 - Final Class - Review