

**HSS 404-004 – HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN SUBURB
Summer II 2020**

Professor: Dr. Kyle Riismandel
Email: kriis@njit.edu
Time: MWR, 1PM-4PM
Classroom: ONLINE
Office: GOOGLE MEET - meet.google.com/hva-kimx-yhw
Office Hours: By appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In this course, we will explore the history of the American suburb seeking to find how it has been defined and represented at different points in American history. In particular, we will explore the various narratives, images, and ideas that helped Americans make sense of suburban life. To do this we will:

1. Read and discuss key secondary sources on the history of the American suburb.
2. Do close readings of primary source texts including but not limited to film, television, news media, and the built environment paying special attention to how discourses of consumerism, family, the environment, race, home ownership, and home defense shaped suburban life.
3. Practice the skills of historical analysis through discussion and writing
4. Demonstrate proficiency of those skills through a research project

Course Goal	Assessment
Understand the history of American suburbs including being able to identify the ways in which Americans both physically built and represented in culture suburbs at various times in United States history	Reading and Class Participation Outline of Secondary Source Completion of Final Project Reading Quizzes
Identify and analyze primary and secondary sources	Reading and Class Participation Outline of Secondary Source Completion of Final Project
Research, write, and verbally present historical arguments using primary source evidence	Reading and Class Participation Outline of Secondary Source Completion of Final Project

COURSE TEXTS

All course readings are available via [Canvas](#). Please bring all readings to class.

ASSIGNMENTS

**YOU MUST COMPLETE ALL ASSIGNMENTS TO PASS THE COURSE.
FAILURE TO DO SO WILL RESULT IN AN AUTOMATIC F.**

Class Participation:

Participation in the context of this course does not simply mean showing up to class. You are asked to be active in and engaged with class discussions.

Participation will be assessed on the quality of contributions to class discussions. Quality participation demonstrates the following:

- Understanding of the historical context as gleaned from lectures and readings
- Completion of that week's assignments such as readings, watching videos, and completing worksheets, etc.
- A willingness to engage in critical assessment of course texts and lectures

Students are expected to attend class and to be punctual. Excessive absences or late arrivals will result in a greatly diminished class participation grade. Further, there will be only one screening of each film so please do your best to not miss class.

Reading Quizzes

You will take reading quizzes 3 times during the semester. The goal of these quizzes is to test your ability to comprehend course readings and apply them to the content of that week of the course.

Final Paper:

The assignments in the class will be the building blocks of the final paper as well as the final paper itself. This paper will be a chance for you to apply the skills you learn throughout the semester to write a paper analyzing a primary source or set of primary sources related to the history of American suburbs in their historical context. Each step in completing the paper, from the paper proposal to the final draft, will be completed in consultation with the instructor as well as your peer cohort. Further instructions will be distributed throughout the semester to guide you in your work.

Final grades will be calculated as follows:

Class Participation	18%
Rome Chapter Outline Assignment	7%
Reading Quizzes	3 x 4% = 12
Final Paper	
Paper Proposal	8%
Outline and Bibliography	12%
Rough Draft	18%
Final Draft	25%

Do not wait to contact me if you are falling behind or having trouble understanding course content. I am here to help so please let me know how I can do so

Course Policies

Attendance:

Students are expected to attend all course meetings on time unless receiving prior authorization. Missing class will not only adversely affect your class participation grade, but there will be screenings in class that will only be offered during that class period so do your best to attend. If you miss class to attend an NJIT sponsored event, to observe a religious holiday, or due to a documented illness, those absences will be excused. For these absences to count as excused, you must receive permission from the instructor in advance or provide a doctor's note in the case of sickness.

Classroom Conduct:

In this course, we welcome intellectual inquiry and thoughtful discussion of difficult questions, but hate speech and disrespectful comments will not be tolerated. We must come to class with an open mind, a willingness to learn, and fundamental respect for the humanity of each person in the room and the historical actors we discuss.

Office hours/student appointments: My office hours will be by appointment via Google Meet at this link - meet.google.com/hva-kimx-yhw. I am available throughout the week so please reach out if you have any questions about course topics, assignments, or grades.

Academic dishonesty: Students are expected to obey the NJIT honor code, and I will enforce this code to its fullest extent. The goal of this course is to evaluate your understanding of course materials and ability to express that understanding. Cheating, plagiarizing or otherwise violating the code of academic integrity not only breaks the trust between professor and student but keeps you from learning course content and improving writing and critical thinking skills. I am here to help so if you are having trouble, do not cheat, ask me for help.

For the tenets of the code or for clarification of what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, please consult: <http://www.njit.edu/academics/honorcode.php>.

Generally speaking, it is a violation of the academic integrity code to:

- Use someone else's words or ideas without attribution
- Copy content from someone else's paper, quiz, or exam
- Pay for course assignments to be complete by someone else

Cell phones:

Students must turn off and stow their cell phones before class begins. Under no circumstances may students answer their phones, make calls, send text messages, or use their cell phone in any manner during class hours unless approved by me before class begins.

Though, you may think texting, using Twitter, etc. is innocuous or invisible, it is not. Research shows that nearly everyone cannot effectively do two tasks at once such as take notes and text or participate in a discussion and play a video game. So, I ask that during class time, you focus on class activities as you will get more out of it and whatever thing you might have been doing during class.

Students Requiring Accommodations:

Students who require accommodations should contact NJIT's Student Disability Services to help procure accommodations in completing coursework. The center can be found at <http://www.njit.edu/counseling/services/disabilities.php>. I am happy to help in any way I can to

facilitate your learning but I need the help of experts in that office to address so please register as needed.

Course Schedule

Week 1 – June 29th

Monday

Introductions/Syllabus Review/Course Expectations and Goals/Doing an Historical Research Project

Wednesday – Lecture: Borderlands/Streetcar Suburbs

Discussion

Primary Text:

Design of Llewellyn Park, NJ

Secondary Text:

Dolores Hayden, *Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000*, pp. 71-96

The Craft of Research, Ch. 3

Thursday – NO CLASS – INDEPENDENCE DAY!

Week 2 – July 6th

Monday

Lecture: “White Flight” and Making the Postwar Suburb

Discussion

Primary Texts: Housing Covenants/FHA Maps

Secondary Text:

Kevin Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism*, Ch. 3

PROPOSALS DUE MONDAY JULY 8TH BY 5PM– VIA TURNITIN

Wednesday - NO CLASS WORK ON OUTLINES

Thursday – Lecture: Representing the Nuclear Family in Suburbia

Primary Source:

Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, Ch. 2

Week 3 – July 13th

Monday – NO CLASS

OUTLINES DUE TUESDAY JULY 16TH 5PM – VIA TURNITIN

Wednesday – NO CLASS – Outline Meetings

Thursday – Discussion/Screening

Primary Text: *Father Knows Best*, “Betty, Girl Engineer” (1955)

Secondary Texts:

Lynn Spigel, *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America*, pp. 36-73

Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap*, pp. 23-42

Week 4 – July 20th

Monday – Discussion

Primary Source:

The Simpsons, “Two Cars in Every Garage and Three Eyes on Every Fish”

Secondary Text:

Adam Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism*, pp. 87-119, 255-271

Wednesday – Race and Class in 21st Century Suburbs

Secondary Text:

Wendy Cheng, *The Changs Next Door to the Diazes: Remapping Race in Suburban California*, Ch. 5

Thursday – **NO CLASS – WORK ON ROUGH DRAFT/OPEN OFFICE HOURS**
ROUGH DRAFT DUE JULY 28TH by 5PM VIA TURNITIN

Week 5 – July 27th

Monday – **NO CLASS – ROUGH DRAFT MEETINGS**

Wednesday – Malls and Public Space in Suburban America

Secondary Text:

Kyle Riisman, “Mallrats and Arcade Addicts: Producing and Policing Suburban Public Space in 1980s America.” Vol. 5, Issue 2, Fall 2013, *Environment, Space, Place*.

Thursday – **NO CLASS WORK ON FINAL DRAFT**

Week 6 – August 3rd

Monday – **NO CLASS WORK ON FINAL DRAFT – OPEN OFFICE HOURS**
FINAL DRAFT DUE AUGUST 6th by 5PM via TURNITIN