

U89 AMCS 401: The Politics of Place: From Ferguson to the Gateway Arch

Instructor: Michael Allen

Saturday 1:00 – 5:45 PM, July 18 through August 8 | Lab Sciences 201

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Office hours by appointment only.

“In truth, because of the nature of the work to be done, almost all city planning is concerned with relatively small and specific acts done here and done there, in specific streets, neighborhoods and districts.”

Jane Jacobs

“Most buildings can be understood in terms of power and authority—as efforts to assume, extend, resist or accommodate it.”

Camille Wells

This course examines how political power manifests itself in the physicality of space: buildings, neighborhoods, public spaces, entire cities and metropolitan regions. This is the architecture behind architecture – social determinants, official acts of government and micro-political decisions on the neighborhood level. The central questions of the course: How does political power produce the built environment? Who has access to that political power? Who really designs the city, besides the architects and planners that get official credit?

To find answers, we will be examining public policy, urban planning, social history, official acts of commemoration, architectural practice, and historic preservation. We will read two primary texts that provide both local and national context, while supplementing that reading with topical excerpts and articles. Primarily, this course will rely on field investigation. Each session has a field component to illuminate themes of our inquiry. We will explore the political tactics and achievements of official, state-sanctioned urban renewal practice (the Gateway Arch/Downtown St. Louis); the rise of the American suburb (O'Fallon Park/ Ferguson/New Town); and the politics of unofficial urban renewal through grassroots revitalization strategies (Cherokee Street, Marine Villa & Gravois Park/Old North St. Louis).

This course is interdisciplinary; we will combine methodologies of political science, urban history, architectural history and urban planning. The pace of our work will be brisk due to the short schedule. Readings will provide the background for short in-class discussions but primarily for understanding the landscapes we visit in the field.

We will always meet at Lab Sciences 201 unless otherwise specified. We will have transportation for the field trips beyond the first class session.

This course fulfills the Humanities and Social Science distribution requirement for the AMCS MA program.

Readings

There are two required texts (both available in the campus bookstore):

1. Tracy Campbell, *The Gateway Arch: A Biography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013; ISBN: 9780300169492)
2. Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987; ISBN: 0195049837).

Other required readings are accessible on Blackboard (<http://bb.wustl.edu>) or will be distributed in class.

Required Work

Response Papers (3 at 15% each)	45%
Final Project	35%
Attendance and Participation in Discussion	20%

Response Papers

There will be weekly response papers to readings and field trips that should be 4-5 pages long. The prompts for the papers will be distributed in class and posted on Blackboard, since course activity will influence the exact questions for each paper.

If any student needs an extension on one of these papers, s/he should ask for one at the start of the class *before* which the paper is due. One extension will be granted, but only if it is requested according to the requirement listed on this syllabus.

Late papers will lose 3 points for each day they are not submitted. Email is an appropriate way of submitting a paper, and will be counted the same as paper submission.

Grades will be returned by the start of the next class.

Final Project

The exact prompt for the final project will be distributed in the **third** session, and will entail a substantial paper of 10-15 pages. The projects will be comparative analysis of the political dynamics that have shaped two (or three) of the sites we visit, which shall include:

- Confederate Memorial
- Jefferson National Expansion Memorial
- Downtown St. Louis

- North Riverfront/Possible Stadium Site
- St. Louis Place/Possible National Geospatial Intelligence Agency Site
- O'Fallon Park
- Ferguson
- New Town
- Cherokee Street
- Old North St. Louis

The final project is due by August 15. Since the class will operate at a break-neck speed, there is some spacing at the end of the class to make sure that students can adequately meet the deadline and develop a quality paper.

The paper cannot be late. If for any reason a student anticipates failure to meet the August 15 deadline, s/he shall notify the instructor immediately.

Academic Integrity

Needless to say, you are responsible for adhering to the university's academic integrity policies (for a full articulation of them, see <http://studentconduct.wustl.edu/integrity/policy>). In particular, you are expected to **produce your own work**, to **avoid inappropriate collaboration** (especially on the written assignments), and to **avoid various other forms of academic dishonesty**, including falsification of data and misrepresentation of sources.

Failure to cite and formally acknowledge your sources constitutes plagiarism, and will result in a failing grade (and likely disciplinary action within the bounds of Washington University's usual policies). You should produce work that is *very clear* in its acknowledgement of others' work – not only quoted material, but ideas and language as well. This is a standard of quality research that you are expected to meet. *When in doubt, cite!*

Citations and Formatting

All work for the course should use **the Chicago Style of documentation** (footnoting of each source each time you quote, paraphrase, summarize or otherwise reference it – see http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html or other such sources for guidance). Please use **an 11-point font, double space your work, and provide page numbers**.

Schedule

Session 1 (July 18): City Politics and How We Make Places

Questions for this session: What are the characteristics of city politics? How do politics relate to the built environment? To what extent are political values an expression of individual identities, in light of what we see in “Do The Right Thing” and what Judd and Swanstrom propose? Is there a difference between the “public” and the “people”?

Readings for this class (please read ahead of the first session):

Confederate Memorial Readings (list of web links posted on Blackboard)

Dennis Judd and Donald Swanstrom, “The Politics of American Cities: An Introduction,” *City Politics: Private Power and Public Policy* (New York: Pearson Education, 2004), p. 1-8.

Viewing during class:

Do The Right Thing (1989; Spike Lee, dir.)

Short field trip during class:

Confederate Memorial in Forest Park

Session 2 (July 25): Landscapes of Urban Renewal, Landscapes of Power

Questions for this session: How do built landscapes embody the dictates of political power? How do they defy or betray civic agendas? Can we name characteristics that define landscapes of civic power? Can we use Clay’s “epitome” district to read downtown St. Louis? Where are conflicts between local political regime agendas (urban renewal, monumental landscapes) and key national political narratives (individual freedom, private property rights)?

Response 1 due by start of class.

Readings for this class:

Dennis Judd and Donald Swanstrom, “Reviving the Central Cities,” *City Politics: Private Power and Public Policy* (New York: Pearson Education, 2004), p. 346-373. (posted on Blackboard as PDF)

Katherine Bristol, “The Pruitt-Igoe Myth.” *Journal of Architectural Education* Vol. 44, No. 3 (May, 1991). (posted on Blackboard as PDF)

Nicole Gelinas, “They’re Taking Away Your Property for *What?*”, *City Journal* (August 2005).

Ferguson

New Town, St. Charles

Session 4: The Politics of Neighborhood Renewal (August 8)

Questions for this session: What political claims about policy are made by residents of urban neighborhoods? Does local revitalization engender conflicts over space and neighborhood identity, and how are these resolved? Are there spatial, architectural or political similarities between suburbs and revitalizing neighborhoods? Does local government represent the demands of neighborhoods effectively? Is the image of a historic city neighborhood inherently political in the contemporary metropolis?

Response 3 due by start of class.

Readings for class:

Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*, chapters 10-15

Robin D.G. Kelley, "Disappearing Acts: Harlem in Transition," *The Suburbanization of New York* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2007), pp. 63-74. (posted on Blackboard as PDF)

Nicholas Phillips, "Oh? My Landlord!" *Riverfront Times* (24 May 2012).

<http://www.riverfronttimes.com/2012-05-24/news/luminary-center-arts-journey-religion-controversy/full/>

Jarrett Medlin and Jeannette Cooperman, "North Side Story," *St. Louis Magazine* (27 October 2009).

<http://www.stlmag.com/Special-Report-North-Side-Story/>

Field trip during class:

Cherokee Street – with guide Anne McCullough, Community Liason for the Cherokee Station Business Association

Old North St. Louis – with guide Sean Thomas, Executive Director of the Old North St. Louis Restoration Group

Final project due by August 15 at 5:00 PM.