

## **GEOGRAPHY 181 URBAN FIELD STUDIES**

Spring 2020

Fri. 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

In the field, or in 575 McCone Hall

Instructor: Dr. Seth Lunine

Contact: slunine@berkeley.edu,

Office Hours: 591 McCone Hall, Tu 2:30-4:00 and by appointment.

### **Overview**

In this course you will learn how to ‘read’ urban landscapes in the San Francisco Bay Area. You will develop ways of seeing, interpreting, and analyzing building types, street forms, land-use patterns, and other artifacts of material culture, no matter how humble. We will walk through places of residence, work, leisure, and consumption; through both official and vernacular space; through global nodes and local redoubts; and through sites of investment and disinvestment, in- and out-migration, wealth and poverty, consensus and discontent. At every juncture, we will explore the multidirectional relationships between built form and everyday life.

What does this all mean? Two things that, in addition to landscape analysis, are the goals of the course:

The first is to learn enough history and geography of the Bay Area to be able to put things in context: What is a Victorian house? How has the Mission District changed over time? Why are there multiple cities here? Who built them? When? Why?

The second is to see in the particulars of the Bay Area some general principles of American urbanization, such as real estate cycles, residential segregation, industrial clustering, changing architectural styles, or the evolution of retail stores. By combining these three elements—landscape, region, and urbanization—you will appreciate the magnificent cacophony of cities, the peculiar pleasures and struggles of the Bay Area, and the banal beauty of ordinary landscapes.

### **Learning Outcomes**

Through successful participation in the course, students will:

- Develop skills for interpreting and analyzing the built environment and comparing various cities and geographic areas;
- Better understand the historical geography of the San Francisco Bay Area;
- Develop familiarity with historical and contemporary data sources for urban analysis;
- Create and present their own analysis of specific urban spaces, informed by research methodologies learned in class.

## Course Requirements & Grading

Completion of all three course components is required to receive a passing grade.

### Attendance & Participation (50% of final grade)

This is a field course dependent on student participation. More than one unexcused absence will affect your grade.

You are expected to complete all assigned readings before each class meeting and arrive prepared to ask and answer questions, point out examples, and otherwise actively participate.

We will walk for the majority of our trips and typically rely on public transportation (BART, AC Transit, SF Muni) to get to our weekly destination. Unless otherwise directed, we meet in the foyer of the **Downtown Berkeley BART Station** (below ground, near the foot of the big escalator) at 9:00a.m., sharp. Please obtain a Clipper Card so as not to waste time buying tickets.

Bring a small notebook and pen or pencil to each class meeting. You should jot down notes, observations, and questions. You are welcome to use a smartphone for class purposes during walking/discussion periods.

We will make stops for food, drink, and rest. Each trip includes time for lunch near cheap eateries. You may, of course, bring your own food. You should bring water to drink. Wear comfortable walking shoes and carry an extra layer in case of unpleasant weather.

Light rain or showers will not cancel class, but you will want a rain jacket and umbrella. If the forecast is over 50% for rain (not just light rain or showers), I will send an email by 9:00p.m. on Thursday night to tell you whether we will meet in BART or in 575 McCone. On rain days we will focus on library research methods for course projects.

### Response Papers (25% of final grade)

Write a 500-700 word response essay for three field trips of your choice. Two response essays are due by March 6 and one is due by April 17. Please submit your responses in .pdf or .doc format via email (slunine@berkeley.edu).

The goal of the response paper is for you to reflect on a given trip, and relate the things we saw and discussed in class to broad course themes, course reading, and your own urban experiences and observations. To that end, you must reference **at least three** specific pieces of information (trip notes, sites, specific buildings, discussions, social interactions, etc.) from the trip. You must also reference **at least one** specific piece of information from the reading (or supplemental reading) assigned for that day. Beyond these basic requirements, the assignments are fairly wide open. Because these are thought pieces, I will not be strict on citations, but please make sure I know where to look for the information you reference (i.e.

include the author of the reading and the page number). Your responses should be proofread and free of grammatical errors and typos. Late work will be penalized one letter grade.

#### Course Project: Temescal Site Analysis (25% or final grade)

Each student, or pair of students, will select, research, and analyze a site in Oakland's Temescal District. In addition to direct observation, you will use the methods we learn during our "library days" to interpret your site. Students will present their projects at the end of the semester. A separate handout will explain the project fully.

#### **Readings**

There is no textbook for this course. Readings will be available in the "Files" section of our bCourses site. Should interest warrant, the assignments can be compiled into a bound reader. I will also add supplemental readings for each trip, which are recommended but not required. Be sure to check our bCourse site regularly. Supplemental readings will be useful for your course projects, as well.

Peter Booth Wiley's *The National Trust Guide to San Francisco* is very handy book for our San Francisco fieldwork. It's usually available (used) very cheaply online.

#### **Academic Integrity**

Any test, paper, report or homework submitted under your name is presumed to be your own original work that has not previously been submitted for credit in another course. All words and ideas written by other people must be properly attributed: fully identified as to source and the extent of your use of their work. Cheating, plagiarism, and other academic misconduct will result in a failing grade on the assignment, paper, quiz, or exam in question and will be reported to Student Judicial Affairs.

#### **Students with "Disabilities" or Special Needs**

Please bring these to my attention through the Disabled Student Program as soon as possible. I will provide all requisite accommodations.

#### **Course Website**

Please check our bCourse site frequently for updates, the syllabus, announcements, and additional resources, along with supplementary materials and items of interest.

## Course Schedule

Our schedule is subject to change based on weather conditions and other considerations. Please check our bCourse each week for supplementary readings.

January 24 City of Acedeme: Introductions & UC Berkeley Campus

Richard Walker, “Four Ecologies of Residence in the San Francisco Bay Area,” *Ecumene* (1995), 33-64. The “The ecotopian middle landscape” section (**40-45**) should be read to contextualize our quick look at north Berkeley homes.

January 31 Berkeley Up & Down

*Meet at Downtown Berkeley BART*

Grady Clay, “Crossing the American Grain with Vesalius, Geddes, and Jackson: The Cross-Section as a Learning Tool,” in *Everyday America*, eds. Chris Wilson and Paul Groth (2003), 109–129.

Paul Groth, “Key Processes of Landscape Formation and Change,” from *Geography 169A*.

February 7 Commanding Heights: Downtown San Francisco & SOMA

*Meet at Downtown Berkeley BART*

Chester Hartman and Sarah Carnochan, *City for Sale* (2002), 1-14.

Peter Booth Wiley, *The National Trust Guide to San Francisco* (2000), 73-121.

February 14 “Old” San Francisco: Civic Center to North Beach

*Meet at Downtown Berkeley BART*

Rebecca Solnit, “The City’s Tangled Heart,” in *Infinite City: A San Francisco Atlas* (2010), 37-44.

Winston Kyan, “Electric Pagodas and Hyphenate Gates: Folklore, Folklife, and the Architecture of Chinatown,” *Amerasian Journal* (2013), 25-47.

February 21 Countercultural City: the Castro & the Mission

*Meet at Downtown Berkeley BART*

Manuel Castells, *The City and the Grassroots* (1983), 99-109, 130-145.

February 28 Sin City & Industrial Suburb: Emeryville

*Meet at Downtown Berkeley BART*

Richard Walker, "Industry Builds Out the City: The Suburbanization of Manufacturing in the San Francisco Bay Area," in *Manufacturing Suburbs: Building Work and Home*, ed. Robert Lewis (2004), 92-123.

March 6      Temescal District Fieldwork  
*Meet at Downtown Berkeley BART*

Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier* (1987), pp. 116-156.  
*See bCourse for supplemental readings* ‘

**\*\*\* Two field trip responses due \*\*\***

March 13      Library research day (or makeup of a rained-out trip)  
*Meet in 575 McCone*

**\*\*\* Course project proposal due by the beginning of class \*\*\***

March 20      Downtown USA & the Port: Oakland  
*Meet at Downtown Berkeley BART*

Robert Fogelson, *Downtown: Its Rise and Fall* (2001), 8-43.

Mitchell Schwarzer, "Oakland City Center," *Journal of Planning History* (2015), 88-111.

March 27      Spring Break

April 3        Office Space: Dublin & Pleasanton  
*Meet at Downtown Berkeley BART*

Louise Mazingo, "Campus, Estate, and Park: Lawn Culture Comes to the Corporation," in *Everyday America*, eds. Chris Wilson and Paul Groth (2003), 255-274.

April 10      Library research day (or makeup of a rained out trip)  
*Meet at 575 McCone*

April 17      Special Guest Tour

Reading TBA

**\*\*\* One field trip response due \*\*\***

April 23 **\*\*\* Presentation materials due by 9:00p.m. \*\*\***

April 24 Presentations

May 1 **\*\*\* Final projects due \*\*\***