

GGR382H Field Course

# NEW YORK CITY



This course is designed for students who are keen to explore New York City in an intensive five-day field experience. We will walk the streets and ride the subways, learn from local people, visit museums and archives, and read popular and scholarly writing. We will undertake these efforts in order to explore diverse perspectives and experiences of this phenomenal city. Enrollment is limited to 20 students who will travel the city with an instructor and teaching assistant.

**Instructor** | Deborah Cowen | Sid Smith Room 5033 | [deb.cowen@utoronto.ca](mailto:deb.cowen@utoronto.ca)

**When** | The field trip runs from September 7-11, 2015. We will also meet 2-3 times in Toronto in the fall term.

**Where** | New York City, including visits to Manhattan, the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens.

**Credit** | Students receive 0.5 credit for successfully completing the course.

**Content** | This field trip will investigate the re/making of New York City over the last three or four decades, with a focus on changing built form, economy, and social geography. The course will approach New York as a deeply contested and divided space that is undergoing both slow and dramatic transformation. One central lens on the city will be gentrification and a number of related processes such as the racialization, de-industrialization, segregation, and financialization of urban space. We will also continuously be asking about the politics and geographies of race, status, gender and sexuality. We will examine how uneven power relations and the different interests and desires of groups produce the contemporary urban landscape of New York. This year we will also be engaging creative and arts based forms of resistance to these urban geopolitical-economic questions. We will visit a series of sites that have been focal points of conflict and change including Red Hook and the Gowanus Canal, lower Manhattan, Williamsburg and Bushwick, the Lower East Side, Jackson Heights, and the Bronx. We will meet up with members of the local communities along the way in order to learn from their experiences.

The second part of the course will consist of a small number of meetings in Toronto to discuss the fieldwork and readings, and prepare for the final paper. Times and dates for these meetings will be determined collectively.

**Course Logistics** | You are expected to arrive in New York no later than Monday September 7. The class will meet for the first time at the hostel at 4pm. We will then explore the city for four days (Tuesday through Friday). We will meet at 9am each morning to go over the day's itinerary and to discuss issues related to the course. You will receive more detailed information about the itinerary and other matters over the summer.

The course involves a lot of walking, and long, active days. You will be riding the NY subway and exploring diverse neighbourhoods. You are expected to bring comfortable clothes and shoes, raingear, and any sun protection you may need.

## Evaluation

Participation

40%

Reading summaries	10%
Paper proposal	10%
Term Paper	40%

## G U I D E L I N E S

**General:** Please engage the readings and the NYC environment with an open mind and critical eye. Please share your ideas and experiences, and ask questions when you have them. Please show respect for your colleagues, your instructors, and the New Yorkers we meet along the way, and expect the same in return.

**Accessibility:** The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. Please contact the instructor as soon as possible if you have any concerns, requests or needs with regards to mobility.

**Class Participation:** Participation in this field course is extremely important so we will work to foster an engaged and inclusive mobile environment. Participation will not be graded according to the *amount* you speak, but according to the thoughtfulness of your contributions, the constructiveness of your engagement with your peers, the reading material, and the social and built environment we encounter along the way, as well as your overall contribution to making GGR 382 a productive learning experience.

**Reading summaries:** You are expected to do all the required readings before you travel to New York. The readings will provide crucial context and make our time in NY much richer. In order to encourage a careful reading of the texts, I am asking you to submit 10 one-page, double-spaced reading summaries. At least five of these summaries must be sent to the instructor and TA by August 18. The remaining 5 must be submitted to us by September 1. You will receive a 1% grade for each completed summary received on time.

**Paper Proposal:** After we return from New York, you will be asked to submit a short research proposal (maximum 2 double spaced pages, including bibliography). We will set the specific due dates for all assignments when we schedule the post field work Toronto meetings of the course, but assume that the proposal will be due by the end of September. This means you should be actively working on the paper and proposal while we are in New York and making the best use of your time there possible.

A research proposal should explain the topic you have chosen for your research paper, the time period(s) and place(s) you will cover, and provide a rationale for why this is an important topic. It should include a tentative overview of the structure of your paper and a bibliography of potential sources. In order to produce a strong research proposal, you must spend time thinking about your topic and doing some preliminary investigation. The proposal provides you with an opportunity to get feedback on your paper topic and is therefore a crucial step in the larger assignment.

Your proposal should include the following sections:

1. Your research question or problem. What will your paper explore or explain?
2. A brief review of relevant literature. What has already been written about the issue?
3. A discussion of how your analysis relates to or differs from existing arguments.
4. A preliminary overview of the paper structure; the different sections you expect to develop in the final paper.
5. A bibliography.

**Term Paper:** With feedback on your proposal you will write a final paper of 10-15 pages plus

bibliography, double-spaced. Your paper can focus on any topic that is addressed in the readings and fieldwork. A proposal should be analytic not descriptive; it should raise critical questions about an issue and not simply describe it. This means you will need to explore 'how' and 'why' questions. I encourage you to discuss your paper topic with me before submitting your proposal. This is a perfect thing to do as we walk the streets of NYC!

**Readings:** I will circulate a list of required readings and films, and access to files in early July.