

Suburban Nation?

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Fall and Winter Quarters, 2011-2012

Eight/16 credit meetings: Wednesdays 6-9:30 p.m. and every other Saturday, 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m.; **Twelve-credit** students meet above days and times AND Mondays, 6-8 p.m.*

Seminar II D 1105



Do suburbs simply reflect our cultures and attitudes or do they create them? What kinds of ideas about environment, class, race and gender do suburbs embody, and how do they in turn structure our culture, consumption, environment and attitudes? Why does the United States have a unique pattern of urban/suburban development that contrasts with other nations? Is an American suburb a built environment that encourages sprawl and consumption, or is it an attempt to contact nature and create community? Do suburbs establish islands of privilege, rejecting urban complexity and diversity, or is their creation a democratic strategy to enable home ownership? This program will look critically at historical, sociological and environmental aspects of suburbs, including the role of the federal government and financial institutions in structuring our landscape and living environments. We'll consider alternative forms of housing and community development put forward by urban planners and environmentalists and examine various models of development in the local community.

Credit will be awarded in environmental studies and U.S. history.

Fall Books:

- Suburban Nation The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream, by Duany, Plater-Zyberk, Speck, North Point Press; 2010 (10th Anniversary Edition)
- Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States, by Kenneth Jackson, Oxford University Press, 1985
- Black Wealth, White Wealth: A New Perspective on Racial Inequality, by Melvin L. Oliver, Thomas M. Shapiro, Routledge, 10th Anniversary edition, 2006
- Modern Housing for America: Policy Struggles in the New Deal Era, by Gayle Radford, University of Chicago Press, 1997

Schedule on the reverse side. *Note: some changes and corrections will be necessary!*

| Date | Activities | Reading completed | What's due? |
|---|--|--|---|
| Week One, Wednesday September 28 | Introductions, program overview, covenants. Workshop: What we know and need to learn about suburbs. Film, James Howard Kunstler's TED Talk: <i>The Tragedy of Suburbia</i> | | A current Evergreen library card and activated campus email account |
| Week Two: Wednesday, October 5 | Form project groups; seminar on <u>Suburban Nation</u> . Sarah: Historians and their lenses. How to read a book for seminar. | <u>Suburban Nation</u> | Seminar 1-pager, class questionnaire on moodle |
| Saturday, October 8 | Guest lecture, Jennifer Gerend, Evergreen faculty and former planning professional. Evaluating our community: Field work at Cedrona and West Olympia. | | |
| Week Three: Wednesday, October 12 | Guest on historic preservation; seminar on first half of Crabgrass Frontier. Films: historic suburban sprawl | <u>Crabgrass Frontier Through Chapter 8</u> | Seminar 1-pager |
| Week Four: Wednesday, October 19 | Guest: John Baldridge on the geography of suburbanization Seminar on second half of Crabgrass Frontier, film. Nancy: environmental effects of suburbanization. | <u>Crabgrass Frontier</u> to end | Essay #1 |
| Saturday, October 22 | Guest: Sandy Desner, historic preservationist and developer; The Land Use Game: Olympia's future | | |
| Week Five: Wednesday, October 26 | Black Wealth/White Wealth seminar, through Chapter 5. Film: Race: The Power of an Illusion | <u>Black Wealth/White Wealth</u> through Chapter 5 | Seminar 1-pager |
| Week Six: Wednesday, November 2 | Workshop on poverty, wealth, welfare, and housing with Monica Peabody. | <u>Black Wealth/White Wealth</u> to end | |
| Saturday, November 5 | Guest: Trevor Griffey on segregation in Puget Sound. Black Wealth/White Wealth seminar, chapter 6- end. Mid-quarter reflection/academic planning | | Essay #2 |
| Week Seven: Wednesday, November 9 | Sarah: Social class and suburbanization. Group work on projects, Films. | Pew Report on race, wealth, and housing | |
| Week Eight: Wednesday, November 16 | Seminar, Modern Housing for America, Prepare for field trip to Portland | <u>Modern Housing for America</u> , part 1 | Seminar 1-pager |
| Saturday, November 19 | Field Trip to Portland on AMTRAK Leave Olympia/Lacey station at 8:50 a.m. | Note: return may be as late as 8 p.m. | |
| November 21-27 | No school! Thanksgiving break week | | |
| Week Nine: Wednesday, November 30 | Seminar, <u>Modern Housing for America</u> and reflection on field work. | <u>Modern Housing for America</u> , to end | Essay #3 |
| Saturday, December 3 | Project symposium and synthesis workshop | | Project poster and bibliography |
| Week Ten: Wednesday, December 7 | Project symposium continued and program potluck | | |
| Evaluation Week | Student/faculty evaluations by appointment | | Faculty evaluation, Final draft of self evaluation, on disc, for conference |