History 283: A History of New York City (01)

Instructor: Dr. Thomas D. Beal  
Semester / Year: Fall 2012  
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Office Hours: MWF (10-11), W (1-2)  
Course Held: MWF (12-1:00PM): SCH 106

Course Description: This Course surveys the history of New York City (New Amsterdam until 1664) from its origins as a trading post for the Dutch West India Company to its present status as America’s foremost metropolis. Building on the work of urban historians, this course weaves together evidence and interpretations from the fields of economic, political, social, ethnic and cultural history. Attention to the city’s growth in the colonial period, its emergence as the center of American commerce in the nineteenth century, and its current position as America’s “cultural” metropolis.

Teaching: The course provides several sources of information. The textbooks, George J. Lankevich, New York City: A Short History and Eric Homberger’s Historical Atlas of NYC offer an introduction to the history of New York City. The instructor’s lectures serve as another source of information. Each lecture will focus on a particular aspect of the city’s past such as New Amsterdam (a Dutch City), or New York City during the American War for Independence. Friday Discussion Sections represent another source of information. During discussion, we will examine –often in groups– the course’s required readings as well as additional material (powerpoint slides and handouts).

Goals:
1. Develop an understanding of the complexities of everyday life in New York City (New Amsterdam until 1664) from the colonial period to the end of the twentieth century.

2. Develop an understanding of the historic diversity of New York City’s population, and an understanding of some of the historically significant results of that diversity.

3. Develop an understanding of slavery’s history in New York City; also, develop an appreciation of the tensions (sometimes with disastrous consequences) the institution created in New York City.

4. Develop an understanding of the contributions which local trade, international commerce, manufacturing, the “industrial revolution,” and “de-industrialization” made to New York City. In so doing be able to analyze how these forces created both wealth and poverty.

5. Develop an understanding of the suburbanization of the New York City region, and its impact on NYC.

Required Texts:
George J. Lankevich, New York City: A Short History (NYU Press).
Eric Homberger, The Historical Atlas of New York City (Holt)
Jacob Riis, How the Other Half Lives (Penguin).

Additional Reading: Electronic Reserve: HIST 283 students will also read a series of Document Packets. The Packets are collections of historical documents and descriptions from New York City’s past. Each is available on the HIST 283 Angel page (Folder = HIST 283: Electronic Reserve Material).

Evaluation:
Class Participation = 10%  
Reading Response Papers = 15%  
Atlas of NYC Paper = 20%  
Early Films of New York = 05%  
Exam # 1 = 10%  
Exam # 2 = 20%  
Exam # 3 = 20%
**Class Participation & Discussion (10%)**: Each week students will discuss the required reading with their peers and the instructor. Mostly on Fridays, these discussions explore the readings included in the document packets. The readings are usually brief; and students must read them before class. During these discussions students are free to explore issues, ask questions relevant to the readings and the history of New York City.

**Reading Response Papers (15%)**: History 283 students will complete four (4) response papers. Each paper serves as a review / interpretation of some of the required reading for AHIS 283. Students have a good deal of freedom as to which response papers they complete; however, students are required to complete response papers on Zabin’s *New York Conspiracy*. The instructor has established a set of readings, due dates, questions and guidelines (see, Angel the page for AHIS 283).

**Films of Early New York City Paper (05%)**: As the song goes, “An image is worth a thousand words.” Students will carefully watch and thoughtfully examine in a brief essay, some of the early movies documenting everyday life in New York City (http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/papr/nychome.html). These films –many of them made by Thomas Edison– document everyday life and street life in New York City.

**Atlas of NYC Paper – Research Paper (20%)**: History 283 students will produce a seven (7) to ten (10) page research analysis paper that explores the history of one of New York City’s streets or neighborhoods. This project require students to explore both the history of New York City and the history of a single street or neighborhood. In addition to secondary sources, students are required to use the *New York Times* electronic index (available on the Milne Library website) to research the history of the street or location. Students should begin this paper by referring to Homberger’s *Historical Atlas of New York City*. In their essays, students may explore, for example, the events that took place on the street or the street / location’s history. The goal of this assignment is to research a single street /location’s history; therefore, students might want to select a early colonial street and explore its history over the course of the semester. A separate assignment sheet for this paper is posted on Angel (title - “Atlas of NYC Research Paper”).

**Exams (50%)**: History 283 students will complete three exams. Exams require students to respond to identification and essay questions. **Exam Extra Credit**: Students will have opportunities to complete additional history-related assignments (these will be a specific due date [usually before an exam] for each assignment. The equivalent point value of these activity-based written assignments will supplement the exam grade for a given unit.

**Late Assignment and Make –Up Test Policy.** Students may not turn in “late” or electronically submit an essay. Make-up exams will not be offered without proper documentation.

**Attendance Policy**: This is a college level course. As such, it is important that students attend each class meeting. Discussion grades are based on in-class performance.

**ADA Statement**: Students Diagnosed with a Disability – All individuals who are diagnosed with a disability are protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. As such, you may be entitled to certain accommodations within this class. If you are diagnosed with a disability, please make an appointment to meet with Student Disability Services (209 Alumni Hall, ext 2137). All students with the necessary supporting documentation will be provided appropriate accommodation as determined by the SDS Office. It is entirely your responsibility to contact SDS and concurrently supply me with your accommodation plan, which will inform me exactly what accommodations you are entitled to. You will only receive accommodations once you provide me with an SDS accommodation plan. Any previously recorded grades will not be changed.
Emergency Evacuation Procedures: In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation from our classroom, please evacuate to the Chase Gym so that College officials can account for you. Please review the College’s Emergency Evacuation Procedures and Shelter-in-Place Procedures at the following web link: http://www.oneonta.edu/security. All students are also encouraged to register for NY Alert for immediate notification of campus emergencies on or near the campus.

Course Outline:

Unit I: New Amsterdam/New York: The Colonial City

Week 1: Required Reading: Lankevich, “Preface.”
8/22: Course Introduction: History 283
8/24: The Dutch Golden Age

Week 2: Required Reading: Lankevich, 1-21; Document Packet # 1; Homberger, Atlas, Chap 1.
8/27: Settling New Amsterdam (Manhattan Island)
8/29: Settling New Amsterdam (Manhattan Island)
8/31: Discussion Section on Required Reading

9/03: New Amsterdam into New York
9/05: New Amsterdam into New York
9/07: In Class Workshop: Mapping the Colonial City; Discussion Section on Required Reading

9/10: The Growth and Development of the English City
9/12: The Growth and Development of the English City
9/14: Discussion Section on Required Reading

Week 5: Required Reading: Zabin, The New York Conspiracy Trials of 1741.
9/17: Lecture: Slavery and New York City’s Prosperity (17th and 18th century)
9/19: Group Discussion: The Slave Conspiracy of 1741 Trial Transcripts
9/21: Exam # 1 (in class)

Unit II: The Emerging Metropolis

Week 6: Required Reading: Lankevich, 49-68 and Trade During the Anglo-French War (Electronic Doc)
9/24: The Anglo-French War: The Beginnings
9/26: No Class: Fall Break
9/28: No Class: Fall Break

Week 7: Required Reading: Document Packet #4; Homberger, Atlas, 48-51.
10/01: The Anglo-French War and the Birth of New York
10/03: The Anglo-French War and the Birth of New York
10/05: Discussion Section: Document Packet # 4.

10/08: New York City before and after the American Revolution
10/10: New York City before and after the American Revolution
10/12: Discussion Section on Required Reading
  10/15: The Canal & America’s Foremost Metropolis
  10/17: The Canal & America’s Foremost Metropolis
  10/19: Discussion Section on Required Reading

  10/22: The Nineteenth Century City
  10/24: The Nineteenth Century City
  10/26: Discussion Section on Required Reading

  10/29: Documentary: Gang Life and Poverty in New York
  10/31: Discussion of Scorsese’s *Gangs of New York* (2003) and Asbury’s *Gangs* (1927)
  11/02: Exam # 2 (in class)
  Note: On 10/29 the instructor will arrange a post 8:00pm viewing of *Gangs of New York*.

**Unit III: The Modern City**

  11/05: African Americans in the Civil War Era
  11/07: Immigration in the Civil War Era
  11/09: Discussion Section on Required Reading
  **Paper Due:** Early Films of New York –see instruction sheet on Angel

  11/12: Riots, Immigrants and the Modern City
  11/14: Documentary Film and Special Discussion: J. Riis, *How the Other Half Lives* (chapters:
  “The Reign of Rum.”)
  York,” “Chinatown,” “Jewtown,” “The Sweaters of Jewtown.”)

Week 14: 11/19 to 11/23: Turkey Days: No Class

  11/26: The Modern City: The Economy and the Skyscraper
  11/28: The Modern City: The Depression and War
  11/30: Discussion Section on Required Reading
  **Research Paper Due:** Atlas Research Paper Due– see instructions on Angel

  12/03: World War II and its Aftermath
  12/05: World War II and its Aftermath & Documentary Clip / Special Discussion of J.Baldwin’s
  *Elizabeth’s Prayer* (Electronic Reserve)
  12/07: Discussion Section on Required Reading; Review for Final Exam

Week 17: **Final Exam Period:** Lankevich, 230-257 (before exam).
  12/10: Final Exam (in-class) 11:00AM to 1:30PM