DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY  
University of Toronto  

GGR 482H TORONTO FIELD COURSE  
The Historical Geographies of Toronto  
Fall 2013  

What is it? This is a field trip course for students who are interested in exploring the urban landscapes of Toronto. The course is organized around a combination of seminar classes and field trips in the Toronto area that will take place between September and December 2013. Enrollment is limited to 25 students.

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When? Friday afternoons, 1-5 pm in Sidney Smith Hall, room 2129

What and where? The course consists of classroom instruction (seminars and lectures), library workshops, and visits to four field sites in the Toronto metropolitan area.

Content: This field trip course examines selected elements of Toronto’s social, political and economic landscapes. Using historical perspectives on the changing character of selected areas, the course seeks to understand the creation and reproduction of the city's landscapes over time. A broad approach centered on the political economy of metropolitan development and the processes of creative destruction will be used to examine the key dynamics of urban change.

The course is centered on four modules, each of which has two parts. The first part consists of four, (up to) four-hour walking trips to local field sites. The sites are the CBD condo belt (from Jarvis St. to Liberty Village); the Spadina corridor (from Bloor St. to Front St.); the Parliament St. transect (from St. James Town to Regent Park); and three pre-World War II working-class suburbs (Silverthorn, Earlscourt and the Toronto Junction). The second part of the module consists of four, two-hour seminar classes that take place at the university. Although there may be some lectures, these classes are, for the most part, geared to providing students with an opportunity to discuss the class readings and the field trips. Other class time will be spent on library workshops, reports on on-going projects, and general discussion. Class time and field visits are compulsory and are evaluated through a participation grade.

Field site logistics: It is your responsibility to get to the field sites on time. We will be in the field regardless of the weather. You must wear comfortable walking shoes and clothes, and, depending on the weather, you must bring a good raincoat (or umbrella) or warm coat, and sun protection (hat and sun cream).

Costs: There are a few additional non-tuition costs. These will cover the cost of getting to and from the field sites, which should involve the cost of local transit for the most part.
Evaluation: The grade for the course is as follows:

- Participation 30%
- Project report 5%
- Written work 65%

Participation: participation is more than just turning up to walk the streets or to sit in class. It also involves constructive engagement with the class material, the other students, the instructor, and the teaching assistant. You are to contribute to the discussion as we explore Toronto and as we talk around the classroom table. The concern here is not with the ‘amount’ of talking you do (although you do have to do some), but with the usefulness and quality of your contributions.

Project report: in the last two classes of term (November 22 and 29) you will present a short oral report on your term paper to the class. The report will be a quick summary of your paper’s question, evidence, argument and so on. Please note that the date of the presentation of the project reports may come before November 22 and 29 due to the weather.

Written work: this consists of several elements. You are to submit:

- **Reading summaries (5%)** - five one-page, double-spaced summaries of the class readings. They are due the day before the class in which they will be discussed.

- **Linked report (10%)** - one two-page, double-spaced, ‘linked’ report on either the working-class suburb or Parliament transect module. A linked report is an exploration of the ‘conversation’ between the field area and the weekly readings. The purpose of the report is to have you think through the relationship between the course’s field and seminar elements. The working-class suburb report is due in class on October 25. The Parliament St. transect report is due in class on November 8.

- **Information reports (10%)** - two, two-page, double-spaced reports, worth 5% each. One report is on the Goad insurance atlases and the Toronto City Directory (due in class, October 11); the other is on the newspaper as a source of information about the city (due in class, October 18).

- **Term paper (40%)** - a ten-page paper that explores and reports on one of the class themes by using evidence taken from a) the areas we explored in Toronto; b) secondary readings; and c) the Goads, the Toronto City Directory and newspapers. The themes are: immigration, suburbanization, gentrification, urban redevelopment, housing, and segregation. The purpose of the paper is to get you to think through the creative destruction of one of the field trip landscapes. This will involve using some historical sources to think thorough how a particular street, area or neighborhood experienced change (creative destruction) over a particular period of time. The paper is due no later than December 3, 2013.
**Timetable**

September 13  
Introduction: urban political economy and creative destruction

September 20  
Module A seminar: The Ward and Spadina: immigrants, housing and work  
Readings: Dennis 1997; Hiebert 1993; Pacyga 1991

September 27  
Module A field trip: The Ward and Spadina: immigrants, housing and work

October 4  
Library workshops: writing history - atlases and newspapers

October 11  
Module B seminar: Toronto’s prewar working-class suburbs  
Readings: Harris 1991; Paterson 1989; Pritchett 2002

October 18  
Model B field trip: Toronto’s prewar working-class suburbs

October 25  
Module C seminar: the Parliament St. transect  
Readings: James 2010; Purdy 2003; Vale 2013

November 1  
Module C field trip: the Parliament St. transect

November 8  
Module D seminar: the CBD and the condo belt  
Readings: Catungal et al., 2009; Kern 2007; Gad and Holdsworth 1987

November 15  
Module D field trip: the CBD and the condo belt

November 22  
Projects reports and class seminar: Toronto, history and landscape  
Readings: To be determined as the course progresses

November 29  
Project reports and class seminar: Toronto, history and landscape  
Readings: To be determined as the course progresses

**Writing and report due dates**

Sept. 19 to Nov. 7  
Five reading summaries

October 11  
Goads and the Toronto City Directory reports due

October 18  
Newspaper report due

October 25  
Linked report on module B (working-class suburbs) due

November 8  
Linked report on module C (Parliament transect) due

November 22 - 29  
Project presentation summary

December 3  
Term paper
Readings


Purdy, Sean (2003) “‘It was tough on everybody’: low-income families and housing hardship in post-World War II Toronto,” *Journal of Social History* 37: 457-82.