

**HH2046**  
**Urban History**  
**Semester 1 (2022/2023)**

Seminar: Tuesdays, 10:30 a.m. to 1:20 p.m.  
Venue: LHS-TR+30, LHS-B2-07, The Hive

Instructor: Asst. Prof. Michael Yeo  
Email: m.yeo@ntu.edu.sg  
Office: SHHK #05-20  
Office Hours: By appointment; email me to arrange for a consultation if required.

### **Course Outline**

This course is an introduction to the discipline of urban history. We will explore the nature, development, and experience of urban spaces in the past, drawing from diverse geographies and periods. The course is structured around the multidisciplinary character of urban history, with each week focusing on different approaches, debates, and themes in this field. This knowledge will equip you with a set of intellectual tools that you can use to develop your own research into the urban past and present.

### **Learning Goals**

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Compare, contrast, and combine major approaches in urban history.
2. Identify and evaluate the temporal and spatial contexts of urbanism.
3. Investigate and explain various factors in the birth, growth, stagnation, and death of urban centres.
4. Understand how people have experienced urban life in different places and periods.
5. Collect and synthesize large quantities of historical evidence about a town or city.

### **Class Structure**

Seminars will be carried out in person and will take place on Tuesdays, from 10:30 a.m. to 1:20 p.m., interspersed with short breaks. You will be assigned a group at the beginning of the first class, which you will have to sit with for the rest of the semester. Please keep your mask on for the duration of the class. On some weeks, you might visit museums in Singapore either alone or with your groupmates. Please adhere to the current COVID-19 regulations on social gatherings in public.

### **Course Assessment**

You will be assessed according to the following criteria:

Class Participation:	10%
Group Presentation:	10%
Travel Poster:	20%
Source Analysis Test:	30%
Take-Home Exam:	30%

#### *Class Participation*

You are required to attend every seminar, having read and prepared to discuss the assigned readings for each week. Your participation in class will be assessed by the depth, frequency, and quality of your contributions to tutorial discussions.

### *Group Presentation*

With your groupmates, you will give a presentation during one of the seminars (either on Weeks 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, or 11). The group presentation should offer a response to the prompt in each of the weekly seminars, which can be found in the class schedule, in relation to *at least two* cities and *no more than five* cities. Your group can present either: (1) a joint response agreeing or disagreeing with the prompt; or (2) a debate between different opinions held by members of the group. The group presentation should also: (1) offer a brief history of each city referred to; (2) allow for each group member to speak for five minutes; and (3) include a question-and-answer session. The weekly group presentations are important because the Take-Home Exam will be based on a similar format: you will have to write essays in response to a series of prompts, drawing on the histories of different cities. Do note that your presentation skills will be assessed individually, so the scores of each group member might not be uniform.

### *Travel Poster*

You will design a travel poster for any city or town *and* write an 800-word essay explaining the details in your poster. Please select an urban centre that is *not* a capital city. Your poster should refer to the history and the historical landmarks of your chosen urban centre, and your essay should draw upon relevant secondary sources. This assignment will be due by 11:59 p.m. on 19 September 2022 on NTU Learn. You can find detailed instructions for this assignment on NTU Learn.

### *Source Analysis Test*

In the penultimate week of the semester, you will take a 90-minute in-class test that will assess your ability to analyse sources used for urban history. You will choose two out of six sources to analyse, one textual and one visual. Although this test will take place during the seminar, you will be required to write your answers on a Word document and submit it on NTU Learn, so please remember to bring your laptop along. There are no plans for a make-up test; if you are absent for this test, you will likely receive a score of zero. We will practice how to analyse sources for urban history during some of the weekly seminars, which will prepare you for this test.

### *Take-Home Exam*

In the final week of the semester, you will be given a week to complete an exam from 11:59 p.m. on 8 November 2022 to 11:59 p.m. on 15 November 2022. You will write two 1,000-word essays, each in response to one of six statements related to the themes covered in the weekly seminars. Your essays should: (1) refer to *at least two* different cities; (2) have an argument anchored in historical evidence; (3) consider change over time; and (4) consider variations between different cities. You will be required to write your answers on a Word document and submit it on NTU Learn. Your essay must draw upon secondary sources that are relevant and properly cited.

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## Class Schedule and Readings

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### Week 1 (9 August)

*No Seminar*

There will be no seminar this week because it is a public holiday.

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### Week 2 (16 August)

*What is Urban History?*

Reading:

- Shane Ewen, *What is Urban History?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016), 1–9. [These pages refer to the chapter titled, “Introduction: Why Urban History?”.]
  - Charles Tilly, “What Good is Urban History?,” *Journal of Urban History* 22, no. 6 (1996): 702–19.
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### Week 3 (23 August)

*Economy*

Themes: agriculture, commerce, the origins of cities, trade, urban economic growth

Readings:

- David L. Stone, “Economy,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Cities in World History*, ed. Peter Clark (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 127–46.
  - Richard C. Wade, *The Rise of Western Cities, 1790–1830* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1959; Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 39–71. [These pages refer to the chapter titled, “The Economic Base”.]
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### Week 4 (30 August)

*Environment*

Themes: environmental degradation, hinterlands, resource endowments, urban environmental history

Readings:

- Martin V. Melosi, “Humans, Cities, and Nature: How Do Cities Fit in the Material World?,” *Journal of Urban History* 6, no. 1 (2010): 3–21.
  - William Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991), 207–59. [These pages refer to the chapter titled, “Annihilating Space: Meat”.]
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## **Week 5 (6 September)**

### *Networks*

Themes: connectedness, global cities, regulation, urban networks

Readings:

- Paul M. Hohenberg and Lynn Hollen Lees, *The Making of Urban Europe, 1000–1950* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1985), 47–73. [These pages refer to the chapter titled, “Systems of Early Cities”.]
- Kris Alexanderson, *Subversive Seas: Anticolonial Networks Across the Twentieth Century Dutch Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 137–67. [These pages refer to the chapter titled, “Pan-Islamism Abroad: Regulation and Resistance in the Middle East”.]

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## **Week 6 (13 September)**

### *Magnitude*

Themes: metrocentrism, small cities, secondary cities, the size of urban centres

Readings:

- Peter Clark, “Introduction,” in *Small Towns in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Peter Clark (Cambridge: Maison des Sciences de l’Homme and Cambridge University Press, 1995), 1–21.
- James Scobie (completed and edited by Samuel L. Baily), *Secondary Cities of Argentina: The Social History of Corrientes, Salta, and Mendoza* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1988), 16–47. [These pages refer to the chapter titled, “The Dynamics of Urban Growth”.]

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## **Week 7 (20 September)**

### *Guided Museum Visit*

[Community]

We will be visiting the NUS Baba House together this week. The two-hour visit will consist of guided tours of the townhouse and its neighbourhood.

Readings:

- Shane Ewen, *What is Urban History?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016), 33–54. [These pages refer to the chapter titled, “Cities, Spaces and Identities”.]
- Bernard Z. Keo, “Between Empire and Nation(s): The *Peranakan* Chinese of the Straits Settlements, 1890–1948,” in *Colonialism, China, and the Chinese*, ed. Matthew P. Fitzpatrick and Peter Monteath (London: Routledge, 2020), 99–117.

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## **Term Break**

26 to 30 September

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## Week 8 (4 October)

### *Power*

Themes: colonial cities, frontier cities, imperial metropolises, race, segregation

Readings:

- Thomas R. Metcalf, “Colonial Cities,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Cities in World History*, ed. Peter Clark (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 753–69.
- Brett Rushforth, “Insinuating Empire: Indians, Smugglers, and the Imperial Geography of Eighteenth-Century Montreal,” in *Frontier Cities: Encounters at the Crossroads of Empire*, ed. Jay Gitlin, Barbara Berglund, and Adam Arenson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 49–65.

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## Week 9 (11 October)

### *Order*

Themes: control, public order, policing, urban governance

Readings:

- Prashant Kidambi, “The Ultimate Masters of the City: Police, Public Order and the Poor in Colonial Bombay, c. 1890–1914,” *Crime, History and Societies* 8, no. 1 (2004): 27–47.
- Elizabeth Wilson, *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder, and Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 12–25. [These pages refer to the chapter titled, “From Kitsch City to the City Sublime”.]

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## Week 10 (18 October)

### *Modernity*

Themes: architecture, city planning, industrial cities, modern cities

Readings:

- James Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 1–17. [These pages refer to part of the chapter titled, “The Copperbelt in Theory: From “Emerging Africa” to the Ethnography of Decline”].
- James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 103–46. [These pages refer to part of the chapter titled, “The High Modernist City: An Experiment and a Critique”].

## **Week 11 (25 October)**

### *Opportunity*

Themes: inequality, migration, poverty, urban population growth

Readings:

- Luther Adams, *Way Up North in Louisville: African American Migration in the Urban South, 1930–1970* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 13–36. [These pages refer to the chapter titled, “Headed for Louisville: African American Migration within the South”.]
- Haydon Cherry, *Down and Out in Saigon: Stories of the Poor in a Colonial City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 32–53. [These pages refer to the chapter titled, “A Woman Who Ran Away”.]

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## **Week 12 (1 November)**

### *Source Analysis Test*

The Source Analysis Test will take place this week during the seminar. Over 90 minutes, you will choose two out of six sources to analyse, one textual and one visual. There are no plans for a make-up test; if you are absent for this test, you will likely receive a score of zero. Please bring your laptops to class.

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## **Week 13 (8 November)**

### *Revision Week*

The formal part of the seminar this week consists of a brief lecture recapitulating the course. Please feel free to use the time after the lecture for consultations on the Take-Home Exam.

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## **Course Policies and Student Responsibilities**

### **General**

You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with the information in this document, especially assignment deadlines and requirements. You are also responsible for finding out about any course-related announcements if you miss any seminars. You are expected to complete all pre-class readings, attend all seminars punctually, and participate in all tutorial discussions. Please bring something to take notes with during the seminar.

### **Absenteeism**

This course requires you to be in class to contribute to discussions and team presentations. These in-class activities make up a significant portion of your course grade. Absence from class without a valid reason will thus affect your overall course grade. Valid reasons include: falling ill, which must be supported by a medical certificate; or participating in an NTU-approved activity, which must be supported by an excuse letter from a relevant body; or a serious extenuating circumstance, which should be supported by relevant documentation. There will be no make-up opportunities for group presentations. If you miss a seminar, you must inform the instructor before the start of the seminar via email.

### **Late Policy**

Assignments submitted after their assigned deadlines will be penalised by the deduction of 10% of the maximum score for each 24-hour period after the submission date. For example, assignments submitted 2 hours late will be subject to a 10% penalty, assignments submitted 26 hours late will be subject to a 20% penalty, and so on. If you require an extension, please request for it at least a day before the assignment is due with a valid reason. Valid reasons include: falling ill, which must be supported by a medical certificate; participating in an NTU-approved activity, which must be supported by an excuse letter from a relevant body; a serious extenuating circumstance, which should be supported by relevant documentation; or any personal reasons that might be conveyed in confidence to the instructor.

### **Plagiarism and Cheating**

Universities consider using the works of others without properly acknowledging that use (that is, copying) to be “cheating”. In this course, such behaviour will result in a score of zero on the assignment in question. In accordance with school policy, the instructor will also report egregious cases to the university to be placed on record in your academic file. Learn how to cite the work of others properly. If in doubt, ask.

### **Policy on Academic Integrity**

You should adhere to accepted scholarly practices in all of your written work. Notes taken for all essays and papers should accurately record sources of material to be cited, appropriately quoted, paraphrased, or summarized. Papers and research projects should acknowledge these sources in the appropriate places of the text using the notes and bibliography system of the Chicago Manual of Style ([https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html)).

### **Course Style Guide**

For all assignments, please select an easily readable font, such as Times New Roman or Garamond, and refrain from using Arial or Helvetica. The main body of the text should be in font size 12pt, and the footnotes should be in font size 10pt. The main body of the text should be in double spacing, with footnotes in single spacing.