Course Description

This course examines our relationship to “the city” and “the urban” through American literature of the twentieth century. Using the city as its focus, students will theorize cities as both imagined and material spaces containing various political, social, and national discourses. Each of the texts on the syllabus presents a different vision of the American metropolis of the twentieth century, and, in studying these texts, students will gain a rich understanding of the city as a product of the literary imagination. In addition to the fictional works on the syllabus, students will examine a variety of theoretical texts that help us to better understand city life and its representations in literature. Developing this critical lens will help students to confront American literature through new critical lenses.

Required Texts

The Intuitionist. Colson Whitehead
Jazz. Toni Morrison
Martin Dressler: The Tale of an American Dreamer. Steven Millhauser
The Crying of Lot 49. Thomas Pynchon
Their Dogs Came with Them. Helena María Viramontes

Students must purchase hard copies of the texts listed above. E-books are not permitted in this class. In addition to the above texts, students will access supplemental texts available either through links provided on the syllabus or through our Blackboard course page.

You are required to watch all films on your own time. I've provided links to Amazon Instant Video. You may also choose to purchase the films or stream them on Netflix or other streaming services.

Course Objectives

1. To develop a rich understanding of spatial theory, and to engage these theories critically in argumentative writing.
2. To situate primary texts within a socio-historical framework.
3. To engage the body of literary criticism surrounding the primary texts and to situate the student’s writing within this body of criticism.
4. To prepare student writing for scholarly publication, academic conferences, and entry into public discourse.
5. To improve students’ proficiency in speaking and writing about literature.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

Students who successfully complete ENGL 5349 will be able to:

1. Recognize the connections between literary works and their social, historical, and cultural contexts
2. Respond critically to literary works and engage critical theory in sophisticated ways.
3. Communicate their ideas through cogent critical analysis of the course texts.
4. Contribute to the scholarly community by way of conference presentations, scholarly publications, etc.
5. Use research methods to access the body of criticism surrounding primary texts.

**Course Grading**

The course will be structured on a 1000-point scale. The scores you receive on your assignments and participation will be totaled at the end of the semester, and your final grade will be calculated based on this score. The points will be distributed as follows:

- Writing Assignment #1: 200 points
- Writing Assignment #2: 300 points
- Annotated Bibliography: 200 points
- Participation: 100 points
- Dérive Writing Assignment: 100 points
- Dérive Presentation: 50 points
- Student-led Discussions: 50 points

Participation will be calculated based on class attendance and participation in class discussions. Students will be expected to bring their text to class every day, having read the assignment due for that day.

**Class Policies**

**Academic Integrity/Plagiarism.**

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in severe disciplinary action.
**Classroom/professional behavior**

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

**Grade Appeals**

As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures (available at [http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C2.01_student_grade_appeal_procedure.pdf](http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C2.01_student_grade_appeal_procedure.pdf)). For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, [http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html](http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

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**Statement of Academic Continuity**

In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi, this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

**Policy on class attendance:** Students are allowed one absence. All absences count equally, irrespective of the cause, and students who exceed one absence will be penalized fifty points on their final grade for every absence over the limit.

- If you are unable to attend class, you do not need to email me to explain the circumstances. You should contact another student in class and copy his/her notes.

**Dropping a Class:** I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course
necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class.

**If I am absent:** If I need to cancel class because my car broke down, or if I am ill, etc., I will try to get someone to post a sign. I also will try to email you all before class. However, if you come to class and I am not here by the time 15 minutes has elapsed (from when class is to start), please assume that class is canceled.

**Late Writing Projects:** All papers are due on the date listed on the syllabus. Students submitting their papers after this time will lose one letter grade for every class period that the paper is late. Students must submit their assignments via the link provided on Blackboard.

**Blackboard Grade Center:** You will see grades for assignments, exams, and blackboard discussion postings appear on Blackboard during the semester. While these scores may be useful in tracking your grade throughout the semester, they should NOT be used to calculate your final grade. Several point categories will not appear on Blackboard (such as Participation and Reading Quizzes), and only I will have access to these scores. If you are ever concerned about your grade, visit me in my office and we can discuss the issue in person.

**Resources**

**Disabilities Accommodations**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

**Academic Advising**

The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Adviser as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.
It is imperative that all students visit regularly with an academic adviser. Each college within the university has an academic advising center, staffed by full-time, professional advisers to assist students with course selection, degree plans, and other academic matters. To find out how to contact the right adviser, go to: http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/advising.php

Students who have yet to declare a major are advised by the Academic Advising Transition Center. For more information, go to: http://www.tamucc.edu/~aac

Blackboard 9.1: To log into Blackboard, go to: http://bb9.tamucc.edu. You must have a NET ID (also known as an Active Directory account) to log in. For instructions on how to get this account and more information about using Blackboard, go to: http://distance-education.tamucc.edu/student_resources.html. If you need additional help at any time to access, download, or print course materials on Blackboard, please contact the Island Online (IOL) Help Desk by telephone at (361) 825-2825 or by email at iolsupport@tamucc.edu.

Course Calendar

UNIT ONE—THE POLITICS OF SPACE

Week One (August 31)
- Introductions
- Syllabus Overview
- Koyaanisqatsi (Dir. Godfrey Reggio, 1983)
- Assign Dérive Groups
- Assign Student-Led Discussions

Week Two (September 7)
- Michel de Certeau, “Making Do: Uses and Tactics” and “Walking the City” (Blackboard)
- Playtime (Dir. Jacques Tati, 1967) http://tinyurl.com/zblqnpb
- Metropolis (Dir. Fritz Lang, 1927) http://tinyurl.com/hmd3xsk
- Helena María Viramontes, Their Dogs Came with Them (1-98)

Week Three (September 14)
- Helena María Viramontes, Their Dogs Came with Them (98-Finish)
- Rem Koolhaas, “Coney Island: The Technology of the Fantastico” and “The Double Life of Utopia: The Skyscraper”
- Nora, Pierre. “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire”
Week Four (September 21)
- Valeria Luiselli, “Manifesto à Velo” and “Relingos: The Cartography of Empty Spaces” (Blackboard)

Week Five (September 28)
- *Millhauser, Martin Dressler: The Tale of an American Dreamer* (129-Finish)
- Bernard Tschumi, Selected Essays (Blackboard)

UNIT TWO—ARCHITECTURES OF THE CITY

Week 6 (October 5)
- **Writing Assignment #1 Due 1:00 p.m.**
  - Morrison, *Jazz* (1-114)
  - Simon Sadler, *Archigram: Architecture Without Architecture*, selections (Blackboard)

Week 7 (October 12)
- Morrison, *Jazz* (114-Finish)
- Henri Lefebvre, “The Right to the City” (Blackboard)
- David Harvey, “The Right to the City” (Blackboard)

Week 8 (October 19)
- Whitehead, *The Intuitionist* (1-127)
- **Dérive Presentations**
- **Dérive Writing Assignment Due 7:00 p.m.**

Week 9 (October 26)
- Whitehead, *The Intuitionist* (127-Finish)
- Jean Baudrillard, “Simulacra and Simulations” (Blackboard)
- Lieven de Cauter, “The Capsular City” (Blackboard)

UNIT THREE—THE NEOLIBERAL CITY

Week 10 (November 2)
- Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49*

Week 11 (November 9)
- **Annotated Bibliography Due 7:00 p.m.**

Week 12 (November 16)
- *The Truman Show* (Dir. Peter Weir, 1998) [http://tinyurl.com/jrzckx7](http://tinyurl.com/jrzckx7)
- *Safe* (Dir. Todd Haynes, 1995)
- Edward Soja, “Writing the City Spatially” (Blackboard)
Week 13 (November 23)
THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY—NO CLASS

Week 14 (November 30)
LAST DAY OF CLASS
WRITING ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE 1:00 p.m.